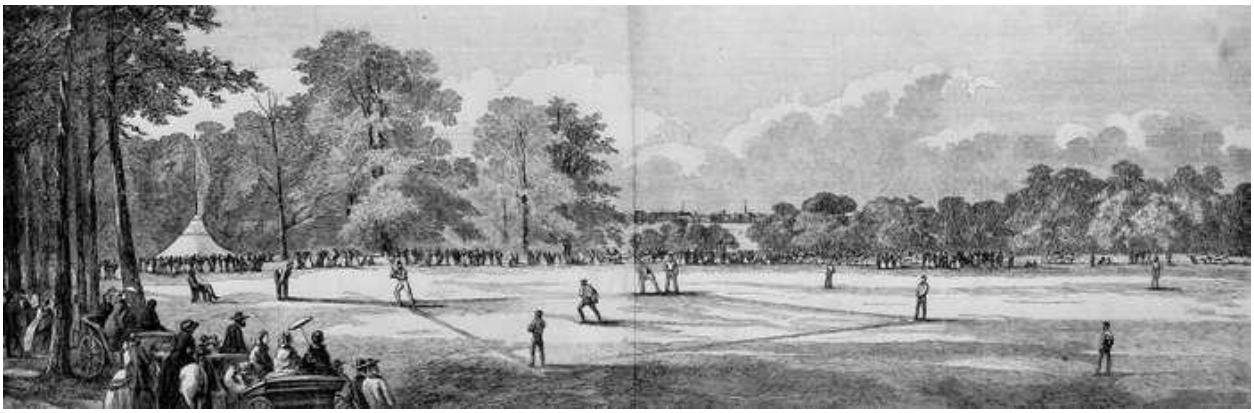


Baseball Origins Newsletter

Volume One, Number 2 **May 2021**

In this issue:

The baseball origins newsletter is put out by members of SABR's Origins Committee, and the website for baseball's origins, www.protoball.org, It is intended to foster research and discussion of the origins of the game of baseball, baseball's predecessor bat-ball games, and the growth of baseball prior to 1871 (when professional, league baseball was founded).

Comments, suggestions and articles should be submitted to Bruce Allardice, editor, at bsa1861@att.net or Larry McCray at lmccray@mit.edu.

Rounders—a Game that "Gets No Respect"

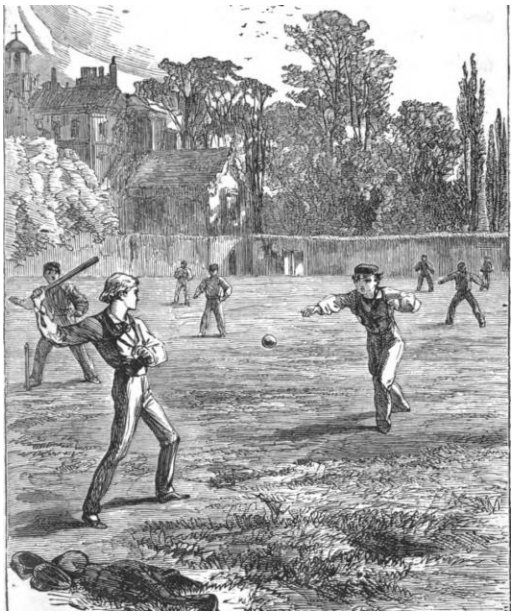
By David Block[1]

Editors Note: *Each issue we plan to highlight a bat-ball game that preceded baseball.*

The British game of rounders is truly the Rodney Dangerfield[2] of bat and ball sports. While countless books enshrine the histories of baseball and cricket, and while millions of fans of those two sports celebrate the accomplishments of their professional heroes, the closely related game of rounders and those who play it receive no such veneration. Indeed, for most of its history, rounders has rarely rippled the British national consciousness, and when thought about at all is typically dismissed as a trifling playground diversion.

How did this all come about? Part of the answer is obvious. Cricket, the oldest game in this triumvirate, became established early on as an activity for gentlemen. With its class standing thus fixed within Britain's highly stratified society, its preeminence as a national sport stood unchallenged. Conversely, rounders, a pastime with a 200-year history and played by as many Britons in the 20th century as cricket, has never escaped its stigma as a game for the working classes and, most ignobly, for girls.

Rounders beginnings in Great Britain are inseparable from baseball's. It should be noted, however, that except as a byproduct of my study of baseball's origins, nobody has ever undertaken a serious look at the history of rounders. Perhaps because of this, its ancestry remains somewhat murky. What is known for certain is that references to rounders first appeared in the late 1820s. They suggest that, by then, the game had already existed for at least a decade or two. The earliest known mention of rounders was in the second London edition of a children's book on games—*The Boy's Own Book*—published in 1828. Inside the book was a diagram of a rounders playing field showing a diamond shaped infield much like baseball's, and a rough description of how to play. The writeup also stated that the game was popular in western England. A second mention of rounders, in an 1829 memoir by a Cambridge University graduate, indicated that he had played the game while in public school in the year 1819. A third reference established that rounders (and baseball) had been played in a Welsh prison yard around the year 1820.



From Kingston's *Ernest Bracebridge: School Days* (1860).

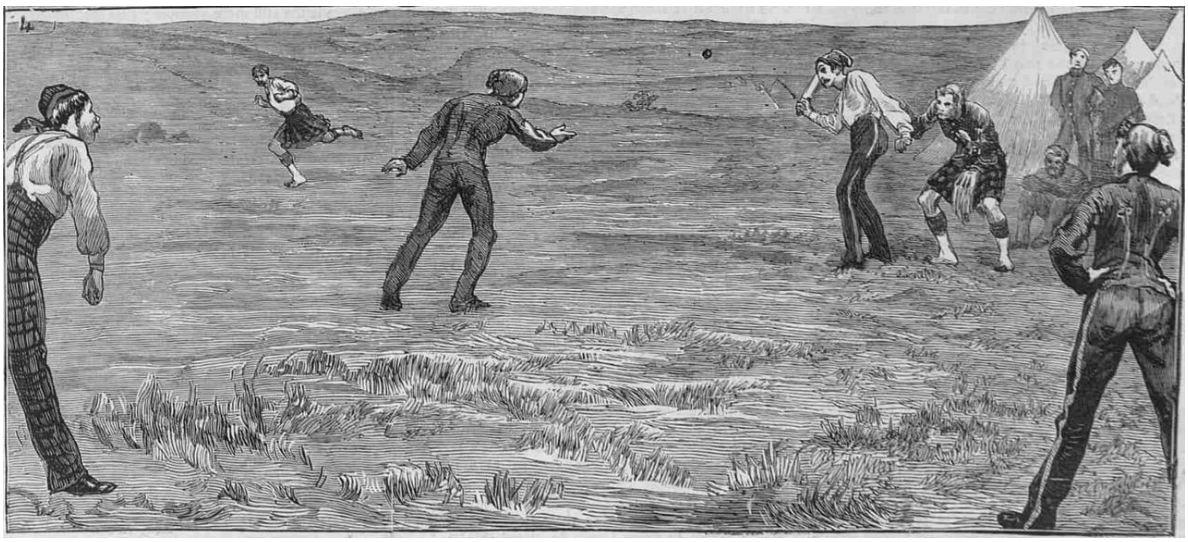
Yet of rounders, prior to then, we know little. That hasn't stopped present day boosters of the game from inventing a history. The governing body of rounders in the UK maintains the unproven claims that rounders has been played in England since Tudor times, and that the earliest reference to it appeared in the 1744 children's book, *A Little Pretty Pocket-book* (where it was called "base ball"). This assertion, that the multiple 18th-century references to baseball in Britain were actually references to rounders, can be found not only on official rounders websites but on those of the Encyclopedia Brittanica and Wikipedia as well. This notion rests upon the assumption that the game of baseball that emerged in England in the mid-18th century was identical to rounders, and that the name rounders was simply a new identifier that came along in the early 19th century to replace the older one.

In my 2005 book *Baseball before We Knew It,* I challenged the consensus viewpoint of American baseball historians that rounders was the ancestor of baseball. My hypothesis was based upon the plain fact that multiple references to baseball predated the earliest references to rounders. Yet, at the time, I was also operating under the common but mistaken presumption that the original English game of baseball was essentially the same game as rounders, with the latter name gradually replacing the earlier title. Since then I've uncovered a considerable body of evidence disproving this earlier view. I've learned that English baseball was played under its original name for nearly a century beyond the advent of rounders, and that the two games were distinct from each other. This evidence, as presented in my 2019 book *Pastime Lost,* includes at least ten documented examples where rounders and English baseball were played side-by-side at the same gathering during the 19th century. Additionally, my research shows that while English baseball was played predominantly without the use of a bat (players using their bare hands to

strike the ball), every published description of rounders from 1828 onward stipulated that bat usage was fundamental to its play.

Having concluded that rounders was not a simple relabeling of English baseball, the question of how the game derived remains unanswered. No known direct evidence supports any particular theory of rounders's history prior to those first mentions of it in the 1820s. Because of its obvious kinship with English baseball, the most likely explanation is that it was a spinoff of the earlier game. In *Pastime Lost* I hypothesized that English youngsters experimented with English baseball by introducing a bat to it somewhere in the late 18th century. For a period of several decades beginning in the 1790s, multiple references to a game called simply "bat and ball" appeared in British publications. I've speculated that this game was a precursor to rounders, although I'm yet to uncover any hard evidence to support this notion.

For all the vagaries of its ancestry, the pastime of rounders swiftly gained favor. By the mid-19th century, references to it in books and newspapers abounded. Several guidebooks on sports and games for boys detailed methods for playing rounders and printed diagrams of its playing field. These descriptions varied, and until the end of the 19th century there was little uniformity among the published handbooks. Some specified a four-base diamond configuration akin to American baseball, while others laid out a five-base infield. Rules covering other aspects of the game also lacked standardization. This was largely a consequence of rounders' place within the arena of 19th-century British recreation. At the start, it was seen as an activity for boys alone, and since schools had not yet incorporated the game into their curricula, there was no compelling need for consistency. This began to change by mid-century when adult men, almost all of them from working class backgrounds, began to take up the game.



From *The Graphic*, Aug. 16, 1873

In much the way that rounders may have formed by splitting off from English baseball, the game itself later subdivided into two distinct forms, with one of them reappropriating the name baseball for itself. This process began in the 1860s when a group of working men formed the City of Bristol Rounder Club. They practiced rounders, albeit a modified form of the sport that required more strength and athleticism than the schoolyard version. Over the next two decades, similar organizations sprung up in cities that, like Bristol, were major seaports along the west coast of Great Britain including Cardiff, Liverpool and Glasgow. The rosters of these clubs were filled by the dockworkers and seamen who populated those cities, and over time they discarded some traditional features of rounders such as the short, one-handed bat and the practice of soaking. In 1892 they instituted one final change. Tired of having their sport confused with the original picnic and schoolyard version of rounders that by then was increasingly being played by girls, the major rounders associations changed the name of their pastime to baseball. Despite the new label, however, the clubs resisted overtures to adopt American baseball rules, and forged ahead playing their own unique form of the game. Although this new British baseball did not last long in some of the cities, it prospered in the Liverpool area and in south Wales. It was adopted by school sports programs in those areas and, over time, women players formed clubs of their own that began to rival in popularity those of the men. Yet, by the dawn of the 21st century, this formerly rounders localized form of baseball began to fall on hard times. It had been dropped from school programs and, like many regional amateur sports in the UK, could no longer compete with the glamor of football, rugby and cricket. Today there are only few clubs hanging on in Cardiff and perhaps none at all still functioning in Liverpool.

Meanwhile, the original form of rounders transformed as well. Having been born as a game for boys, the number of girl players that began as a trickle in the late 19th century soon turned into a

torrent. By the early 20th century, rounders had become a fundamental component of the UK's school physical education program, with girls comprising the vast majority of its players. As recently as 2018 an estimated 7,000,000 British schoolchildren were still playing rounders, a number that is likely to decline because of the game being dropped that year from the standard school curriculum. Meanwhile, amateur rounders leagues comprised of players of all ages and genders continue to prosper throughout the UK.

In spite of its threatened future, rounders by any measure is a successful and widely played sport. Though it never gained the prestige that class, gender, and professional glory brought its sibling games of baseball and cricket, rounders unquestionably has provided a competitive outlet and means of recreation for countless millions of adherents over its 200-year existence. How to explain, then, why, to this day, not a single book, not one, has ever been written about the history of rounders? Rodney Dangerfield, move over.

[1] David Block is the author of two books and numerous articles on early baseball.
[2] For those not of a "certain age," Rodney Dangerfield (1921-2004) was a well-known comedian whose comic catchphrase was "I get no respect…"

When the Game was NOT the Thing…

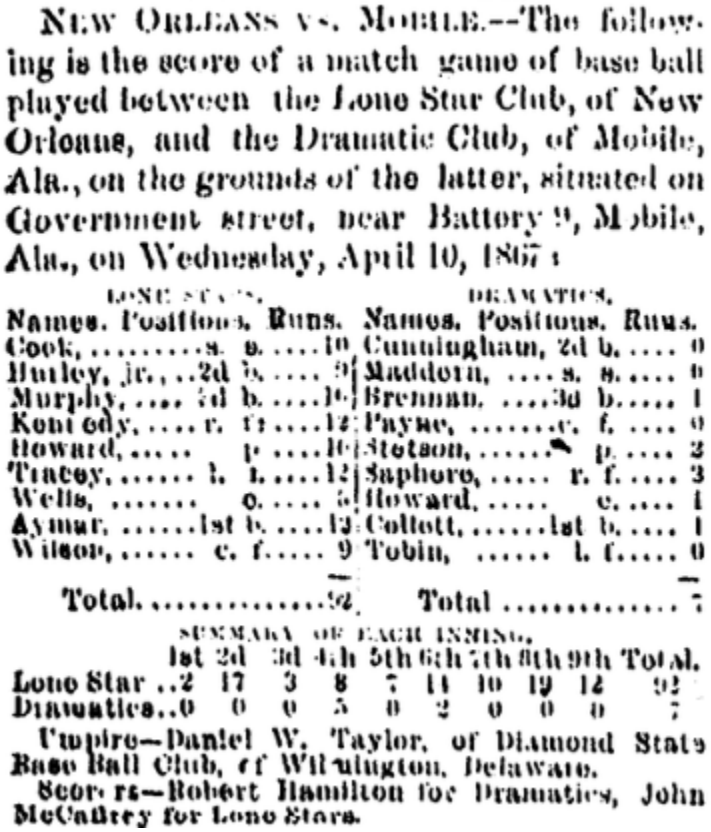
By Bob Tholkes

Lacking access through my usual online sources to the local papers, fleshing out background to the following wasn't an option for this exercise, but enough was gleanable to ferret out the points which make it interesting.

Mobile, Alabama, in the spring of 1867 seemed to have largely regained its prewar footings, to the extent that a dramatic club (called the "Dramatic Club") was not only, presumably, dramatizing (the club was founded by members of the local theater community) but had the previous fall (and also possibly in the fall of 1865) begun playing base ball on the side, going so far in November 1866 as to seek advice on playing rules from the damn Yankees at the *New York Clipper.* That they were transferring their allegiance to the national game (as was taking place in many cities of the erstwhile Confederacy that spring) from a previous regional form is evidenced by their question to the *Clipper:* Could a striker, once put out, bat again in the same inning? In some old regional variants of the game, the answer was "No".

The big doings in Mobile on Wednesday, April 10, 1867, was the Annual Firemen's Parade, a procession of firemen's companies, reported to have been a mile long, drawing throngs of spectators and featuring gaily decorated engines and colorfully-uniformed firemen. Reaching the local theater, several speakers harangued the crowd on this and that. Meanwhile the Dramatic

Club, which had also marched in the procession, hustled off to its grounds near the abandoned Confederate army redoubts to prepare for the day's other attraction, the club's game with the Lone Star club of New Orleans, champions of that city, and, presumably, of the Southeast, as New Orleans gentlemen had been playing the national game since 1859. Reprints of reports from Mobile in the New Orleans papers reckoned the attendance for the match at 1,000 to 1,500, and a visiting member of the Diamond State Base Ball Club of Wilmington, DE, served as umpire. Seating had been provided for ladies and a few special guests; as the *Mobile Register* remarked, "*Place aux dames* was of course the motto of the occasion, as it always is, whenever and wherever the votaries of chivalrous and manly sports are assembled." As the game progressed, the "lithe, active, and graceful forms" of the visitors became "the objects of general admiration", while the locals, the pioneers of the game in Mobile, were observed to have sponsored the unequal match for the purposes of promoting the sport and establishing a friendly rivalry. The *Register* described the banquet that followed the match as "one of the most *recherche* occasions of the season": the usual restriction of the Lenten season were set aside for bountiful food and drink and graceful champagne toasts, and, presumably the customary presentation of the game ball to the victorious Lone Stars. The affair lasted so late that the visitors' departure (by boat) for their 150-mile return trip was delayed until the next morning. Game score? Dramatic Club of Mobile 7, Lone Star Club of New Orleans, 92.



NEW ORLEANS VS. MOBILE.—The following is the score of a match game of base ball played between the Lone Star Club, of New Orleans, and the Dramatic Club, of Mobile, Ala., on the grounds of the latter, situated on Government street, near Battery 9, Mobile, Ala., on Wednesday, April 10, 1867:

LONE STARS. Names.	Positions.	Runs.	DRAMATICS. Names.	Positions.	Runs.
Cook,	s.	10	Cunningham,	2d b.	0
Hurley, jr.,	2d b.	9	Maddern,	s. s.	0
Murphy,	3d b.	16	Brennan,	3d b.	1
Kentedy,	r. f.	12	Payne,	c. f.	0
Howard,	p.	16	Stetson,	p.	3
Tracey,	l. f.	12	Saphore,	r. f.	3
Wells,	c.	5	Howard,	c.	1
Aymar,	1st b.	13	Collett,	1st b.	1
Wilson,	c. f.	9	Tobin,	l. f.	0
Total.		92	Total		7

SUMMARY OF EACH INNING.

	1st	2d	3d	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	Total.
Lone Star	2	17	3	8	7	14	10	19	12	92
Dramatics	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	7

Umpire—Daniel W. Taylor, of Diamond State Base Ball Club, of Wilmington, Delaware.

Scorers—Robert Hamilton for Dramatics, John McCaffrey for Lone Stars.

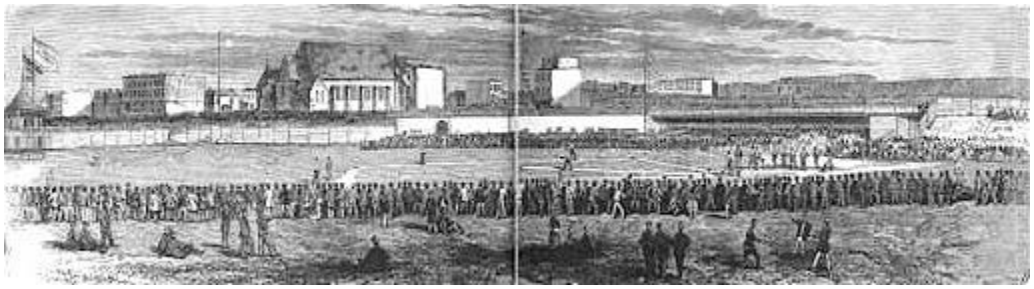
From the New Orleans *Times Picayune*, April 13, 1867

McKinstry vs. *Brooklyn Daily Times*: An 1862 Baseball Rules Dispute

By Steve Sisto

As large and detailed as the baseball rulebook is, the game is ultimately a subjective one, requiring an umpire to make split-second judgment calls. Given this, it is only natural that not everyone will agree with an umpire's ruling. In fact, the history of baseball rule disputes dates back almost 150 years ago. This article will examine one of the earliest recorded ruling controversies, between an umpire and a Brooklyn newspaper, from 1862.

"Go to see the match this afternoon between the Constellation club and the Atlantic club of Jamaica. It will be worth seeing," wrote *The Brooklyn Daily Times* on July 30, 1862. The paper continued, imploring fans to pay the admission for entry: "Don't stand in the back, but pay your ten cents like men, and go inside. If a game is interesting enough to keep a crowd standing outside in the broiling sun for hours, it is worth the paying of ten cents to go inside and sit down in the shade like a Christian. Go in and shell out."



Union Grounds, Brooklyn, 1865
Source: Library of Congress

The two teams had played earlier in the month, on July 4, in the Atlantics' territory of Jamaica, Queens. The Atlantics were victorious, 35-23. The game on July 31 was to be played on the Union Grounds in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn. Ed McKinstry, a veteran ballplayer of Brooklyn's Eckford Club, and previously the Putnam Club, was selected as umpire.

The Brooklyn Daily Eagle reported the score of the game as 24-15 in favor of the Constellations, writing that "the playing throughout was rather mediocre" (Eagle, August 1). The box score published by *The Daily Eagle* was as follows:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Constellations	9	0	0	4	1	3	3	3	1	24
Atlantics	0	5	1	0	0	2	3	1	3	15

The Brooklyn Daily Times, however, scored the game 23-15, arguing that one of the Constellation's runs in the 8th inning should not have counted. According to *The Daily Times*:

> It occurred thus: Thomas was on the third base, and Smith was striker. Thomas started to run home before the pitcher had delivered the ball, but the latter seeing his movement, pitched the ball, and Smith hit it, sending it over to shortstop, who fielded the ball over to the first base in time to put Smith out. Mr. McKinstry decided that Thomas had made his run, because he reached the home base before Smith was out. We contend that he did not make his run, and copy the following from the rules and regulations of the National Association to prove our assertion. It must be recollected that Smith was the third hand out.
>
> "Sec. 24. If two hands are already out, no player turning home at the time the ball is struck, can make an ace if the striker is put out."
>
> This will put that matter straight.

This was *The Daily Times*' box score:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Constellations	9	0	0	4	1	3	3	2	1	23
Atlantics	0	5	1	0	0	2	3	1	3	15

McKinstry must have read the article in *The Daily Times*, because he wrote a letter to the paper, which it published the next day on August 1:

> While finding no fault with the spirit which dictated the assumed correction, I nevertheless beg to differ with your reporter, and for the following reason: "Mr. McKinstry" did *not* decide "that Mr. Thomas had made his run because he reached the home base before Smith was out," but because, in the opinion of the umpire, Thomas had reached the home base before Mr. Smith hit the ball. The point was a close one, Mr. Thomas arriving at the base at the same moment the ball was hit, in fact touching, or rather coming in contact with Mr. Smith as he started for the first base. This was the state of facts upon which the decision was

based, and although several old players in the base ball arena disagree with me as to the correctness of the decision, (they taking the ground that it made no difference whether he arrived at the home base prior to the ball being struck or not, inasmuch as he run on the ball which was struck by the third hand out). I still contend that Mr. Thomas should score his run which was recorded...

I remain, yours very respectfully,
E. McKinstry

The paper, in introducing the letter, defended its initial opinion, writing: "We are of the same opinion now as we were then, and think the majority of base ball players lean the same way. If Mr. Thomas had reached the base a few seconds before the ball, Smith never could have hit it, as he would have had to get out of the way of Thomas, and never could have recovered himself in time to hit the ball as he did — it was impossible."

In the opinion of this writer, *The Daily Times* was correct and McKinstry was wrong. This writer's interpretation of the rules is that a run cannot be scored during a play in which the third out is made, even if the runner touches home plate before the pitch is thrown, as unlikely as that may be. Of course, vigorous debate over the rules of baseball is healthy, and differing views on this circumstance are more than welcome.

Regardless of one's view of the play in question, the mere fact that a dispute of this nature between umpire and newspaper played out all the way back in 1862 is nothing short of fascinating. Anyone who comes across similar disputes, whether before or after this one, is encouraged to share them for further examination and discussion.

Old Team Nicknames

By Bruce Allardice

In Marty Payne's excellent presentation on old baseball club nicknames at the 2021 Frederick Ivor-Campbell Conference, he noted that he hadn't tried to determine which nicknames were the most prevalent. Fortunately, Protoball's search function enables a researcher to locate and count team nicknames of the 3,700 clubs in the database.

Most Common Club Nicknames, pre-1871

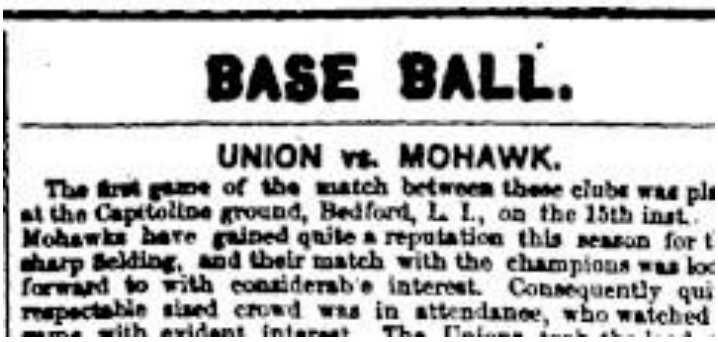
Star(s)[1]	320
Union	163
Excelsior	112
Independent	96
Eagle	86
Athletic	78

Atlantic	76
Olympic	64
Young America	63
Enterprise	57
Mutual	55
National	54
Clipper	51

By far the most popular nickname of the early clubs was the Star(s). Admittedly, this number includes "Star" variants, the most popular being "Lone Star" (a name adopted by teams in the state of Texas, and Texas wanna-be's). In that era the word "Star" denoted the lead performer (as in a play) as well as a heavenly body. A well-regarded early Brooklyn club also sported this nickname.

The popularity of "Union" can be ascribed to several factors, but the two most obvious are copying the name of the Morrisania club, and in connection with the Civil War and the north's fight to preserve the Union. In that connection numerous teams had nicknames of popular Union army generals, such as the General Grants of Newport, the Shermans of St. Louis, McPhersons of Decatur, Phil Sheridans of Warsaw, IN, and even the McClellans of Paterson NJ. Southern army veterans and sympathizers followed suit when naming southern clubs, with dozens of clubs named after the Confederacy's two most popular generals, Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee.

Every historian has noted the New York City (NYC) influence on early baseball. Here we see evidence of a similar NYC influence on early baseball club nicknames. The list of nicknames above very closely track the nicknames of the prominent early NYC clubs. For example, the clubs featured in the wonderful book *Base Ball Founders*[2] include the Excelsior, Atlantic and Star of Brooklyn; the Eagle of New York City; the Union of Morrisania; as well as the Athletic and Olympic of Philadelphia. The many clubs nicknamed the Eckfords (after a prominent Brooklyn club with a unique name) and Creightons (after a prominent early baseball star) shows that clubs throughout the U.S. were familiar with, and chose, names of well-known pioneer NYC teams and players.



BASE BALL.

UNION vs. MOHAWK.

The first game of the match between these clubs was pl
at the Capitoline ground, Bedford, L. I., on the 15th inst.
Mohawks have gained quite a reputation this season for t
sharp fielding, and their match with the champions was lo
forward to with considerable interest. Consequently qu
respectable sized crowd was in attendance, who watched

From the NY *Clipper*, June 27, 1868. Note that the headline uses the club nicknames, not the hometowns of the clubs

While today's major league clubs have names that often refer to animals, relatively few of these early clubs (and only one of the top 13, "Eagles") had any reference to animal? life. Area/location names were much more common. Proud southerners named their clubs after the "Lost Cause," with nines named the Confederate, Dixie, Southern, and Rebels. Loyal Chicagoans started a club using the city's then-nickname, the Garden City. Milwaukee had its Cream City club, the name referring to the cream-colored brick commonly used in Milwaukee's buildings. Other club names looked beyond baseball to honor Heavyweight boxer John Heenan and Chess champion Paul Morphy.

Especially in small towns in the west, whimsical names were common. Thus we see the Flat Paddles, Homeolithics, Old Fogies, Soapweeds, Alkali Treaders, Toothpicks, Oh Be Joyfuls, Whangdoodles, Knock Down and Skin 'ems, Ground Hogs, Cornstalks, Tarantulas, Plowboys, Six Shooter Jims, Lunatics, Hunkie Punkies, and many more. Perhaps modern league franchises, looking for a unique name to publicize their club, can find ideas by looking at this past!

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[1] The counts in this article includes plural versions of the name: e.g., "Star" as well as "Stars."
[2] Morris et al., eds., *Base Ball Founders* (2013).

The Mysterious Origin of the Balk Rule

By Richard Hershberger

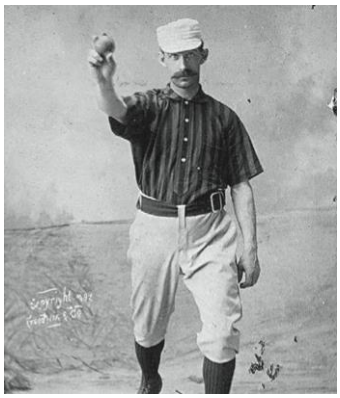
Rule 19 of the 1845 Knickerbocker rules discusses the balk:

> A runner cannot be put out in making one base, when a balk is made by the pitcher.

When I wrote about this rule in *Strike Four: The Evolution of Baseball,* I believed the 1845 rule to be the likely origin of the balk, or at least the Knickerbockers' version of the 1837 Gotham rules described by William Wheaton in his famous 1887 interview with the San Francisco *Examiner.*

It is clear that the balk rule was from the start about base stealing. There is a point in the pitcher's delivery where he is physically unable to halt the delivery. Once he reaches the point of no return, any base runner can attempt to advance a base without fear of being picked off. He is still liable, however, to being put out by a good throw from the catcher. The balk rule defines, however, vaguely, an earlier point when the pitcher is obligated to complete his

delivery: a point of no return defined by rule rather than by physics. The rule existed to ensure the runner a fighting chance at a successful steal. This is still its purpose, and to this day various tweaks are being discussed to fine tune the odds.



Base stealing is an ancient feature of baseball, cooked into the logic of the game. The ball is either live or dead. If live, anyone on base is free to try to advance to the next base. This is still true today. If the fielder with the ball decides to stop what he is doing to argue with an umpire, and no one things to ask for time, any base runner can take a stroll to the next base. Ty Cobb is reputed to have stolen home this way at least once. So how does the ball become dead? The two main ways are if it is hit foul and if an umpire calls time. Most early versions of baseball did not have foul territory, and while they sometimes had an umpire it is unlikely that he called time with any great frequency. The conclusion is that runners were nearly always free to take their chances. Later versions such as softball that restrict base stealing need to add rules to accomplish this. No such rule is known to exist in any early version of the game.

So much for base stealing. What about the balk rule? This is what I wrote in my book:

> While base stealing is an ancient feature, the balk is not. It was unique to the New York game... The explanation for this apparent contradiction lies in the New York game's unusually long base paths. Just how long they were in 1845 is unclear but by even the most conservative estimate they were over 70 feet between the bases. The form played in and around Boston (the "Massachusetts game") was codified in 1858 with 60-foot base paths. The longer distances are likely an adaptation for organized adult play, just as a modern regulation baseball diamond is larger than that used in youth baseball.

I was pretty comfortable with this analysis when I wrote it. The state of research is, however, a moving target. This turned later turned up:

> "A Balk is a Base."–Any one having a remembrance of the ball games of his youth, must recollect that in the game of *base* if the tosser made a balk to entice the individual making the round from his post, the latter had the right to walk to the next base unscathed. [*Rondout Freeman* (Kingston, NY) June 5, 1847]

Kingston is on the Hudson River midway between New York City and Albany. The context–a metaphor applied to a local political debate–makes clear that this is a local item, not one that made the rounds of various newspapers.

What are we to make of this? It is ten years after the formation of the Gotham Club. We might suppose that the unknown writer might be from New York City and knew of the game as played by the Gothams. On the other hand he ascribes the rule to the game as played by youths. It is not plausible that the Gothams' game had worked its way down to boys' games in time for anyone in 1847 to put this in a boyhood reminiscence.

The conclusion is that the balk rule was not an innovation peculiar to the New York game at all, but a regional variant included in the New York game. The rule as described is substantially the same as the Knickerbocker rule, presumably existing for the same purpose. This in turn implies that the long base paths also were a regional feature, and not an adaptation for adult play.

This is all very tentative–far more so than the previous conclusion before it was spoiled by an ugly fact. We can only await the next discovery to shed light on the origin of the balk rule.

"Two Hobokens"

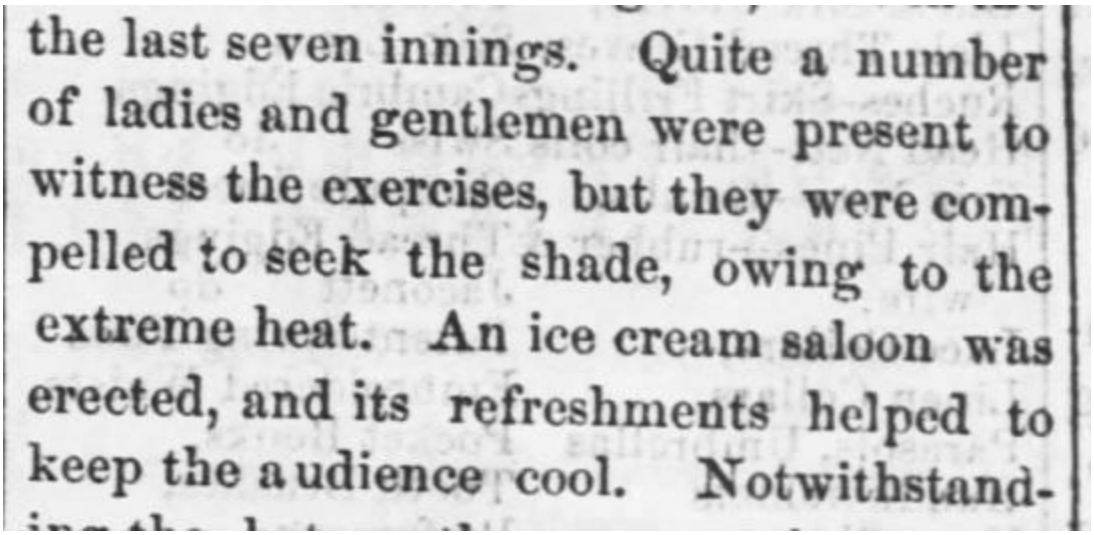
Super researcher Bob Tholkes ran across the next three items, including this item in the *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, June 4, 1867. He wondered if anyone knew what "Two Hobokens" and "One Hoboken" refers to?

BASE BALL MATCH.—One of the most exciting base ball matches ever played in this city, took place Sunday, at the Delachaise Grounds, between the Empire and Southern clubs. The first innings resulted in even tallies, and the tenth inning was played to decide it. Both clubs could have played even better than they did but for the ground being wet, and the ball almost constantly soaked. The following is the score:

SOUTHERN.		EMPIRE.	
Catch—Pierce	3 runs.	Catch—Fox.....	3 runs.
Pitch—Winn.....	3 runs.	Pitch—Condon.....	2 runs.
1st Base—Holtzman.	4 runs.	1st Base—Gullivan....	3 runs.
2d Base—Simms....	2 runs.	2d Base—Kain	3 runs.
3d Base—Bozant....	2 runs.	3d Base—Tate	2 runs.
S. Stop—Buddendorf	3 runs.	S. Stop—Martinez...	1 run
L. Field—Kerns.....	3 runs.	L. Field—Dunn.....	3 runs.
R. Field—Fay.....	4 runs.	R. Field—Hackett....	3 runs.
C. Field—Twomey....	2 runs.	C. Field—Cozzens....	3 runs.
Total.....	26	Total.....	23
Two Hobokens.		One Hoboken.	

Turns out the Bob's guess as to the phrase's meaning—an inning where no runs were scored—was correct. The *New Orleans Times Picayune,* April 11, 1867 has a report of a baseball game in Mobile in which the losing team was "Hobokened" seven time. The box score of the game, in the *Times Picayune* April 13th, shows that the losing team failed to score in seven of the nine innings.

1867--First Stadium Ice Cream?

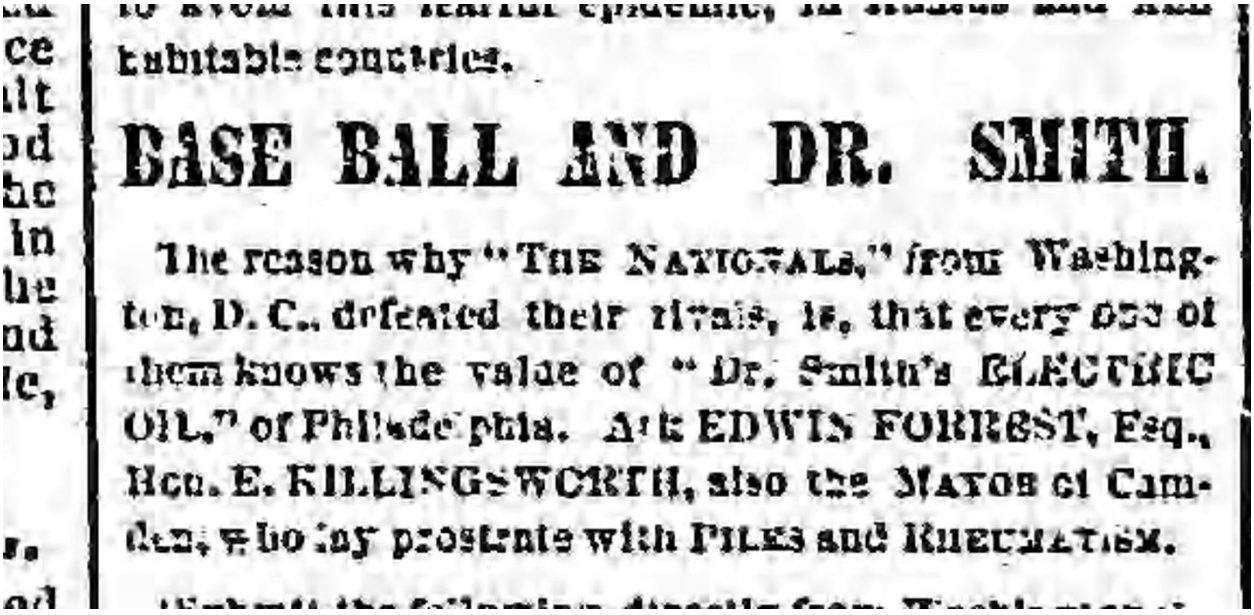


the last seven innings. Quite a number of ladies and gentlemen were present to witness the exercises, but they were compelled to seek the shade, owing to the extreme heat. An ice cream saloon was erected, and its refreshments helped to keep the audience cool. Notwithstand-

From the *Fort Scott Patriot*, July 31, 1867

Popcorn, peanuts and Cracker Jack were many years in the future!

"Electric Oil"—What all Ball Clubs Need!



habitable countries.

BASE BALL AND DR. SMITH.

The reason why "THE NATIONALS," from Washington, D. C., defeated their rivals, is, that every one of them knows the value of "Dr. Smith's ELECTRIC OIL," of Philadelphia. Ask EDWIN FORREST, Esq., Hon. E. KILLINGSWORTH, also the MAYOR of Camden, who lay prostrate with PILES and RHEUMATISM.

According to "Dr. Smith's" claims, the "electric oil" could cure cholera, piles, rheumatism, deafness, salt rheum, corns, paralysis, wounds, burns, headaches and hair loss.
It's easy to see why a ball team would want this! If the oil actually cured any of these.

There's also no evidence that the Washington club, or world-famous actor Edwin Forrest, actually used the stuff.
Not only were these claims a scam, but "Dr. Smith" (Galusha B. Smith, born 1821) was accused by a Professor DeGrath of stealing DeGrath's secret formula for "Electric oil."
The scam was long-lasting: newspaper ads for this "Electric Oil" ran for 16 years (1856-72).

Playing "Ball" in Canada in 1803

by William Humber

Editor's Note: *Bill Humber's presentation at the 2021 Fred Conference touched on how Canada can claim a place in the development of baseball, along with the United States. The following article lays out proof of a "ball" game in Canada as early as 1803.*

Two reports from Upper Canada (today's Ontario) in 1803 demonstrate how the folk game became embedded in the nascent Canada, and even hinting at a purpose in the case of the Hope Township game. ***The Illustrated Historical Atlas of the Counties of Northumberland and Durham, Ontario*** released by H. Belden & Co. Toronto in 1878, (*reprinted by Mika Silk Screening Limited, Belleville, Ontario 1972)* says on page iii,

"The first Court of Queen's Bench that ever assembled in the counties of Northumberland and Durham was held in a barn on the premises of Mr. [Leonard] Soper, in Hope, on which occasion the judge (Major McGregor Rogers), lawyers and other officials, chose sides and played a game of ball, to determine who should pay the expenses of a dinner. Ephraim Gifford, father of the late Garner Gifford, acted as constable."

The account concludes however by noting, *"This statement is made on the authority of a pamphlet issued by Mr. Coleman a few years ago. As will be seen, further on, it is contradicted by the accounts of the 'Town of Newcastle' and loss of the 'Speedy,' with the judge, crown prosecutor, &c., on their way to hold a court at Presque Isle."*

It remains unclear what the contradiction might be. It is not however the game of ball but apparently the identity of the court proceedings on the 1803 premises of Mr. Soper as being a Court of Queen's Bench when in fact they were a district Court of Quarter Sessions. The Queen's Bench proceedings were scheduled for 10 October 1807 in Presque Isle Point at which a First Nations man, O-go-tong-nat, was to be tried for the murder of one John Sharp. The judge, the prosecuting authorities, the accused, and even some children aboard were all lost however, when their boat, the *Speedy*, sunk on Lake Ontario after being hit by hurricane-force winds near its destination.

Intriguingly David McGregor Rogers (the Major, 1772-1824) is the only person in common between the two places as he is described as a holder of a one-acre lot on the site of the proposed location of the 1807 trial at Presque Isle Point in the planned town of Colborne (about 25 miles or 40 kilometers east of Mr. Soper's farm).

The Belden Atlas description of the 1803 Court proceedings derived its account from the ***History of the Early Settlement of Bowmanville and Vicinity***, by J. (John) T. Coleman, Bowmanville, West Durham Steam Printing and Publishing House, 1875. The complete description on pages 6-7 reads,

"The First Court of Queen's Bench that ever assembled in the Counties of Northumberland and Durham, was held in a barn, on the premises of Mr. Soper, in Hope, on which occasion the Judge, (Major MacGregor [sic] Rogers,) lawyers, and other officials, chose sides, and played a game of ball, to determine who should pay the expense of a dinner. Ephriam [sic] Gifford, father of the late Garner Gifford, acted as constable."

Aside from correcting the spelling for McGregor Rogers and Ephraim Gifford, the Belden Atlas simply parroted the Coleman account.

The ***Dictionary of Canadian Biography*** describes Rogers as clerk of the peace for the newly established Newcastle District (1802), registrar of the district Surrogate Court (1802), and clerk of the district Court of Quarter Sessions (1802). This appears to confirm the identity of the court on Mr. Soper's farm as that of a district Court of Quarter Sessions and not the first Queen's Bench. Here the matter sat until the 100th anniversary of Canadian Confederation in 1967 and the publication of ***The History of the Township of Hope***, by Harold Reeve, (Cobourg Sentinel-Star, Cobourg, Ontario, 1967). Reeve confirmed the Hope Township's court identity in his review of the minutes of the Quarter Sessions for Newcastle District as found in the Archives of Ontario [now located at York University in Toronto but unavailable for review during the Pandemic].

Quoting from those minutes, he wrote,

"The General Quarter Sessions of the Peace Holden at Hope, Newcastle, in and for the said District on the twelfth day of July in the forty-third year [1803] of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the third by the grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland defender of the faith. Before Robert Baldwin, Timothy Thompson, Elias Jones, Leonard Soaper [sic], Asa Burnham, Benjamin Marsh, and Richard Lovekin ----------. Esquires Justices of our said sovereign Lord the King assigned to keep the peace in the said District and also to hear and determine divers felonies, trespasses and other misdemeanors in the said District committed. & c."

Reeve continued with the session's opening and the reading of the Commission of the Peace. Then he noted that the Sheriff returned the grand jury of over 20 persons. A trial for the "The

King versus James Stevens" followed. Stevens was eventually found guilty and fined two shillings and six pence payable to the Sheriff. The court broke up on Thursday, 14 July, 1803. Reeve then wrote,

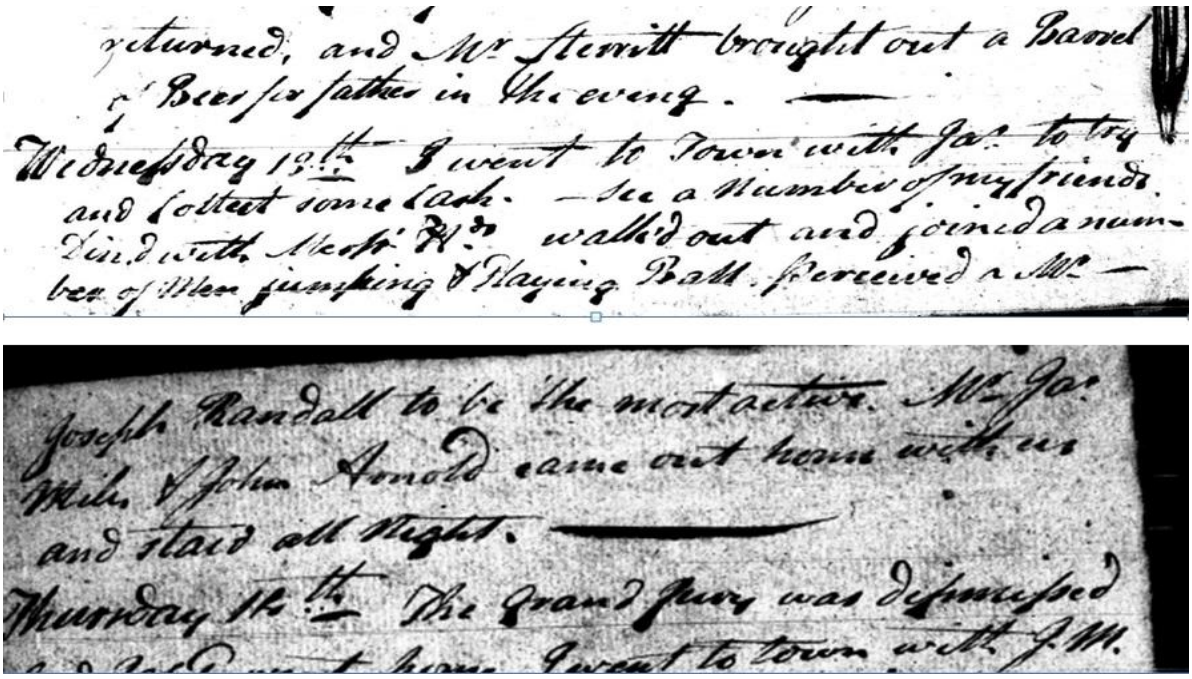
"According to Belden's Atlas, a game of ball was played to decide who was to pay for the dinner. The Court was held in the barn at Leonard Soper's, Lot 22, Concession 1. The nature of the offence was not given and this gives rise to some interesting speculation. What offence would fit a fine of 52c?"

Obviously, this adds nothing new to confirm the 'game of ball' account, nor does it reference the earlier Coleman story from which the Belden Atlas took its information. Given the Coleman account is only three years before its repeat in the Atlas the problem of its being written so long after the supposed event is telling.

A useful question is from whom did Coleman get his account? Possible candidates exist. On page 44 of his 1875 booklet he lists persons who helped him in his research for the booklet by furnishing documents. They included Richard and J.P. Lovekin, and Timothy Soper. The Lovekins were descendants of one of the Justices in attendance as cited by Harold Reeve, and so could have provided second hand corroboration. Timothy Soper on the other hand was, in 1803, the 14-year-old son of another justice also cited, Leonard Soper. The proceedings were held on the latter man's property. It seems a reasonable conclusion that Timothy Soper could either have witnessed the play of ball first hand or learned of it second hand from his father Leonard. When Coleman wrote his account in 1875, Timothy Soper was still alive. He lived until 1878 and is buried in the Bowmanville Cemetery.

A second validation is found in the diary of Ely Playter (1776-1858), a farmer, lumberman, militia officer, member of the Upper Canada House of Assembly, and in 1801-02 a tavern keeper who lived in and around York (Toronto). Concurrent with the time of his writing, he described coming to town and joining, on Wednesday 13 April 1803, "…. A number of Men jumping & Playing Ball…". We do not know definitively, and will never know, what "ball" they were playing, but Playter's connection to David McGregor Rogers, who presided over the Hope Township Court Sessions, is captivating.

Rogers married two of Playter's sisters, Sarah and Elizabeth (not at the same time, but after Sarah's death). Playter and Rogers thus had a close personal relationship. While the distance between them of 60 miles in an era largely dependent of travel by boat on Lake Ontario, would have meant they likely met only occasionally, we can see the real likelihood of them sharing an interest in the game of ball.



returned, and Mr Stewitt brought out a Barrel of Beer for father in the evening. —
Wednesday 19th I went to Town with Jas to try and collect some cash. — See a Number of my friends. Din'd with Messrs H.s walk'd out and join'd a number of Men jumping & Playing Ball. Perceived a Mr —
Joseph Randall to be the most active. Mr Jas Wilkins & John Arnold came out home with us and stay'd all Night. —
Thursday 20th The Grand Jury was dismissed [illegible] I went to town with J. W.

The actual 1803 account of "Playing Ball" in Ely Playter's diary in the Public Archives of Ontario

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Latest Protoball Additions

Baseball Around the World—Protoball now lists baseball games and clubs for over 160 countries, including every nation in Central and South America, all but one of the Caribbean nations, and every major country in Africa, Asia and Europe. More evidence that baseball is world-wide!

Protoball, by the Numbers—the Protoball database now includes:

- a **Glossary of Baseball**-related games, with 300 different games listed
- a **Chronology** of notable Baseball events, with 1500 entries
- a **Clippings** collection, with 9,000 newspaper clippings of early baseball
- the **Pre-Pro** database, of 9,000 different early clubs and 3,700 early baseball games
- **Baseball Firsts**, with 113 entries

New Nations Added. New nations with proven baseball play have been added for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Nauru, Mauritius, South Sudan, North Korea and Guinea-Bissau. One

of the goals of Protoball is to aid Major League Baseball in uncovering how baseball has spread throughout the world.

Find of the Month

Baseball's French Origins?

By Bruce Allardice

It has long been claimed that American baseball is merely a variation of the English bat-ball game of Rounders.[1] However, two recently discovered articles assert that a hitherto obscure French bat-ball game, "Grand Theque" [Big Stick], make similar claims to be baseball's predecessor.

The more recent, and more scholarly, of the articles appears in *Le Viquet* (1994), provocatively titled "Did the Normans Invent Baseball?" The "Normans" referred to here are the inhabitants of Normandy, a region of France best known as the site of the D-Day landings of World War II. Normandy is just across the English Channel from England, and the two have enjoyed longstanding trading and cultural ties.

The details of "Theque" are given in the subjoined 1888 article. It appears that "Grande Theque":

1) Resembled English Rounders;
2) Featured sides of 12-20 players;
3) Had 5 pegs for bases, with the bases separated by 60-90 feet, depending on the age of the players;
4) Used a wooden bat similar in size to a modern baseball bat;
5) Used pitching by the batting side's teammate;
6) Included foul ground, and foul hits were out;
7) Had a first-bound out rule;
8) Allowed "plugging" of baserunners;
9) A 5-bagger hit was worth 5 points;
10) Was played in two 40-point innings

The article states that "Theque" is well known to the older inhabitants, and has been played in Normandy in some form "for at least three centuries" past—i.e., as early as the 1700s. It appears that an American visitor to France witnessed the game in 1847.[2]

With (perhaps pardonable) French pride, the article notes that both "Grand Theque" and Rounders pre-date American baseball, and labels American baseball as a "pseudo-invention" that in its essentials derives from these earlier games.

An 1888 article gives a real-time view of the game:[3]

"Outdoor games

Grand Theque [literal translation: The Big Theque/Stick/Cudgel]

Grand Theque is an old French game that was often played in Normandy and Brittany. Many people remember having seen it in Chartres, thirty years ago. The Rouen high school principal, originally from Morbihan, recalled recently to his students that he often practiced it and very much enjoyed it during his childhood. Widespread in countries of Celtic origin and known in England under the name of Rounders, this game went to America, where it is very much enjoyed, under the name of base-ball. There is no reason to not keep it under its original name here: the big stick (as opposed to the little stick, which is played on a different field and under different rules).

Let us say that these two games should not be confused, like we have incorrectly done in the past, with the "ball in court." These are three very distinct games and they each have their own characteristics.

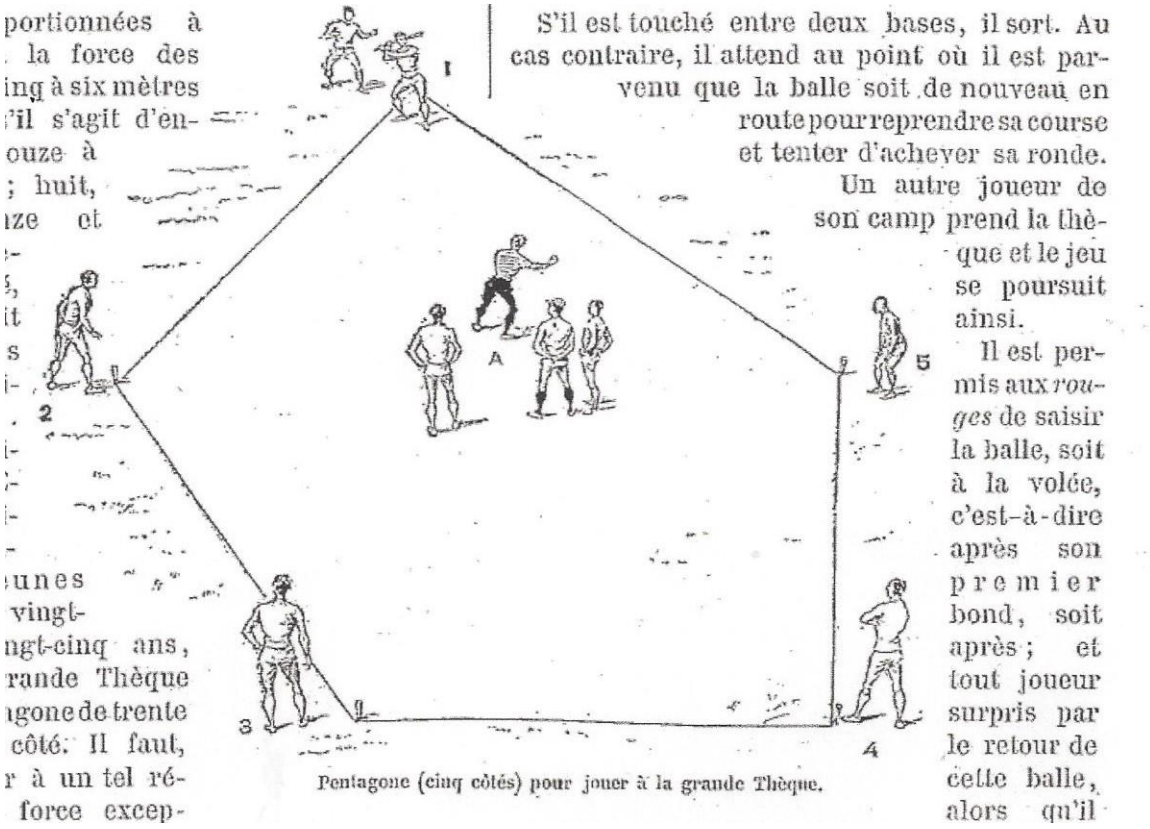
Grand Theque is played with twelve, sixteen or eighteen players, twenty at most, divided into two teams, each under the command of a captain.

The equipment, very simple and cheap, consists of: 1st a few wooden pegs, or better yet canvas bags filled with sand, destined to mark the bases; 2nd a strongly stitched leather ball; 3rd a cudgel/stick [the Theque] 60 and 80 centimeters long [24 to 32 inches, which is close to the length of modern baseball bats for kids and adults], in the form of a small club,

[Image of Theque bats and balls, from a 1913 advertisement]

The field of play should be 300 to 400 square meters. An ordinary yard/field/playground of a college/high school, without trees, works well, provided the windows have been protected/covered to prevent broken windows.

On this field, we draw a regular pentagon, proportional to the age and strength of the players: five to six meters per side, for children 12-13 years old; eight, ten, fifteen and twenty meters per side, for grown and vigorous men. The monitors of the Joinville Military School, young athletes from 22 to 25 years old, play Grand Theque on a pentagon of 30 meters per side [close to the 90 feet a side of a baseball diamond]. For best success, exceptional strength and agility are required: this should be the goal of all players.



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S'il est touché entre deux bases, il sort. Au cas contraire, il attend au point où il est parvenu que la balle soit de nouveau en route pour reprendre sa course et tenter d'achever sa ronde. Un autre joueur de son camp prend la thèque et le jeu se poursuit ainsi.

Il est permis aux *rouges* de saisir la balle, soit à la volée, c'est-à-dire après son premier bond, soit après; et tout joueur surpris par le retour de cette balle, alors qu'il

Pentagone (cinq côtés) pour jouer à la grande Thèque.

At each corner of the pentagon, place a peg or sandbag to mark the bases 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Near the middle of the shape, at point A, another peg indicates the entrance; the inside of the shape is called the room.

The items so placed, toss a coin to decide which team starts the game.

Suppose the blue team wins the coin toss. They position themselves in the interior/room of the pentagon, while the reds position themselves around the shape, spread about evenly. One of the blues takes up position at 1st base (base 1), the stick in hand, ready to receive the ball and to hit it; another positions himself at position A, to throw him the ball.

The throw should be one that the batter has every chance to receive [hit?] the ball, with minimum awkwardness. He (the batter) can refuse twice. If he refuses or misses a third time, he is out of the game [likely just out].

Did he hit it, on the other hand? He lets go of the bat, runs to 2nd base (base 2), and, if he has time, touches successively 3rd base (base 3), 4th base and 5th base, to finally return to the room/interior. Managing to achieve this round trip, his team scores 5 points. But his opponents are eager to grab [catch?] or pick up the ball, to catch him in the act of moving from one stake [base/peg] to the next and throw the ball at him, hitting [plugging] him, as we say.

If he is touched between two bases, he is out. If not, he stops at the spot he arrived at when the ball returns in order to resume his course and try to complete the round. Another player on his team takes the theque and the game continues like so.

The reds are permitted to grab [catch?] the ball, either on the fly, that is to say after the first bounce; and throwing the ball at any player, while he is between two bases, is out immediately.

There must never be two at the same base, nor can you pass another runner.

When there are only two players left in the room/interior, either one has the right to demand three strokes for a round: that is to say that after hitting the ball, if he makes the round of the bases without getting touched, his whole team returns [scores?] and starts again to hold the theque [their turn at bat?].

It is therefore of great importance to save as backup the two fastest runners.

A batter who hits the ball behind him is out.

The entire team is out when all the members are on the bases. The object then, in order to empty the bases, to drop the ball in the room.

Grand Theque, unless otherwise agreed, is played in two innings of 40 points, with a “belle” [?], if there is one.

As with all ball games Grand Theque simultaneously develops strength, suppleness, agility, composure under strain, judgement, and aptitude.”

What are we to conclude? Certainly “Grand Theque” resembles Rounders, and both share aspects with Baseball. But the foremost authority in the field, historian David Block, has failed to find any “smoking gun”—proof that Americans copied their game from Rounders or “Grand Theque,” or that Americans were aware of “Grand Theque” when baseball’s rules were first written. “Grand Theque’s” relationship (if any) to Rounders is a subject for further research.

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[1] For more on this debate, see David Block, *Baseball Before We Knew It* (Lincoln, U. of Nebraska Press, 2005). Block fails to find proof for the claim that Baseball derives from either Rounders or "Theque."

[2] See Protoball Chronologies, 1847.17.

[3] From *La Revue des Sports*, Dec. 12, 1888. Translated by Martin Lacoste, and lightly edited for clarity. Editor's notes are bracketed in the text.

Research Requests

Berber Baseball? As recounted at http://protoball.org/-3000c.1, 66 years ago an Italian researcher reported that Berbers in Libya were playing a two-base safe-haven game with several base-ball-like rules. He suggested that the game had come to Africa centuries earlier. It's time to poke a bit at that conjecture. Is this the only claim for a base ball predecessor game in Africa? If it were a common pastime, shouldn't we now have many additional sightings by now? Can we at least locate someone who might do some web searches in Arabic? Can we rule out the possibility that later forms of base ball were taught to locals, say 70 or 100 years ago? See https://protoball.org/Most_Wanted_Research

Media Firsts Project Announced--The Origins Committee is starting a new initiative called the Media Firsts Project, dedicated to compiling a list of firsts related to baseball and the media. Some of the questions that this project will seek to answer include:

When was the first media credential issued for a baseball game?
When was the first press box established at a baseball venue?
Who was the first baseball player quoted in a newspaper?
What was the first instance of a newspaper publishing betting odds for a baseball game?
And much more!

Anyone interested in contributing to the Media Firsts Project can reach out to Steve Sisto at stevesisto@gmail.com.

Baseball-less Nations: While the Protoball researchers have unearthed baseball clubs or games in over 160 countries, there's still a few countries with no evidence yet found of baseball play. Any information on baseball in the following countries would be welcomed: Andorra, Comoros, Central African Republic, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini (Swaziland),

Liechtenstein, The Maldives, Monaco, Sao Tome, The Seychelles, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Timor.

For more details, visit https://protoball.org/Most_Wanted_Research

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BULLETIN BOARD

Fred Conference a Big Success. The "Fred" (Frederick Ivor-Campbell" Conference on 19th Century Baseball, held April 22-24 via zoom, was its usual great success, with many penetrating presentations and discussions. Among the presentations were several that touched on pre-1871 baseball (two by contributors to this newsletter):

Tom Gilbert, "Baseball's Man in Philadelphia, Col. Tom Fitzgerald

Marty Payne, "What's in a Name (Individuals' and Teams')"

Bill Humber, "Baseball's Roots Revisited: Lessons from Hockey and Football's Modern Creation"

Jon Popovich, "G.L. Werth: The Growth of Reconstruction Base Ball in Montgomery, AL, 1865-1875"

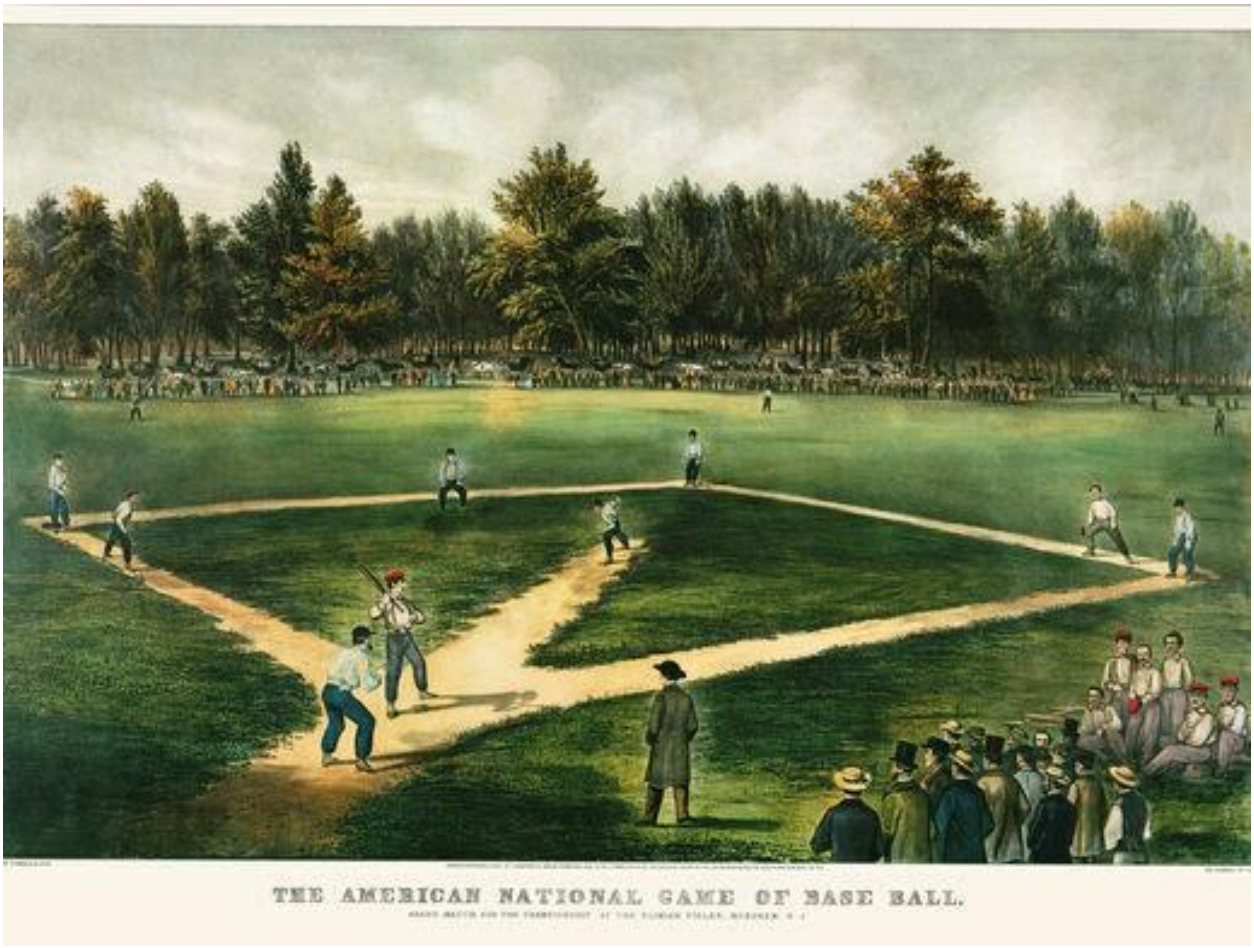
Larry Phillips, "The Beginnings of Baseball in Cincinnati"

And a Panel Discussion featuring early baseball guru Richard Hershberger

SABR is offering viewable videos of the presentations, but only for those who attended the conference.

Centre for Canadian Baseball Research. Our friends "up north" have created a great resource on the early history of baseball in Canada. A visit to http://baseballresearch.ca/ is well worth the time spent.

Allardice to talk to Civil War Groups on "Baseball During the Civil War Era." On July 14th Professor Bruce Allardice will talk, via nationwide zoom hookup, to the Congress of Civil War Round Tables on the topic "Baseball During the Civil War." Civil War Round Tables are the Civil War study equivalent of SABR's local chapters. Consult the Congress' website at https://www.cwrtcongress.org/ for access to this presentation.



The American National Game of Baseball (Currier and Ives)