

BASEBALL!

THE STORY OF IOWA'S EARLY INNINGS

BY THE WRITERS PROGRAM
OF THE IOWA W. P. A.

Baseball in Iowa was in the beginning, and for many years thereafter continued to be, pre-eminently an amateur's game. In this respect it followed the national trend. North, east, south, and west, day by day the new pastime was developed both by the experiments of players and by the suggestions of spectators. Moreover, the spectators of one day became the players of the next, for everyone—lawyers, merchants, doctors, policemen, fat men and thin men, East Side and West Side—all these citizens of young America were playing ball. In the United States that new race composed of former Europeans was spreading out, to build stage roads and canals and railroads; to send timber rafts booming down frontier rivers; to tear iron and lead and gold from the earth. These selected Americans were developed, trained, specialized, by a new environment. They became men of iron, and they played iron games. On vacant lots in growing cross-roads towns or gathered around country grist mills, waiting for water to accumulate behind the brush and mud dam, they wrestled and ran foot races, they told tales—and they played ball.

As they played they tried innovations. There were no books of rules. An idea proposed was put to the test and, if it worked, became part of the future game. Otherwise it was dropped and forgotten.

It was this spirit of bold experiment that brought about the changes that turned "town ball" into "baseball." Under the commonly accepted rules governing the former, practically any number of participants could play. The batter stood at the home plate, with a "tosser" beside him. The duty of the latter was to toss the ball straight up in such a way that the batter could easily hit it as it fell earthward. Driven by the four-inch bat, the big yarn and leather ball zoomed into the field. If it was caught, the catcher became the next batsman. If the batter struck and missed and if the tosser caught the ball before it struck the ground, the tosser took his turn

at bat. If the batter hit the ball and it was not caught, he ran for a base fifty feet distant. He was now fair game for anyone who could retrieve the ball and "plunk" him with it as he ran. If he got back safely, without being so struck, he had another turn at bat.

An inevitable monotony in this over-simplified game irked a group of boys connected with Greene's Select School for boys, in Cooperstown, New York. On the occasion of a game played with a rival school one of the Greene School players suggested several changes.¹ This youngster, Abner Doubleday, showed even in these early years the spirit of initiative that in later life made him a business leader. He was typical of that adventurous American spirit that was taming the mountains and the prairies—and developing baseball.

Young Doubleday thought that four bases would be better than two. On three of these the runner could rest as long as he had one foot on the "cushion." If he reached home, he tallied. There were to be eleven players on each side: four outfielders, three basemen, two infielders, a pitcher, and a catcher. The runner could be put out by being hit with the ball of those days—a rubber core, wound with yarn, the whole covered with buckskin.² The pitcher's box was to be 6 x 8 feet, the baselines 90 feet. An iron disk over which the batter took his stand and to which he returned if he scored was the "home plate." The game, played as suggested, was highly successful. Abner Doubleday, because of his part in having the changes adopted, has often been called the founder of the modern sport.³

The success of these changes encouraged further experiment. Soon an "out" could be made either by catching a fly ball or a ball on the first bounce. The end of the game was fixed as that point at which one side or the other had made twenty-one runs, although the full inning had in all cases to be completed.⁴ And still later a line was drawn forty-five feet from the batter's box. Anywhere behind this line the

¹This is the commonly accepted version of what happened in that year, 1839. Other stories state that Doubleday was grown up and in Business when he suggested the changes in the game that was becoming baseball.

²Dubuque Herald, April 26, 1905.

³*Annals of American Sport*, p. 117; *Encyclopedia Britannica* (14th edition) III:160.

⁴*New International Encyclopedia* (second edition) II:732.

pitcher could take his stand, but he must toss the ball and he must get it across the plate to the satisfaction of the batter. Sometimes this latter requirement greatly lengthened the game, as the batter could stand placidly, bat over shoulder, and watch fifty balls go by, if so minded, before he picked out one to hit at.⁵ This lengthening of the game by the "strike when you choose" rule was somewhat offset by that other rule that prescribed twenty-one runs to win. An illustration of how this requirement could bring a ball game to an end almost before it began is one played between the "Knickerbockers," and the "New Yorks," in which twenty-one runs was made by one of the contenders by the end of the fourth inning of play.⁶

All of these changes show that baseball had not yet begun to "jell." The players, drawn from every rank of life and constantly in contact with the spectators who passed upon the merits of the game, were arriving by a process of trial and error at a standardized contest, stepped up, dramatized, guaranteed to give the gallery every possible thrill. The almost universal prevalence of amateurism helped greatly, because it avoided that great gulf between spectators and players that is inevitable when ball players take on cast and begin to live in a world set apart from that of the "public." The professional talks with other professionals. But in those formative days amateur players talked baseball with their families and with their neighbors. The amateur player and the highly vocal spectator-critic worked together for the good of all.

Comparative fixation was bound to come, but it was not till 1844 that the Knickerbocker Club, in New York, adopted a printed code of rules.⁷ Another ten years passed before the first national convention,⁸ at which, among other changes, the twenty-one runs-to-win rule gave place to the present game of nine innings.⁹

The stage was now set for the rapid expansion of baseball to every part of the country. The game was integrated and

⁵Most of these changes were made in 1845, according to the *Dubuque Herald* of August 6, 1911.

⁶This game was played at Hoboken, New Jersey, June 19, 1846. *Commy, The Life Story of Charles H. Comiskey* (Reilly & Lee, Chicago, 1919), p. 13; *Annals of American Sport*, p. 117.

⁷*Dubuque Herald*, August 10, 1884.

⁸In 1857—*Americana* (1937) III:302.

⁹*Brittanica*, III:165.

was receiving increasing publicity. In Iowa, country editors were beginning to ask curious or facetious questions.

FIRST DAYS IN IOWA

In various parts of the state ball games of the prebaseball period were being played. In Des Moines, in 1857, a cricket club was organized. The *Iowa State Journal* for June 27, 1857, states that an early meeting was held at the Demoiné House, and that upwards of forty members were in attendance. But cricket was an imported game, and formal too. No wonder in Davenport cricket was loosing out to townball, possibly because, as one sage observer remarked, townball was an institution "western young men understand a great deal better than cricket."¹⁰

In 1858 came baseball. That year two local baseball teams played before a large crowd in Davenport. This is apparently the first time the game under that name was played west of the Mississippi River. Later the same year the Pastime Baseball Club No. 2 was organized in Davenport, with George L. Davenport, president; Add Sanders and A. C. Billon, vice-presidents; M. M. Price, corresponding secretary; J. A. LeClaire, treasurer; H. Tilden, secretary; A. Castell and A. D. Jewell, ground committee.¹¹

America, however, was entering a critical period, and during the next five years the new game had an uphill fight to hold a doubtful place in popular interest. Tension over the issue of slavery mounted and the depression of 1857 was still felt. Once the great conflict was on, however, a new factor, favorable to the dissemination of baseball, entered. Those husky young fellows who donned their uniforms to be whisked away over the prairies in the cars of the recently completed Midwestern railroads, found it difficult to amuse themselves during the interludes of marching and fighting.¹² They began to play ball, probably running the gamut from the simple to the complex till they were playing the latest version. Returning on furlough from the front, they brought this advanced game to all parts of Iowa. To these army boys goes

¹⁰*Davenport Gazette*, May 28, 1858.

¹¹*Ibid.*, June 2, 1858.

¹²*Annals of American Sport*, p. 119.

a large part of the credit for accelerating baseball awareness throughout the entire country.

Items like the following, from Dubuque, a northern Iowa mobilization point appeared in the Dubuque *Daily Times*, August 15, 1863:

All members of the Dubuque City Base Ball Club are requested to be on the grounds back of Judge Wilson's residence, promptly at half past three, this afternoon.

And this, from the Dubuque *Times* of August 19:

A match game between the nines selected from the Hawkeye Base Ball Club will take place in the club grounds, at the old race track, this afternoon at 3 o'clock. Promptness on the part of players is requested.

Earlier in the year, Dubuque's Fourth Ward played the Third Ward team. After two hours of strenuous effort—(they played with an oversized ball¹³ very different from the "rabbit" type of today) the third warders gave up in disgust.¹⁴

The game the men in blue brought back to their home state on furlough visits retained its amateur character. Those lusty pioneers—those clerks and printers and druggists, those lawyers and physicians and merchants—still held to the idea that it is better to be a participant than a spectator. There were favorable circumstances, making for the retention of amateurism. One was the fact that the hardest of the pioneering was done, and there was a little leisure for play. Another was that Iowa towns and cities were being built up rather loosely, with plenty of vacant lots scattered about for the after-work-hours baseball contest. The noon hush, characteristic of many country towns today—broken only by the whine of tires and the hum of racing engines on the highway—was in those early decades broken up by the excited yells of boys and men. Everyone was at it, sweating, swatting, debating the fine points of the new pastime.

Although the new game was evidently taking root and establishing itself in popular favor, it didn't have the field of amusement entirely to itself. Horse racing was an old favorite, and many an Iowa hamlet had a favorite trotter or running horse that it was willing to back against outside

¹³*Americana*, III:302.

¹⁴Dubuque *Democratic Herald*, June 9, 1863.

talent. Dubuquers in the late 50's patronized the track at Peru. A few years later they were holding race meets during the open season of the year in a Dubuque driving park. During the winter, races were frequently held down Locust street, with accommodating spectators acting as guards at the crossings. And there was hunting. Quail, woodcock, wild turkeys, geese, ducks, squirrels, and raccoons still abounded in the Iowa countryside, and the idea that it is not highly creditable to sally forth to slaughter wholesale as much game as you can haul home had not yet been heard of. Men were still living lustily and whatever they did, they did with vigor and enthusiasm.

This love of doing things, of being a participant rather than a spectator, made it possible for baseball to thrive alongside the older and better established sports. Clubs sprang up in Dubuque, in Davenport, in Keokuk, and in other towns and cities. Often in the smaller places where the limited number of players justified the formation of only one club, it consisted of two nines that played against each other.¹⁵

The playing technique of those old-time games seems amusing now. The pitcher still tossed the ball with an underhand motion¹⁶ and the batter could call for a high ball or a low one. The idea was to get him out on the field, and to deal with him there before he could score. Gloves and masks were unknown, as was team work.¹⁷ In the sixties broken fingers were an inevitable consequence of ball playing. An old time catcher was rather proud of his hands, which usually were thickened and crippled in every joint.

But despite these features which make the game of those days seem rough and unformed to us now, a ball club was in every formal sense a club. Perhaps the boys had learned order and management in the war. Perhaps the dignity of formal presentation as a club helped to offset the absence of formality in play. Even small-town organizations showed themselves to their rivals with a complete array of officials; president, vice-president, secretary, and a board of directors.

¹⁵F. Oldt, *History of Dubuque County, Iowa*, (Goodspeed Historical Association, Chicago) p. 157.

¹⁶*Annals of American Sport*, p. 137.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 120.

Step by step, little by little, in these various ways baseball was making a place for itself in the national consciousness.

Thus, with the close of the Civil War, when the husky young Iowa veterans, steadier and older now than when they had headed away for camp and battlefield, returned to their homes west of the Mississippi, they found that the game they had helped introduce was playing a larger and larger part, each year, in the recreational life of their home communities. And it may be that certain arguments they had indulged in while they were away from home as to the relative up-and-comingness of the towns they hailed from, could now be put to a practical test. Which was the better baseball town—Dubuque or Davenport? With the verve and enthusiasm of exuberant health, these broad-shouldered young men got back of the game. That could prove the answer! Davenport formed a club which they called the "Scotts" and later another called the "Pasture Club." Dubuque came in with the "Juliens." Rock Island, not to be outdone, brought forward the "Jacksons."

Both enterprise and rivalry were in the air. Not only the influx of soldier blood but the very nature of the work these early comers to Iowa were doing in building up towns, in creating industries and businesses, made it inevitable that they should compete: they competed in laying out new town-sites, and they competed on the diamond. Soon there were enough town and city clubs that regional tournaments could be held. Not surprising in view of the early prominence of Dubuque was the tournament held in that city in 1865. The "Empires" of St. Louis defeated the Freeport and Dubuque nines, for the championship and for a cash prize of \$100.¹⁸

From press notices of the time we learn that in December 1865, a gathering of baseball devotees from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Iowa, was held in Chicago. A name was adopted—the "North-Western Base Ball Convention"—and apparently an effort was made to secure for mid-western clubs some kind of representation in the national movement that was controlled in and by the East. J. D. Langworthy,

¹⁸Held September 29-30, 1865, see Dubuque *Democratic Herald*, September 30, October 1, 1865.

a member of one of the Dubuque nines, was elected assistant vice-president but whether the convention took any practical steps and what, if anything, came of them, it is impossible to determine.¹⁹

AN ALL IOWA SPORT

During the following two years there was a rapid spread of baseball fever to all parts of the state. Baseball news traveled its devious course from town to town by personal contacts. Visiting players carried the fever to new communities. In 1866, undoubtedly due to some such direct conveyance of the rules and methods of the new game, Mount Pleasant appeared with its "Hawkeye Club" while the "Capital City Club" represented Des Moines.²⁰ Dubuque, which early succumbed to the infection, passed it on to Galena on the east and to Manchester on the west.²¹ Keokuk, on the other hand, seems to have possessed remarkable resistance to the fever. As late as September 30, 1866, the *Daily Gate City* announced foot races with prizes as high as \$500²²—but no ball games.

The sport reached Council Bluffs, clear across the state, this same year, 1866. The editor of the Council Bluffs *Non-pareil*, for June 9, remarked of the new game that

When we stated the other day that we were unacquainted with that kind of game which the boys call Base Ball, we erred grievously. Little did we know when we wrote, that Base Ball is but another name for "Two-cornered" or "Three-cornered" or "Four-cornered Cat!" Guess we know that game! Guess we followed it as a professional for ten years of our juvenile existence! Guess we know how to knock a common yarn ball with a round bat, clear over the top of a very small tree! . . . Call things by their right names! Say "Cat" to us, and ten thousand glorious reminiscences will leap from the home of remembrance, and dance gloriously in the twilight of our age!

P.S. We are sadly mistaken. We confess after having examined the play at the depot grounds yesterday afternoon that Base Ball is not Old Cat by a jug full! It is simply Town Ball with variations.

In 1867 there were nine clubs in Des Moines, the "Capital City" and "Rough and Ready" clubs, the "Mechanics," the

¹⁹*Burlington Hawk-Eye*, Dec. 13, 1865.

²⁰*Ibid.*, Aug. 20, 1866.

²¹*Dubuque Herald*, April 25, 1926.

²²*Keokuk Daily Gate City*, Sept. 30, 1866.

"Pioneers," the "Star City," the "Tough and Gritty," the "Young America," the "Young Eagles," and the "Shirttail Rangers." The Des Moines *Iowa State Register* describes the last-named group as "composed of jolly little urchins who have 'just left their mamas'."²² Winterset, Knoxville, and Oskaloosa had teams. August 10, 1867, the "Mechanics" of Des Moines went to Winterset for the first away-from-home game of a Des Moines Club, and beat the Winterset team 82-47.²⁴ It is noteworthy that a clergyman, the Reverend W. E. Smith of the First Methodist Church of Winterset, was conspicuous for his fine playing in that game.²⁵

Perhaps as a result of these inter-city competitions, uniforms for players began to take the place of the miscellaneous garb of work-a-day life. Usually purchased in the East, these uniforms included cravats, flannel suits, and brightly colored stockings. Later came caps and canvas-topped shoes with hobnailed soles.²⁶

Then, late in the season of 1867, three ball clubs were organized at Keokuk; the "Pioneers," the "Gate Citys," and the "Athletics."²⁷ On August 14 the "Gate Citys" beat the Warsaw, Illinois, Mutuals 49 to 46, only to have the Illionis team come back a week later and defeat them, 60 to 55.²⁸ After the game Charles Carver, catcher for the Gate Citys, was presented with a solid mahogany silver mounted bat which bore the inscription:

Presented to Charles H. Carver for the handsome manner in which he caught a ball, August 22, 1867.

Not only individual ability, but an individual act of play, was recognized with a trophy! Carver's prize-winning catch had ended an especially fruitful inning for the Mutuals.

August 10, just before these two games with Warsaw, the *Daily Gate City* announced "a Great Base Ball Convention to be holden at Belle Plaine, Iowa, on the 10th, 11th, 12th, and

²²*Iowa State Register*, (d.) Des Moines, July 13, 1867.

²⁴*Ibid.*, July 27, 1867.

²⁶*Ibid.*, Aug. 13, 1867.

²⁸That these new dress-up uniforms made an impression on the observer of those days is indicated by a report of a game played in 1866, between the Ft. Dodge "Wahkonsas" and the Marshalltown "Marshalls." The reporter for the Ft. Dodge paper wrote with obvious admiration of the players, "looking swell in their bright dazzling underclothes, of red zouave pants, long white stockings, blue shirts with white ruffled bosoms, looking 'huger' . . ."—*Iowa Northwest*, Sept. 26, 1866.

²⁷*Keokuk Daily Gate City*, August 15, 1867.

²⁸*Ibid.*, August 29, 1867.

13th of September," and stated that tents were to be furnished the different clubs so that those who preferred to camp could do so. All games were to be governed by the Rules and Regulations of the National Association of Base Ball players, adopted December 12, 1866. The tournament rules following included a ban on intoxicating liquors, none of which were to be allowed sold on the grounds. The captains of the different nines were to be held responsible for the behavior of their teams and for property in their charge. A prize of a silver ball and mounted bat was announced for the best club organized previous to January 1; a silver service urn and nine goblets for the second best club, and six other prizes for the best pitcher, catcher, batter, fielder, baseman, and the swiftest runner of bases. Prizes for younger clubs, organized since January 1, were the same. All together, the trophies announced for this tourney amounted to a thousand dollars.²⁹ The Marshalltown "Marshalls" outplayed all competitors at the Belle Plaine Tournament.³⁰ On this team was one destined to contribute much to baseball, Adrian Constantine Anson, the first white child born in Marshalltown.³¹ "Pop," as he was later called, was only fifteen at the time of the tournament, but he and his brother Fred were the outstanding players of the meet.

There can be no doubt that such events as the Belle Plaine tourney were gala days with the home town band playing and a grand parade down Main Street and the stands at the ball park doing a thriving business in popcorn, taffy, and in red lemonade. The visitors in their uniforms and the home town boys in theirs vied for attention, particularly that of the pretty girls of the village.³² It is sad to have to point out that this spirit of exhilaration and of excitement didn't always last much past the ninth inning. Then the mood of the players cooled and the crowd went home, and soon there were apt to be recriminations. Frequently two small Iowa towns spent weeks of the baseball season abusing each other, usually in the columns of the local papers, as the result of one game. But

²⁹*Ibid.*, August 10, 1867; *Iowa State Register*, August 7, 9, 1867.

³⁰*Iowa State Register*, Nov. 7, 1867.

³¹*Palimpsest*, III:374.

³²For a detailed description of the enthusiasm engendered in a local inter-city rivalry, between Fort Dodge and Marshalltown, see *Iowa Northwest*, Fort Dodge, September 26, 1866.

it is safe to guess that even this vociferous abuse had in it an element of fun, that it was "part of the game." Consider, for instance, this excerpt from the *Belle Plaine Transcript* of September 24, 1866. Quoting the *DeWitt Observer*, the editor says:

We learn that Marshalltown was at Belle Plaine that day for the purpose of playing a match game against herself on the "grab" principle and taking all the prizes and Belle Plaine too— for *they owned it*. At least that was the way it looked to a man without spectacles.

Baseball tourneys were in the air. At almost the same time the Belle Plaine tournament was announced, Dubuque, proud of its famed "Excelsiors," was laying plans for a second baseball convention to be held in that river city in mid September, when further plans were to be laid for a subsequent tournament. The club members went so far as to arrange for half fare transportation by one of the Mississippi River packet lines for teams coming by the river. But this was an unfortunate time for the Dubuque convention, for the Belle Plaine games, proceeding at once without preliminary convening, drew the attention of fans and players by middle September, thus killing the Dubuque Excelsiors' plans.³³

A third effort towards a state meet in 1867 had a longer and more satisfactory history. It too had its inception in the first week of August, the same time as the Belle Plaine and Dubuque plans were originally offered. Started by a circular signed by officers of the Des Moines, Ottumwa, Mount Pleasant, and Burlington baseball clubs, and widely distributed among the southern, eastern, and central Iowa teams, the suggested plan called for a Base Ball Convention to be held at Ottumwa, August 21, for the purpose of setting a date for a state tourney.³⁴ Attending this convention in addition to "Prof." C. B. Worthington of the "Capital City Club" were delegates from two other Des Moines clubs. Burlington's three clubs had delegates, and Fairfield sent two, one her editor, W. W. Jenkins, and the other state representative John T. McCullough. H. C. Leighton, editor of the *Oskaloosa Herald* represented a club from that town. Marshalltown,

³³*Dubuque Times*, (d), August 7, 13, 1867.

³⁴*Iowa State Register*, (d), August 11, 1867.

Mount Pleasant, and Nevada appeared, and delegates were there from Ottumwa, of course.³⁵

The outcome of the convention was the formation of the Iowa State Base Ball Association, with a membership fee of \$2. Arrangements were also made for a state baseball tournament to be held October 15, 16, 17, at Burlington, which easily won the bid for the games by offering to raise an additional \$600 in special prize money for awards. But perhaps because of the entrance fees required for teams in the three classes of competition set up—\$20, \$15, and \$10—entrance applications came in slowly.³⁶

The deadline for applications was postponed until October 14 in order to have as large a list as possible to compete for the attractive awards. In the first class the first prize was \$200 (in greenbacks) and a gold-mounted rosewood bat worth \$75. Second and third prizes were in proportion. Second class teams competed for combination prizes for first, second, and third places worth respectively \$150, \$100, and \$50. Clubs in the third flight, presumably the junior clubs, were offered \$50 and a \$50 gold-mounted bat as first prize, and second place winners received \$25 and a set of blue silk flags valued at \$25. Third prize winners were awarded a \$25 rosewood bat. In addition to this there were special prizes for outstanding individual skills, among which was the usual prize for the best batsman, and one for the best catcher of fly balls. Plans were suggested for an exhibition game between the Chicago Excelsiors and the Rockford Forest City team, with a liberal prize in greenbacks to the winner.³⁷

In addition to the Burlington teams, the Davenport "Scotts," the Mount Pleasant "Hawkeyes," and one or more Ottumwa clubs were entered. Although on October 12 the *Keokuk Daily Gate City* glibly announced that "The Keokuk boys haven't entered the lists, and of course the championship cannot be settled without them," apparently, the other teams that were entered did not share that conviction. Des Moines teams, notably the Capital City Club, and probably others,

³⁵*Ottumwa Daily Courier*, August 21, 22, 1867; *Iowa State Register*, August 21, 1867.

³⁶*Ibid.*, August 22, 1867; *Iowa State Register*, October 2, 1867.

³⁷*Iowa State Register*, *ibid.*

did not enter because many of their members could not be away from the city for so long a time. The Marshalltown Marshalls remained out, apparently satisfied with the Belle Plaine championship.³⁸

The Mount Pleasant Hawkeyes won the first class award by defeating the Burlington Westerns in the final decisive game by the conclusive score of 115-42. The Ottumwa "Actives" won first prize in the third class—\$50 and a gold-mounted bat—from the Orchard City club of Burlington,³⁹ quite a feather in the cap of Ottumwa's junior ball club.

The absence of track from Keokuk to Burlington may account for the failure of the "Westerns" to enter the Burlington tournament. Fort Madison and Keokuk were connected by the Keokuk, Mount Pleasant and Muscatine Railroad in 1857, but the line was not completed to Burlington until 1870, a year after it was purchased by the C. B. & Q.⁴⁰

Dubuque, in this year 1867, although not entered in either tournament, had its "Excelsiors" of which the inhabitants of the Key City were very proud. From time to time lesser local teams were absorbed by this organization. The *Dubuque Herald* of July 23, 1867, mentions one such merger:

Base Ball Consolidation: The 'Eureka' and the 'Clipper' clubs had both addressed communications to the 'Excelsiors,' asking for consolidation. The 'Excelsiors' decided to take in the 'Eurekas,' which hereafter will be open to challenge, etc. The 'Clippers' will maintain their separate organization and will fight it out on that line all summer.

According to the same newspaper, of July 27, enthusiasm in the central parts of the state was every bit as keen:

The *Courier* says that Waterloo has no less than six base ball clubs. Broken fingers, disjointed thumbs, noses askew, and variegated eyes . . . ought to prevail.

On July 31 a game was held at Manchester between the "Excelsior" club of Manchester and the "Cedar" club of Waterloo. The game was called at "2½ p. m.," and the play-

³⁸The Des Moines Capital City Club as well as the Tipton Resolutes were first reported as attending the tournament, *Keokuk Gate City*, October 12, 1867, but the Des Moines team had definitely decided to remain at home by that date, see *Iowa State Register*, October 12. For a jibe at the Marshalltown Marshalls, see the *Register*, October 9. *Keokuk Gate City*, October 18, 1867.

³⁹*Keokuk Gate City*, *ibid.*; *Ottumwa Daily Courier*, October 18, 1867.

⁴⁰*History of Lee County*, (Western Historical Co., 1879), p. 511.

ing time for the nine innings was about three hours. Manchester won by a score of 44 to 20.⁴¹

During this year, 1867, Decorah had no organized ball club, although a match game with Freeport was arranged, to be played at Freeport.⁴² Knoxville had a club of 34 members called the "Nonpareil," and ordered caps and belts for these local heroes, from New York. The "Surprise" club was organized at Knoxville.⁴³ And according to the Council Bluffs *Nonpareil*, school girls in Council Bluffs took up baseball in 1867. For anyone who remembers the decidedly decorous and ladylike behavior expected of girls and young women even several decades later than this date, the statement seems a little puzzling. Perhaps the air of the "great plains," blowing in over Nebraska from country which was still the wild and woolly frontier of the Indian and the buffalo, had something to do with it. Or possibly "Bloomerism" may be credited in bringing about the result. If anything of the kind took place in the eastern part of the state, history has failed to pass it on to us.

The same molding of public sentiment in favor of baseball that has been noted throughout the two or three previous years continued in 1868. Organizations sprang up in every part of the state and it is obvious that the trend had established itself as a strong and continuous current. Marshalltown's club, that had won the Belle Plaine tournament the year before, invaded Nebraska to beat Omaha by the unusually low score of 2-1.⁴⁴ Sioux City in the northwest, and West Union and Fredericksburg organized teams this year;⁴⁵ Fayette, Waukon, Pottawatamie, Marshalltown, and Lansing were also among the names now on the roster of Iowa clubs.⁴⁶

During the brief remainder of this decade the ball clubs of Iowa continued to grow in strength and in number. They were given special rates by the railroad companies, and traveled about the state, competing with other local teams.⁴⁷ Often

⁴¹*Dubuque Democratic Herald*, August 2, 1867.

⁴²*Decorah Republican*, July 26, 1867.

⁴³*Knoxville Iowa Voter*, August 15, 1867.

⁴⁴*Council Bluffs Bugle*, August 14, 1868.

⁴⁵*Sioux City Journal*, May 7, 1868; *Decorah Republican*, June 5, 1868.

⁴⁶*Decorah Republican*, April 10, June 26, July 24, 1868; *Council Bluffs Bugle*, August 27, 1868.

⁴⁷*Palimpsest*, VIII:177.

business houses closed during the hours of the game and the townfolk and occasional fans from adjoining farms made their way to the ball field and shouted themselves hoarse, as hard-batted balls released their favorite player to race around the diamond. Spectators sat on the ground or on folding canvas-covered stools, and were nearly as close to the play as though they had been on the field. They knew all the members of the home team, and perhaps would be playing themselves the next day or the next week. This was a more intimate participation than that of the modern fan, sitting tense-faced and picking his fingers before his radio, sometimes hundreds of miles from the playing field.

Perhaps this close contact with the game had something to do with the rise of gambling on the outcome of ball games at about this time. Another suggestion is that the gambling fever was just another evidence of the rivalry between towns and between sections of the state, which was still in a condition of growth, with towns expanding and new towns springing up along the lines of the railroads. Competition was in the very air that blew in from the western prairies. Audiences began to back their judgment by wagering side bets. Lafe Young and J. S. Clarkson, editors of Atlantic and of Des Moines papers, are said to have won enough plug hats by sagacious betting to stock a hat store!⁴⁸

The newspaper attitude, although casual and mildly derisive at first, as we have seen, became increasingly stimulating, until the editor's function as an actively betting sidelines promoter gave strong impetus to interest and the matching of games. On May 14, 1868, the Algona *Upper Des Moines* gives a sample of the provocative taunting that ran between editors over the teams of their towns.

. . . the Winnebago Press, makes the following "teching" appeal to the "Hickorys."

Hickorys where are ye? Come forth and show yourselves in all your might. The reputation you gained last year as ball players, though you did get "scooped" by the Pioneers, must not be infringed upon by any other club. The Algona boys say they can "lay out" the Forest Citizens without any practice. Here's a flat up and down challenge which you must prepare to answer in the

⁴⁸For discussion of national problems concerning gambling in baseball at this time, see *International Encyclopedia*, II:732.

course of another month or two. So Hickory boys you had better spread yourselves on the ground next Saturday.⁴⁹

The *Upper Des Moines* then went on to tell the "Hickorys" how they were to be "eaten and slept" over night, and the next day laid out in good style, stowed away again over the next night, then the next day sent on their way rejoicing—if they were able to rejoice. It must be remembered that the distance between Algona and Forest City is only forty-one miles. Considering that often three days were lost for a game with a nearby neighbor, the number of inter-city ball games played between clubs lying north and south of each other is not really small. Transportation facilities for east and west points, thanks to the railroads, were much better. July 5, 1870, the "Crescents," of Des Moines beat the "Clippers" at Omaha 36-13, after they had spent the Fourth beating Council Bluffs 48-13.⁵⁰

Losers did not always take their misfortunes in good spirit. Fist fights so often followed ball games that women usually departed promptly after the last inning to give the men plenty of room to swing fists or bottles. Down on Third Street in Dubuque, where the "Celtics" were playing the "Lone Stars," and on the diamond in Jackson Park where the "Live Oaks" battled the "Actives," the sand lot teams of boys took their fun so seriously that two husky and agile grown-ups were required to police each contest. Great baseball players were created by this rough and tumble competition. "Pop" Anson of Marshalltown was one of the greatest.⁵¹ Another was William Sunday, born at Ames in 1862. "Billy" Sunday made his reputation, as far as baseball is concerned, after he had turned professional; but it was on the sand lots of Iowa that he developed the abilities that made him famous.⁵²

For a time in 1875, Keokuk with its "Westerns" held membership in the National Association. That it should have done so, even for a short time, is remarkable. Very possibly that exalted civic pride which led each community to boost its own climate, its own commercial vigor, and its own prospects for becoming the metropolis of the middle-west, had something to

⁴⁹*Upper Des Moines*, Algona, May 14, 1868.

⁵⁰*Iowa State Register*, July 6, 1870.

⁵¹*Palimpsest*, III:374.

⁵²*ibid.*, XI:345.

do with this phenomenon. Often a town would rake up enough of a purse to start some grandiose adventure of this kind, without realizing what the future cost would be. It would build the foundation, then be able to go no farther. Certain it is that in an organization made up almost entirely of teams from the big eastern cities and from Chicago, little Keokuk could hardly expect to maintain a foothold, and soon the "Western" withdrew from the league.⁵³ Most of the players went to better positions on larger teams. Joe Miller, second baseman, was signed by the Chicago White Sox; Tallehan, shortstop, and Bernie, the catcher, joined the Mutuals of New York; Simmons, first baseman, had offers from New Haven and from Washington; Jones, the left fielder, went to Louisville; and Jack Carbine, utility player, joined the Boston Red Sox.

Other parts of the state, in the same year, 1875, continued the good work of organizing ball clubs. In fact it was said that

for the year 1875 Iowa is more largely represented on the diamond field than at any previous years, it has no less than fifty legally organized clubs, Iowa City, Manchester, Davenport, and Dubuque standing at the head. Iowa City claims the championship, with the Hyde Clarks of this city a good second. The Hydies and the Old Empires have consolidated, making the strongest nine this city has ever had.⁵⁴

ORGANIZATION OF LEAGUES

The idea of organizing local teams into circuits though less ambitious than Keokuk's attempt in the National Association nevertheless led at first to many fiascos. Among these was the collapse of the Southwestern Iowa Prairie League in 1877, after its first few weeks of play. But the following year, 1878, Ted Sullivan, with the backing of such men as U. S. Senator William B. Allison and David B. Henderson, later U. S. Representative, organized the Northwestern League. Dubuque, Davenport, Rockford, and Omaha were among the member teams. In the same year Sullivan hired a young fellow named Comiskey to come to Dubuque to play baseball.

⁵³Keokuk Daily Gate City, Oct. 20, 1937.

⁵⁴Dubuque Herald, August 3, 1875.

Charles Comiskey had made his debut in baseball when as a boy of 17 he abandoned the brick wagon he was driving and went to the rescue of a Chicago ball team losing a hotly contested game. Later in the afternoon his father appeared, saw what had happened, and drove the rig to its destination. That night father and son had a heart-to-heart talk, with the result that Charles left the next day for Milwaukee, where he signed as a third baseman.⁵⁵ From Milwaukee, Comiskey went to Elgin, Illinois, and its team did not lose a single game in which he played.

In Dubuque the "greatest Roman of them all," as Comiskey later came to be known, received fifty dollars a month as a utility player during the season and worked as a "peanut butcher" on the Illinois Central for the remainder of the year.⁵⁶ Part of the time he pitched, and of Comiskey's pitching in these early days of his career there is an interesting account by Ted Sullivan:

The distance from the pitcher's mound to the batter was forty-five feet, and at that distance his (Comiskey's) long arms used to send balls across the plate that the country clubs around Dubuque were afraid to face. Many of the members of those clubs returned home with fractured ribs and blackened shins from Comiskey's rifle-shot delivery. . . .⁵⁷

The identity of the other members of the Dubuque team may be gleaned from the line-ups of the final game of the split six-game series played between Dubuque and Davenport in 1878:

DUBUQUE		DAVENPORT	
O'Rourke	First Base	Harry McCaffery	
Colford	Shortstop	Mike Moynahan	
Comiskey	Catcher	Rudy Kemmler	
Dolan	Right Field	Biddy McPhee	
Farrell	Left Field	Wagner	
Brady	Center Field	Mackrey	
Sullivan	Third Base	O'Day	
Phelan	Second Base	Levis	
Ross	Pitcher	Joe Bohn	

⁵⁵Commy, p. 10, *et seq.*

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 49, 50.

⁵⁷Dubuque Herald, April 26, 1903.

The Dubuque team in 1879 had now become the "Red Stockings." Among the players this year were Sullivan, catcher; Reis, pitcher; Lapham, first base; Radbourne, fielder and utility pitcher (a few years later to become baseball's highest salaried player);⁵⁸ Loftus, right field; J. Gleason, shortstop; W. Gleason, third base; Taylor, left field; Alveretta, center field; with Comiskey sometimes pitching and sometimes playing in the outfield. With this powerful array of players, most of whom were soon to see service on the teams of larger cities, Dubuque proved altogether too strong for other members of the league. Bad blood was created, and by July the Northwestern League was in difficulties, as reported in the Dubuque *Herald* of July 12, 1879:

The Dubuques not being able to come to an agreement with the Rockfords about an umpire, left this Thursday night for Milwaukee, where they play today.

* * * *

The Omahas following the examples of the Davenports, have disbanded, which virtually busts up the league . . . A traveling man now in the city says that he heard while in Rockford lately that the Rockford nine reported that they were pounded, insulted, and hit in the head at the 4th of July game and that the police had to be called . . .

Other league members disbanded because of financial troubles, but both Dubuque and Rockford, though continuing to scold each other, kept their clubs intact. Near the end of this hectic season Dubuque played her famous shut-out game with the Chicago White Sox, winning by a score of 1 to 0.⁵⁹ Because of the prestige of the visiting team and the excitement engendered by the quarrels in the league, this victory is probably the high spot in Dubuque baseball history. Moreover, as both the Dubuque and Rockford clubs ended the year intact, the Northwestern League was regarded as having rounded out the season, the first minor league in the country to do so.⁶⁰ From this it is apparent that the mortality among baseball organizations was high in the late seventies. In 1879, Providence, Boston, and Chicago were the only major organiz-

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, November 23, 1884.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, August 5, 1879.

⁶⁰*Commy*, p. 50.

ations to clear expenses.⁶¹ Nines in other large cities played to crowds that averaged less than 500 spectators.

But baseball by now was unmistakably a national game, and the rules were still being changed year by year to bring it closer to what the public wanted. The "bound catch" on the third strike was abolished, the pitcher was allowed "only" eight balls before the batter could walk to first base, the dimensions of the pitcher's box were reduced, bases became a uniform fifteen inches square in size, and a batter struck by a batted ball was automatically out.

Although the Northwestern League failed to start the season of 1880, Dubuque had a ball team, and its line-up was about the same as for the previous year. The thriving little city of Dubuque—during this and the following decade it hummed with industrial prosperity most of the time—may almost be taken as the norm with which to compare other Iowa cities, in the development of the national pastime. Again and again the most rosy prospects faded to a pale gray cloud of gloom. Business men rallied behind one team after another, for civic pride was a stinging incentive to make a showing that would compare favorably with the best that other Iowa towns could do. The team would sprint to the top of whatever league or association it played in, and then very often would fall again when the support both of business men and of spectators who could and would pay cash admissions to the ball park failed.

For a brief period then, the banner of baseball would be carried forward only by amateur teams. Sporting news in the local papers would fall close to the zero mark. And then the coming of spring would renew enthusiasm and the Key City would start off wildly toward new defeats. And so it was with a hundred other Iowa towns and cities. Sometimes even the most successful teams were unable to rally financial support behind their rosters. In this season of 1880 the Dubuque team went on the road to win straight games from St. Louis, from Jefferson City, and from Ottawa. But even this fine record availed nothing for the club failed to pay expenses. It may be that public interest then, as now, was

⁶¹Dubuque Herald, March 21, 1880.

rhythmic, and that this year was one of ebbing enthusiasm among the fans; that there had come what financiers call a "technical reaction." At any rate in July the local sponsors withdrew and Captain Loftus was left with an organization on his hands, but with no financial support. A man of spirit and resourcefulness, he formed a first and second team and went on, full steam ahead, nevertheless.

Charles Comiskey was on the Loftus payroll in 1880. This is the year when he revolutionized the play at first base by coaching the pitcher to help him cover that position, while he himself ranged about the cushion. This technique, taken as a matter of course now, was revolutionary when Charlie Comiskey introduced it.⁶²

Other dynamic changes were at hand, not the least of which was the introduction of the curve ball, heralded with hoots of incredulity from the skeptics. A fan in Rochester, New York, offered to pay \$1,000 to any pitcher who could demonstrate that he could make a ball curve "in the air."

The year 1881 is important to Dubuque rather because it prepared for the departure of one of its greatest players than for anything that happened to the team otherwise.

Comiskey and Loftus were again team-mates. During July the Dubuque team—now called the "Rabbits"—played the St. Louis "Browns." Although Dubuque was beaten, Comiskey's errorless game so impressed the fans of St. Louis that they induced him to join the St. Louis team the following season.⁶³ His subsequent rise in baseball was rapid and brilliant. Like other players on the early Dubuque teams, Comiskey found in the Key City club a springboard from which to reach the peak of attainment. Ted Sullivan, the two Gleasons, Radbourne, Loftus, and many others perfected their playing in Dubuque and afterward achieved national recognition. Other Iowa clubs served in the same way as spawning ground for big league players.

Dubuque and Davenport had been the centers of baseball attention in Iowa for many years, but now interest began to shift. True, plenty of baseball was played in Dubuque in

⁶²Commy, p. 70; *Annals of American Sport*, p. 139.

⁶³Commy, pp. 53, 64.

1883, but it was strictly of an amateur character. There were a dozen amateur organizations, and such games as the "City," versus the "County Officials," "Dubuque," versus "East Dubuque," "Dubuque" versus the "picked nine," and the "Regalies" versus the "Live Oaks," were played in local parks, while the newspapers teased the teams more or less good naturedly.⁶⁴ But there was no professional team this year. Evidently, continuing the "technical reaction" already suggested, the money crowd could not be lured through the turnstiles.

But in Des Moines a professional team was organized, destined to do well at home and to fare badly on the road. Trouble developed when the umpire carried by Des Moines was ruled out in several competing cities. Local scorers in turn, accused by Des Moines of having "totaled the runs before the games was played," were substituted.

In 1885 Keokuk came into the Western League with a nine that successfully met the teams of Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Louisville. So formidable was the Keokuk nine that soon the league dwindled away, leaving only the champions from the little "Gate City."

Again in 1887 a Northwestern League was formed. This name had apparently acquired so much luster and prestige that it couldn't die. The member teams and the management varied, but as often as one circuit bearing the magical name fell apart, another sprang up. This Northwestern League of 1887 included Milwaukee, St. Paul, Oshkosh, Minneapolis, Duluth, LaCrosse, Eau Claire, and Des Moines.⁶⁵ Ted Sullivan, who had introduced Charles Comiskey to the baseball world, was president. Des Moines built a park with a seating capacity of 2,000 on South Seventh Street, near the Raccoon River. Admission was twenty-five cents with an additional charge for stabling horses during the games.

Lesser leagues were also formed. The State League included What Cheer, Oskaloosa, Newton, and Ottumwa.⁶⁶ In the Southwestern League were Creston, Atlantic, Red Oak, and Shenandoah. Dubuque again played through the season with

⁶⁴*Dubuque Herald*, July 31, 1883.

⁶⁵*Iowa State Register*, April 30, 1887.

⁶⁶*Dubuque Daily Herald*, August 28, 1887.

its amateur teams and with a semi-professional team that took on all comers, including members of the Northwestern League.

But the baseball year of 1887 ended rather gloomily for most of the larger cities. The problems of salaries and other expenses, to maintain competent professional nines, became constantly harder to solve. Professionalism, which had begun so innocently at the Capitoline Club in 1863,⁶⁷ was now beginning to show its true nature, for as the demand for superior players increased, the cost of obtaining them likewise rose. But there was sufficient momentum from the year 1887 to carry baseball in Iowa forward into the following year. In 1888 the Western Association was formed, with clubs in Des Moines, St. Louis, Omaha, Minneapolis, Kansas City, Chicago, St. Paul, and Milwaukee. The Interstate League was composed in 1888 of Davenport, Dubuque, Peoria, Crawfordsville (Indiana), Rockford, Bloomington, Danville, and Decatur. Dubuque ran into such adverse financial weather that it lost its franchise due to lack of patronage.⁶⁸ In the same league Terre Haute replaced Bloomington; other teams dropped out, and the four that remained barely managed to stagger through July. Early in August, with financial difficulties too heavy to bear, the league disbanded. Davenport bought the Minneapolis franchise in the Western Association and finished the season with that league.

It is noteworthy that Sioux City chose to stay out of what the editor of the *Sioux City Weekly Times* called "the baseball business."⁶⁹ Yet the era of inter-city leagues was well under way, and players of every caliber flocked to the city ball parks to try for positions on the teams.

GROWING PAINS OF THE GAME

The increasing complexity of organization brought disciplinary problems. In Davenport the management was forced to hire special policemen to keep ruffians in the crowd

⁶⁷In 1883, for the first time, admission money was collected from spectators. This was at the Capitoline Club, in Brooklyn, New York. Heretofore baseball had been strictly an amateur game, played by men who received no reward in the form of money. But from 1863 on, the custom of making the spectator pay for his fun, and of rewarding both the man who furnished the playing field and the players, became an established factor.

⁶⁸*Dubuque Daily Herald*, July 10, 1888.

⁶⁹*Sioux City Weekly Times*, June 7, 1868.

from throwing pop bottles at the players and from jeering too loudly.

Petty rivalries continued to divide the teams. Davenport developed a strong dislike for Umpire Hunt, whom the Davenport players accused of helping Quincy and Springfield to "squeeze" Davenport out of the league. These cities partly answered the charge by insisting that while they were playing in Davenport, the players had had to stay at Rock Island Hotels to avoid physical violence. Davenport ended the season with a grand gesture. Refusing to play out its schedule, it released its star battery of Rhines and Harrington to Cincinnati, and saw Con Strouthers sign a Brooklyn contract, while Charles Gessner went to Toledo, Jack Fanning to Omaha, and Allen to Philadelphia.

In the Western Association, Des Moines was also having trouble. On May 3, 1889, Bill Fagen, an old New York Metropolitan pitcher, was signed to bolster the faltering staff of the Des Moines Colts. Previously, Denver had advanced Fagen \$100 to enable him to report to its team. When it learned that Fagen had stopped off at Des Moines, the Denver management offered to release him to the Colts if Des Moines would reimburse them for the advance fee. This was done, and Fagen was signed with Des Moines at a salary of \$225 per month.⁷⁰

During the first month of play Fagen began to win games for the Colts. Denver then charged that he had been stolen. The dispute was carried before the league officials, who gave a decision in favor of Des Moines, but soon a strange thing happened. Fagen began to weaken; whenever he appeared on the mound, he was unmistakably drunk.⁷¹ Back in Des Moines, apparently sober, he had to be sent to the showers after pitching only one inning. Des Moines immediately released him, and before long he showed up in Denver where, during the remainder of the season, he won 17 games! Until Denver left the Western Circuit, the two cities cordially hated each other.

To make matters worse, Des Moines ended the year in last place.⁷² This and related financial troubles prevented the

⁷⁰*Iowa State Register*, May 16, 1889.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, May 29, 1889.

⁷²*Ibid.*, Oct. 1, 1889.

team from securing any star players. Not even Ladies' and Children's days could bring paying crowds through the park turnstiles. In September the Colts played out their schedule at Missouri Valley, Iowa. Omaha won the pennant, Sioux City ended in fourth place, while the Colts, in the cellar, were 41½ games behind Omaha.

During this eventful year of 1889 "Pop" Anson roused national turmoil among Chicago boosters by refusing to use Hutchinson, the former Des Moines star, in an important series of games for his Chicago team. Day after day he kept Hutchinson on the bench, even when his team was losing. Eventually he was forced by popular indignation to use the former Des Moines hurler. Hutchinson soon lifted Chicago out of the second division and into the pennant-contending class.

During the fall of 1889 a series of discussions which had a direct bearing on one of baseball's problems arose in Dubuque. This was the question of whether baseball games should be played on Sunday. The Dubuque *Herald* of October 20, 1889, observed:

While a good many would attend Sunday games who could not attend during the week, yet the business men who would put the money into the club are opposed to Sunday games, and as these men propose to put up enough money to carry the club through the season, their wishes will be respected . . . The influence of the pulpit in favor of the game will be a great advantage that would be turned against them should it be turned into a Sunday game.

Although apparently some Iowa cities passed laws against ball games played for money on Sunday, the law was evaded by allowing free admission and then "passing the hat" after the game was finished. But without doubt the opposition of conservative members of communities to Sunday games added financial to managerial troubles. Sunday, instead of being a "money day," brought little profit.

PROBLEMS OF MATURITY

In the final decade of the nineteenth century baseball found the field of popular favor crowded with other diversions. Horse racing, particularly harness racing, was fast coming into its own as a sport of the millions. Nevertheless Dubuque



FRANK M. BEYMER

PITCHER FOR THE MISSOURI VALLEY, IOWA
TEAM, 1889, 1890

rallied and in 1890 entered the Illinois-Iowa League. The players were Carrol, second base; McVicker, right field; Carlin, third base; Decker, first base; Hupp, left field; Jones, catcher; Suhr, center field; Keas, pitcher; and Richardson, shortstop. By the middle of June they were leading the league. They soon fell to fourth place, rebounded to first, then dropped to fifth. W. P. Lapham, a member of the great team of 1879, was brought back as manager. When the home town boys lost, they were all but disowned by a vitriolic local press. But when they won, the same newspapers turned on the visiting team with derisive epithets. At the end of the season the Dubuque *Herald* published the following obituary:

On this calm September morning it is with no small degree of sorrow that we say farewell to the national game. It means more than a goodbye to the cranks' delight—it means an Alpine mount of shattered hopes, a broken column of aspiration . . . Attendance dropped off, interest flagged, the stream of gold ran low, and baseball entered upon its decline . . . As a grand final on the home grounds the Dubuques played two games with Monmouth yesterday, and in order to avoid surprising anybody, both games were lost by the home team.⁷³

Des Moines' entry in the Western Association in 1890, as the "Prohibitionists," fared no better. Almost before the season was started, oxygen treatments in the form of special attractions were offered. Balloon ascensions, parachute jumps, Ladies' days, and finally a May Baseball Festival were tried. The festival continued through the month of May. Special rates were offered by the railroads, and the Des Moines management hired hacks to carry the fans from railroad station to baseball park. The ushers were specially uniformed, seats were upholstered, and stables were enlarged for the horses of visiting fans, but all these inducements failed to bring in profitable crowds—perhaps because the team was in sixth place.

At last, in July, matters reached a climax. Paton, the star lead-off man and third baseman, and Flanagan, playing at first and batting in the clean-up position, sat on the side lines, jeering at the other members of the team. Their salaries had not been paid, and this was their method of collecting. Final-

⁷³Dubuque *Daily Herald*, September 18, 1890.

ly, in a last drastic effort, Des Moines stores were persuaded to close at noon one day so that everyone might attend the ball game and contribute \$1 toward the \$6,000 required to keep the "Prohibitionists" in the league. This failed, for the Des Moines team could not rise out of sixth place. In August the franchise and the players were sold to Lincoln, Nebraska, and there the former Des Moines aggregation dropped to seventh place. Kansas City won the pennant, with only one Iowa team still represented, Sioux City, which finished in fifth place.

Des Moines and other towns in Iowa appear to have given up professional baseball during 1891.⁴ The financial panic had hit the Western Association and team after team dropped out. The play-off found only two teams competing, Kansas City and Sioux City; the latter won the pennant, such as it was.

About this time an episode in one of the major leagues finally wrote another paragraph in the baseball history of Iowa. "Pop" Anson, who was growing more and more querulous, apparently finished the season out in front with his Chicago Colts. Boston had five postponed games to play with the New York Giants, however, and won them all. This enabled Boston to nose out Chicago by a few percentage points. Against this "outrage," as he considered it, "Pop" immediately protested, as did the entire city of Chicago, which was demanding some kind of a post-season series. Anson satisfied the popular demand by challenging Sioux City, which had won the pennant in the Western Association.

For the series, which was played October 5-11, 1891, the team and its rooters came to Sioux City in all their big city finery and paraded up and down the main business streets. Hutchinson, the former Des Moines hurler with Pop's team, was the "Dizzy" Dean of his era and rode a mule in the procession.

On the opening day the weather was cold, and Anson installed a stove in the Chicago dugout. Hutchinson opposed Billy Hart on the mound. Hart had a good fast ball, and the team work of the Sioux City club enabled it to win an 8-1

⁴*Davenport Democrat*, July 29, 1891.

victory. Pop Anson was heard to remark that maybe his team wasn't good enough to play in Sioux City. In the second game, Luby pitched for Chicago, and Ehret for the Sioux City "Huskers." The latter's control was bad, and Anson's men won by a score of 7 to 4. In the third game Pitcher Maekin of the "Huskers" was nervous and badly affected by stage fright. He issued seven bases on balls, and with five errors behind his erratic pitching Chicago won by a score of 9 to 7.

A tense crowd gathered to watch the fourth game. If the "Huskers" lost this game, they were out of the series. Anson again put Hutchinson on the pitching mound, while Sioux City pitched Billy Hart, and again Hart's sizzling fast ball was too much for Anson's men. A home run by Earle in the ninth inning marked a 4-3 victory for Sioux City, which went on to take the fifth game. In the sixth and last of the series, the score was tied in the seventh inning, but eventually Sioux City won. Anson and his men went back to the Windy City having won but two of six games. Sioux City then played the St. Louis "Browns," four times pennant winners in the American Association, and beat them in four straight games.^{74a}

In 1892, Des Moines and most of the towns in eastern Iowa were out of organized baseball. Sioux City continued to dominate the Western Association until 1894. In that year, having clinched the pennant by the latter part of August, it was unceremoniously ousted from the league by the remaining teams, which then calmly continued to compete for the pennant.

In this year old "Dad" Traffley was named manager of the Des Moines Prohibitionists.⁷⁵ The Des Moines club secured a franchise in the Western Association, and in the spring of 1895 built a park on the banks of Walnut Creek near Valley Junction (now West Des Moines), because of the blue laws against Sunday games.⁷⁶ Gambling syndicates were numerous and brazen in these middle years of the Gay Nineties, and Traffley had his hands full keeping his best players sober.

Though Sioux City and Des Moines did fairly well with

^{74a}*Sioux City Journal*, Oct. 4-12, 1891.

⁷⁵*Iowa State Register*, July 19-22, 1894.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, March 31, 1895.

their professional teams in 1894, Dubuque did not. The amateur game seems to have reached its peak in the Key City this season, during which many teams were organized, headed by the "Dubuques," a team which operated on what was called a "mutual" plan. The players shared profits or losses, and played ball chiefly for recreation. The clubs included the "Doctors," who often played the "Lawyers" or the "Druggists"; the "First Street Stars," whose hereditary enemy was the "Panhandlers"; the "Police," who played against the "Lawyers" and were, as might have been expected, defeated. The "Eagle Point Reds," the "Senators," the "Golden Eagles," the "Black Diamonds," the "Hawkeyes," and the "Milwaukeees" united to form a city league, with a playing field in Rhomberg's park. Competition reached a peak in July, and judging from local press notices, Dubuque never had a better time.

The next few years found baseball at its lowest ebb in many Iowa communities, but the game that had started so obscurely sixty odd years before had completed a phase of its development. Some of the excitement and some of the hilarity had left it; the cleavage between the professional player and the almost professional fan, who would as soon lose his right arm as miss a game, was nearly complete. Henceforth their influence upon each other was to be much less direct than it had been back in the sixties and seventies, when the heated players of one day were the coolly critical spectators of the next.

The story of the cyclic development sketched in these pages does not claim to be exhaustive or complete. Rather it is suggestive, a history of trends rather than of precise details and personalities. It is a brief story of a growth that was graphically American.

Professionalism, though occupying the center of public attention, did not completely absorb the public's interest. Busy youths in their leisure time still ran to vacant-lot diamonds and to city parks to play ball. And bruised knuckles and bumped heads of the earlier days were no longer the common or inevitable parts of the game.

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