

Baseball and Telephony

The time — two o'clock in the afternoon. The date — Thursday, June 27, 1867. The place — Waterloo. The occasion — the outstanding baseball game of the year between the Empire club of Waterloo and the Marshalltown club. The teams had met twice in the preceding fall, and in both games Marshalltown had triumphed, 28 to 25, and 40 to 22. Now, the Empires had the advantage of playing on their home field, and they were determined to avenge their earlier defeats. They also had a reputation to uphold, for they were acknowledged to be the best of the six teams in Waterloo.

The Marshalltown boys had left home two days before, traveling by horse and wagon. After stopping for the night at Fifteen Mile Grove they had arrived in Waterloo on Wednesday at noon. For the remainder of the day they had been entertained by the courteous citizenry of the neighbor city, but they retired early in order to be in good condition for the next day's struggle.

Early Thursday afternoon the teams met downtown and, headed by the umpire, T. H. Ball of Chicago, marched out to the baseball field where

some three thousand spectators eagerly awaited whatever was then the equivalent of the modern "Play ball!" The home team was dressed in white uniforms trimmed with scarlet cord, and their white regulation caps were perched jauntily on their heads. The visitors wore blue caps, blue shirts, and red pants. The contrast in colors was a fitting symbol of the fierce but friendly rivalry between the two teams.

The Marshalls, being the visitors, were first at bat. Their star center fielder, "Cap" Anson, led off against the opposing pitcher, "Doe" Vail. The accounts of the game do not record what Anson did his first time at bat. Perhaps he hit a home run, for he did have one in this game; perhaps he reached base safely and scored one of the eight runs he made during the afternoon; or maybe he was put out, for only two runs were scored that inning.

Whatever Anson did on his first trip to the plate had little effect on the outcome of the game. The Marshalltown lads were powerful sluggers: they scored in every inning. In the fourth, fourteen runs crossed the plate; in the fifth, twenty-two batters scored in the melee when Marshalltown lacked only two men of batting around three times. Despite "splendid playing on both sides", the Empires were soundly trounced, 76 to 29.

Obviously "Doe" Vail was off form, but in his own behalf it should be said that his regular position was catcher or shortstop. The simple box score as published in the Marshalltown *Times* is not accurate, which is not surprising considering the size of the score and the fact that the game was played in two hours and fifty minutes. It does, however, list the players, give their positions, and indicate something of the performance of each.

<i>Marshalltown</i>			<i>Runs</i>	<i>Outs</i>	<i>Empires</i>			<i>Runs</i>	<i>Outs</i>
[A. C.] Anson	cf	8	4	F. E. Cutler	cf	5	2		
A. B. Cooper	1b	10	2	O. C. Miller	rf	5	2		
D. Ankeny	rf	10	2	F. Chapman	lf	4	4		
J. L. Green	c	10	3	L. A. Cobb	3b	5	2		
J. M. Parker	lf	9	2	J. W. Crooker	ss	1	5		
M. K. Williams	p	9	2	S. Raymond	1b	1	5		
P. Woodruff	ss	9	3	F. Switzer	c	3	4		
J. L. Williams	3b	6	3	G. Ordway	2b	3	2		
M. Ellis	2b	6	5	T. N. Vail	p	3	2		

The score by innings was:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Marshalls	2	9	3	14	22	5	9	3	9	76
Empires	4	3	1	4	5	1	7	0	4	29

The Marshalls knocked thirteen home runs, the Empires none; but the Empires caught eight fly balls while the Marshalls caught only six.

Despite the humiliating defeat, the Empire players were good sportsmen. When the game ended they gave three rousing cheers for the triumphant Marshalls, who reciprocated in kind. Then both teams joined in a cheer for the umpire, out of respect for the impartiality of his decisions.

The baseball game was only a part of the day's festivities. In the evening, a reception was held at Lincoln Hall, and the players were made to feel at home by "many of the fair ladies and gallant young men of Waterloo". Then the athletes sat down to a bountiful supper at the Central House. Among the decorations was a sign, hung over crossed and battle-scarred baseball bats, reading "Marshalls, the Victors". The visitors were just as magnanimous. They voted unanimously to award to "Doe" Vail the belt honoring him as the champion baseball player of Iowa. After the banquet, toasts, and awards, there was dancing until three o'clock in the morning. Then the Marshalltown boys climbed in their wagons, gave three cheers for their hosts, and left for home, tired, happy, and triumphant.

More important than this game is the story of the subsequent careers of the leading player on each team. Adrian C. Anson, better known as "Cap" or "Pop" Anson, was born in Marshalltown. As a boy he liked games. Apparently his

baseball career began in 1867. Two years later, when he went to the State University to prepare for the "important duty" of teaching in the public schools, he helped establish the earliest form of organized athletics among the students. He began his professional baseball activities at Rockford, Illinois, in 1871, and he ultimately reached the top of the baseball world. He joined A. G. Spalding's Chicago White Stockings in 1876. In the following year he became captain and manager, and before his retirement in 1897 his team had won the pennant five times. As the star first baseman of the Chicago National League team, he was one of the most polished fielders in the game, and his lifetime batting average of .348 is a mark which would be a worthy boast of a modern player.

The pitcher whom he faced on that June day in 1867 was a newcomer to Waterloo. Theodore N. Vail was born in Ohio in 1845, and when he was two years old, his family moved to Morristown, New Jersey, where Vail later clerked in a drug store. There he became interested in the telegraph, and worked for two years in New York City as a telegraph operator. When his family moved to a farm near Waterloo in 1866, Theodore came with them. Almost on the day of his arrival he had an opportunity to prove his skill at bil-

liards by defeating one of the local experts. It was not long before he became a member of the Empire baseball club. He played during 1866 and 1867, but in the following year he took a position as a telegraph operator with the Union Pacific Railroad. From this he soon went into the railway mail service and, after demonstrating his administrative abilities in this work, he was called into the telephone business where he achieved his greatest success. He was the first president of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, which he helped to organize in 1885. He retired two years later to engage in farming and to take a leading part in the industrial development of Argentina. In 1907 he returned as president of the reorganized American Telephone and Telegraph Company. It was under his aegis that this enterprise became one of the world's greatest corporations, with a phenomenal expansion in the number of telephones in use and with a remarkable improvement in the quality of service. Vail died in 1920 after establishing a reputation as one of the country's outstanding corporation executives.

Although Theodore N. Vail reached the pinnacle of success in the business world, he always remembered with pleasure and a tinge of nostalgia the happy days of his youth when baseball held

his interest. In a letter written in 1917 he recalled the game with Marshalltown when "Anson afterwards the famous baseball player was Captain of the team (Marshalltown)". And then he continued, with a hint of wistfulness, "I have often wondered if I would have become famous as he if I had stuck to baseball."

None of the spectators who witnessed that game between Marshalltown and Waterloo could have realized they were watching two young men who would later become known throughout the nation — one as a popular sports hero, the other as a powerful business leader. Each must have enjoyed a full measure of satisfaction in the knowledge that he had reached the top in his calling.

CARL B. CONE