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I appreciate the honor of talking to "The Frederick." (I feel formal today.)

I'm taking this opportunity to address you about my favorite topic: research into amateur baseball, its omissions and its successes. I don't regret studying the early **professionals,** but for sociological meaning in American culture, the amateurs have always held more appeal for me, and in learning about them I thought I learned more about the way Americans felt about baseball.

POPULARITY OF 19TH CENTURY BASEBALL

The dedication of nineteenth-century players to their favorite game surprised me. I was touched to discover that workers got up early in the morning to play a game before work, sacrificed their lunch to play at work during the noon hour, and used baseball-playing as their off-day entertainment. I was affected by the disappointment and great sadness of young men at reformatories whose administrators could not afford to furnish them with baseballs for pursuing their favorite game. When I saw a photo of sailors trying to play a baseball game on the deck of a moving battleship, I was surprised at their dedication.

All this evidence of Americans' deep devotion to baseball as a part of their personal lives impressed me as an aspect of our culture that we should pay attention to. Administrators

of Indian schools were so convinced of baseball's value that as part of the so-called Americanization program they forced baseball on their young charges, who were children taken from various tribes, shorn of their long hair, and forbidden to speak their own languages. I'm not convinced we've gone fully into the effects of that phenomenon, and I'll mention it again.

What we all want to know is why baseball was able to capture the interest of Americans so thoroughly and hold onto it, even extending it to the enjoyment of watching other and better players display their skills. Perhaps Mark Twain was right when he asserted that the game of baseball embodied the American spirit better than anything else. That spirit obviously includes the desire to organize not only our work but also our play. But we need more than Twain's opinion to decide what to think about amateur baseball.

SHARING OUR RESEARCH

Those of us who love baseball research and have been performing it for as long as sixty-five years have been impelled by a similar pleasure: learning the details of this early dedication to baseball as it quickly became the American national game, and sharing our knowledge with others.

Sharing what we learn means exposing our work to the inspection of other scholars, who soon find the lapses in our research and publish their corrections. That's how revisionist history happens, and we all have to be open to it. What seemed true in the late forties, when I began

baseball research, does not always stand up to the discoveries that researchers made over the years that followed. But accepted knowledge in every field changes over the years; after all, physicians don't bleed their patients any more, either.

Those of us who are ready to accept the newer discoveries in our field need to not only embrace these discoveries, we need also to point out where more discoveries are waiting to be made. I believe that some aspects of baseball history have merely been touched upon and not really explored thoroughly. When Harold Seymour and I introduced some amateur baseball topics in our third Oxford book called Baseball: The People's Game, which covers the early amateurs only through the 1930s, we had in mind that someone would surely develop these topics further than we were able to do in one fat book and also continue them on into the future. In some aspects of baseball history, that has not happened. Scholars have researched and written in these fields, but no comprehensive work has been done on each topic we thought important enough to be introduced in that Oxford book.

EMPHASIS ON PROFESSIONALS

In fact, books published on baseball are still dominated by biographies of star professional players along with histories of pro clubs and pro parks. Their effect is to reinforce the thrill of watching the professionals, and to lead fans to assume there's something important and even heroic about star players and their exploits, even though they are often appalled to learn from these books that ball players are much more like the rest of us than they thought. I believe

that concentrating so heavily on supporting fan devotion to the professionals makes us miss the full story of baseball's meaning in America. That full story should include the amateurs.

If you read about what happens when one town team plays another, or one industrial team challenges another, you get a much more personalized story than one based on the professionals. Amateur baseball stories are based on attachment to your town, your buddies, your neighbors, your girlfriends and boyfriends, your co-religionists, or your fellow employees. These associations are much closer than those involved in big-city rivalries because they're made up of people we know well. What have we lost by turning from a team representing a group of, say, under twenty people you see every day to becoming fans of a team you've read about that represents a city of thousands or millions, most of whom you don't know? Is it the same feeling? Do we get equal joy from rooting for a modern city team of strangers as we do when cheering for a team of neighbors or friends, one that we ourselves may have played on? Marty Payne's presentation yesterday reflected the fun people had when celebrating their town team.

Is there any evidence that we have lost something of value as the amateur game receded in importance and was supplanted in people's minds by the professional game?

I think historians might do well to consider such questions, or at least keep them in mind when performing research. We might learn more about ourselves than we really want to learn, but it could be worth it.

As I list several amateur topics, I'll comment on those I think could use more attention from baseball historians because that attention could help answer questions about Americans.

MILITARY BASEBALL

One of the amateur topics I found fascinating was military baseball. At the time I was researching baseball in the armed forces, I had never dreamed it was as extensive as it turned out to be. Scholars were discovering that soldiers played in the Revolutionary War as well as the Civil War, and books have revealed how close soldiers felt to their baseball teams. I found that remote western posts as well as camps near northeastern cities had formed teams and leagues, and the U.S. Navy teams organized ship competitions in the 1880s. Commanders were establishing rivalry not only among leagues in the States but also abroad. This Spring's Baseball Research Journal features a piece by researcher Terry Bohn on early baseball in North Dakota mentioning a military team I wrote about called the Benteens, but Bohn had the advantage of researching the local newspapers because he lives in the
Bismarck area, so he has the more complete story about military ball in that area.

I get the impression, however, that World War II was the last period in our history when baseball was played on a large scale by the American military. Rougher play like boxing and football seem to be pressed upon servicemen nowadays. Is baseball considered too gentlemanly to help prepare our troops for war? Considering the long and broad history of baseball among service personnel, I can

envision a good book about the changes in the way the military used baseball and the way its effects were evaluated. In other words, I'd love to read a book that asks the big questions about the relationship of the military to baseball.

INDUSTRIAL BASEBALL

Baseball used to be very prominent in industries. American business has long used baseball to help it develop good publicity and to keep employees happier. Even out in Hawaii industrial teams and leagues developed among the early sugar plantations and sugar mills. The whole story of nineteenth-century industrial ball would make a good book.

Nothing exemplifies earlier American industrial ball more than textile ball in New England and in the South, where textile mills became textile cities and spawned textile teams and leagues. Here some good research has been published. Thomas Perry has given us an excellent study of South Carolina's mill teams. Those teams, besides playing against other mill teams, also played college teams and town teams. I was surprised to learn that some women had their own textile mill teams, which played against traveling Bloomer Girl teams that came to their towns. For a while there were even leagues of women's mill teams. I think practically nobody knows about that.

Of course, with the outsourcing of so much of our textile business, we sacrificed not only textile profits but also mill baseball teams and leagues that are part of the memories of many Americans.

One of the best books on industrial ball is the coalfield baseball story called Ball, Bat and Bitumen, written by the prize-winning author L.M. Sutter. She interviewed a lot of ex-players who performed on teams of the Appalachian League from the time of its beginnings, and she studied the local newspapers and examined family scrapbooks, a wonderful source. Most of these players, she said, didn't care if they progressed to pro baseball or not; they played because they loved the game and because they wanted to win. This independent view of playing baseball is typical of amateur players and it's what makes them such attractive characters. There's something inherently American about it--the idea that all that counts in life are having fun and winning.

Sutter also wrote a fascinating book on early New Mexico baseball that included not only miners and soldiers but homesteaders, farmers, Indians, and outlaws--a colorful mix that produces an intriguing story. These books could show the way to other similar studies.

TOWN TEAMS

Another one of the topics I introduced in Baseball: The People's Game is town teams. Sometimes I think about all the scrapbooks, journals, diaries, old newspapers, pamphlets announcing town celebrations, and other miscellaneous materials that must be languishing in historical societies and libraries of small towns that have got to be full of rich material about the joy residents had in playing on town teams and watching their neighbors play. I'd love to see a full history of the way baseball became a part of life in small towns contrasting it with the devotion

that fans show toward big-city pro teams. Today's fans, even if they don't live in a big city, seem to feel they must adopt a big-city team to love. I wonder what it is we have lost here when our interest in baseball becomes so much less personal than it was in the l 9th century.

A new book called The Farmer's Game by David Vaught tells about the relationship between early farmers and baseball. It explains how the hard lives of early settlers were often lightened by playing and watching baseball. This kind of history helps us make sense of the past.

CHURCH BASEBALL

Church teams were once very popular. Ministers held out membership on church teams as a carrot to attract young members. One of the boys who got his first baseball uniform by signing on with a church team was Harold Seymour. In reading recently about churches whose leadership decided to sponsor youth baseball, I caught the flavor of slight embarrassment about having so crassly advertised their institutions on the backs of kids' baseball uniforms, but in some cases that evidently still works, not so much on the kids but on their parents, who might decide to join a church whose name they see advertised so prominently. I think the full story of the way religion, including the YMCA, uses baseball has yet to be told. I have the impression that religion, although it certainly affected baseball, is treated with kid gloves by researchers in many fields. Jimmy Carter has a new book pointing to worldwide discrimination against women and girls, which he says is "largely caused by a false interpretation of carefully selected religious texts." Notice the two copouts: "false

interpretation" and "carefully selected." As a religious person, Carter will doubtless tell us the "true" interpretation and will select his own competing biblical texts. I think anyone who writes about religion's effect on baseball has to deal with the way religious leaders have taught generations of Americans that women are second-class citizens, not as important as men, and worth something only as helpers to their husbands. I'm one of the many women whose lives were affected by this religious belief. Religious leaders should have to deal with the way this teaching has made most male leaders try to exclude women from just about everything, including baseball.

AMERICAN INDIAN BASEBALL

Consider the story of baseball among American Indians. Here we have excellent books to show the way Indian baseball history can inform our understanding of American culture. John Bloom has given us a history of sport as it was forced on the residents of the Indian boarding schools. Joseph Oxendine has interpreted this experience, asserting that the children who were made to attend these schools found a sense of belonging in baseball. Jeffrey Powers-Beck has concentrated on American Indians who grew up to play pro baseball. But I think there's more to learn here. Historians have to consider not only what seems obvious but also what's missing.

When I first became interested in this story, I read biographies and autobiographies of some of these children. Their first days at these so-called Indian schools were horrific. Baseball became a major part of their new culture whether the children liked it or not, because their teachers

believed in using baseball and band as ways to change the culture of these young people. In some cases, the imposition of sport and band appeared to work as the teachers desired. But the successes are the only experiences we've heard about. What about all the other children? Did they learn to hate baseball? Did they withdraw from it or pretend to like it?

The Sport Literature Association has been quoted as saying that these books on American Indians and baseball open new areas of investigation to sport historians in general and baseball historians in particular. "Scholars looking to build off this work will find an immense archive already charted." Maybe not immense, but some information is there. We know that In the past baseball was used at Chilocco, which is now an agricultural institution; Chemawa, which now emphasizes football; Haskell, which has become a basketball power; and Carlisle, which developed famous baseball players but the last I learned was slated for demolition. All of these schools have had checquered histories. Chilocco, which housed Cherokee and Lakota children, was known for terrible conditions, and Carlisle had some cruel teachers, despite developing good baseball teams and players.

I wonder why baseball seems to have been discarded at such institutions. Does the federal agency that's part of the Department of the Interior and deals with Indian Affairs still introduce baseball at all in the two so-called Indian schools that they still operate for the government, Haskell in Kansas and SW Indian Poly in Albuquerque. If not, why not? What the government has to say about the matter **now** might

reflect on its dissatisfaction with its nineteenth-century experience.

A biographer in the field of Indian ball stands out, with a prize winning book, Chief Bender's Burden, by Tom Swift, which brings to the fore an important theme in American society: the way we can celebrate a good baseball player and yet permit one like Bender to carry the burden of knowing he's not fully integrated into society.

COLLEGE BASEBALL

College ball evidently still has importance, but some of it is negative. Boys have since the nineteenth century been recruited for pro baseball out of college. I have heard many presentations on the history of college baseball but nothing that approaches a full interpretation of its significance. Even college presidents are speaking out now **against** college athletics. Last year the chancellor of the University of Maryland said, "We've reached the point where big-time intercollegiate athletics is undermining the integrity of our institutions, diverting presidents and institutions from their main purpose." Actually, from comments I've read in the past, we must have reached that point in the nineteenth century. If so, why do we still have college sport? Is it for college promotion and making money, or student character development, or the preparation of professionals?

Back in the 1880s commentators worried that college baseball players were becoming professionalized. Nowadays their professionalism is recognized in the new movement to pay them for their play, since they are making tons of money for their colleges and getting none of it. In

addition, I see that the same controversy is still going on about the sports tail wagging the education dog, with commentators saying colleges give unwarranted breaks to star players but not star students. Hasn't this changed at all since the nineteenth century? And is baseball part of it? It was surprising to learn last month that some college football players have won the right to be considered employees who can demand salaries and other employee rights. If college football players can organize, no doubt some college baseball players will try to do the same. And if they are employees now, weren't they employees in the 19th century? I know that some historians disapprove of judging the past by present-day standards. But it's one tool we have for understanding ourselves.

I'd like to see some researchers study college and university archives for the truth about the reasons these institutions continue to support baseball (or omit baseball).

PUBLIC PARK BASEBALL

From their beginnings in the nineteenth century, city planners have always been ambivalent about whether to include baseball diamonds in public parks, which they originally planned as places of contemplation, not active play. I wonder how early teams got the opportunity to play on these public spaces. Or did they just take their chances on finding some flat meadow to use? Some of them must have reserved diamonds for their games, either private or public. Did the local governments of the nineteenth century cater to baseball clubs by giving them the use of public diamonds? When the best teams went professional in the 1870s, how did they all find enclosed fields so that they

could charge admission? Were there still plenty of diamonds for the remaining amateurs, or were they stuck with disused fields?

John Thorn has opened up this subject in describing the New York "pleasure gardens" and of course Elysian Fields in Hoboken. But we know little about these early ball fields, where the New York game and the New England game flourished. There must have been plenty of clubs that failed to join the 1871 association; where did they play? Were all or most of these spaces private? I'd like to see a study of private as well as state, city, and federal parks for a history of their provision of baseball diamonds and why cities furnished them in the nineteenth century. I notice that some Protoball members are working on this right now.

PRISON BASEBALL

The early history of baseball in prisons is quite startling to learn about. I think we could say that baseball was one of the key factors in loosening up the cruel lockstep behavior expected of men who were imprisoned in the nineteenth century. At first, prisoners were not even allowed to speak. Reformers like Zebulon Brockway of Elmira in the 1870s and Gardiner Tufts of Concord in the 1880s opened the way for sports in prison, and baseball became very popular there. The development of decent treatment for prisoners in the 19th century and baseball's role in this development would make a good book if someone were interested enough to study it. All I did was introduce the topic. Some writers have produced books about the later period, like a good biography of Blackie Schwamb called The Wrong Side

of the Wall by Eric Stone, but I think nineteenth century prison ball is much more striking.

DISCRIMINATION IN BASEBALL

In two other aspects of baseball history, baseball scholars are really starring today. In both of these two aspects there is a long history of discrimination. I refer to black baseball history and women's baseball history. I think this phenomenon of historical interest in both fields is a compliment to American scholarship, for scholars know that revealing the discrimination of the past can help in overcoming it.

It's become clear that the main reason for the surfacing of this discrimination lies in flaws and omissions in the main document underlining our government: our constitution. A professor of constitutional law named Sanford Levinson points out that the worst aspect of our constitution is the way it has institutionalized discrimination by race and by gender. Institutionalized it, not just permitted it, because, he says, discrimination is embedded in the language of the document.

Baseball historians have pounced upon this flaw in our constitution, showing us how difficult it's been to repair this serious lapse, which has prevented too many people from participating fully in our democracy, including opportunities they might have had to play baseball.

CHILDREN AND BASEBALL

Take children's baseball, for example. My study of children's ball for the third Oxford volume, Baseball: The

People's Game, stops in 1939 with the formation of the Little League. When the League was formed, there was a lot of criticism by educators who declared that adults shouldn't have taken over children's play, which 19th century children had handled largely by themselves. That criticism seems to have died out, and children now seem used to having adults organizing and controlling their baseball. And of course this organized play has many advantages over the pickup ball most children used to play. But have they benefited from the change in ways that outweigh the disadvantages of learning to develop their own leaders, their own diamonds, and their own competition? I'd like to know how educators today balance the advantages and disadvantages of this big change in children's baseball.

I am bringing this up because the effects of adult organization of children's baseball in some ways proved tragic, since while offering facilities and organization to some children, it specifically excluded others. From the point of view of girls' baseball, of course, the opening of Little League proved a disaster, since it taught girls that they were not as important as boys. It's something girls didn't really need to learn, since they knew it back in the 18th century.

We know now that girls have been playing baseball with boys since the 1840s. Debra Shattuck is finding all sorts of evidence for girls playing on boys' teams in the 19th century, and we look forward to her coming publication. Yet a century later, the organizers of Little League told girls they had to play softball instead, because baseball was only for boys. Most people don't realize that it took 35 years and

many lawsuits by parents to give girls a chance at Little League, so a full generation of girls lost out on playing children's baseball because it was organized to exclude them.

And Little League earned bad press when newspapers revealed its discrimination against black children in the South, which culminated in Southern white boys being withdrawn from Little League and placed in an all-white league, leaving black children to their own devices. This move taught black boys that they were not as good as white boys. That is, if they hadn't already heard it. The white league didn't permit black kids to join until 1967, which historically is practically yesterday. A lot of baseball historians know about this, and I heard a presentation about it last year at NINE, but I think most Americans don't, and those who realize it, I'm sure, want to forget about it. Treating our children so shamefully isn't something that is played up in general history textbooks.

My point is that if children's play had been left undisturbed as a self-organizing activity, as it was in the 19th century, maybe girls and all minority children would have been able to continue developing their own play in a less discriminating way. They might have grown up to accept each other in their self-organized neighborhood games, as a lot of kids did before Little League. So the American tendency to organize everything, although it leads to efficiency, does not always serve our democracy. That's a part of the American spirit that Mark Twain might not have admired.

BLACK AMERCANS AND BASEBALL

Historians have done a great deal to bring forward the history of black baseball and its long fight for recognition by the baseball majority. Much good research has been presented under the auspices of a journal run by Leslie Heaphy. The first winner of the Seymour Medal, a book called Fleet Walker's Divided Heart, was a book with a theme important in American history: Like Chief Bender, Walker earned the feeling of belonging that was conferred by success in the national game, but that success was tempered by the disappointment of continued discrimination, which Walker believed was so strong it could never be overcome, and it made him urge black people to join the back-to-Africa movement. We need more books that show that the people involved demonstrate important themes about who we are as Americans, as this book did.

Besides biographies in this field we have some histories of early black baseball in important cities like Chicago and Cleveland. Right now the historian James Brunson, who spoke to us at this meeting, is about to publish a book some of us have heard about already, giving us biographies of a great many formerly unknown early black amateurs and professionals.

I've read that the historically black colleges still run baseball teams but now they also have a lot of white players on their teams, thus diluting the ethnic solidarity of their organizations. Is it true that the long years in the South without Little League have kept Southern black youths from enjoying competition with their peers and thus discouraged them from developing into good players as they might

have? I know the historically black colleges had baseball teams, but did they consciously try to develop baseball players the way the white ones did? Is it true that the big leagues still fail to recruit in the black colleges? Finally, are there any plans for a book integrating, summarizing, and interpreting our knowledge of the black experience in American baseball? I'm thinking of one of those slim volumes the British historians produce interpreting an entire field. That would be a major contribution.

WOMEN AND BASEBALL

The other lapse in our constitution, equality for both genders, has also received a lot of attention by baseball historians. We have excellent books by Jennifer Ring and Marilyn Cohen, among others. Jean Ardell's book, Breaking Into Baseball, has given us a history of this topic that is so comprehensive it supersedes the earlier histories prepared by other good researchers. Supplementing this we have biographies and autobiographies, and we have the Encyclopedia of Women in Baseball published by Leslie Heaphy's committee on women, a book that is full of information about amateur and professional baseba;; women and is now being updated.

That doesn't mean we've uncovered everything, of course. I try to contribute ideas to this aspect of baseball history, and I've suggested to other researchers that they could probably find more proof that girls played baseball in the 1840s by searching women's early diaries, journals, and letters, because since women were discouraged from writing for publication, they recorded their activities and their ideas in correspondence and their diaries. Girls must

have been playing in the 1840s, because if they hadn't , they could not have formed their own baseball teams without any help in the new women's colleges of the 1860s and 70s.

Philadelphia was the site of some early clubs started by women, so when I was in Philadelphia last summer I visited the historical society to examine women's nineteenth-century diaries, but in the short time I spent there, I located no mention of baseball. In checking the internet I found a site called "A Celebration of Women Writers" listing hundreds of women who have written diaries and even published books between 1801 and 1900. I'll bet some of them mention playing baseball.

Whenever I speak on women's baseball history, I show pictures of these early women players posing in long dresses and baseball caps and holding bats and balls, or playing in what looked like the early bathing suits, long black stockings and short skirts, or in those bulky, ugly bloomers. I think showing these dated photos helps a little to introduce the notion that women actually did play baseball in the nineteenth century.

PUBLICIZING KNOWLEDGE

Much of the discovered information now available about women's early participation in baseball is not seeping down, however. Many adults still assume that women have played and still play only softball; my trying to assure them otherwise doesn't make them believe it, no matter how many pictures I display. Parents and teachers must still be reinforcing the notion that baseball is a masculine game,

because children are still grow up assuming that baseball is just for boys and men. The proliferation of books about professional male players emphasizes that impression. It doesn't help that countries as diverse as Canada, Japan, China, Cuba, Australia, Venezuela, and the Netherlands **promote** women's baseball while we give it comparatively little support and almost no publicity.

In 1939 even Babe Ruth was thinking of American kids. At the ceremony that year where he was inducted into the Hall of Fame, he was quoted as saying, "They started something here and the kids are keeping the ball rolling. I hope some of you kids will be in the Hall of Fame. I'm very glad that in my day I was able to earn my place. And I hope youngsters of today have the same opportunity to experience such [a] feeling." Well, sorry, Babe, they didn't all have that same opportunity even in 1939. Their chances depended on their skin color and their gender, and the basic reason is that our constitution failed them. Its two critical lapses permitted us to believe for far too long that women are not as important as men, and that black men are less important than white men, and it was perfectly all right to keep less important people from participating fully in the American national game. These are ideas I haven't seen in American history textbooks.

It seems to me that we have accumulated a great deal of knowledge about baseball's experience with those two important constitutional lapses, knowledge that is for the most part sitting on bookshelves instead of being used. Back in 1987 the philosopher Doris Lessing anticipated our talking about this problem in a book called Prisons We

Choose to Live Inside. She declared that "we are now in possession of a great deal of hard information about ourselves, but we do not use it to improve our institutions and therefore our lives." How many times have we read articles making that same point?

That's why I'm beginning to think that SABR should form a committee to stay in contact with textbook companies and the people who write them, to keep them updated about the newest discoveries in baseball history. Otherwise, kids will continue to grow up thinking that baseball history equals Babe Ruth, period. Students of American history also need to be informed about the discoveries presented in the revisionist history written by people like David Block and John Thorn, and news like the updated view of the Cartwright myth described by Richard Hirschberger in the latest Baseball Research Journal.

INTEGRATING KNOWLEDGE

Fully understanding the nineteenth century baseball experience would enable another change: writing baseball history books that, instead of devoting themselves to either the professional side or the amateur, would include both. Some writers already do this. Consciously integrating amateurism and professionalism when writing baseball history gives us a broader, more thorough view of that history and enables us as scholars to compare nineteenth century baseball with that of the present to show us whether we have really progressed. I can envision a one-volume history of baseball--an interpretive summary that treats of both professionals and amateurs--one that would

evaluate the American baseball experience. In any case, I look forward to seeing a future that includes this kind of approach to baseball writing.

ENCOURAGING AMATEURS

Last month in the NINE Journal I read a quotation from former times that I think embodies my attitude toward the topic I'm addressing today. This is that quotation:

"The only thing now lacking to forever establish base-ball as our national sport is a more liberal encouragement of the amateur element. Professional baseball may have its ups and downs according as its directors may be wise or contrary, but the foundation upon which it all is built, its hold upon the future, is in the amateur enthusiasm for the game. The professional game must always be confined to the larger towns, but every hamlet may have its amateur team, and let us see to it that their games are encouraged." That was John Montgomery Ward speaking.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for your devotion to our national pastime's history and to assure you that you are doing valuable work in revealing its part in what Twain called The American spirit.

Thank you for listening.