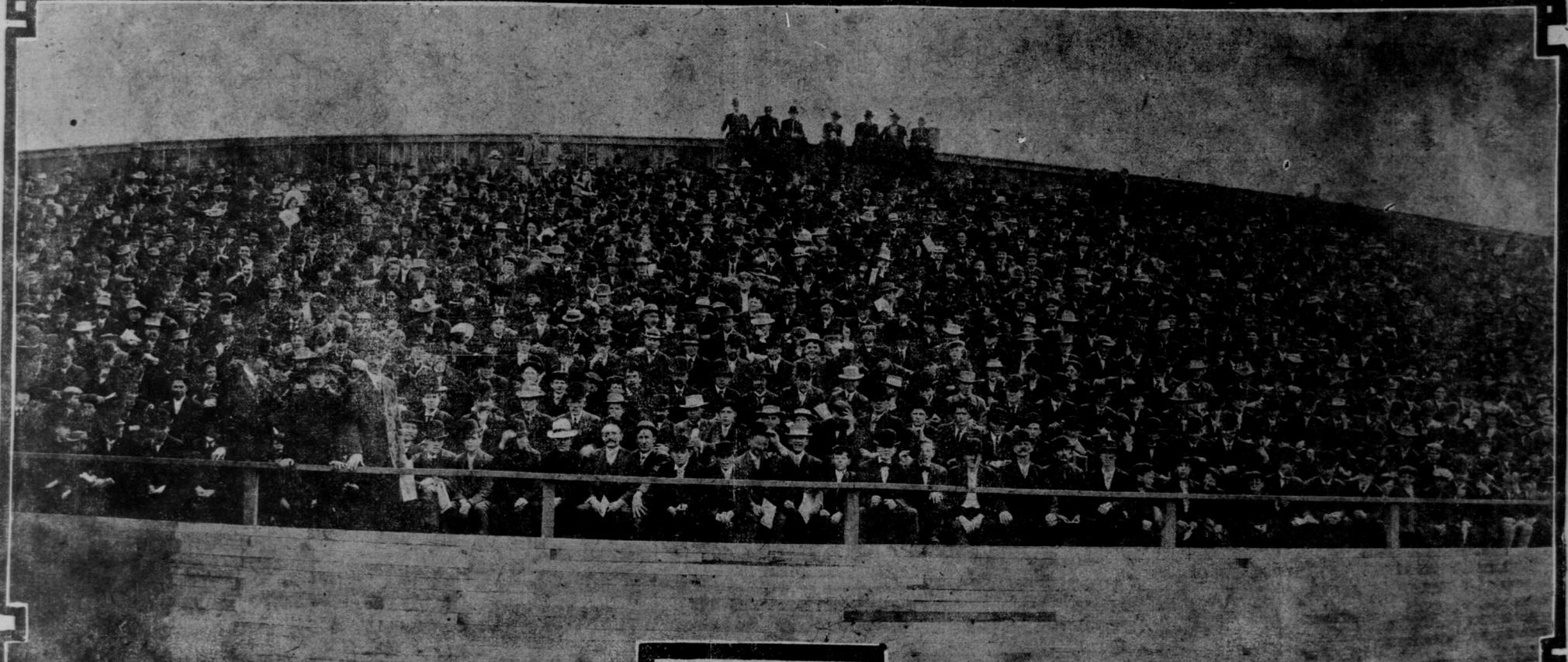


THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF BASEBALL



By William J. Slattery

THE great game of baseball has prospered throughout the length and breadth of the land for many years. It has known its trials and tribulations, its moments of prosperity and its days of strife; but today it stands as the greatest outdoor sport in the wide world.

There are thousands of fans in every city, village and hamlet of the United States who believe that they are familiar with each and every phase of the national pastime, but it is safe to assert that many of them are not aware of the fact that the fiftieth anniversary of the professional baseball club has just been celebrated.

Fifty years ago last month the first baseball commission met in the city of New York. It was then that the first set of playing rules was drafted and the foundations laid for the mammoth organization that now directs the affairs of baseball in this country and Canada.

Perhaps the few men who attended that meeting and framed the plans for the formation of a great American league were confident that the game would prosper for a few years, or until such time at least as the novelty of the thing would appeal to the populace. If one of these old patriarchs should be allowed to stalk on earth again and survey the baseball field as it is today, he sure would feel proud of the work that he and his associates performed half a century ago.

Baseball has, during these 50 years, developed into a gigantic commercial project as well as a great outdoor sport. Thousands of men are making their living out of the game while millions of its admirers, known as "fans," derive from it their chief amusement.

From the quarters and halves which these persons deposit in the box offices, the salaries of the thousands of ball tossers, managers and magnates are paid and millions of dollars in dividends are declared in the many leagues that are under control of the National Association of Professional Baseball Clubs. This is one of the most capable and ably directed bodies that govern any of the large enterprises of which the United States can boast.

The reason why baseball has prospered and become a national pastime is because it is a square sport. When one steps to consider the chances that present themselves to tempt players and managers alike to forsake the straight and narrow path of honesty and clean up thousands of dollars at every turn of a crooked wheel, it is marvelous, indeed, to figure out how the sport is kept pure and clean. But, nevertheless, the fact remains that the honor of baseball has been preserved during all these 50 years, though the men who control the game have been obliged to fight many a bitter battle for clean sport.

It will be interesting for the California fans to learn that there are at present 37 leagues from Maine to California that are under the control of the national association. This does not include the hundreds of semiprofessional leagues and minor organizations known to the fan as the "bush brigades." The clubs under the control of the national body are all classed and graded. Each has its officers, its managers and its set of rules to abide by and is compelled to live up to its agreement in every particular.

Some Star Salaries
In these 37 leagues of organized baseball there are 222 clubs. Each has on its salary list all the way from 15 to 20 players. The grand total of stars who perform in these various leagues is no less than 3026 on an average. As the salary of each of these players ranges all the way from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for a season's work, it can readily be noted that the game of baseball is profitable to the young man who is athletic and brainy enough to hold his place in the ranks.

The money expended each year in conducting baseball in these 37 leagues would finance many an important corporation. At a glance the casual fan would scarce believe his eyes if he were told that the grand total of the expenses reaches nearly \$6,000,000 before a single cent of dividends is declared. But it is a fact nevertheless, and the estimate is only a conservative one.

A noted student of the game has compiled a table showing the amount spent each year by the various clubs of the larger leagues. First of all come the salaries of the players, for which the tidy sum of \$2,400,000 is expended annually. Then come the expenses of the teams on the road, which generally total in the neighborhood of \$17,000. The rental of grounds and other incidentals connected with the running of well equipped parks cost the magnates \$600,000 each year. The salaries of the umpires reach in the neighborhood of \$200,000, while the spring training before each season opens represents an outlay of \$150,000.

The managers of the various clubs in these leagues receive about \$100,000 a year all told, which, by the way, is one of the smallest items in the vast expense account. The organization expenses and incidentals connected with each league cost in the neighborhood of \$75,000, while the uniforms that the players wear stand the clubs about \$50,000 a season. The baseballs represent an outlay of about \$25,000 and incidental expenses of \$100,000 bring the grand yearly total up to within striking distance of \$5,000,000.

After studying these figures, the fan can readily see that the magnates must take in many a piece of silver at the box office before it is possible for them to declare a dividend in any club or any league. It also can be understood then why every man who owns an interest in a ball team wants to see it win games, for it is the winning team that gets the pennant and draws the largest crowds both on the home grounds and on the road. Everybody wants to see the star team perform, no matter in what city or league it might be, and it is principally for this reason that the great rivalry that makes baseball so exciting exists in the piny town from the bush circuit to the national league.

It is the desire to win that has made baseball a sport worth going miles to see. Victory on the diamond is dearer to the heart of the player or the magnate than anything else in this world. When he is winning he is happy, but whenever the dreaded slump sets in he is down in the mouth and nobody has the power to comfort nor console him.

And the fan is built on somewhat the same lines. He loves the home team with a love born of the stars and stripes. While the boys are winning the fan is in his element, but as soon as the tide of fortune turns he generally becomes dyspeptic. He has no use for the good times of life, and, in fact, at times he figures that there is no use in living now that the home talent is down and out without a chance to bring home the pennant.

While the game of baseball has been forging ahead during all these years, practically every state in the union has contributed its mite toward making the great pastime what it is. New York is practically the mother state of the game, while Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut and other of the great eastern commonwealths have been identified very closely with it.

California has been closely linked with the national pastime. When the baseball fever began to spread throughout the country in due time it reached the Golden state. The germ was very contagious, and before many moons there were professional and amateur baseball teams in nearly every city of California.

Old timers can look back about 35 years when the park at the corner of Twenty-sixth and Harrison streets was built. They can remember when the game was played on the old Alameda grounds when it was necessary for the fans to rise bright and early in the morning and do many a hot step before they reached the old grounds across the bay where the stars of former days were wont to shine.

In those days California's fans were developed. Those were the days of the true fan—the fan who would walk all day long for a chance to witness a game of baseball, that would furnish him with a stock of conversation large enough to last till the next game was played.

In those times baseball was not so well organized as it is at the present time. The governing body of the sport was not the power that it is now, and the system of drafts, releases and contracts was not down to the fine point of perfection that it now is. But the foundation for all these things was laid then, and laid well, and in due time California fell in line with the other great states of the nation and helped them build up the national pastime from year to year.

Perhaps no other state has contributed so many wonderful ball players to the big leagues as California. There are people in the east who will sniff and scoff at this statement, but nevertheless it is true. For 30 years past California has been sending back star after star who has made his mark with the fans of the larger eastern cities. Invariably, California's players make their mark, and, as usual, California gets the worst of it.

Then, again, there has been many a star in the big leagues, who, though he is not entitled to claim the Golden state as his home, made his mark here, and in fact learned how to play the game under our sunny skies. These men probably were possessed of the ability, but it is a singular coincidence that all the same, and, after playing in other leagues for years without gain-

ing reputations, they drifted out here and in a short time became fit subjects for the major organizations.

A Famous Pitcher
There is many a fan today who is not aware of the fact that the greatest pitcher of his time, and considered by some to have been the greatest, the game has ever known, was Charley Sweeney, a San Francisco boy, who went back to Providence and won the pennant for that team in the days of the old league, 1881. Sweeney performed a feat on the ancient Boston grounds that has never been equaled since, and perhaps never will be. He struck out 19 of the famous Bostonians, shutting them out and pitching a game the like of which was never surpassed in any league.

It was Charley Sweeney who won the pennant for Providence that year. "Besides being a grand pitcher he could wield a club with a fierceness that drove many a pitcher from the club." Sweeney won one remarkable game for Providence by knocking the ball out of the lot in the eighteenth inning, scoring the only run of the most memorable contest of its time. And after all the glory he won on the green diamond Sweeney died alone and unattended at the city and county hospital here five years ago. It was not till after his death that the thousands who knew him in his palmy days realized what a wonder he was.

Then there was the great Carroll and Morris battery that went back to Philadelphia in the later seventies and took the Quaker City by storm. Carroll was a left handed pitcher and Morris a catcher who could wing the ball around the field better than any one in his day. After years of triumph the pair returned to California, where they took their places among the many other former greats, and are now heard of no more.

Everybody who follows baseball knows all about old George Van Halten, the patriarch of the Oakland team. For the last 25 years Van has been a star of the diamond. He was

one of the most talked about men in baseball when he was drafted by the old Chicago White Sox in the early eighties. Ever since that time Van has held his own in every club with which he has played. He was one of the most popular men who ever chased flies on the famous New York polo field and he could be there yet, despite his years, had he not preferred to stay in his native town, where he started out as a lad on the sand lot so many years ago that none save the real old timers can remember.

California also gave Jerry Denny, the greatest third baseman of his time, to the big league. Jerry was with the old New York Giants when they won the pennant in 1889 and 1890. This is still considered by the fans to have been the greatest aggregation of ball tossers that ever performed on any diamond, and that is saying a whole lot.

Patsy Cahill, fondly known as "White Wings," is another Californian who won the hearts of the bleachers in the old National league. Patsy was an infielder who had few equals. He passed away in Oakland several years ago after an honored career in the field.

Then there is Hal Chase, the Santa Clara college boy, who has not a peer as a first baseman today, and whom the New York fans compelled Clark Griffith to bring back, no matter how much salary he demanded.

Joe Nealon, the former St. Ignatius college and Seal first baseman, is clouting the ball hard for Pittsburg and incidentally drawing the largest salary ever paid a youngster breaking in. Tommy Sheehan, on the same team, is best remembered as a member of the old Sacramento and Tacoma clubs, while Americans, is making good with a vengeance and fooling the best of batmen with his wonderful curves and shoots.

If one went down the line and carefully studied the lists of players in the clubs of the various big league teams today he could readily pick out a score of Californians, or men who learned to play the game as it should be played in California. They are all

making good. In fact, most of them are stars, and so it is that California has done more than its share toward supplying talent to the big leagues.

Today, baseball in California is as popular as it ever was. The fan of today is just as ardent as the fan of the past and one has but to take a glance at the bleachers at Recreation park some sunny Sunday afternoon and note the 10,000 or more enthusiasts to satisfy himself of this.

Today California is developing material for the big leagues just as it has done in the past. When the present season comes to a close, it is safe to assert that there will be many a California boy on the drafted lists of the National and American leagues, but in less than six weeks the league officials got together, paid up their men and started out anew on the Oakland field. Every club of the league finished the regular season and the fans who attended the games did so after their usual custom, forgetting, in their glee, that the ashes of the burned city were still hot. They were determined that baseball should not die, and it was due to their determination and the games of the league officials that the national game is now flourishing in our midst just as though nothing had happened.



PITCHER and CATCHER IN FRENCH BASEBALL GAME



THE GAME OF CALIFORNIA AND GREAT PLAYERS WHICH THE STATE HAS PRODUCED

A CHAMPIONSHIP GAME IN 1866 FROM AN OLD PRINT



SECTION OF BLEACHERS AT RECREATION PARK



JAPANESE BASE BALL TEAM OF WASEDA UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

BASEBALL ON A LONDON DIAMOND