

"The Fats Defeat the Leans"

Carroll County Times article for 20 August 2000

By Jay A. Graybeal

Community baseball was the cornerstone of local athletics from the late nineteenth century until after the Second World War. Teams of "nines" were fielded from towns, larger businesses and service clubs and games were a community event. A memorable game between members of the Westminster Rotary Club was played on Hoffa Field, Western Maryland College seventy-five years ago. A light hearted description of the event appeared in the September 11, 1925 issue of the Westminster Democratic Advocate newspaper under the headline of "Fats Defeat Leans":

"They actually played ball on Hoffa Field on Wednesday afternoon, but the telling the story of the defeat of the Lean Rotarians by their Fat comrades would require a more skilled pen than that of the Advocate reporter. He is compelled to say, however, that not all the 'Fats' were fat, nor all the 'Leans' lean; although there is no disputing the fact that Pearre Wantz, Joe Hunter, Mayor Koontz and Harry Kimmey were appropriately placed among the former, and Frank Dillard, John Reifsnider, Tom Anders and Peyton Gorsuch, among the latter. There is an old adage that "comparisons are odious," yet at the risk of criticism, the scribe feels warranted in saying that stellar lights were Steve Ramer, Mayor Koontz, Harry Kimmey, George W. Babylon, Charlie Eckenrode, Carroll Albaugh, Bill Mather, Ober Herr, Tom Anders, Frank Leidy, Peyton Gorsuch and Ray Fogle, for examination of the box score, will show for each the record of 10,000; Wantz's record in the box score looks a little better, 20,000, but it must be remembered that he was at the bat twice and the others only once. It is confidently asserted that if each of them had been armed with a bat ten feet long and two feet wide, neither Mott Smith, nor Molly Twigg could have missed hitting the bat for either of them. Seriously Guy Steele distinguished himself by making a hit, though Charlie Eckenrode, who ran for him because there was something the matter with Guy's feet, lights, liver or something or other, got caught trying to steal from first to second. But there was nothing the matter with Guy's feet, hands or other paraphernalia, when in the field, far left, he made the long, running catch of Jack Bennett's high fly. Speaking of stealing; the scorer is still trying to figure how Tank Reese stole from first to third; breaking the world's record for base stealing. Of the other players, whose names have not been mentioned above, the box score and summary tells the story. No account of the game would be complete without special reference to the umpiring of Check Baile and Russ Mowen. It could not help being all to the mustard, so far as Check was concerned, for he umpired from right behind the pitcher's box, and while the 'Leans' were at the bat, Mott Smith could tell him which pitched balls he could call 'strikes' and which 'ball;' and when the 'Fats' were at the bat, Molly Twigg could guide him. It is enough to say that he was fair and impartial, and only once was compelled to 'pull his gun' to keep from being mobbed. The real story of the game is summed up in the expression of one of the fans: -- 'It was worth any body's fifty cents.' The name of Custard will be found in the box score, as catching for both teams. Behind the bat for what amounted to eleven innings, he did splendid work, playing equally well, and that well was mighty good for both sides. The lineup was:

FATS.

AB. H. R. O. A.

Reese, 3b, p.....	3	.....	2	.....	1	.....	0	.....	2
Cover, 1b.....	3	.....	1	.....	2	.....	4	.....	0
Smith, p., 3b.....	3	.....	2	.....	2	.....	2	.....	3
Gehr, ss.....	3	.....	2	.....	2	.....	0	.....	0
Thomas, 2b.....	3	.....	2	.....	0	.....	5	.....	1

Hunter, rf.....	2.....	0.....	1.....	0.....	0.....
Wantz, lf.....	2.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Conaway, cf.....	2.....	0.....	1.....	0.....	0.....
Ramer, c.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Koontz, c.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Kimme, c.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Babylon, rf.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Steele, lf.....	1.....	1.....	0.....	1.....	0.....
Eckenrode, lf.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Custard, c.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	2.....

27 10 9 18 8

LEANS.

AB. H. R. O. A.

Dillard, cf.....	2.....	2.....	1.....	0.....	0.....
Woolfolk, ss.....	2.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Twigg, p.....	3.....	1.....	1.....	3.....	2.....
Billingslea, 1b.....	2.....	1.....	2.....	4.....	1.....
Bennett, 3b.....	3.....	1.....	0.....	1.....	3.....
Albaugh, lf.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Manino, 2b.....	2.....	0.....	0.....	1.....	0.....
Reifsnider, c.....	2.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Mathias, rf.....	2.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Mather, lf.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Herr, cf.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Anders, rf.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Leidy, cf.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Gorsuch, cf.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....
Fogle, rf.....	1.....	0.....	0.....	0.....	0.....

24 6 4 15 9

Score by innings:

Fats.....	2.....	2.....	2.....	3.....	0.....	x-9
Leans.....	2.....	0.....	0.....	1.....	0.....	1-4

Summary – Three base hit, Billingslea, Conaway, Smith; two base hits, Reese, Thomas, Bennett, Cover. Stuck out by Smith, 5; Reese, 1; Twigg, 4. Base on balls, off Smith 2. Stolen bases too numerous to mention; errors, plenty. Umpires, Baile and Mowen.

Democratic Advocate, September 11, 1925."

The participants, no doubt, enjoyed the above article as much as the spectators. Although not mentioned in the article, the money raised at the event was put to good use in the community.

Photo1: Harry Kimmey (right holding teddy bear) played for the Rotary Club "Fats" in a 1925 baseball game. Historical Society of Carroll County collection, gift of Henry B. Kimmey, 1985.

Photo 2: H. Peyton Gorsuch, editor of this newspaper, played for the Rotary Club "Leans" in a 1925 baseball game. Historical Society of Carroll County collection, gift of Mr. Arleigh Burke, 1986.