

## Chanler 1906 Baseball Team

# THE BATBOY "REMEMBERS"

WHEN

Milk wagons, flexible flyers, Edison machines, and summer band concerts are all part of a life style that existed over three decades ago. It was a time of warm kitchens, hard work and occasional trips to the woodshed for those who tended to be a bit mischievous. I do not remember "way back when," and I doubt if my father does, but Mr. Len Schutte of Amherst Road, Red Hook can still recall handing Heine Zimmerman a bat as the first baseman walked to the plate for the 1906 Robert Chanler Team of Red Hook.

Robert Chanler, according to Len Schutte, was a wealthy Hudson River landowner, an artist, a notorious party giver, a horse racing enthusiast, a tremendous baseball fan and a man who lived life in a grand and Gatsbyian fashion.

Like Mr. Chanler's personality, his ball team was no ordinary home town fixture. The men in the picture above, were predominately Fordham College students or graduates that were recruited and paid by Chanler to play exhibition games. These players were not hired on a part time basis but practiced every day much in the same way that the major leaguers work today.

The games were held on Sundays and holidays. Hundreds of fans came from New York city, Poughkeepsie, Kingston, Hudson, Troy, and Albany to see the Chanler Team play a fine brand of baseball. Their opponents were traveling teams from China, Japan and other foreign countries as well as black teams from Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, New York City, and many cities throughout New Jersey which came to Red Hook each week to do battle with the famous Chanler team.

Baseball was not the only sport

that interested Chanler. Surrounding his ball field now the site of the Scheffler Lumber Co., in Red Hook, was a large horse race track where many big time races were held, both trotters and pacers.

Directly north of Chanler's sports complex the Red Hook Gun Club had a clay pigeon trap shooting range, now Triebel's Garage, where members held weekly matches. Each year a special event attracted nationally known marksmen and representatives from many of the nations leading firearms and ammunition manufacturers to compete at the Red Hook range.

Mr. Schutte remembers that when Chanler opened his race track and ballfield there was an all day carnival with horse racing, baseball, and a barbecue to which the public was invited. Chanler's brother, Louis, Lt. Governor of New York, state officials and many prominent people attended the festivities. Mr. Schutte reminisced, "I was very young at the time but remember two large oxen, impaled on spits, and roasting over a large fire. This roasted beef with all the fixings was served to all attending." This all happened a long time ago, and it must have been quite a show, for Mr. Schutte still recalls it as "an outstanding event that was talked about for years."

Many great ball players came out of Red Hook in those days, two of whom were Heine Zimmerman and Eddie Collins, and many great memories were created "way back then." There are few people who remember that time and it is our good luck that Len Schutte chose to share his rich experience with the residents of this area, many of whom may be unaware of the heritage that they share with generations of Northern Dutchess residents and sports fans.