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Baseball, Immigration, and Professionalization in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts History from  
The College of William and Mary

by

Michael Anthony Young

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Williamsburg, VA  
April 28, 2011

## Introduction: Baseball's class appeal and initial expansion

Outlined in this section will be the upper class origins of the game and baseball's diffusion into the lower class. Additionally, this section will address the nationwide expansion of the game through leisure time, cultural change, and the Civil War. George B. Kirsch and Harold Seymour have done significant work on the initial expansion of the game, and their research will be included in this section. This background is essential to fully understand the later impact that European immigrants and members of the lower class had on the early game.

The origins of baseball are somewhat mysterious, but most scholars agree that baseball first developed from a game called town ball, itself derived from an older English game called rounders, among other traditional children's games including cricket.<sup>1</sup> Town ball and similar games evolved into competing versions of what can be described as "proto-baseball." The "New York Game" and the "New England Game" competed for prominence in the 1840s and 1850s. The key difference was that in the New England Game the ball was thrown underhand, while in the New York Game the ball was thrown overhand.<sup>2</sup> The New York game eventually won out and became baseball; the New England variety ceased to exist. The dawn of baseball arrived with the publication of the Knickerbockers Rules in 1848 by the club of the same name, which lay out a game that is recognizable by even the most tepid follower of modern baseball. The late 1850s saw a game of baseball that was nearly exclusively upper class, where the

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<sup>1</sup> George B. Kirsch, *Baseball in the Blue and Grey: the National Past Time During the Civil War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), page 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

“overwhelming majority of players” were native born.<sup>3</sup> Baseball first competed with cricket for attention. In the words of Albert Spalding, “Cricket is a splendid game for Brits, it is a genteel game, a conventional game,” and this was no less true for the upper class progeny of British descent in America who enjoyed cricket more than baseball until the Civil War.<sup>4</sup>

The Civil War put an end to this preference for cricket when purported English support, or even sympathy, for the Confederacy made baseball the game of choice for those professing patriotism in New York City.<sup>5</sup> The *Brooklyn Eagle* stated in 1862 during the war that “[cricket] is not an American game, but baseball is purely an American game.”<sup>6</sup> This “instinctive aversion to cricket” allowed the game of baseball to grow rapidly during the Civil War as the upper classes sought amusement.<sup>7</sup> This growth would continue after the war, but was simultaneously spurred by other trends in athletics and society.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw great overall growth in the game. Especially in the second half, citizen appreciation for all athletics and recreation increased. This was notably true of the upper classes. Many members of the upper class joined athletic clubs in order to pursue these newly popular athletic interests. Industrialization and later unionization led to one day off a week, and on Sundays the lower classes could engage in athletic activity for the first time without concern for work. This newfound leisure time for the lower classes was already enjoyed by the upper classes, and now the low born could mirror

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 81.

<sup>4</sup> Albert Spalding, *America's National Game* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 1992), 5. [reprinted]

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Devine, *Harry Wright: The Father of Professional Baseball* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company inc., 2003), 17.

<sup>6</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 31.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 31.

upper-class activities. The standardization of the work schedule ensured that many people, both poor and rich, were free on Sundays. The growth of cities, in conjunction with this newfound free time, created a massive base of people willing to participate in leisurely activities.<sup>8</sup> Thus, recreation has been cited as one of the primary things affected by the growth of cities. The explosion of athletic clubs in cities like New York, Philadelphia, and Washington DC after the Civil War fully demonstrate this trend.<sup>9</sup> Baseball emerged at just the right time to take full advantage of the nationwide athletic phenomenon.

Before baseball began to grow rapidly among all classes of Americans, middle and upper class members participated in a different way. The first organized baseball clubs grew as extensions of the athletic clubs that existed all over New York City and had become popular earlier in the century. In these clubs members of the upper class would compete among each other for social prestige.<sup>10</sup> Hefty initiation fees and even detailed membership screening processes were enough to keep undesirables excluded.<sup>11</sup> The Philadelphia Athletics, for instance, had a \$25 initiation fee in the 1850s, which was a few weeks' wages for a member of the working class, and would prevent most people from even being able to consider joining.<sup>12</sup> Fees in many of these clubs would go up in a coordinated move to prevent members of the lower classes from participating as their participation became more possible due to wage increases or inflation.<sup>13</sup> This exclusion

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<sup>8</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 76.

<sup>9</sup> Lawrence W Fielding, "Reflections in the Mirror: treatments of Civil War Sport," Journal of Sports History 2(Fall 1975), 140.

<sup>10</sup> Richard G Wettan "Social Stratification and New York City Athletic Clubs 1865-1915," Journal of Sport History 3(Spring 1976), 48.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>12</sup> Kirsch, *Baseball in the Blue and Gray*, 69.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 102

was especially true for clubs attempting to gain prestige. The Knickerbockers Club in New York even actively maneuvered to keep baseball upper class only in this way.<sup>14</sup> This meant that lower class players were excluded by the selectivity of the upper class athletic clubs in seeking out their opponents, notably through the fees required to play. Often these single club matches would involve much festivity and usually a banquet that a club whose members were without means would find it impossible to afford. Since clubs would only play members of a similar social class, the practice of excluding the lower classes was complete.<sup>15</sup> Even when lower class or immigrant groups would form teams there was generally no interaction with the upper classes because of their exclusionary nature, and they generally only played each other.

The Knickerbockers Club, the paragon of upper class baseball, had only three ethnic German members in the 1860s, but this fact signals the first chink in the armor of exclusion: competition.<sup>16</sup> As baseball expanded, finding members of lower classes to bypass initiation fees to play became fairly regular because of the increasing competitiveness and prestige that was at stake. Exceptions in fees were made for talent, foregoing any bias or hatred in the name of victory. English immigrants were welcomed into the game with open arms instead of in secret. This was due to them being of common ethnic stock. In the meantime, others continued to desire a game that attracted a “better class of people,” which inter-athletic club baseball certainly was designed to do so.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 23.

<sup>15</sup> Steven A Riess “From Pitch to Putt: Sports and Class in Anglo-American Society,” Journal of Sport History 21(Summer 1994), 157.

<sup>16</sup> Lawrence Baldasarrio and Richard A Johnson, *The American Game*, 27.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

Before the Civil War spread baseball nationwide, baseball had begun growing rapidly in New York. An 1855 issue of *Porter's Spirit of the Times* (a gambling newspaper) described Brooklyn as the “city of baseball clubs.”<sup>18</sup> Though exclusively an upper class game in any organized nature, baseball had begun to spread among the masses even before the war. Many baseball clubs, outside the bourgeoisie athletic club tradition, formed around occupational categories, such as policemen or schoolteachers. Even a group of New York clergy had a team.<sup>19</sup> This growth occurred simultaneously with the growth of baseball teams on New York's respectable athletic clubs, but the two were still entirely distinct and had not taken on the class mixing characteristics so vaunted by later chroniclers of the era. These club teams would play each other independent of the organized, upper class, athletic club system. The great masses of people could participate in baseball since participation was less expensive than other sports of the time, such as polo or cricket. And so with the upper classes actively encouraging baseball through their play, the game grew.<sup>20</sup> Two seemingly separate spheres of baseball were created; a segregated system of sport by class would aptly describe the situation that developed in antebellum New York.

Class biases during this time period also reflected ethnic biases, with early Irish players being characterized by their “rowdiness” (meaning scrappiness as a player) repeatedly in the media, making it an almost instinctual stereotype of play that came along with ethnicity. Differences in play, between ethnics and natives, from the developed Protestant gaming ethic of “fair play” that had developed in the previous

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<sup>18</sup> Rader, *Baseball*, 5. [reprinted]

<sup>19</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 24.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

centuries and into the 19<sup>th</sup> began to alter the game.<sup>21</sup> This “fair play” prohibited aspects of the game, such as: stealing bases, bunting, and dirty tricks that Irish players would later notoriously develop. Some Irish players such as ‘King’ Kelly were chastised for being “fond of whiskey as any representative of the Emerald Isle,” along with criticism of their play. This criticism was written by none other than Hall of Famer Adrian ‘Cap’ Anson, a manager of an opposing team. This societal separation was palpable, but the penchant for athletics was growing among the lower and upper classes, signifying that athletics were expanding nationwide, if by differing ethics and even including class division amongst the participants. With both the lower and upper classes further encouraging and participating, it could be expected that a conflict over their differences was inevitable, given not only the “fair play” differences, but also the differences on gambling, drinking, and many other cultural issues that would continue to illustrate the clash of cultures in sport later in the century.

Because of the Civil War, baseball grew far beyond the athletic clubs of upper-class New Yorkers, and expanded dramatically as Civil War veterans came home with knowledge of the game and as cities continued to grow. For instance, before the war Chicago had just four clubs. After the war there were thirty two.<sup>22</sup> The game was primarily a New England and New York phenomenon before the war,<sup>23</sup> but expanded exponentially after the war ended. The *Clipper* declared in 1865 that “when soldiers went off duty baseball was naturalized in every state in the union.”<sup>24</sup> Additionally, baseball

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<sup>21</sup> Benjamin G. Rader, *Baseball: A History of America's Game* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 67.

<sup>22</sup> Rader, *Baseball*, 13.

<sup>23</sup> Kirsch, *Baseball in the Blue and Gray*, 25.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.* 115-116. [reprinted]



could take as short an amount of time or as long as was wanted to play (depending on time limits set, amount of innings agreed to, etc), which was attractive to people of the lower classes who did not have a great amount of leisure time, but were newly available on Sunday afternoons because of the industrial work week. Compared to other sports of the time, like cricket, a game of baseball was a quick play, which contributed to its nationwide expansion.<sup>25</sup>

The game was even spread to the South by union soldiers who played the “New York Game” in prison camps, during leisure time, while waiting to see action, or just standing idly by.<sup>26</sup> Their play allowed the game to spread across the country, since southerners observed the northerners playing in prison camps and then started playing on their own. Even in non-prison encampments, different units from different parts of the country would scrimmage each other allowing the game to spread precipitously among soldiers from different classes around the nation; years before that, the seeds of expansion had been sown, and now they were in full bloom. Baseball would win out over cricket. Baseball was much less raucous than the popular pastimes among the lower classes, which consisted of rattings and boxing during the antebellum.<sup>27</sup> This change in pastimes happened rapidly, and baseball’s adoption as America’s pastime became inevitable after it became a nation-wide phenomenon.

By the 1870s, it was apparent that baseball was America’s game. Baseball’s primary competition among similar sports during this later period continued to be cricket,

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<sup>25</sup> Steven McGelber, “Their Hands Are All Out Playing: Business and Amateur Baseball 1845-1917,” Journal of Sport History 11 (Spring 1984), 9.

<sup>26</sup> Kirsch, *Baseball in the Blue and Gray*, 42.

<sup>27</sup> Warren Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps: A History of Early Baseball* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 30.

which was still played well after the first professional ballplayer took the field. Though baseball became the primary past time, cricket still remained popular in some segments of society. An 1887 issue of *Longman's Magazine* noted that cricketers are apt to despise "full pitch ball," but, at the same time, the two sports required an entirely different skill set to participate.<sup>28</sup> "It would be difficult to decide whether baseball or cricket is more scientific," states *Longman's* after a prolonged discussion on the topic, which given the fact that baseball did not even exist forty years prior shows remarkable progress in its ability to gain popularity. Baseball and cricket are similar, but the most distinct aspect was their very different fan base. Irish Americans became baseball fans instead of fans of cricket as their population grew, because they identified cricket as an Englishman's game. It was immigrant fans of baseball who eventually contributed to the game winning out over all others as a national favorite.<sup>29</sup> Due to growing fan populations and rabid devotion, baseball flourished over all others.

Baseball began as a game played by New York elites and a second fiddle to cricket, but after the Civil War the game spread rapidly. This expansion created a new national pastime played by both north and south that began to expand to the lower classes. Class and ethnic conflict define the social history of the era, and the game of baseball was no different in these factors.

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<sup>28</sup> "full pitch ball" RA Proctor, "Baseball and Cricket" *Longman's Magazine* June 1887, 181; *ibid.*, 183.

<sup>29</sup> Ted Vincent, *Mudville's Revenge: the Rise and Fall of American Sport* (New York: Seaview Books, 1981), 100.

## **Chapter 1: Immigration in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and its impact on the game.**

The following section contains a brief overview of immigration during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the social climate surrounding recent immigrants, and, most notably, how the immigrant groups were received. This section will then describe how this reception affected their position in the game of baseball. The purpose of this section, the first part largely based on the research of John Higham, is to place the accomplishments of the immigrant ballplayers in historical context. Dually, this section will describe the first period of the transition and how baseball was initially impacted before professionalization and commercialization fully took hold and the game became essentially what it is today.

Background information on immigrants in America is essential to fully understand the issues that surrounded the early game. Nativism, which describes anti-immigrant sentiment, was prevalent throughout the country, and contributed to the barriers between the classes participating in joint baseball games. Such nativism can be illustrated by club membership exclusion and who could play who in the early system. Immigration to America occurred on a massive scale in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in contrast to the trickle during the nation's earlier days when immigrants were of mostly English and Scottish stock and made up the ruling hierarchy of America. German and Irish Immigrants flooded into the country in the first three quarters of the century, and Polish, Italian, and Eastern Europeans and Chinese immigrants, followed in the years afterward and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1850, 40% of the population of New York City was composed of foreign-born persons, which illustrates the impact of immigration on population and only hints at the population of the progeny of these first immigrants who

shared their heritage.<sup>1</sup> The second generation immigrants were often still fully entrenched in their native traditions and could not be considered ‘American’ by any native-born stock Americans. Additionally, between 1876 and 1884 roughly 21% of the country could claim German ancestry and a massive 41% could claim Irish.<sup>2</sup> This influx of immigrants was met by nativist thinkers in purely racial terms with analysis of the new peoples’ characteristics, and their perceived inferiority on full display in both print and public campaign.<sup>3</sup>

The vast majority of German and Irish immigrants were also Catholics, making, according to Higham, “nativism and anti-Catholicism more or less synonymous.”<sup>4</sup> These antipathies made their way into the politics of the time and into even the most common of social interactions. This restricted the allowable association of respected members of society. These prejudices would eventually be broken down in the world of sport by competition, but the details surrounding nativism are important to context as the actual integration of the game and other cultural impacts are examined. The factors behind immigration quotas and policies are extensive during this period, and the hatred goes far beyond anything that is stated in either media or written accounts. There was fear on both sides, with the Anglos afraid of losing their America, and the Irish and German immigrants afraid of failure, not just sports, but in their desire to succeed in the new land.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps*, 116.

<sup>2</sup> Baldasarrio and Johnson, *Baseball and Ethnicity*, 29.

<sup>3</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1955), 21.

<sup>4</sup> “nativism and anti-Catholicism were more or less synonymous.” *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

Many German immigrants settled in Midwest cities, such as Milwaukee, Chicago, and St. Louis. St. Louis and Milwaukee would become battlefields for the culture wars that would surround baseball where German immigrants pushed for their interests in the game under Chris Van Der He and others. Irish Immigrants went to the Northeast, to locales such as Boston and New York City.<sup>6</sup> Judicial decisions and blue laws used against baseball under biased circumstances would later become the refuge of the remaining Anglo traditions to stave off the demographically fueled cultural changes. These earlier norms all came under assault because of the changing demographics and characteristics of the nation.

Once immigrants and ethnics began playing baseball it was, in retrospect, inevitable that the immigrants, native-born players, and native interests in the game would collide. The most salient example of this collision is the storied Atlantic-Excelsior series of 1860. This was a series played between the Irish working-class Atlantics and the upper-class Excelsiors of New York City. This was a rare occurrence, given the restrictions often imposed by clubs and the general aversion to class and ethnic intermixing of the period, and it ended in what can only be described as a riot.<sup>7</sup> The arguments and fights that broke out in the stands were over the quality of umpiring. As the *Clipper* described: “The spirit of the faction with which the foreign element of our immense metropolitan population and their offspring wish to indulge.”<sup>8</sup> This description of the fans’ conduct only fueled the flames of division. Many historians point to the individual instance of this game as being the flashpoint for “class envy” in America, but

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Kirsch, *Baseball in the Blue and Gray*, 99.

<sup>8</sup> Rader, *Baseball*, 18.

this assertion is vast oversimplification. Class antipathy within baseball was much more deeply rooted and should be seen as a consistent presence instead of a few minor instances, such as this, that later chroniclers of the game would remember.

In the 1860s and 1870s, immigrants began picking up baseball en masse along with their non-immigrant lower class counterparts.<sup>9</sup> Within the loose conglomerations forming the power structure as to who was in charge, the emerging baseball organizations still reflected society as a whole with the upper class in control of the matches between the better clubs and restricting entry to others. Many teams took pride in their names which reflected their heritage. For instance the Eckfords, who would rise to prominence in the late 1860's, were named after a Scottish shipbuilder. Heritage was taken into account in these organizations and was important to those participating.<sup>10</sup> Ethnic heritage and class would be in the backdrop of later conflicts centered on player salaries and unions, as well as challenges to the blue laws that baseball inspired. The clash of cultures created by people sticking to their beliefs is obvious.

The initial social and ethnic integration of baseball was rough on many players. One illustrative instance is when Jim O' Rourke signed with the Red Stockings as a professional in 1873, he was asked to drop the 'O' from his name by the owners in order to avoid what they feared would be a possible backlash by Boston's non-Irish native population because of the general disdain for immigrants. He responded by stating, "I would rather die than give up the 'O' in my father's name and a million dollars would not

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<sup>9</sup> Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps*, 83.

<sup>10</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 24.

tempt me.”<sup>11</sup> The Red Stockings promptly signed him anyway. Many Irish ballplayers faced the same stereotypes they had faced after immigrating. Whether accused of alcoholism or being hoodlums, criticism appeared in both the media coverage and even the commentary on other ballplayers.<sup>12</sup> Cap Anson, a ballplayer and manager who would later be in the hall of fame stated in his own autobiography that O’Rourke that “[he was] blessed with a godly share of Irish wit, and a right share of jawbreaking words.”<sup>13</sup> One player described Anson as one with “no use for players with Irish blood in their veins.”<sup>14</sup> These accusations were consistent with many players’ later positions on Anson, but also reflect the fears of team management. All involved were aware that issues of class and ethnicity were in play. Anson would later have to defend himself against these charges at the turn of the century when integration of whites was complete.

Rowdiness among fans would later become an issue as baseball became professionalized, but the automatic assumption in the media that it was the immigrant fans who were the rowdy ones is telling. In fact, it has been recorded that the upper class fans also partook in the rowdiness.<sup>15</sup> The incorrect perception surrounding immigrant fans was shaped by such discrepancies. In stark contrast to American fans, Anson described while on his tour of England in 1877 that the English fans had “gentlemanly conduct.”<sup>16</sup> This class antipathy was palpable even after integration began among the athletic clubs, and is reflected in a player/ manager like Anson’s comments as well as the

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<sup>11</sup> Baldasarrio and Johnson, *The American Game*, 63 [quote reprinted]

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>13</sup> Adrian C. Anson, *A ballplayer’s Career* (Chicago: Era Publishing Co., 1900), 80.

<sup>14</sup> David L. Fleitz, *The Irish in Baseball: An Early History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2009), 59. [quote reprinted]

<sup>15</sup> Steven A Riess, *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 4.

<sup>16</sup> Anson, *A Ballplayer’s Career*, 77.

reaction of Boston's owners to signing an Irishman. In Richmond, for instance, the clubs that did eventually form a league were strictly separated along racial and ethnic lines.<sup>17</sup> There was a growing willingness to play against each other, but inter-club integration was out of the question in most amateur leagues. Richmond's size likely later forced integration due to a lack of satisfactory opponents within the common ethnic groups, and integration began to occur in other cities as the popularity of baseball expanded into the late 1860s.

Baseball served as an overall means of societal assimilation even with its ongoing difficulties of welcoming different peoples.<sup>18</sup> Baseball theoretically allowed immigrants and members of the lower class to play the game on a level field with those who were miles above them in status and then prevail, which they would never be able to do in industry or through political power.<sup>19</sup> Such success was possible since the skills were the same, and the game was easy to learn. In spite of this the lower class had a hard time competing because inter-class games were made systematically difficult at the outset, and as the game grew, the upper class teams managed to acquire lower class players in under-the-table deals. Some even saw baseball as a means of social mobility. In America there was a quite literal fissure of wealth, culture, knowledge, or anything else namable between the rich and the poor during the development of baseball.<sup>20</sup> Though baseball was played by both rich and poor, the class narrative was by and large entirely glossed over by Albert Spalding, who fancied himself the game's chronicler. Spalding completely

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<sup>17</sup> Robert H. Gudmestad "Baseball, The Lost Cause, and the South" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (Summer 1998), 269-270.

<sup>18</sup> Baldassarri and Johnson, *The American Game*, 27.

<sup>19</sup> David Q. Voigt, *America Through Baseball* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1976), 11.

<sup>20</sup> Goldstein, *Playing For Keeps*, 77.



ignored the strife that defined his era. The purported allure was that both sides had an equal chance of winning. Even the *New York Times* said “all classes of people can so fully participate” when describing the game’s positive societal impact. Playing the game of baseball made the working class more respectable. Since they were following the norms of the upper classes they became elevated in stature.<sup>21</sup> The reality is that it took time and a lot of conflict for the working classes to achieve social mobility.

In the amateur era, financial benefits from baseball were only reaped by those who were already rich. The status quo only changed as ethnic players gained more leverage with their greater numbers and further integration into society and the sporting world. This leverage was gained by their enhanced clout that was the result of superior play. The Eckfords, for instance, were nationally known as the “workingmans club” and received disproportionate criticism in the press because of it.<sup>22</sup> Media prejudice was not uncharacteristic of the antipathy that existed between the classes and ethnic groups that participated in the national game. An 1877 news article heralded the skill of the college amateurs, and, at the same time, assaulted the strength only game of professional baseball, which was the common German ballplayer stereotype of the time.<sup>23</sup> This type of coverage was emblematic of the classism that existed colored society’s view of the game, and this was clear throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Cracks in the separation of classes in the game began to occur over time. As the game grew in popularity, members of a club would subsidize new, lower class members’

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<sup>21</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, page 30; “all classes of people can so fully participate” unknown, *New York Times*, 27/11/1870, compiled by Brown: 1979; Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps*, 30.

<sup>22</sup> Goldstein, *Playing For Keeps*, 76.

<sup>23</sup> Unnamed newspaper, dated 27 April, 1877, compiled by Daley, P.J. in 1877, Hall of Fame Archives. Call: BASCR 173 BL-114

membership. This served two purposes: the first was to give positive attention to the club for their philanthropic values, which were becoming prized in society in the late 1860s. The second purpose was to acquire a much better player who simply could not afford to join, which gave the club a competitive advantage in the all important upper class contest for prestige among the athletic organizations.<sup>24</sup> This juxtaposition is expressed in the fact that these “unifying factors” of the sport would later be lauded by both the game’s promoters and future historians, but the reality is that these were not compromising or high-minded idealistic factors. Their sole purpose in integrating was to better the reputation of their baseball clubs. The immigrants were made to “enforce a standard of conduct of games based more exclusively on respectability and the genteel middle class culture of white, native born Americans.”<sup>25</sup> This standard was by and for the upper class, and their norms significantly shaped the exclusionary nature and style of play of the amateur phase of the game. These changed as immigrant ethnics became more overtly professional and norms shifted.

As salaries and notoriety grew for the celebrities of the game after 1869, social mobility became a reality for many immigrant and lower class baseball players.<sup>26</sup> Most ethnic groups that played the game experienced upward mobility, and by the 1880s the Irish and Germans were also largely assimilated into the American population as a whole.<sup>27</sup> After the turn of the century, the German ethnics had rapidly replaced the Irish in the ranks of professional ballplayers.<sup>28</sup> The prospect of players being paid salaries will

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<sup>24</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 31

<sup>25</sup> Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps*, 75.

<sup>26</sup> Baldassarri and Johnson, *The American Game*, 29.

<sup>27</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 26.

<sup>28</sup> Newspaper Unknown, Sharp, Timothy 1 August 1906, Baseball Hall of Fame Archives: Race and Folder.

be discussed in depth in chapter 3, but the immigrants contributed to the overall integration and camaraderie of the game as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed.

Assimilation in America happened in conjunction with the growth of baseball as a sport, but the prejudices carried over into the analysis of the game. Baseball had a great impact on the country, but with stalwart Anglos still in power, assimilation still did not affect the laws governing society. Fans compared the merits of German and Irish ballplayers showing that there were still reservations about immigrants even after they were fully integrated into the professional game.<sup>29</sup> Germans were known for their power, whereas the Irish were known for their scrappiness and speed. In 1922 when looking back on the earlier era, the *Sporting News* stated that “the Irish turn out splendid performers.”<sup>30</sup>

By the late 1860’s the class conflict was noticeable, and it was framed in multiple ways. A.G. Spalding framed this conflict in terms of National League versus American League, with the National League being more traditional and upper-class oriented, and the American League being more geared toward the lower classes and immigrant interests. In practice, there was very little enfranchisement for poorer players even when they were allowed to join athletic clubs, and the leagues that developed out of these clubs. Even with immigrant participation, the clubs were still controlled by those with capital. The owners who controlled play could restrict and then blacklist players at will. Leadership positions, social advancement, and other benefits were seemingly absent

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<sup>29</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> “Baseball-The Nation’s Melting Pot,” *Baseball Magazine*(August 1923), 394

within these supposedly egalitarian organizations for those of non-English stock in the pre-professional era.<sup>31</sup>

As the century wore on and the game gained popularity, the media surrounding baseball also expanded. Henry Chadwick, who was known as the “father of baseball,” wrote on baseball at least once a week from baseball’s early days until his death in 1908. An English immigrant, Chadwick made it a personal mission to be sure that the newspapers covered baseball on a daily basis and was the one who propagated and widely circulated the “baseball ideal” of all parties across the nation participating in a joint experience without class strife or any other issues playing a role.<sup>32</sup> During the labor struggles, Chadwick was the first to call a closed-door meeting of the owners that was meant to determine how to handle the striking players to be “anti-American” because it was done in secret<sup>33</sup> Chadwick spoke about the baseball ideal of all Americans playing together while the game was growing rapidly, but he would later dismiss the economic concerns of players and came out against Sunday baseball as well as gambling at the games. Chadwick would later soften his positions toward the social issues surrounding baseball, including alcohol and playing on Sunday, as the national reputation of the game improved toward the close of the century.

By the time of the Spanish-American War, *Harper’s Weekly* was proud to report that the camp life of the soldiers involved four games a week played by two different teams of the best players in a Cuban military instillation.<sup>34</sup> When Spalding published his

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<sup>31</sup> Seymour, baseball., 84.

<sup>32</sup> Baldasarrio and Johnson, *Baseball and Ethnicity*, 14.

<sup>33</sup> Glen Moore, “Ideology on the Sports Page: Newspapers, baseball, and Ideological Conflict in the Gilded Age” *Journal of Sport History* 23(Fall 1996), 232.

<sup>34</sup> “Largest Military Post on the Island of Cuba” *Harper’s Weekly*, 24 May 1902, 665.

memoirs ten years later, he proudly included a graphic showing soldiers in occupied Cuba playing baseball, stating that “baseball follows the flag” to highlight the game’s expansion.<sup>35</sup> The media proudly drew on these examples to illustrate baseball’s expansion, as well as America’s seeming unity behind what was proudly stated as “America’s game.” Making patriotism and baseball more or less synonymous further gives baseball the connotation of being a game that is uniquely American and patriotic by nature, which is an image Chadwick first described in his weekly columns. The very real issue of class all but disappeared when the first histories of baseball appeared at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In reality, this labor-capital conflict was very real even though it was glossed over as acknowledged in a cursory fashion by A.G. Spalding when he wrote his baseball memoirs, but its impact on the game’s formation cannot be understated.<sup>36</sup> Baseball’s social acceptance had come full circle.

In the second half of the nineteenth century America saw a rapid shift in its culture. From the nativist tendencies that dominated the 1840s and 1850s emerged a late century acceptance of German and Irish immigrants. In fact, these immigrants had shifted the American culture, and social acceptance of alcohol, and other former vices, grew. However, the protestant elite stayed in control of society’s power structure, which would create conflicts as the 19<sup>th</sup> century wore on and baseball expanded its professional and commercial reach to the point where baseball was the American game.

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<sup>35</sup> Spalding, *America’s National Game*, 12.

<sup>36</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 80.

## Chapter 2: Professionalization and Development of the Game

With the game's early history and initial class and cultural conflicts explored, one can now examine the professionalization of the game. Professionalism did not hit the game all at one time. The first openly professional team was the Cincinnati Reds (the Reds) which was established in 1869. Long before, rumors circulated about other teams, players, and even clubs who were overtly amateur but had players on their payroll or on the payroll of a club member's business with the understanding they were going to play ball. Professionalism came into the game with no formal announcement. The first professionals struck at the Victorian rules of amateur play. The clubs first participating in organized baseball were all ostensibly amateur, but there were always ways around amateur rules to make a team better. Since social prestige was at stake, teams probably circumvented these rules often. For instance, A.G. Spalding stated in his autobiography: "I was approached one day by a Chicago man with an offer of \$40 a week to take a position at a wholesale grocery, with the understanding that my store duties would be nominal, and [would have] a chance to play ball frequently."<sup>1</sup> Such arrangements were commonplace with clubs. Many of the individual companies and guilds that fielded teams in amateur tournaments would often hire players just for the tournament in order to play baseball with the same purpose in mind as teams did.<sup>2</sup> However, it was billed that the hired players worked for the company, even if they had a "no-show job," which still kept the game amateur by a technicality.

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<sup>1</sup> Spalding, *America's National Game*, 119.

<sup>2</sup> McGelber, "Their Hands Are Out Playing", 24.

No show jobs, under the table money, and bonuses were common among these allegedly ‘amateur’ clubs in order to compete with each other while maintaining the facade. The societal norms of the upper class mandated that sport were played for recreation alone, and the “idea that a [professional] sportsman could be a reputable member of society was not even admitted.”<sup>3</sup> These norms created a culture of shame among the first players involved in professional sports, and the end of amateurism was a difficult pill for many of these men to swallow. *Harpers* also added that since baseball was for hire it could not be played for enjoyment.<sup>4</sup> This did not stop the early teams from doing so without getting caught. Baseball could have only remained entirely amateur so long as a “privileged community played it.” Once this ceased to be true and those who needed to make a living began to play, the perception of the game changed entirely from one of patrician recreation to a game like horse racing or boxing where gambling and other morally questionable activities within could not be contained.<sup>5</sup>

Playing sports professionally went directly against the upper class ethic of an even playing field and recreational honor that surrounded playing athletics for its own sake and competing for nothing more than social prestige. The ideal explains why overt professionalism was such a change for baseball. Even though most of the athletic clubs were breaking their own rules about paying players by skirting the rules to begin with; the fact that it was done overtly changed the game. The reception of a professional sport among the upper class Victorians was only “lukewarm,” which may be because this new professional system relied on lower class ethnics and workingmen to sell tickets, led to an

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<sup>3</sup> “Country Club Life in Urban Chicago,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 1 August 1896, 761-762

<sup>4</sup> “A Defect of Oppurtunity,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 28 September 1895, 913.

<sup>5</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 47.

unprecedented mixing of the classes in the stands and on the field that did not exist to any significant extent during the amateur era.<sup>6</sup>

Playing professional baseball was a route for the lower class to access the game since they would not be able to afford to play in athletic clubs given their meager earnings. The promise of a salary to play baseball opened the game up to them on a grand scale.<sup>7</sup> Even after players were openly paid in 1869, Cap Anson would speak on salaries after one player was paid as “the laborer had been worthy of his value.” Members of society were trying to detach the fact that the player was actually being paid to play what was just a game by Victorian standards. Initially, this detachment was difficult because of the sporting ethics, but that slowly began to change. Instead, baseball was becoming viewed as a real profession that was not just to occupy free time.<sup>8</sup> This tied into the puritan aversion to playing the game for money. Anson, a ballplayer himself, likely colored this opinion, but one can understand given the societal factors why secret professionalism existed, and why even after the game was openly professionalized the pressure existed to separate the game from the individual payments made to players.

The first professional player that can be identified was pitcher James Creighton. Creighton was paid under the table to play for the Excelsiors in 1860. His status as a professional was not announced since the Excelsiors were an athletic team of upper class amateur gentleman. The need to win seemingly blurred the notions of amateurism. His name should also be noted as being Irish in origin. The fact that he was still allowed to play meant that competitive achievement came first. Undoubtedly, this happened many

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<sup>6</sup> Rader, *Baseball*, 29.

<sup>7</sup> Voigt, *America Through Baseball*, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Anson, *A Ballplayer's Career*, 69.



times before a player was forced to play under a pseudonym or an Anglicanized version of a family name was the case with James O'Rourke who was asked to change his name to Rourke by the Red Sox. Thus, we can see that the amateur standards of the 1850s had shifted, and the importance of competition and success began to grow among the clubs, which would lead to an entirely professional game.

The first openly professional team was Harry Wright's Cincinnati Reds beginning in 1869. Wright, who was English by birth, immigrated to the United States in 1835. He got his start as a cricketer, but after baseball began to grow in popularity his loyalty switched to baseball.<sup>9</sup> The first professional team had a total salary of \$9,300, and as manager and captain he took up a significant portion.<sup>10</sup> The first professional team, A.G. Spalding said, "required a great deal of courage on the part of Harry Wright and his conferees to take this next step," which implies that the overt professionalization of the game was inevitable after the first players began receiving payment.<sup>11</sup> This inevitability sprang from the fact that if a team was paying players then they would attract the best, so, in order to compete, other teams were forced to take the same measures and pay their players. Even Spalding was offered money for a no show job with attachment to his playing baseball. Spalding also stated that Harry Wright's tour with his professional team, in which it went undefeated in 70 contests (69-0-1), proved the "superiority of the organization of [professional] players."<sup>12</sup> The opening of this door would, quite literally, create a "whole new ballgame" for how baseball was run and managed.

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<sup>9</sup> Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps*, page 9.

<sup>10</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 57.

<sup>11</sup> Spalding, *America's National Game*, 134.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

Even after this first professional team in 1869, the *New York Times* praised that now true amateur baseball could finally thrive after being officially and openly separated from the professionals.<sup>13</sup> This did not happen. As all the best players immediately went professional, amateurism died. The amateur teams that continued as amateurs could not compete with the professionals. After baseball became professionalized in 1869, the number of immigrant players skyrocketed.<sup>14</sup> Being paid to play, they were able to quit their traditional jobs to play what was only a game a decade earlier for money. Under-the-table payments were by and large eliminated and a true separation now existed between professional and amateur baseball players.<sup>15</sup> *The World* took the position that this new professionalism would inspire the amateur players to compete with the pros to prove that amateurism was better.<sup>16</sup> This prediction was proven completely false, and nationwide, organized amateur baseball ceased to exist by the turn of the century. Professional teams and organizations took over baseball.

Shortly after professionalization, the National Association of Baseball Players (NABBP) was formed in 1871, and the National League formed shortly thereafter in 1873 as a conglomeration of owners and professional clubs joined to form a circuit. By 1876, the top players were capped at earning \$2,500, which was four times what the average non-farm employee earned.<sup>17</sup> Thus, baseball became a significant form of upward mobility for those with a high level of skill, and players who were good enough could afford to quit their traditional jobs and play baseball for a salary. Speaking to the

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<sup>13</sup> Unknown author, *New York Times*, 29 November, 1870, Compiled by: Brown, 1979.

<sup>14</sup> Baldassarri and Johnson, *The American Game*, 56.

<sup>15</sup> McGelber, "Their Hands are Out Playing", 24.

<sup>16</sup> "The National Game," *The World*, 22 April 1891, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Steven A Riess, "'Professional Baseball and Social Mobility,'" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 11 (Fall 1980), 236.

*Boston Sunday Journal*, after the turn of the century, a member of Boston's front office stated about a player on the team: "My Abbaticcio's (the player's name) salary speaks to his opportunities and advantages."<sup>18</sup> It became clear that baseball presented an upward social mobility through sports that could not be found elsewhere. This lure of a significantly higher salary explains the influx of immigrants who replaced recreational upper-class amateurs and illustrates the monetary motivation of many to expand this participation.

The professionalization of the game also changed its nationwide structure, which had been created at the close of the Civil War with small towns having one amateur team and larger cities having many. Many of the smaller towns that had fielded amateur teams were no longer able to support their teams because their better players went to professional teams in larger cities. The strongest professional teams were centered in the nation's major population centers. New professional teams from smaller cities like Troy, NY, who had been very good as amateur clubs, could no longer compete. They could not afford to pay salaries. Cap Anson spoke about this in his autobiography: "in smaller places where they could not afford the expense necessary to hire a first class team [baseball] ceased to be the main attraction, and interest was centered on the doings of teams in other places."<sup>19</sup> Anson spoke from firsthand experience with this phenomenon. He had moved from a small town in Iowa, to Rockford, IL, then to Chicago pursuing even more lucrative contracts. The newly founded NABBP openly stated that not paying

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<sup>18</sup> "Boston May Contribute to Italian Supremacy in Baseball" *Boston Sunday Journal*, 7 June 1903, unknown.

<sup>19</sup> Anson, *A Ballplayer's Chronicle*, page 27-28.

players was discriminatory to those of the lower class.<sup>20</sup> These changes effectively ended the presence of voluntary amateur teams playing against professionals and further cemented professionalism, and, by extension, an immigrant and lower class presence in baseball.

Regional competition for players could become fierce. For example, The Southern League experienced a series of collapses as a smaller professional circuit since the teams from the larger cities of the north used them as a de-facto system to scout new players and sign their professionals to contracts for more money by making the players break their earlier contracts with Southern League teams. In Richmond, Virginia, even the local teams began to hire “foreign players” on a smaller scale in order to incorporate the best talent into their league.<sup>21</sup> It is telling that even Richmond attempted to incorporate professionalism on its own scale. From these systems the minor league was later born as an attachment to major league baseball after the turn of the century.

There was a strong prejudice amongst the newly participating professional ethnic players because of their lower class origins, which was nothing new in society, except now the interactions were bound to take place on a large scale within baseball because baseball was united by the advent of professionalism.<sup>22</sup> According to Spalding, this initial opposition to professionals faded away rapidly after the NABBP was established in 1871.<sup>23</sup> The near immediate organization of professionals indicated that they were there to stay. It is likely, however, that Spalding glossed over the continuing struggles that

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<sup>20</sup> Rader, *Baseball*, 23.

<sup>21</sup> “Baseball, The Lost Cause, and the New South”, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Summer 1998, 278.

<sup>22</sup> Riess, “Professional Baseball and Social Mobility”, 237.

<sup>23</sup> Spalding, *America’s National Game*, 143.

ensued between the forces of lower and upper class culture after the league both integrated and professionalized. Playing for money provided the great equalizer in participation and even commercial integration for immigrants on the ball fields.

With the dawn of professionalism came the inevitable tensions between labor and ownership that were prevalent throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century in factories and numerous other occupations. Baseball was no exception. On November 4, 1889, after a long-running dispute with owners over salaries, the reserve clause, and other grievances, many players broke away from professional baseball. From the NABBP, which was founded in 1871, sprang the “brotherhood”.<sup>24</sup> The brotherhood, as it was known, was originally founded as a mutual welfare society for players. Should one get sick or injured, the organization would provide some benefits. Later the brotherhood became a crucial sounding board for players’ grievances and, eventually, a tool for warfare against the owners.<sup>25</sup> It was not uncommon for owners to have agreements with each other and to collude to deflate salaries. The National League, for instance, allowed Boston to decrease Tommy Bond’s salary from \$2,200 to \$1,500 on a whim between 1879 and 1880.<sup>26</sup> With the reserve rule in place there was nothing Bond could do, even though he was one of the best pitchers of his time. The players would eventually go on strike and form their own league in order to combat what they saw as injustice. This instance is known as ‘the revolt’. When the revolt started, John Montgomery Ward, who was a lawyer in the offseason as well as an immigrant himself, became the leader of the movement for better wages and a Player’s League. The Player’s League was founded by

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<sup>24</sup> Donald Honig, *The National League* (NY: Crown Publishing, 1987), 1.

<sup>25</sup> Lee Allen, *100 Years of Baseball* (Garden City, NY: Country Life Press, 1950), 94.

<sup>26</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 117.

players on strike who started ownership groups, sought capital, and played the game professionally for a year with the sole goal of reducing the profits of owners enough to bring the owners back to the negotiating table. They succeeded.

The Player's League survived the 1890 season as a competitor to both the American Association and National League. None of the three were profitable, but the players forced the owners back to the table to negotiate. Stars such as Pud Galvin and hundreds of others joined the Player's League in droves, often walking away from more money in favor of solidarity.<sup>27</sup> The Player's League was also referred as "the brotherhood" by many critics, thus continuing the namesake of the union organization that started it.<sup>28</sup> One of the crucial issues that factored into the formation of this player's league was the declaration by the owners that Sunday games would no longer be allowed. Players and some owners were upset with this change because Sunday was the day where the most revenue could be taken in by the clubs, but the blue law forces won a significant victory that stayed in place even after the settlement.<sup>29</sup> This would only change at the end of the century, and the other grievances of the players were not solved until well into the twentieth century after some collective bargaining was adopted by Major League Baseball.

The reaction to the grievances of the players by the critics can best be described as swift and unforgiving. Both Cap Anson and A.G. Spalding strongly criticized the Player's League in their autobiographies. Anson blamed the owners and instigators of

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<sup>27</sup> Author unknown, Pud Galvin Scrapbook, Circa 1870-1880. Hall of Fame Archives: 36.6651.76

<sup>28</sup> Glenn Dickey, *The History of National League Baseball* (NY: Stein and Day, 1979), 14.

<sup>29</sup> Spalding, *America's National Game*, 275.

the Player's League teams for goading the gullible lower class players into joining.<sup>30</sup> Spalding described the player's grievances as an "edifice of falsehood with no moral foundation."<sup>31</sup> This moral characterization of the grievances typifies the similar language used in other industries as immigrant agitators attempted to gain benefits. Anson's exact criticisms reflect the same reservations against all unions: "The brotherhood was a secret organization, and one that was originally formed by the promoters with the object of protecting ballplayers and for the purpose of dissolving the old league for a new one in opposition."<sup>32</sup> Anson speaks as one would expect of a person who had made a significant financial investment in the game and who stood to lose money by the creation of the rival league. His complaints are familiar to anyone who has studied the reaction to unions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the 1890 settlement, in which the players had their grievances addressed on many salary issues, Anson could only react by stating that costs for the clubs skyrocketed, which is why in following years ticket prices began to rise from a quarter to upwards of fifty cents.<sup>33</sup>

The reserve rule continued to be the most contentious issue. It allowed a team to reserve a certain number of players who could not be released, declare free agency, or leave for another team as a "revolver" (walk away from one team for more money from another owner). The number of reserves before the strike was up to seventeen players per team in some years depending on how the owners colluded. After the birth of the Player's League the number stayed relatively static at five players per team with salary grades for their performance that were designed not to be reduced without reason. Though the

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<sup>30</sup> Anson, *A Ballplayer's Chronicle*, 287.

<sup>31</sup> Spalding, *America's National Game*, 277.

<sup>32</sup> Anson, *A Ballplayer's Chronicle*, 287.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

agreement held on paper, there were ways to reduce salary by manipulating the systems. The reserve rule would hold until 1971, when the United States Supreme Court decided in favor of ballplayer Curt Flood in *Flood vs. Kuhn* using antitrust as a justification. Though reserving players was not formally introduced until 1889, it had been informally in effect since the dawn of professionalism as owners colluded to keep salaries relatively low and profits high.<sup>34</sup> Reserving players was done in conjunction with owners buying and selling players to each other without any player input. (Granting 10-5 rights and contracts with no trade clauses was a late 20<sup>th</sup> century development.) The American Federation of Labor went as far as to condemn the practice of owners buying and selling players on Dec 21<sup>st</sup> 1889, while taking solidarity with the formation of the Player's League.<sup>35</sup> With so many smaller professional teams folding every year, selling players to larger clubs was what kept many of these teams afloat. Functionally, those teams only existed to prepare players for the teams they were supposedly competing with.

For owners and players alike, the existing system was not perfect, and there were many grievances against its management. Spalding stated that an organization was necessary to run baseball, despite any and all grievances.<sup>36</sup> Many men like Anson, who were players before they joined this discourse despite being a part owner, said that they “were exchanged like sheep and not American citizens.”<sup>37</sup> Exchanges, in conjunction with the reserve rule, were deemed necessary by owners who colluded to ensure that players could no longer jump contracts for more money. The reserve rule was described

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<sup>34</sup> “League of 10 Clubs” *St. Paul Daily Globe*, 15 November 1889, 1.

<sup>35</sup> Moore, “Ideology on the Sportspage”, 242.

<sup>36</sup> Spalding, *America's National Game*, 275.

<sup>37</sup> “were exchanged like sheep and not American citizens.” Anson, *A Ballplayer's Chronicle*, 291.



by Spalding as a “requisite” for baseball to function.<sup>38</sup> Issues surrounding the reserve rule reflected the broader struggles between labor and society, and labor groups actually got involved. While fighting for workers’ rights in the factories, the baseball playing brethren of Irish and Germans were fighting for what they saw as their own rights on the ball field. Using similar tactics, with a very similar corporate opponent, they saw restricting their rights for no other reason than profit with no recourse of their own to be an exact parallel to the unions of their day. Ultimately, the Player’s League received some concessions, but they were watered down in the years that followed. By the 1901 national agreement salaries did rise in the aggregate, but superstars lost their negotiating power once the reserve rule was institutionalized, and many players’ grievances would remain well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Gambling was another issue that many thought would become more prevalent once baseball was professionalized, since all the major low class professional sports of the time, such as boxing or rattings, were generally supported solely by the gambler following. Many also thought, quite contrarily, that becoming overtly professional would prevent many from taking bribes under the table, but game fixing allegations continued unabated. The most famous scandal of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the Louisville Grays’ “bright games” scandal that involved throwing games during the last week of the season in order to come in second place. This scandal was the first well documented case of player crookedness that was chronicled in the media. After the scandal, other clubs reacted very swiftly to any alleged irregularities in the quality of players’ play to avoid

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<sup>38</sup> Spalding, *America’s National Game*, 229.

allegations of illegality.<sup>39</sup> Gambling on baseball grew to a point where it was so popular that often even gentlemen's newspapers would answer questions on how to decide payments in a tie ballgame.<sup>40</sup> For instance, the issue of the *Clipper* from October 27, 1877 explicitly answered how the money from a tie ballgame was decided, showing not only a growing following but a prevalent gambling culture surrounding the game.

The Anglo ethic opposed gambling on games. For the integrity of the game it was hoped for by some that salaries would prevent scandals, and when the National League was formed, gambling was banned in all baseball fields affiliated with it.<sup>41</sup> Even the league ban on gambling did not prevent magazines like *The Sporting News* from uncovering and publishing horror stories about game fixing.<sup>42</sup> These scandals were directly tied to the integrity of the game and the new league and the players participating. Gambling simply could not be stopped, giving social advocates more capital to use against baseball. As the game became more commercially viable, the opposition of social advocates crystallized in the war on Sunday baseball and alcohol at games. These attacks on the morality of baseball were constant beginning on the day that the game was given away from exclusive upper class participation and opened up to lower class and immigrant participants. These biases reflected the same nativist sentiments that Anglos had against immigrants long before they joined the game.

It was not until the national agreement of 1902 that any real, permanent structure consisting of all professional teams was in place. The slipshod league management of the

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<sup>39</sup> JE Findling, "The Louisville Grays Scandal of 1877" *Journal of Sport History* 3 (Fall 1975), 182,187..

<sup>40</sup> "Base Ball" *Spirit of the Times*, 25 August 1877, 78.

<sup>41</sup> Dickey, *The History of National League baseball*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

19<sup>th</sup> century makes the lack of a structure all the more apparent. With the expansion and professionalization of baseball, the national structure of the game was forced to continue evolving. In the amateur era the NABBP voted on everything from allowing new clubs to barring individual players.<sup>43</sup> The National Association was established in 1871 as the first professional baseball league, but many others, major and minor, including the National League, American Association, Player's League, Southern League, Pacific Coast League, and a Midwest League would emerge and fail as the century wore on.<sup>44</sup> Many of these smaller professional leagues would later be affiliated as Minor League Baseball after the 1902 National Agreement. It was difficult throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century to determine which games against which teams did and did not count to determine the champion in the relative leagues because of factors ranging from scandals and teams dropping out mid season to individual teams attempting to count a "friendly match" against amateurs in the standings to better their chances for a league championship. This predicament is highlighted in many newspaper articles. Deciding "so who really won" and what it really counted for was a challenge.<sup>45</sup> These discrepancies led to problems calculating standings, compiling statistics, and dividing gate receipts, that would not be resolved until the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>46</sup> Harry Wright was the first to attempt a solution to determining a champion by asking that total games played be tabulated a team with a better record who played fewer games would not be shorted by a bad team that played a

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<sup>43</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 36-37.

<sup>44</sup> Voigt, *America through Baseball*, 48.

<sup>45</sup> Author unknown, 2 September, 1877, Scrapbook compiled by Daley, P.J., Retrieved Hall of Fame Archives: BL 114.50

<sup>46</sup> Honig, *The National League*, 2.

lot of games.<sup>47</sup> It was not uncommon mid season for teams to go under, which later led to minimum population requirements for cities that wanted a professional franchise.

While professionalism was revolutionizing the salary, league, and other baseball structures, immigrant ballplayers were also revolutionizing the game itself. What was originally looked down on as being unsportsmanlike play by the upper class amateurs became the norm as these men joined the professional ranks. In the early days, players like “Doc” Adams invented the position of shortstop while he was a Knickerbocker. As the science of the game evolved and expanded with its growing popularity and incentives to play, the game changed.<sup>48</sup> Once Irish and Germans joined the game the Irish were known for their speed and “scrappiness,” which was synonymous with unethical play at the time due to the sporting morals of the upper class, and the Germans were known for their power, also mirroring the “strong and stupid” German stereotype.<sup>49</sup>

Professionals invented new techniques and styles in order to better compete. The single most dynamic person in the development of baseball as a game was Harry Wright, who earned the nickname the “father of baseball.”<sup>50</sup> Wright managed and played, most famously, for the Cincinnati Reds. He was at least partially responsible for the position of respect that all managers received early in the game’s history solely due to his contributions. Harry’s brother, George was a player on his team and is credited with inventing the concept of a stringent pre game warm-up routine that all professional clubs and individual players would eventually adopt.<sup>51</sup> Tommy Bond threw the first curveball,

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<sup>47</sup> Devine, *Harry Wright*, 94.

<sup>48</sup> Baldassarri and Johnson, *The American Game*, 7.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>50</sup> “father of baseball.”, Daley, PJ, HOF Archives: BL 114.50

<sup>51</sup> Voigt, *America Through Baseball*, 60.

Tim Murmane stole the first base in National League history, and Pud Galvin, a second generation immigrant, threw baseball's first no hitter and was also the first known user of a performance enhancing drug.<sup>52</sup>

The impact of immigrants on the game was more than just these innovations and achievements. It was the integration of American sport to the extent that had never existed before. Through athletics, this change reflected an increasingly integrated society. Interestingly enough, even cheating was done in the native tongue of immigrants. When not only giving on base signals, and stealing signs, many of the first Irish players would convey the information in Gaelic, fulfilling the upper class' originally racist ideas on Irish participation to some extent.<sup>53</sup> The baseball bat was not first invented by an immigrant, but it was John Hillerich, a second generation German, who used his wood turning business in Louisville, KY to create a baseball bat for ballplayer Pete Browning. Apparently Hillerich enjoyed creating baseball bats for he then founded Louisville Slugger, which still manufactures bats to this day.<sup>54</sup>

In conclusion, immigrant and lower class participants were at the forefront of professionalism. Their financial needs and the need of upper class athletic clubs to recruit better players trumped the traditionalist attitudes of the amateur era. After professionalism became the norm, these immigrant players went forward to not only reenact societies social and class struggles on the battlefield, but to innovate the game as

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<sup>52</sup> Baladasarrio and Johnson, *The American Game*, 64; Pud Galvin Scrapbook, 36.6651.76

<sup>53</sup> William C. Kashatus, *Diamonds in the Coalfields: 21 Remarkable Baseball Players, Managers, and Umpires from Northeast Pennsylvania* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2002), page 14.

<sup>54</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 182.

they sought to be better. It was financial need that brought these players into the fold, and further need that created the professional structure baseball fans know today.

### Chapter 3: Commercialization

The commercialization of the game came in concurrence with its professionalization. Expansion reflected several contentious issues including alcohol sales, playing ball on Sunday, selling tickets, and even how the fans behaved. Selling tickets became essential as a source of revenue in order to maintain teams as professional organizations. In the amateur era many teams would charge nominal admissions, and this was especially true for teams whose members did not pay enough dues to fully support their teams. Admissions supported buying supplies and scheduling matches for their clubs among other expenses. Dubbed the “enclosure movement” by historian Benjamin Rader, commercialization started on a massive scale with the dawn of professionalism as ball fields were fenced in and turnstiles put up in order to capitalize on baseball fever. This action lined the pockets of the newly minted team owners and gave the owners the ability to pay salaries.<sup>1</sup>

Once ethnic players started playing the game, ethnic fans soon followed them to the ballpark. Well before the turn of the century teams were courting ethnic fans to the ballpark.<sup>2</sup> The upper class alone could not fill the stands to turn a profit. Chris Van Der He, for example, was a St. Louis tavern owner that founded the St. Louis Browns. He became especially noted in his tactics to get ethnic fans to the ballpark. He was the first to advertise his team’s games in newspapers, including newspapers printed in the German language.<sup>3</sup> This ethnic outreach strategy, which was attracting the complete opposite person who would have been attracted to watching the game in the 1850s, as well as the

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<sup>1</sup> Rader, *Baseball*, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Baldasarrio and Johnson, *The American Game*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

game being fully professional, ruffled the feathers of the Victorian sportsman's ethic. It was reflected by the rules of the National League when first formed in 1876. Sunday games were banned and alcohol sales were eliminated.<sup>4</sup> This did not stop teams, especially in the Mid West, from explicitly ignoring rules. The American Association, founded six years after the earlier National League, expressly permitted both alcohol and Sunday baseball in order to draw more fans.<sup>5</sup> The Sunday blue laws, still on the books in many states, were opposed by immigrant groups because of the differences in the "European Sunday." Europeans observed Sunday as more of a day of leisure than the United States did because they industrialized first, and societal adjustment of Sundays had already taken place. In the United States this was still all being sorted out. For many, Sunday was the only day for recreation of any kind since many factory jobs employed people six days a week.<sup>6</sup>

Alcohol at the ballpark was an extremely contentious issue for the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A clash of cultures took place between the growing temperance movement and the well highlighted social drinking habits of European immigrants. This clash was fully reflected on the ball field as well. During the club era drinking socially at athletic club functions was commonplace, but the fear was that if introduced to the masses in the professional era that it would have encouraged disorderly behavior.<sup>7</sup> German immigrants were the first to begin drinking at professional baseball games.<sup>8</sup> The Cincinnati club, apart from founding the first professional team, was also

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<sup>4</sup> Rader, *Baseball*, 43.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, page 47.

<sup>6</sup> Baldasarrio and Johnson, *The American Game*, 37.

<sup>7</sup> Goldstein, *Playing For Keeps*, 81.

<sup>8</sup> Baldasarrio and Johnson, *The American Game*, 31.



the first to aggressively market alcohol to the German immigrants attending their Sunday games. This netted the team \$3,000 a year in revenue, which was approximately one third of their team's payroll, and probably drove up attendance at their games.<sup>9</sup> There is no clear evidence to prove that this increase in attendance was exclusively due to alcohol. However, it is certain that after the introduction of alcohol, attendance increased markedly<sup>10</sup>

The attempts to stop the mixture of drinking and baseball began at the outset of professionalization when alcohol was first sold. Generally it was old stock American Protestant groups who opposed the sale of alcohol. Germans and Irish groups, notably Catholics, vocally opposed any movement on the part of the Protestants to do so.<sup>11</sup> The Cincinnati Reds stated their intention to sell liquor at ball games in 1879 and were temporarily expelled from the league.<sup>12</sup> When the Reds began to sell alcohol the following season they were expelled again by commissioner Hulbert.<sup>13</sup> The league also used its regulatory power to punish individual ballplayers for being intoxicated, both on and off the field. This was done by blacklisting players with perceived alcohol problems or who showed up to games drunk. The purpose of blacklisting was ostensibly to maintain order, but in reality also an anti-immigrant restriction. It was selectively enforced by a colluding ownership block to remove problematic ballplayers.<sup>14</sup> Often leveled at unionizers and those of declining skill, the owners sought refuge in citing a player's immoral behavior to remove them from the roster.

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<sup>9</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 91.

<sup>10</sup> Rader, *Baseball*, 72.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>12</sup> Allen, *100 Years of baseball*, 59.

<sup>13</sup> Dickey, *The History of National League Baseball*, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Moore, "Ideology on the Sports Page", 234.

The banning and restriction of alcohol led to more than simple societal squabbles in baseball because profits were on the line. Individual owners who were constantly on the verge of bankruptcy went so far as to lead a dry rebellion against the National League to lift the ban on the sale of alcohol in order to increase their revenue.<sup>15</sup> One would contend that even Protestant baseball fans would choose baseball with alcohol over no baseball at all. The *New York Times* chronicled the fact that there was a “corpulent German” filling up glasses of beer for the “ruffians.”<sup>16</sup> The antipathy is clearer six years later when the *New York Times* also highlighted that beer glasses were thrown onto the field by an “angry baseball mob.”<sup>17</sup> This fear of disorderly groups of underclass people is apparent in the *New York Times*’ pieces, and can be distilled to be an additional motivation of the upper class aversion to drinking at baseball games. In short, a crowd of angry proletarian immigrants acting against the class structure was a nightmare for the upper-class, and is consistent with the same fears that patrician Americans held with union movements. Alcohol, in their minds, also made the lower class mob more likely to act without thinking on the consequences, making a circumstance where control of a crowd could be lost infinitely more likely to occur. One major aspect behind opposing alcohol at baseball games was likely out of the fear of a rally or strike with massive numbers of participants, who would have all happened to be in one place and collectively intoxicated.

Sunday baseball was another significant point of contention between Protestant Anglos and the immigrant culture. The “continental Sabbath” or “European Sunday” as

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<sup>15</sup> Ted Vincent, *Mudville’s Revenge* (New York: Seaview Books, 1981), 114.

<sup>16</sup> “Baseball on Sunday”, *New York Times*, 26 May 1884, 8.

<sup>17</sup> “A Disgraceful Scene”, *New York Times*, 18 August 1890, 2.

it was also called, was increasingly more recreational in America as European immigrants changed the social norms surrounding the Sabbath.<sup>18</sup> The concept of Sunday baseball gave many the impressions that baseball was a lower-class sport.<sup>19</sup> Sunday was the only day that many lower class fans had off, so sports on this day just made sense to immigrants. The Reds were expelled not just for alcohol in 1879, but for playing on Sundays as well.<sup>20</sup> The National League enforced the rules pertaining to Sunday baseball, much more than on liquor rules. The ban on Sunday baseball continued even though the American Association, formed in 1882, allowed it. The American League drew more fans and revenue because of Sunday play.<sup>21</sup> The difference in rules allowed the American League to be able to outsell the National League at every turn. This made the American league significantly more financially stable as National League teams folded or lost money season after season. The National League's ban was put in place in order to attract middle and upper class fans, the same fans that the league had traditionally courted, whereas the American League was the working man's league by popular myth.<sup>22</sup> The *Chicago Tribune* once stated that the ban on Sunday baseball was necessary to prevent the "German conquest" of the city on those days.<sup>23</sup> This was likely a means used to some degree keep immigrants from gathering on their day off, and the conflicting morality is illustrated by the language used to characterize the German fans in the *Chicago Tribune*.

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<sup>18</sup> "Continental Sabbath" .... "European Sunday" Seymour, *Baseball*, 92.

<sup>19</sup> Riess, "From Pitch To Putt", 179.

<sup>20</sup> Allen, *100 Years of Baseball*, 59.

<sup>21</sup> Rader, *Baseball*, 43; *ibid.*, 47.

<sup>22</sup> Riess, *Touching Base*, 135.

<sup>23</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 25.

When people attempted to play games on Sundays during this period the reaction by society was extremely hostile. Newspapers illustrate the issue. When baseball began to be played on Sundays more commonly in the 1893 season, the threats to close it down continued. Whether for profit or recreation it did not matter: Sunday play was a point of contention.<sup>24</sup> In 1885 a group of preachers showed up to a game with arrest warrants in Kenosha, WI, with the intention of showing the ballplayers what would happen if they continued playing baseball on the Sabbath in the future.<sup>25</sup> In both 1884 and 1892 there were instances of ballplayers being arrested in New York and New Jersey for playing baseball on Sunday.<sup>26</sup> In St. Paul, MN, the church of Reverend Charles H. Aupt led an organized campaign against the nearby ballpark of the St. Paul Saints after eleven Sunday games were put on the schedule for the 1895 season. This organized campaign included protests as well as sending the newspapers a multitude of complaints.<sup>27</sup> During this protest the neighboring German church did nothing to assist them. Their refusal to join in the protest can be seen as tacit approval of Sunday baseball consistent with the beliefs of their immigrant congregation.<sup>28</sup> During one bizarre episode, Cleveland, Ohio's ban on Sunday baseball in 1897, the city police shut down a game.<sup>29</sup> The law that caused the shut down was then challenged by the players in court, and re-affirmed the following year by the Ohio State Supreme Court.<sup>30</sup> The societal religious norms of the white Protestants are contained within these laws. The protests of preachers in Wisconsin and Minnesota

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<sup>24</sup> "Mobs Hold To Villages," *New York Times*, 19 June 1893, 5.

<sup>25</sup> "No baseball on Sundays," *New York Times* 30 June 1885, 3.

<sup>26</sup> "Sunday Ballplayers Arrested," *New York Times*, 12 August 1884, 3; "Against Sunday Baseball" *New York Times* 21 May 1892, 2.

<sup>27</sup> Kristin M. Anderson, "The Saints on Sunday Ballparks" *Nine: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture* 17 (Fall 2008), 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 3.

<sup>29</sup> No title, *New York Times*, 12 June 1897, 5.

<sup>30</sup> "No Baseball on Sunday," *New York Times*, 20 April 1898, 5.

illustrate that even when it was not a law, playing baseball on Sunday was not accepted by society. The game of baseball had become a game for all classes, and there is no doubt that many of these crackdowns were specifically targeted at the lower classes playing the games. There are no records of upper class games and athletic clubs being shut down in the same way, even though many of their recreational games as early as the 1850s took place on Sundays, so we are left to assume that ethnic tensions played a significant role in the subjective nature of Sunday enforcement. The fact that these men were playing professionally on a Sunday a game that was traditionally associated with leisure in the pre-professional era also likely contributed to the surrounding animosity.

Alcohol policy at the ballpark began to change as the nineteenth century came to a close. The alcohol issue was formally part of the players' settlement in 1890 that baseball would not be explicitly banned on Sundays by either league. However, there were also no games immediately scheduled to be played on Sunday as the players demanded.<sup>31</sup> In many places in the western U.S. play was already happening on Sundays, with Van Der He's Browns playing most of their games on Sundays and making the most revenue by doing so.<sup>32</sup> Where Sunday games existed in 1885 they drew 5-10,000 spectators, which is two or three times what a weekday, or even Saturday, game would have been able to draw.<sup>33</sup> The first ruling in favor of Sunday baseball came in 1884 when a local New York court ruled that, despite complaints by clergy, that regulating Sunday baseball was not in his jurisdiction.<sup>34</sup> The players' settlement allowed clubs to pick their own Sunday policies, even though Henry Chadwick said in 1892 that the league would not schedule

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<sup>31</sup> Rader, *Baseball*, 72.

<sup>32</sup> Allen, *100 Years of Baseball*, 66.

<sup>33</sup> Riess, "Touching Base", 23.

<sup>34</sup> "Against Baseball on Sunday," *New York Times*, 2 September 1884, page 5.

any games on Sunday. Chadwick also states that clubs would be allowed to change regular game dates to Sunday if they wanted to.<sup>35</sup> For example, this meant a club was now able to re-arrange their schedule to allow for Sunday play on a technicality. Basically, the league expected the schedule to be shuffled around for Sunday play, but wanted it done so they could wash their hands of it. This effectively made Sunday baseball the norm for all clubs in the country, as the vast majority switched to Sundays since that was where the most revenue was.<sup>36</sup> *The American Law Review* even weighed in on the issue for the first time in 1899 in reaction to the Ohio Supreme Court and other rulings and warrants stating that “days [are] set apart by secular laws for standard recuperation for which they [people playing baseball] are entitled.”<sup>37</sup> *The American Law Review* declared that the laws were even unconstitutional, and that no “novel” reasoning could make them so.<sup>38</sup> The norms of society changed quickly enough to avoid this going to the US Supreme Court. In 1901 another local judge in New York ruled that Sunday baseball was okay if it was played in an “orderly” way.<sup>39</sup>

The norms of the nation changed as more immigrants became assimilated into society. The seeming dissolution of all opposition by the turn of the century is indicative of this. Both the game of baseball and immigrants of the 19<sup>th</sup> century became more accepted. Allowing of baseball on Sundays reflected the broader societal inclusion of formerly non-mainstream immigrant and lower class ethnic populations. When publishing his autobiography, Spalding declared in his 1911 autobiography, “I am not,

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<sup>35</sup> “About Sunday Games,” *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, 25 January 1892, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Riess, *Touching Base*, 136.

<sup>37</sup> “Constitutionality of Sunday Baseball,” *American Law Review* 33 (July/ Aug 1899), 601.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 600.

<sup>39</sup> “Favors Sunday Baseball,” *New York Times*, 6 July 1901, 7.

nor have ever been, opposed to Sunday baseball,” which is a prudent position for an owner to take given the increased attendance and profits that came with both Sunday baseball and alcohol sales that were also later adopted.<sup>40</sup> Spalding glossed over the earlier conflicts, but when he was writing his autobiography Sunday baseball had become the norm. Somewhat ironically, future evangelist W.M. “Billy” Sunday was a professional baseball player who played on Sundays before he turned to preaching to make a living, playing with Cap Anson for Chicago.<sup>41</sup> “Billy” Sunday was, unsurprisingly, silent on the issue during his later preaching career in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Generally, the 1880s and 1890s the same public advocates that were against professional baseball, alcohol, and Sunday games had begun to accept that the game was here to stay. Baseball had become a safety valve from hard work for those lower class members participating either recreationally or attending a ballgame, whether on a Sunday or not.<sup>42</sup>

In tandem with further commercialization came the marketing aspect of the game. Ticket sales were the greatest form of revenue. Taking tickets was essential to the growing commercial enterprise of baseball, and it was tickets that created the urgency for Sunday baseball because Sunday games sold much more of them. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century rolled, on ticket sales multiplied and more and more people attended ballgames enticed by the allowance of Sunday baseball and even the inclusion of alcohol has been given credit. Cheaper tickets, the accessibility of alcohol, and the ability to watch a game on

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<sup>40</sup> Spalding, *America's National Game*, 256.

<sup>41</sup> Anson, *A Ballplayer's career*, 133.

<sup>42</sup> Leverett T. Smith Jr., *The American Dream and the National Game: Sports in Our Lives From the Babe to Vince Lombardi* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1970), 34.

Sunday paved the way, not only for immigrant players, but for immigrant and lower class spectator participation as well.

The going rate for a ticket until the formation of the National League in 1876 was 25 cents, but promising a better quality game because of a better quality professional player the National League charged 50 cents for a seat.<sup>43</sup> When the American Association was formed it responded by promising the same quality of play but charged just 25 cents a seat. That league also allowed alcohol and Sunday baseball games.<sup>44</sup> Hence, the American Association gained its reputation as being the “lower class league.”

This back and forth in prices and promotions was due to commercial leagues competing with each other for a fan base. Teams were in serious financial trouble nearly every year because fans would refuse to support a losing team. They would then sell their players to better teams to cover their losses hoping to stay in existence until the end of the year. Some also went broke mid season and ceased to exist.

Professional players made profit became the driving force of every team. Teams failing forced National League commissioner Hulbert to mandate that a city must have 75,000 people to have a National League team to ensure tickets would sell.<sup>45</sup> The number of people attending league games was fabricated during the Players’ League strike. This resulted in many more people being marked as attending than did, and created a false need for more teams.<sup>46</sup> The manipulation during the players’ strike was done by positioning a league agent by the gate, counting the number of entries, and then doubling

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<sup>43</sup> Rader, *Baseball*, 43.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>45</sup> Honig, *The National League*, 1.

<sup>46</sup> Spalding, *America’s National Game*, 287.



the number admitted for the records.<sup>47</sup> It was not until the 1902 union of the National and American Leagues in Major League Baseball that there was some ticket stability with each league being given eight teams, and multiple teams were banned from a single area.<sup>48</sup>

The crowds were often economically diverse. By placing ads in German language newspapers, people like Van Der He attracted new fans to the game. It was obvious that the owners were attempting to reach out to German and Irish Americans.<sup>49</sup> By the 1886-1887 seasons, nearly 50% of all seats sold were 25 cent seats. In less desirable areas of the park seats were predominantly marketed to lower class immigrants.<sup>50</sup> The numbers of attendees only increased as more and more teams adopted Sunday games in the American League, and skyrocketed after both major baseball circuits allowed them. Before Sunday baseball “workers in America were greatly excluded” from attending.<sup>51</sup> The profit potential of playing on Sunday eventually won out over cultural concerns because the ability to market these games to immigrant groups and to generate more revenue won out. The Players’ League settlement teams were allowed to reschedule their games to Sundays. This promised better revenues because it encouraged the lower classes to attend.<sup>52</sup> Even the scorecard was invented and marketed by an Immigrant from England named Henry Stevens, whose company cornered the scorecard market by the 1890s.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>48</sup> “Moguls Confer” *Salt Lake Herald*, 19 January 1902, 4.

<sup>49</sup> Riess, “From Pitch To Putt”, 178.

<sup>50</sup> Riess, *Touching Base*, 41.

<sup>51</sup> Charlie Bevis, “Rocky Point: A Lone Outpost of Sunday Baseball in Sabbatarian New England” *Nine: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture* 14 (Fall 2005), 79.

<sup>52</sup> Vincent, *Mudville’s Revenge*, 115.

<sup>53</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 199.

The attendance increased toward the close of the century can only be attributed to the increases in immigrant fans.

The behavior of fans was often criticized in the media. The *New York Times* once described the ethnic fans as “ruffians” Even A.G. Spalding said that: “the rooter (term for a fan) is bound by no rules of the game, no rules of decorum.”<sup>54</sup> This criticism is based on class antipathy. These incidents became unfairly magnified by the media. Even though it is known that the upper class fans were complicit in rowdiness, it was put on the lower class because the traditional lower class games of boxing and rattings were as rowdy. This behavior made the transition to baseball along with the lower class fans and players. The *Literary Digest* even published items on baseball that included one essay on what the appropriate amount of heckling should be for fans.<sup>55</sup> The issue of what to do with the fans was constant, since baseball was the first real non-violent spectator sport in America besides horse racing. The behavior of fans would trouble both the protestant elite and the media alike as the game’s popularity grew.

The disparity in expected behavior for different classes is apparent. An example would include, intoxicated fans throwing beer glasses onto the field or the overstated involvement of immigrants in the Atlantic-Excelsior series conflicts of 1860. Cap Anson made comparisons of the crowds to English crowds from his world tour with Spalding: “an English crowd is at all times quiet and sedate compared with a crowd in our own country.”<sup>56</sup> The difference is crystal clear between the Anglo tradition and the immigrant behavior, and dealing with this difference in crowd behavior and changing the nature of

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<sup>54</sup> Spalding, *America’s National Game*, 13.

<sup>55</sup> “The Rights Of baseball Rooters” *Literary Digest*, October 1902, 476-477.

<sup>56</sup> Anson, *A Ballplayer’s Career*, 72.

being a spectator is just another way that the culture surrounding the game was impacted by the contribution of German and Irish players and fans. For instance, even today the bleachers are cheap seats that carry with them the expectation that fans there are rowdy and seats closer to the field have completely different expectations of the game. This is, no doubt, a carryover from this early period.

With the expansion of the commercialization of the game the cultural proliferation of its legacy also grew as people tried to capitalize on baseball's popularity. Media coverage went beyond just the sporting papers and gambling sheets of the early days to include the daily newspaper column, which was created by former player Tim Murmane and offered both news and rumors that ran for over 30 years.<sup>57</sup> This is the style of a team beat writer column that is still familiar to fans of the game today that is directly linked to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Overall, this indicates an interest in the game to people other than just the players and closest followers, and this Americanization of the game created the environment where public interest in the game went beyond just game day. Fiction works, such as The Sunlit Field, were published to capitalize on this growing popularity. The overall cultural diffusion of baseball from newspaper columns onto popular literature in the latter part of the century shows that baseball was there to stay.

In conclusion, after the dawn of professionalism the driving force behind better baseball became economics. Ticket sales, concessions, and mass media became necessary to expand the profits of the owners. This system, set up by profit seekers, is still in place today.

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<sup>57</sup> Fleitz, *The Irish in Baseball*, 15.

## Conclusion: An American Game

A.G. Spalding stated that baseball was undoubtedly American in origin declaring that it was Patriotic by its nature.<sup>1</sup> A unified American front, an American game, met with the manifest destiny mythos of post Civil War America to the point where it became true.<sup>2</sup> Charles Comiskey would famously state that baseball was a positive reflection of the character American society.<sup>3</sup> Even children began to take part; the first little league was founded in 1902. In 1903 the national agreement was signed, which combined all of baseball's professional organizations under one umbrella organization known as Major League Baseball.<sup>4</sup> By the end of the century baseball had gained renown not only within the nation, but worldwide. It was even one of the sports considered for the 1896 Olympic Games.<sup>5</sup> Before that, baseball had already been on a world tour to England, Australia, Egypt and many other locations spreading simultaneously with US commerce.<sup>6</sup> The growth of the game throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was spectacular. This dynamic growth was primarily due to immigrants pushing for professionalism through the necessity of salaries and owners attempting to capitalize on immigrant fans through tickets and concessions sales. Without these immigrant populations there can be no doubt that the baseball we know today would be radically different, if it survived at all. If the game did not catch on with these emerging Americans, would it have died with the Anglo-protestant social dominance of the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

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<sup>1</sup> Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps*, 11. [reprinted]

<sup>2</sup> Seymour, *Baseball*, 265

<sup>3</sup> Smith, *The American Dream and the National Game*, 129.

<sup>4</sup> Wettan, "Social Stratification and New York City Athletic Clubs", page 60; Rader, *Baseball*, 78.

<sup>5</sup> "The New Olympic Games in Athens," *Harper's Weekly*, 28 September 1895, 923.

<sup>6</sup> Voigt, *America Through baseball*, 93.

Regardless, by the time the history of baseball was being written the perception of the game's history had changed from what really occurred. The separation and discrimination against the lower classes and immigrants had been seemingly forgotten. The purported ideals of American society where all are equal had become a part of the game itself. Spalding said: "The son of a president would soon play baseball with Patsy Flannagan as with Lawrence Lionel Livingstone."<sup>7</sup> However, that leaves us with the true contribution, the necessary contribution, the immigrant contribution, which can be best spoken for by historian Richard F. Peterson: "The Irish belong in Cooperstown, not for their notoriety on the field, but for their achievements on the field and their contributions to the transformation of a leisurely pastime for gentlemen into America's game."<sup>8</sup> This is a game that went from the pastime of the rich, to immigrants inclusion, to professionals and then to the point where commercialization based on the need to pay salaries of these new lower class professionals.

However, the battle for equality on ball field was not over. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century race would replace ethnicity, and the battle for inclusion would begin anew with those who were once on the outside keeping those on the outside away. This is once again a way that baseball reflects America as whole, more in truth than in myth; baseball was a dividing force that spoke to the divisions of society. When historians discuss breaking the color barrier they always seem to forget that those holding up the barrier had been outside it less than a half century before. So is America, and so is its past time.

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<sup>7</sup> Spalding, *America's National Game*, 6

<sup>8</sup> Baldasarrio and Johnson, *The American Game*, 66.

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