



NEWS RELEASE

Fort Hays State Historic Site
1472 Hwy 183 Alt • Hays KS 67601-9212

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VINTAGE BASE BALL MEETING

An informational meeting to explore interest in forming one or more Vintage Base Ball teams in the Hays area will be held at Fort Hays State Historic Site at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, March 16. Vintage Base Ball is the term for the game as it was played in its infancy during the mid- to late-1800s, when it was really called base ball instead of baseball. It is played according to the rules in effect around 1860.

Games using a ball and bat have existed for centuries but they tended to be generally loose and unorganized. Then, in 1845, Alexander Joy Cartwright, Jr., drew up a set of rules for his team, the New York Knickerbockers. His rules included some now-familiar aspects such as a diamond-shaped field, the three strikes and three outs rules, what constitutes fair and foul territories, as well as the elimination of “soaking,” the practice of actually throwing the ball at a runner and hitting him in order to put him out.

There are only a few Vintage Base Ball teams in Kansas. Two are associated with Old Cowtown in Wichita and one is located in Jetmore. Mark Wellbrock with the Jetmore team will be on hand to explain exactly how Vintage Base Ball differs from the modern version and says, “This is really recreation in a living history format. Some teams play a May thru October schedule, some play around community events. Age isn’t really a factor. So anyone can enjoy the game.” The idea is not only to educate but also to have fun and entertain and so membership, historically made up of men, is no longer restricted to “the masculine gender.” Women can play on the teams, too!

The public is invited to attend this meeting. For more information, contact Fort Hays State Historic Site at 785-625-6812.

Fort Hays State Historic Site is located four miles south of I-70 exit 157 at Hays. The site is one of 16 administered by the Kansas Historical Society. For more information contact Fort Hays State Historic Site, 1472 Highway 183 Alt., Hays KS 67601-9212: 785-625-6812; thefort@kshs.org; kshs.org.

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