Baseball in Kansas, 1867-1940

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THE spring of 1867 was one of tremendous activity in Kansas. Workmen were busily constructing the first unit of the state capitol at Topeka. Lawrence was looking forward to the successful completion of the first year of study at the new State University. Salina was awaiting the arrival of the first train over the Kansas Pacific and Joseph G. McCoy was building a great cattle market at Abilene. Federal commissioners were negotiating with the Indians for a peace treaty, soon to be signed at Medicine Lodge. Susan B. Anthony was preparing to invade the state in behalf of female suffrage. In the midst of all this Leavenworth, the restless metropolis on the Missouri river, found time for play. The Frontier Baseball Club was chartered early in the year and the crack of the bat meeting the horsehide sphere was added to the hum of industry in the big town on the river bluffs.

The Frontiers were sponsored by a group of Pioneer City business and professional leaders, most of whom were veterans of the Civil War. Leader in the movement was Col. Thomas Moonlight, soldier, statesman and diplomat, who had commanded the Eleventh Kansas regiment in the late conflict and returned to Leavenworth with a desire to promote the welfare of the city by providing wholesome recreation for its young men. A. A. Hyde, a young bank clerk who later founded the Mentholatum company in Wichita, signed as one of the incorporators. Personnel records of the Frontiers have not been preserved and accounts of their activities are meager. It is probable that they resorted to playing “Work-up” or choosing up sides until some rival nines were organized. But it was not long until the baseball fever had gripped Leavenworth and was spreading rapidly down the Missouri river and westward up the valley of the Kansas.

“Lawrence has got it, Leavenworth’s got it, Topeka’s got it, we’ve all got it,” the Topeka Weekly Leader reported on August 22. “We now boast three baseball clubs in Topeka. The Shawnees, the Prairie club (whilom Old Maids), and the Capitol.” Lawrence had its Kaw Valleys and its Universities; Leavenworth had a rival to provide local competition for the Frontiers. “The Prairies

1. “Corporations,” charter copybooks, Kansas, v. 1, p. 281. The charter was filed January 29, 1867.

(175)
played a friendly match game with the Shawnees last Friday and were ‘scooped;’” continued the Weekly Leader. “They played again Tuesday, and were again ‘scooped.’ It is their intention to wait now till the Capitols (composed of boys under 15) bust the Shawnees, as they will, and then propose to Shawnee to join them in a friendly game of pins—believing that both the Shawnees and themselves are better adapted to that game. . . .” These scornful remarks probably were prompted by the lack of success the Topeka clubs had achieved in inter-city competition, the Shawnees having been soundly beaten by Lawrence’s Kaw Valleys, 52 to 15.

Topeka made a social event out of the visit by the Lawrence club. The victorious Kaw Valleys were entertained lavishly at the Gordon house and departed by train with the Topeka Brass Band blaring out a friendly farewell. Traditional animosities engendered by baseball rivalry had not become established but it was not many years until baseball was provoking a lot of vitriolic repartee in rival newspapers.

The Shawnees regained some prestige for the capital city by winning from the Universitys at Lawrence, 96 to 57.2 Scores like this were not uncommon; on the contrary they were the usual thing in those days. Nearly every rule in baseball favored the batter over the pitcher. In the first place the rules decreed that the ball should be “pitched, not thrown.” This restricted pitching to an underhand delivery much like that used in softball today. The base on balls was unknown. It was the batter’s privilege to stand and let the good ones go by as well as the bad ones. He didn’t need to hit at the ball until he felt like it. Another rule, seldom strictly enforced, allowed the batter to call for a high or a low pitch.

But three strikes were out, and to make things a trifle easier for the defense a third strike caught on first bounce was out as well as a foul caught on the bounce. The first bounce rule was not abolished until 1880. Pitchers were emancipated three years later when an amendment permitted overhand and free arm pitching. The base on balls developed during this period of enlightenment. In 1884 six balls entitled the batter to free passage to first base, but in 1887 they gave the batter an extra strike to balance matters after reducing the number of balls to five. The present rulings, “three strikes and out” and “four balls, take a base” came to stay in 1889.3

Baseball as a Kansas sport was officially recognized by the state fair association in 1867 when a silver baseball was awarded to the

2. Topeka Weekly Leader, September 5, 1867.
winners of the state championship. The state fair was held at Lawrence late in September and the Kaw Valleys kept the trophy at home by winning the title match from the University on the last day of the fair. The silver ball now rests in the Kansas State Historical Society’s vault.

Baseball activity was renewed with zeal in the spring of 1868. Intense rivalry had developed between the Frontiers and the Lawrence Kaw Valleys. These clubs met three times during the season and the Lawrence boys won every game, establishing a claim to the state championship. Lawrence seethed with civic pride and the club was reorganized in 1869 with a list of directors that included such prominent citizens as Dudley C. Haskell, who later served as congressman from the second district and in whose honor Haskell Institute was named.

Again it was a battle between the Kaw Valleys and the Frontiers. Despite its early start Leavenworth was forced to admit at the end of the campaign that Lawrence had definitely established itself as baseball capital of the Sunflower state. Possibly the Frontiers missed the guiding hand of Colonel Moonlight, who had been elected secretary of state and deserted Leavenworth for an office in Topeka. The game played between the Frontiers and the Kaw Valleys on September 10 was heralded as the championship struggle and the Valleys came in under the wire, 29 to 22.

Baseball gossip occupied considerable space in Kansas newspapers the following spring. The Topeka Daily Kansas State Record announced on April 8, 1870, that an attempt would be made to bring the Cincinnati Red Stockings to Topeka for a game with a picked team of Kansans. The Red Stockings, organized in 1867, were the first professional club in the United States. Apparently this ambitious plan never materialized. Of more importance to Kansas baseball than this idle rumor was the organization of the Topeka Westerns, who were destined to become famous in Kansas baseball circles before long.

Topeka’s alert theatrical agent, a gentleman named O. Sackett, was an opportunist who realized the possibilities of baseball as a crowd attraction. When the deal for the Red Stockings fell through he immediately boarded a train for Rockford, Ill. The Forest Citys of Rockford were the only club in the land that could compete on fairly even terms with the Cincinnati boys and Sackett figured they

5. Ibid., August 27, 1868.
6. Ibid., September 11, 1869.
12—3504
would be an acceptable substitute. On May 5, 1870, the Topeka Kansas Daily Commonwealth announced that the Forest City club had been engaged to meet the state champion Kaw Valleys at the Topeka fairgrounds, May 11.

In the Forest City lineup was A. G. Spalding, whose name later appeared on thousands of baseballs after he became the head of the great sporting goods house that bears his name. Spalding was one of the first great pitchers. In 1863 a Union soldier returning invalided to Rockford from the war found the local boys batting a ball around in aimless fashion. He told them he knew a better sport that he had learned in the army and taught them baseball. Spalding was one of his aptest pupils. The Forest Citys were soon organized and they were touring the country before many years had elapsed.7

Fifteen hundred persons crowded about the diamond at the Topeka fairground on that May afternoon long ago. In the visiting lineup were: Spalding, Hastings, Doyle, Addy, Foley, Barnes, Stires, Simmons and Barstow. For the Kaw Valleys the lineup included: Haskell, Whitman, Lane, Longfellow, White, Lefevre, Campbell, Griffin and Sears. It was announced that a picked nine of Kansas players would oppose Forest City the next afternoon.

All things considered, the Kaws did not fare badly. The final audit showed a score of 41 to 6 for the Forest Citys. Sam Lakin, Topeka bank employee, was the umpire and each team provided its own score keeper, as the double check system was employed in those days. The “picked nine” was not so fortunate. This time the men from Illinois turned on the power and crushed the Kansans, 97 to 12. The baseball “tournament” was a financial success, however. Promoter Sackett made a neat profit and the elite of the city danced at Union hall the night of May 11, honoring the visiting athletes in a “Baseball Promenade.”8

After this disaster Kansas teams confined their activities to intrastate competition for several years. Ottawa organized a team called the Nashys and the boys from the Marais des Cygnes were off to an auspicious start with a 28 to 25 victory over Lawrence’s Kaw Valleys. The Kaws evened it up a few weeks later and captured the third game, 21 to 16, to retain the state title.9

In 1871 Emporia introduced its Jayhawkers and a rival Lyon county team was organized at Americus, Emporia’s old county seat

7. Irwin, Will, loc. cit., May 9, 10, June 12, 1870.
8. Topeka Kansas Daily Commonwealth, May 12, 13, 1870; Daily Kansas State Record, Topeka, May 12, 13, 1870.
rival. On July 14 the Emporia News announced an impending clash between the Jayhawks and the Americus nine. "Come and witness the game, ye lovers of innocent and manly sports," urged the News. The July 21 edition of the newspaper published an account of this game, which the Emporians won, 95 to 30.

The Leavenworth Unions, successors to the Frontiers, celebrated the Fourth of July at Lawrence by winning a thrilling game from the Kaw Valley team, 24 to 22. It was a great day in Leavenworth baseball history and the jubilant fans claimed that the state championship had been returned to the Pioneer City. But the Leavenworth enthusiasts had reckoned without the Topeka Westerns who were sweeping through their opposition like a combination harvester and thrasher through ripe wheat. The Topekans silenced Leavenworth and Lawrence by resounding victories over the Unions and the Kaw Valleys and mid-August found their claim to baseball supremacy almost unchallenged. They accepted an invitation from the Emporia Jayhawkers with some condescension.

The Jayhawkers had been playing the game for only two months when they met the mighty Westerns on the Emporia diamond. Topeka gamblers in the Western entourage were offering two to one odds that their team would double the score on the Emporia novices. There were many takers. Some Topekans had to borrow railroad fare to get out of town after the game when the surprising Jayhawkers thumped the Westerns, 31 to 27. "The Topeka boys were too confident, and the Emporia boys kept cool," wrote the News correspondent. It was the Westerns' only defeat of the season, but the News claimed on September 15 that the Westerns had dodged a return game with the Emporians. "The Topeka Westerns had better emigrate to Greeley," sneered the News. The Jayhawkers went to meet the Topeka club on its own grounds September 13, but the latter declined to play. They were so badly demoralized by their little game in Emporia some time before, the News continued, "that they have not got their spirits up since."

Nevertheless, the Westerns dominated the field for the next eight or ten years. In the starting lineup in 1871 Jim McFarland was captain-pitcher, Glenny was behind the bat. Evarts, Morris and Gilmore composed the outfield. Barnes was at first base; Morgan, second base; Ritchie, short stop and Moore, third base. The Rix brothers appeared frequently in the lineup, one as pitcher, the other

11. Emporia News, August 18, 1871.
12. Ibid., September 15, 1871.
in the outfield. The Emporia giant killers on that memorable August afternoon in 1871 were: Hawkins, Lord and Cochran, outfielders; Randolph, first base; Willard, second base; Simms, short stop; Wales, third base; Halleck, pitcher; Rollins, catcher. During the three-year period, 1874-1876, the Westerns met defeat but once. After the club had returned to the home stand from a road trip "down the Gulf Road" in August, 1876, the Ottawa Red Stockings took their measure by a score of 10 to 7. Fort Scott, Paola, LaCygne, Mound City and Pleasanton were among the teams that fell before the Westerns during their southeast Kansas invasion.

Baseball was moving westward and many of the smaller towns had taken up the game. Ottawa met Williamsburg and Lyndon. Emporia's schedule included games with Cottonwood Falls and Council Grove. Manhattan, Junction City, the Fort Riley soldiers, Abilene and Salina were competing out on the Union Pacific lines. Reports from along the Santa Fe indicated that Newton, Wichita and Hutchinson were rivals on the diamond.

But the depressions, droughts and grasshopper invasions of the 1870's apparently sapped Kansas baseball enthusiasm to a considerable degree. There was little advance dope in the press when spring came 'round in 1880 and a Topeka newspaper queried, "What is the matter with Atchison, Lawrence and Leavenworth in regard to baseball?" Atchison, it recalled, had never had a good club, but what then had become of Manhattan, Wichita and Lyndon?

The Westerns, with some new players in their lineup, were hard at work and Ottawa's Red Stockings were ready for another season. But, aside from the renewed Ottawa-Topeka rivalry and periodical visits by touring clubs from Kansas City and Dubuque, Iowa, there was little activity during the ensuing summer months. History was made again on April 17, however, when the first inter-collegiate baseball game was played at Lawrence between the University nine and the Washburn team.

For several years there had been desultory activity on Kansas college diamonds. Back in 1867, it will be recalled, the University team played matches with the Topeka Shawnees and the Lawrence Kaw Valleys. There is no record of games played by this team in a Scores pamphlet published by the Kansas University Athletic Association in January, 1932. Six baseball letters were awarded in 1874, the roster of K-men reveals, but the first game recorded in

13. Ibid., August 16, 1871.
14. The Triumph, Ottawa, September 1, 1876.
15. The Topeka Daily Capital, April 25, 1880.
this pamphlet is a successful foray against the town team in 1879.

Washburn organized a team in 1880, played a practice game with the Westerns, in which the collegians were soundly drubbed and then invaded Lawrence for the match with K. U. Details of the game have not been recorded. The rival Lawrence newspaper men who covered the contest confined their remarks to personalities not related to the game. The Topeka Capital of April 19 published the score with little comment. It was 29 to 22 in favor of Washburn. The University nine came to Topeka for a return game four weeks later and tasted the sweets of revenge. The score of this game was 22 to 10, K. U.\(^\text{16}\)

Washburn’s team included DeHart, Elliot, Holliday, Ballinger, Tefft, Ross, Fowler, Heaton, and Quail. The University has no record of the 1880 baseball team, but the roster of K-men includes the names of seven men who won baseball letters that year, including: E. C. Little, M. Lovelace, D. J. Rankin, C. F. Scott, W. C. Spangler, R. E. Twitchell and S. T. Williams. Both Little and Scott served terms in congress after leaving the university.

College athletics did not develop rapidly until the 1890’s, but Baker University had a baseball team as early as 1882 and played a game with K. U. that spring, according to Thomas A. Evans, alumni secretary at Baker. Records at Kansas University give the score of a meeting between the Jayhawks and the Methodists in 1886. It was a 6-6 tie.\(^\text{17}\) Baker has a record of the tie game, says Evans, but the Baldwin historians give the year as 1885 and the score as 16-16. Baseball games between Baker, K. U. and Washburn were regularly scheduled after 1888. Before the end of the century Emporia Normal, Ottawa, Kansas State, St. Mary’s, Bethany and the College of Emporia were playing the game.

Professional baseball gained a foothold during the boom of the middle 1880’s. The Topeka Westerns and their successors the Browns were semi-professional clubs during this period. Atchison, Kansas City and Leavenworth were hiring players and organized league baseball appeared in 1886 when Topeka and Leavenworth took franchises in the Western League, a six-club circuit that also included Denver, Leadville, Lincoln and St. Joseph.\(^\text{18}\) The Kansas teams did not fare well their first season. Anxious to advertise their booming city, several Topeka financiers decided to buy a club that would put Topeka on the baseball map in embossed capitals.

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17. *The University Courier*, Lawrence, April 30, 1886.
The result was the collection of the highest priced and ablest crew of diamond athletes that ever represented a Kansas city. Goldsby's Golden Giants, they were called. What a ball club!

Early in 1887 the Western League was enlarged to an eight-club circuit, and by mid-season there were ten teams in the race. Leadville had dropped out but Kansas City, Hastings and Omaha were added. Emporia and Wichita came into the fold when the season was half finished but never caught up with the pack. Emporia finished ninth and Wichita last. But the Golden Giants of Manager Goldsby breezed in to win the pennant about twenty games ahead of Lincoln, the nearest contender. The team finished with a percentage of nearly .800. Six Giants boasted batting averages above the .400 mark. The great "Bugs" Holliday delighted the fans at Kenwood park with his home runs, seventeen for the season. These abnormal batting averages may be partially explained by the then prevailing rule crediting the batter with a hit and a time at bat for each base on balls. Under the present rules a base on balls does not count as a time at bat.19

But deflated real-estate values incidental to the bursting boom bubble depleted the Topeka war chest and the Giants were considered too expensive a luxury for another season. Most of the talented members of that club, which has become almost a legend in Topeka, went back to the major leagues. The Western League was gradually diminished as hard-pressed club owners gave up their franchises during the lean years and only four clubs remained in 1893, Topeka, Kansas City, Lawrence and St. Joseph. There was some brisk activity on college fields, however, and Junction City, Abilene, Manhattan and Enterprise formed a short-lived league in 1895. The Missouri Valley League, training school for numerous major leaguers in later years, was organized about this time with representatives in several southeast Kansas towns.

The Leavenworth Maroons, a fast semi-professional club, entered the picture in 1895 when they outdistanced all opposition. Junction City had a strong team that included "Dummy" Taylor, deaf-mute pitcher and outfielder, who played with the New York Giants in the early 1900's. These towns, Junction City and Leavenworth, became baseball rivals in 1896. But interest lagged in Leavenworth and the Maroons were moved to Topeka in June.20 Topeka organized an athletic association and built a new ball park, which

19. Ibid., May 2, 1924.
stood on East Fifteenth street for many years. A Kansas State League was organized to include Junction City, Topeka, Emporia and Minneapolis. The Maroons performed well in their first Topeka appearance but when the games were over the club manager and the receipts vanished. Some of the Maroons had received no pay for weeks and had to walk to town from the ball park.21

The Kansas State League soon disbanded, but the Maroons continued as the Topeka Blues and played independently with such worthy rivals as Atchison, Independence, Iola, Coffeyville and Junction City. Abilene had a fast club and was winning games from Salina, Emporia, Chapman, Wichita and Fort Riley. On August 8, 1896, the Daily Reflector pointed with pride to Abilene's record of ten wins in thirteen starts. Unfortunately this boast was followed by successive defeats by Salina and Wichita.

The Haskell Indians toured the state during the summer of 1896 and 1897. The State League appeared again in 1897 with Atchison, Emporia, Junction City and Topeka. Abilene and Salina replaced Emporia and Junction City in 1898. Abilene threatened to run away with the race in the early games, but the club slumped, the war distracted public attention, and the team was disbanded in June.22

Southeast Kansas was becoming a hotbed of baseball in the early 1900's. The Missouri Valley League produced Warren Seabough and Johnny Kane of Pittsburg, who were taken up by the Chicago Cubs. In 1903 the Missouri Valley circuit included Fort Scott, Joplin, Nevada, Leavenworth, Iola, Jefferson City, Sedalia and Pittsburg. The Western Association, which had been operating in Iowa and Illinois, shifted its sphere of activity to the southwest in 1905 and opened as an eight-club loop with Joplin, Oklahoma City, Guthrie, Leavenworth, Sedalia, Wichita, Springfield and Topeka.

Wichita's entry was the city's first baseball venture since 1887. Will Kimmel was the club owner and Jack Holland was imported from Little Rock, Ark., to manage the team. The "Jabbers" opened the season at the home grounds in Island park with a 3 to 2 defeat by Topeka. Ernie Quigley was at short stop for the visitors. The umpire was Brick Owens, who, like Quigley, became a famous major league umpire in later years. Owens' Wichita debut was inauspicious, though exciting. Brick left the park with enraged fans demanding his blood because he had called a Wichita runner

21. Ibid., July 6, 1896.
out for failure to touch first and second bases. Wichita won the pennant that year, Topeka was seventh.

Richard G. Cooley, a former Detroit American League outfielder, piloted Topeka to a Western Association pennant in 1906. Hutchinson had replaced Guthrie, and Webb City, Mo., succeeded Sedalia in the standings. Leavenworth withdrew in 1908 and was replaced by Enid, Okla. Jack Holland won another pennant for Wichita in 1907 and it was Cooley's turn to bring the flag to the capital city in 1908. While the "Jimson League," as Jay House, Topeka Capital columnist, called the W. A. circuit, provided lively summer entertainment for thousands of citizens in Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma, it was definitely a "bush league." The Class A Western League had been operating with six clubs, including Denver, Omaha, Des Moines, Sioux City, Lincoln and St. Joseph. Wichita and Topeka were added to this more select circle in 1909.

The advent of Class A minor league baseball marks Kansas' golden age in the professional game. In 1910 twenty-five cities and towns were sponsoring teams in organized baseball. Wichita and Topeka were well established in the Western League. The Kansas State League, revived as a Class D organization, included McPherson, Hutchinson, Lyons, Arkansas City, Great Bend, Newton, Wellington and the Twin Cities club, sponsored jointly by Strong City and Cottonwood Falls. The Central Kansas League, also of Class D rating, included Salina, Ellsworth, Abilene, Manhattan, Junction City, Clay Center, Beloit and Concordia. Larned later assumed the Twin Cities franchise in the State League.

The Eastern Kansas League opened its first campaign in 1910 with Seneca, Sabatha, Hiawatha, Holton, Horton and Marysville at the starting post. Down in the old W. A., Guthrie encountered financial difficulties before the end of the summer and the club was moved to Independence. In the Central Kansas League the Beloit club was moved to Chapman, probably the smallest Kansas town that ever sponsored a team in organized baseball.

Kansas was ably represented in the major leagues at this time. Walter Johnson and Joe Wood, two of the greatest speed ball

24. Ibid., September 19, 1906.
26. Ibid., September 20, 1907.
27. Ibid., September 22, 1908.
29. Ibid., June 30, 1910.
30. Ibid., July 21, 1910.
pitchers of all time, were causing distress to American League batters. Wood, who came from Ness City by way of the Hutchinson Western Association club, was with the Boston Red Sox. Johnson, who was born on a farm near Humboldt, was with the Washington Senators. Art Griggs of Topeka was an infielder with the St. Louis Browns.

For some obscure reason Johnson was known as the “Big Train.” During the major portion of his career he maintained a winter home near Coffeyville and Grantland Rice called him the “Coffeyville Express.” Unfortunately the Senators were one of the weaker clubs during most of Johnson’s career. “Washington—first in war, first in peace and last in the American League,” was a popular vaudeville laugh line for years. But the club finally won a pennant in 1924 and Johnson, after nearly twenty years, had his first World Series opportunity against the late John McGraw’s New York Giants. Beaten in his first two efforts, Johnson went into the seventh and deciding game as a relief pitcher in the ninth inning and held the New York club scoreless until his teammates squeezed out a run in the twelfth to win the game and series.\(^{31}\)

In 1925 the Senators won the American League flag again and faced the Pittsburg Pirates in the series. Johnson was in great form, allowing but one run in eighteen innings to win his first two starts. Handicapped by a leg injury, he went down to defeat in the deciding game, which was played in a pouring rain.\(^{32}\) The big Kansan retired from active competition in 1927, ending his baseball career as manager of the Cleveland Indians in 1936. He sold his Coffeyville home after the death of his wife in 1930 and has since lived in Maryland, where he is now the Republican nominee for congress from Maryland’s Sixth district.

Joe Wood, known as “Smoky Joe” because of his dazzling fast ball, broke into organized baseball with the Hutchinson Western Association club in 1907 at the age of eighteen. His rise was rapid. In 1912 he was the mainstay of the Boston Red Sox pitching staff. The Red Sox won the American League pennant and met the New York Giants in the World Series. Wood opposed Big Jeff Tesreau, Giant ace, in the first game and won, 4 to 3. With three days rest he came back and stopped the Giants again, 3 to 1. His third appearance in a game which would have given his team the series, was met by a Giant bombardment that sent him to the club house

\(^{31}\) “Big Chief Johnson of the Indians,” The Literary Digest, June 24, 1933; Topeka Daily Capital, October 11, 1934.

\(^{32}\) The Topeka Daily Capital, October 16, 1925.
in the first inning. But Joe came back the next day as a relief pitcher in the eighth inning and held the Giants until his comrades broke a tie to win in the tenth.\textsuperscript{33} Wood now coaches baseball at Yale.

A contemporary of Wood and Johnson was Fred Clarke, an outfielder with a great batting eye and tremendous speed on the bases. Clarke played twenty-one years of major league baseball and was manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates for a number of years. Since his retirement he has lived near Udall.\textsuperscript{34}

Kansas clergymen and other advocates of strict Sabbath observance conducted a stout fight against Sunday baseball but to little avail. A Kansas statute provided that persons “convicted of horse-racing, cockfighting or playing cards or games of any kind on Sunday shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.” The strict enforcement crowd invoked this statute against Ernest Prather who was arrested in Johnson county on July 14, 1907, for promoting a baseball game on the Sabbath. He was convicted in the district court but the case was appealed and the decision was reversed by the Supreme Court of Kansas.\textsuperscript{35}

Justice Silas Porter, in presenting the opinion of the court, said in part, “This construction would make the statute apply to every game—to authors, whist, chess, checkers, backgammon and cribbage, even when played within the privacy of one’s home, and to croquet, basketball, tennis and golf, whether played in public or on private grounds.”\textsuperscript{36} Subsequent efforts to enact legislation specifically prohibiting Sunday baseball have been unsuccessful. A law passed in 1907, however, prohibits baseball games on Memorial Day.

With the approval of the supreme court Sunday baseball became so well established that it was countenanced in nearly every city in the state. A Minneapolis minister even conducted religious services at the ball park. Jay House observed that the umpire’s failure to come forward and ask forgiveness for his sins defeated the essential purpose of this innovation.\textsuperscript{37}

House, a popular columnist, was one of Kansas’ cleverest baseball writers. He perfected a style somewhat similar to that of Ring Lardner, who loved to magnify the incidentals of the game. The weather was one of House’s favorite themes. One game in the spring of 1910 was played on what he described as

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., October 9, 12, 16, 17, 1912.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., March 31, 1940.
\textsuperscript{35} State v. Prather, 79 Kan. 518-520.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} The Topeka Daily Capital, August 31, 1909.
the worst day for baseball ever seen in this latitude. It was not only nipping cold, but the wind blew fifty miles an hour every minute of the game. Half the time the players were obscured from the vision of the meager handful of fans in the stands by swirling clouds of dust. . . . Baseball was incidental. The players spent most of their time wiping dust from their eyes. Had there been no wind it would have been a fine day for skating. 38

Baseball was a major sport in Kansas college circles during the golden age that preceded the World War. Baker, Washburn, Bethany, Emporia Teachers, Western Kansas Normal, College of Emporia, Friends, Fairmount, Ottawa, St. Mary's, Kansas Wesleyan, Southwestern, Haskell, Kansas State and Kansas University had teams on the diamond. Lonberg of Washburn, Hal Harlan of K. U., Mason of Baker, Baird of Kansas State and Collins of St. Mary's were a quintet of pitchers that would have graced any minor league staff.

Harlan and Lonberg met in one of the most sensational pitching encounters in college history one May afternoon back in 1908. It was the third meeting of the season for K. U. and Washburn. The Jayhawkers had beaten Lonberg at Lawrence. Washburn had blanked the university men in an earlier game at Topeka. The deciding game was played on the Washburn field. Neither team scored in thirteen innings. In the fourteenth a home run following a double gave K. U. two runs, a lead that looked mountainous. But the Ichabods came back with an assault on Harlan that produced five hits, three runs and victory. 39

Baird of the Aggies shut out the Washburn nine that same season and Baker's Mason also stopped the Ichabods. The Bethany Swedes had a great club in 1909, counting K. U. among their victims. In 1910 the Aggies, as they called the Kansas State Wildcats in those days when the big Manhattan school was still a "cow college," won 20 out of 24 games with Baird carrying the pitching burden and Josh Billings, the Grantville boy who went to Cleveland via the Topeka Western League club, as first string catcher.

Baker's contribution to the pro game was "Zip" Zabel, a rangy right-handed pitcher, who broke in with the Kansas City Blues and later went to the Chicago Cubs. Zabel played football and basketball at Baker while he was a professional baseball player. This is an illustration of the liberality of collegiate eligibility rules in Kansas, where participation in professional baseball only disqualifies an athlete for that particular sport while he retains his amateur stand-

38. Ibid., April 24, 1910.
39. Ibid., May 23, 1908.
ing in other sports. In many Eastern colleges this would have dis-
qualified Zabel from all competition. Baker alumni of the pre-war
days recall that Zabel was a good basketball center and a hard-
hitting fullback on the gridiron.

The Kansas State and Central Kansas Leagues had ceased to
exist before the end of the World War. Wichita lost its Western
League club in 1933. Its last pennant was won in 1931. Art Griggs
became owner in 1926, but moved the team to Tulsa in 1932. Frank
Isbell then took over the Wichita franchise in an effort to keep the
town on the organized baseball map, but after a few games in 1933
the team moved to Muskogee.

Since 1930 Wichita has held the state semipro tournament. The
National Semipro Congress was organized in that city in 1935 when
the first National Semipro tournament was held. Raymond Du-
mont, former Wichita newspaperman, is president of the organiza-
tion and the state and national tournaments are now annual events
in the city. A baseball school is held annually in April. Wichita
semipro enthusiasts contend that the semipro game is faster than
the Class C professional baseball played at Topeka, Salina and
Hutchinson and express little interest in attempts to place a Western
Association club in their city.

The ubiquitous Dick Cooley brought league baseball back to
Topeka in 1922. At various times during the next few years To-
peka, Arkansas City, Independence, Coffeyville, Hutchinson and
Salina were represented either in the Southwestern League or the
Western Association. Topeka won the Southwestern pennant in
1925. The capital city tried Western League baseball in 1929, 1930, 1931 and 1933, with little success. Some good players were
developed and sold to major league clubs, but the Topeka entry
failed to finish higher than sixth place in the standings.

Wichita's withdrawal from the Western League in 1933 and sev-
eral abortive attempts to put Topeka, Hutchinson and other cities in
the Western Association nearly killed the professional game in
Kansas. Baseball, both amateur and professional, was at its lowest
ebb in the early 1930's. All the colleges abandoned the game but
Kansas State. One of the hardest blows to college baseball was
the passing of St. Mary's. The little Catholic college had dominated
Kansas amateur baseball circles for years and trained several players
for professional careers. Since 1931 the college enrollment has

40. The Topeka State Journal, April 21, 1922.
41. Ibid., September 15, 1928.
been restricted to clergics, thus eliminating a program of competitive athletics.

The American Legion Junior Baseball program has been one of the most potent factors in bringing about the revival of interest in baseball. Nation-wide in scope, the program was launched by the Legion in 1926 and has operated in Kansas since its inception. Boys below the age of seventeen are eligible for competition on clubs sponsored by local Legion posts. Kansas has forty teams in the field, who compete for the state championship and the right to enter the regional, sectional and national play-offs. The Western Sectional tournament was held at Topeka in 1934. The program is directed by the Junior Baseball subcommittee of the National Americanization commission of the American Legion.

Major league magnates were not slow to recognize the potential value of the Junior Baseball program as a source of material for major league clubs. The National and American Leagues now contribute $20,000 toward the expense of the national play-offs. In the Junior World Series of 1939 Dan Barry of the American League and Ernest C. Quigley of St. Marys, a National League umpire, officiated.

A second factor in the revival of baseball in Kansas is the Ban Johnson League, an amateur organization for youths under 21. Named for the late Bancroft Johnson, who for many years was president of the American League, the Ban Johnson movement began in Kansas City, Mo., in 1928, when the Kansas City Junior League was renamed in Mr. Johnson's honor. The American League contributed $300 for a trophy as an award to the winning teams in 1929.

Harry Suter of Salina was granted permission to form the Ban Johnson League of Kansas in 1933. An eight-club league was organized with clubs in Salina, Topeka, Beloit, Abilene, Wichita, El Dorado, Emporia and Dodge City. When applications were received from additional cities the league was split into three divisions. Division winners meet in an elimination series for the state title and since 1935 the Kansas champions have met the Missouri title holders in a series for the national championship.

Players who have reached their twenty-first birthdays after the first of the year are permitted to play during the ensuing season. No player receives any pecuniary compensation, although most of

42. *Junior Baseball for 1940*, a pamphlet published by the National Americanization Commission of the American Legion.
44. Goodman, Frank, "Records of the Ban Johnson League of America."
the clubs have paid managers. The clubs are sponsored by civic organizations or by local industrial concerns. The Kansas Ban Johnson lineup is—Central division: Beloit, Concordia, Fairbury (Nebr.), Junction City, Beatrice (Nebr.), Manhattan and Marysville. In the Western division are: Dodge City, Garden City, Larned, Liberal and Pratt. The Southeastern division consists of Coffeyville, Fort Scott, Humboldt, Independence, Iola, Parsons and Pittsburg. Because the policy of the league is to avoid conflict with professional baseball, Salina and Topeka dropped out of the league when they acquired Western Association franchises.45 According to Walter Sloan of Topeka, president of the Ban Johnson League of Kansas, a sixth club may be added to the Western division and an eighth club to the Central division. Dr. G. L. Cowan of Dodge City is vice president and James E. Lang of Junction City is secretary and treasurer of the league. Leon Lundblade, Beloit attorney and former state president, recently succeeded Frank Goodman of Kansas City, Mo., as national president.

Night baseball, which was introduced to Kansas in 1932, has proved to be the salvation of the professional game. The Hutchinson, Salina and Topeka Western Association clubs play most of their games under the flood lights. When league baseball returned to Kansas in 1937 club owners wisely followed the example of the small colleges who have made night football pay in recent years. Kansas’ leisure class is neither numerous nor sufficiently interested in baseball to fill the stands on week days, but “fans” who spend their afternoons at the office or the golf club are patronizing the night games.

Soft ball, which local tradition says was originated by Topekans in 1916, has acquired a tremendous popularity in the past five years. The new game has stimulated interest in its parent sport, recent developments have proven. Topeka has twenty or more soft ball teams playing to large and enthusiastic crowds and the city celebrated its return to organized baseball in 1939 by establishing a new season’s attendance record for the Western Association.

Kansas University, which had dropped baseball in 1931, put a team on the diamond again in 1937. Baker, pioneer in college athletics, renewed baseball activity in 1939, after an interlude of ten years, and the Haskell Indians were back in the game to provide neighborly rivalry for the Baldwin team. Friends University and Sterling College also are playing baseball again. Many of the

45. Ibid.
larger high schools took up the game in 1940, including Wyandotte and Ward of Kansas City, the two Wichita high schools and Topeka.

Kansas is well represented in the major leagues today. Pittsburg, always a baseball center, is the winter home of Don Gutteridge of the St. Louis Cardinals and Ray Mueller of the Pittsburgh Pirates. Eldon Auker, a former Kansas State College athlete whose home is at Nocratur, is now with the St. Louis Browns. Auker, a pitcher, was previously with the Detroit Tigers and the Boston Red Sox. Elon Hogsett, left-handed Indian pitcher from Ness City, was a team mate of Auker’s at Detroit for two seasons. He was sent back to the minor leagues, but returned to the American League this spring as a member of the Philadelphia Athletics. Fred Brickell and Forrest Jensen, both of Wichita, are with the Pittsburgh Pirates and Ira Smith, another resident of the Sedgwick county metropolis, is with the St. Louis Cardinals.

Many Kansas baseball players reached the top of the ladder in the years gone by, including Frank Isbell, who played second base for the old Chicago White Sox. Isbell has been a resident of Wichita for forty years and is now a member of the Sedgwick county board of commissioners. Claude Hendricks of Stanley was one of the mainstays of the Pittsburgh Pirates pitching staff in the World War era. The Barnes brothers, Jess and Zeke, who came from a farm near Circleville, pitched good ball for the major leagues in the 1920’s. Jess Barnes starred in the 1921 World Series between the Giants and the Yankees. Jake Beckley of Leavenworth played first base for the Cardinals for several seasons at the peak of his career. Art Griggs of Topeka, played in the outfield for the St. Louis Browns for many years and later managed several minor league clubs, including Wichita. Judge Hugo Wedell of the Kansas supreme court, a resident of Chanute, was once with the Philadelphia Phillies, as were Ray Pierce and George Darrow of Topeka.

Hutchinson’s most notable contribution was Babe Adams, one of Pittsburgh’s great pitchers. Charlie Keller, another Salt City boy, was with the Chicago White Sox. Newton claims Nick Allen, erstwhile catcher for the Cincinnati Reds. Kansas City produced Zack Wheat, Brooklyn outfielder and his brother Maek, a catcher with the same club. Pat Collins, now a Kansas City business man, is a former New York Yankees’ catcher.

Dale Gear, a Topeka resident for nearly thirty years, has devoted the major portion of his life to the game. After a playing career
in major and minor leagues, Gear came to the capital city in 1912 as manager of the Western League club. For many years he was president of both the Western League and the Western Association. Gear retired from baseball in 1935.

St. Marys claims that Charlie Comiskey, first baseman of the old St. Louis Browns, was once a resident of that city. Comiskey and Ted Sullivan, another St. Marys Irishman, played ball together in the American Association and the National League. Comiskey and Ban Johnson organized the American League in 1900. For many years Comiskey was owner of the Chicago White Sox.46

Steve O'Rourke, formerly coach at St. Mary's College, is a scout for the Boston Red Sox. His neighbor in St. Marys is Ernest C. Quigley, who is probably the best known figure in Kansas sport circles and the dean of National League umpires. Bob Enslie, Waterville; George Magerkurth, McPherson; George Barr, Scammon; and Brick Owens, Pittsburg, are other Kansans who became major league umpires.47

46. The writer is compiling a list of Kansans who played major league baseball and will appreciate the assistance of sports editors, former players and lovers of the game in completing an authentic list. The names will be filed with the Kansas State Historical Society.

47. The Topeka Daily Capital, March 24, 1940.