

BRIGHTON BEATS FOWLerville - 30-23!

The 75th Anniversary issue of the Brighton Argus, printed in 1955, includes many references to earlier events. Among them was a recounting of an 1880 ball game between Brighton and Fowlerville. BRIGHTON'S ORIGINAL BASEBALL CLUB WAS ORGANIZED AS THE MAPLE LEAF CLUB IN 1876. Its first game that year was played ...AGAINST A TEAM COMPOSED OF PLAYERS FROM PETTYSVILLE AND ANN ARBOR. Tho' there is no record of the score the Brighton team won. THIS TEAM PLAYED SEVERAL GAMES THAT YEAR, LOSING BUT TWO both against Pinckney.

THE MEMBERS OF THAT EARLY BRIGHTON TEAM WERE AUGUST REINER, CAPTAIN AND CATCHER; BIGHAM, (probably the son of Robert Bigham who, in the 1830s, operated a tavern north of town) PITCHER; WALT ACKER, 1ST BASE; C. D. BIGHAM, (perhaps another son of Robert) 2ND BASE; CHARLES PLACEWAY, (who established the Brighton Argus in 1880) 3RD BASE; WILLIAM KRAUSE, S.S.; WILL STUHRBERG, (proprietor of Easter House) RIGHT FIELD; PETER HARTMAN, (ran a local saloon) LEFT FIELD; AND O'BRIAN, CENTER FIELD.

Altho the seasons of 1877-78 saw them win every game, in 1879 the team was short of players and had a rather dismal season. According to the 1880 issue of the Argus the game between the Brighton Red Stockings and Fowlerville Mutuals was scheduled. ...AS THE TIME FOR THE CONTEST DREW NIGH A SPIRIT BEGAN TO BE MANIFESTED BY THAT CLASS OF CITIZENS WHO ALWAYS LIKE...TO SEE THEIR TEAM WIN,...RESULTED IN THE SECURING OF NEW UNIFORMS FOR THE PLAYERS AND THE NECESSARY BACKERS TO GUARANTEE THE GAME A SUCCESS. THE CLUB WAS ACCOMPANIED TO FOWLerville BY A LARGE CROWD OF INTERESTED CITIZENS AND BACKERS AND WERE THE RECIPIENTS OF MANY CHEERING WORDS WHEN THEY DEPARTED ON THE MORNING TRAIN FOR THE FIELD OF DUTY.

However, upon arriving it was obvious that the opposing team consisted of only a few Fowlerville players and the rest were ringers from other counties. THE MUTUALS WENT TO THE BAT AND SECURED 3 RUNS AND THREE BASE HITS IN THE FIRST INNING. THE FIRST INNING OF THE RED STOCKINGS RESULTED IN KRAUSE STRIKING OUT, HARTMAN GAINING 2ND BASE, SNYDER 1ST AND JOHNSON AND BIGHAM STRIKING OUT...A WHITEWASH. However, by the second inning the Red Stockings had begun to figure out how to bat against the professional curve ball pitcher.

PLACEWAY WENT TO BAT WITH THE SECOND INNING, GAINING ONE RUN FOLLOWED BY A RUN FROM STUHRBERG, S. SNYDER, KRAUSE, E. SNYDER AND JOHNSON. JONES, HARTMAN AND PLACEWAY STRIKING OUT. Altho the Mutuals' catcher wore a mask he WAS BADLY HURT BY RECEIVING THE FULL FORCE OF THE BALL FROM THE PITCHER ON THE LEFT SIDE OF HIS FACE RENDERING HIM NEARLY INSENSIBLE FOR A TIME AND UNFIT FOR FURTHER SERVICE BEHIND THE BATTER.

In the third inning the Red Stockings scored 12 runs. BRIGHTON FINALLY WON, 30-23. (Researched by Marieanna Bair. Readers who can supply more accurate identification of the players are asked to contact her in order to correct the records in the Archives.)

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