



Phelps Community Historical Society

April 2022 Volume 30 Issue 261



Baseball Beginnings

The first officially recorded game of baseball in U.S. history took place on June 19, 1846. The year 1852 saw the first generation of baseball players in the village of Phelps. In pre-Civil War days, the Phelps Victory baseball club had established itself as one of the best in the county. Baseball continued to flourish during the late 1800s in Phelps where many games were played on Redfield Commons.

During the early 1900s Phelps had three teams: a men's team named the Zeniths; the Crown baseball club made up of school boys; and a women's team.

In April of 1901, the citizens of Phelps held a benefit ball at Gibson Hall to raise funds to construct a new grandstand at Redfield Park for the ball teams. It is recorded that on August 16, 1902 the women's team took part in an exhibition game.

They participated at every position except catcher, which was held by Arthur Kirk. The position of catcher was deemed unladylike for women of culture (they played in long sleeved blouses and long skirts).

In the 1920s Phelps would produce their own major league player in Joseph Gleason. Born in Phelps in 1895, Joe began his professional career with the New Bedford Whalers of the Class C Colonial League in 1914. He was a pitcher for two seasons with the Washington Senators, played minor league baseball for several more years, and ended his career with the Scranton Miners and Elmira Colonels of the New York-

Pennsylvania League. He passed his legacy on to his son Gary who later became a high school standout.

By the 1930s and 1940s baseball fields began to spring up around Phelps. Games were found at Jesse Goodman's place outside of town, the McBurney Road diamond, the Burnett and the Pre-Emption corner field and at the base of Tiger Hill.

The groundskeeper of Tiger Hill was Zeke Lockemeyer. He was known for his meticulous care of the local diamond where he spent many hours grooming and edging the baselines. The Tiger Hill diamond was known to have the finest manicured grass around until a 1960s rainstorm washed away the many years of Zeke Lockemeyer's care. The undoing came by way of a surplus of salt pile located at the town barns above the school diamond. The intense rainstorm swept the pile away onto the field. Shortly afterwards it was rumored that Zeke went looking for the Highway Superintendent armed with a rake and a garden hoe.

The law makers of Phelps baseball would vary from the school age boys who represented the East and West End sandlot clubs to Judge Earl S. Warner, a State Senator and State Supreme Court Justice. Rituals of the game at sandlot level included the tossing of the bat, fingers only and the ceremonial three swings over the head to signify the choosing of players. (continued on page 2)



Zeniths 1908

Top Row:

C. Croford
D. Welcher
J. Hewett
F. Brashard
A. Harvey

Bottom Row:

W. Spray
P. Condit
C. John
F. Helmer
S. Combs

Baseball Beginnings (continued from page 2)

Following the sandlots days, Harold Andrews, who was known as Mr. Baseball in Phelps, became one of the founding fathers and the chief organizer of youth league baseball in the village. Harold made the occasional trip to Cooperstown where he and some friends attended the induction ceremony. One such ceremony found the Phelps contingent spotting former Baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn. In their passing of each other Harold Andrews yelled good morning to Bowie. The group was somewhat embarrassed and wondered what Harold was up to when the silver haired Bowie Kuhn took another look and said "well if it isn't Harold Andrews".

Since that day the people of the community awarded Harold Andrews with the honorary title of Mr. Baseball of Phelps, New York.

Other names that are part of the community's baseball history include Chuck Goodman, Frank McCallister, Everett Jones, George King, Dr. Gordon VanHooft, Harold "Buster" Combs, Bud Milliman, Ken "Whitey" Smith, Babe Smith, Ken Overslaugh, Steve Darrow, and Larry Havert.

Source: From Backyards to Big Leagues *Baseball in Ontario County, NY 1850-2004* by Timothy D. Munn and Matthew F. Vitticore. A copy is available in the PCHS reference library.

Photos: PCHS files.



Phelps Central School 1942 Baseball Team

Front row L-R : Jim Hatch, John Scherbryn, Charlie Wilber, Bruce Sabin

2nd row: Bill Upchurch, Tom Linehan, Walt Smith, Pete Adams, Harold Combs, Roger Hollenbeck

Back row: Coach Leader, Marvin Johnson, Charlie Dunning, John Neeham, Bill DeVall, Alfred Adams, Zeke Lockemeyer



Phelps Central School 1952 Baseball Team

Front row L-R: Bill Filiatreau, Morgie Knapp, Ray Howard, Rodney Rishel, Skip Filitreau, Charles Overslaugh, Don Fridley, Lowell Falkey, Ray Dunham, Frank Barry, Don Ulmer

Second Row: Ken Overslaugh, Tom Filiatreau, Harry Peake, Bob Nagel, Ron VanCamp, R. Burnette, Stanley Maines, Frank Sweet, Ned McAllister, Coach Cook

School District Number 12 The Hill District (The Flood District)

School District #12 can be found on the 1859 map of Phelps on what today is County Route 26, near the intersection of Route 88. In the past (and for many people today) it was called the Vienna Road. Lewis Hill, who lived across the road from the school, presumably gave the land for the school. The earliest information we have at the museum shows the school on a ledger in 1837. A. Baldwin was the lead trustee and the school received \$20.15 in apportionment aid. In April 1840, the teacher was paid \$34.13 and the library apportionment was \$8.53.

In the 1800s the District 12 was known as the Hill District. The neighbors in the area who likely sent their children to the school were the Hill, Tiffany, Stedman, Baldwin, Whittum, Case, Avery, Reed, Murphy, Filkin, and Roberts families. In the early 20th century, School 12 was known as the Flood School. The neighborhood had changed a bit. Then, the neighbors were the Flood, Hill, Wolf, Newton, Tiffany, Bigelow, Crow and Irvin families.

Dr. Ron Grube



PCHS Program

Flower Power

A guide to starting
and maintaining
a flower garden

Presenters

Master Gardeners

Billee Altman and Dorothy Colvin

Monday May 9, 2022 6:00 PM

United Church of Phelps

58 Main Street

Phelps, NY

Thank you for your support !

PCHS membership dues, memorials and donations are not just monetary contributions. They also show support for the work that is done by the PCHS Board of Trustees, volunteers and staff: caring for collections, maintaining our buildings, genealogy and research, and sharing Phelps history with visitors. If you have the opportunity to share a newsletter please do so and encourage membership. PCHS dues may be paid and memorials and donations made at the PCHS office, by mail or online at phelpsnyhistory.com.

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 Don Ulmer
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 in memory of her father
John W. Gifford

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 in memory of
Mr. & Mrs. Emmons Gifford

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 in memory of
Jean Naukum

Jeanne King-Leonard &
 Michael Leonard
 in memory of
Beverly Cheney
Stephen Cheney
Bradley Cheney



Memorials

Olivia Hershey
 Sarah and Murray Hestley
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 in memory of
Nancy H. Doubleday

Linda Homco, DVM
 Funds for Stairlift Installation
 in memory of
Nancy H Doubleday
 It was always Nancy's wish that
 the Howe House Museum be
 accessible to everyone

Margaret H. Jolliff
 in memory of
her parents John & Hazel Harland
her sister Julia Harland Wells

Barbara Rickard
 in memory of
Lynn Falkey



In Memoriam
 Nancy Huston Doubleday
 February 7, 1930-
 April 3, 2022

Monetary Donations

Barbara Gillespie
in honor of Carol Conklin

Kathleen Quigley

Don Ulmer

Glen and Ann Webster
in honor of Barbara Gillespie

From Our Photo Files....



**Collins Iron Works
Across from railway passenger station
October 10, 1910**



**Kathleen Baker crossing Main St, Phelps, NY
November 1951**



Ives Motors Inc. on West End of Main St 1954

Photo left: Ives Motors Inc., 261 Main Street. Later Tyman Ford, and since 1995 the Blue Ribbon Smokehouse Restaurant and Bakery.

Photo below: The median strip in the center of East Main Street ran from North Wayne Street to Exchange Street where a Civil War cannon sat. Installed in the mid 1920s, the median was removed in September 1946 and replaced with asphalt pavement.



The median strip in the center of East Main Street. The Howe House is on the corner.

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Application: New _____ Renewal _____ Gift _____ Send membership card _____

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DONATION: Amount _____

_____ In memory of (Optional): _____

_____ In honor of (Optional): _____

_____ Allocate funds to (Optional): _____

WANTED:

Bicycle for PCHS Transportation Exhibit in the Carriage House

If you have a bicycle from the
early 1900s—1950s that you
would like to donate or loan
to the museum

please contact us at
histsoc2@gmail.com
or call 315-548-4940



PHELPS COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Howe House Museum

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E-mail: histsoc2@gmail.com

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Museum Hours:

Wednesday, Thursday and
Friday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
or by appointment

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SAVE THE DATE!!

PHELPS ALUMNI

ASSOCIATION

REUNION

THURSDAY

AUGUST 4, 2022

CLUB 86 GENEVA, NY

Details to follow