

History of Baseball in Clarendon

What follows is a brief (and incomplete) history of baseball in Clarendon with more questions than answers perhaps but it is a start on documenting this aspect of history. What has long been called America's pastime has been a cherished part of growing up and living in Clarendon since at least the late 1860's. This is evidenced by it being organized and funded by volunteers, even to the point of baseball fields being on private property.

All of the newspaper clippings that follow are from the Rutland Herald.

Oct. 6, 1868 – *Base Ball – The first game of a series of three, between the Green Mountain B.B.C., of Wallingford, and the Pico B.B.C. of Clarendon, was played in East Wallingford, on Saturday afternoon, Oct. 3d, and resulted in victory for the Green Mountain Club. At the end of the game the score stood as follows, viz: Green Mountain, 37; Pico, 14. The return match will be played upon the grounds of the Pico's, in Clarendon.*

Aug. 21, 1876 – *A game of base ball was played Saturday afternoon on the Bolivar's grounds between the city boys of Clarendon Springs and a picked up nine here. The game begun about four o'clock and ended at dark, resulting in a victory for the "City Boys" by a score of 22 to 20.*

May 31, 1889 – *The Laundry nine from the laundry of Tim, Wallerstein & Co., crossed bats with the North Clarendon nine at Clarendon yesterday forenoon and defeated them by a score of 16 to 13. The battery for the laundry nine was Feeley and Crow. Feeley struck out eight men.*

May 15, 1891 – *The Stoddard Manufacturing Company's nine has completed negotiations with the Clarendon ball team, and the two teams will meet in Rutland on May 30.*

June 1, 1893 – *North Clarendon – The Clarendon base ball team won in a game with the Rutland Institute team Decoration day.*

Note: Decoration Day was a predecessor to today's Memorial Day.

June 12, 1893 – *The game of ball which was to have been played on Munson's field last Saturday between a nine from East Clarendon and the institute nine was declared forfeited to the former, as the institute refused to play. A "scrub" nine was brought together, however, and the East Clarendon nine was defeated by a score of 15 to 1.*

Aug. 27, 1894 – *The Victor ball team defeated a picked nine on the fair grounds Saturday afternoon by a score of 25 to 22. The Victors were to have played with the North Clarendon nine, but that team did not put in an appearance.*

Aug. 3, 1896 – *Clarendon Springs – On Friday the Clarendon baseball team defeated the Montverts here in an interesting contest. The game was full of kicking, in which the Montverts excelled. Before the game it was agreed to play seven innings, and after the fifth, the score then standing Clarendon 8,*

Montverts 15, the Montverts refused to play, claiming that a five inning game was the agreement. The umpire awarded the game to the Clarendons, 9 to 0.

The reference to kicking is interesting. Literally it means kicking the ball to another player so as to make an out rather than throw the ball to that other player. Was this a common tactic back then? More importantly, how does a score of 8 to 15 end up being 9 to 0? Where was the baseball field in Clarendon Springs?

June 26, 1897 – *Castleton - The Clarendon Springs ball nine came over Friday and whipped the home nine by a score of 18 to 16. Batteries – McNeal and Wing; Stiles, Williams, Jones, and Bull.*

Aug. 2, 1921 – *North Clarendon – The Clarendon baseball team added another scalp to their long list of victims defeating East Wallingford here Sunday 12 to 4.*

April 20, 1922 – *North Clarendon – The baseball club of North Clarendon will hold a dancing party Friday evening in Grange hall. Following the dancing refreshments will be served.*

June 27, 1922 – *North Clarendon – The Clarendon baseball nine defeated the strong Pittsford team here on Sunday.*

June 18, 1928 – *An advertisement for a dance to be held at the Town Hall to benefit the Clarendon Baseball Association. Numerous similar ads continued across the months that followed.*

April 10, 1929 – *The North Clarendon Junior baseball team defeated the East Clarendon Juniors Saturday by a score of 19 to 12.*

This news clip tells us there was more than one team based on age at this time.

June 6, 1933 – *Wallingford - The North Clarendon baseball team defeated Wallingford, 13 – 10 in a Twin Valley league game here yesterday. Wallingford had been favored to win. Smith, Hebert and McFarland were the Wallingford battery while Lee pitched and Gutzwiller caught for North Clarendon.*

May 16, 1934 – *East Clarendon Tigers baseball team played the Clarendon Panthers Saturday afternoon with a score of 27-28 in favor of the Panthers. Next Saturday's game will be at East Clarendon in the forenoon.*

This is the first mention of there being competing teams in Clarendon. Where was this field in East Clarendon?

July 17, 1935 – *Clarendon Cardinal Baseball team which has won six out of nine games this season, was the loser to Ormsby's All-Stars, 13-8, on Sunday.*

June 15, 1937 – *Clarendon Nine Splits Doubleheader – The Clarendon baseball team split a doubleheader recently, losing to Cold River, 8 to 7, and defeating Wallingford, 16 to 11.*

June 19, 1937 – *Clarendon to Play Pittsford Nine* – The Clarendon Junior baseball team will travel to Pittsford Sunday to oppose the strong Pittsford team. Batteries for Clarendon will be Congdon and Kehoe.

Sept. 1, 1942 – *Clarendon Softballers to Play Two at Fair Grounds* – Clarendon's "blitzkreiging" softballers have a full schedule at the end of this week, their manager Clyde Akley, announced last night. The fast-stepping Clarendon ball-hawks will tangle with the Rutland town team in the first game of a doubleheader to be played on Saturday as part of the 4-H fairground exhibit. The Clarendon-Rutland town engagement will begin at 10 o'clock on Saturday morning, with a twilight contest between the undefeated Bomoseen club and the Clarendon crew finishing the day's softball.

Both games should be close because the Bomoseen ten has earned a reputation for hard-hitting and although the Rutland town club is an unknown quantity their manager, George Livac, claims to have a ten that will stop the growing Clarendon victory string, but those Clarendon lads aren't named "blitzkreigers" for nothing.

July 7, 1950 – *Clarendon Nine Plays Pittsford Sunday* – Clarendon - The newly organized Clarendon baseball team will take on the Pittsford town team here Sunday at 1:30 p.m. Larry Adams, manager, announced today that the team will practice Monday, Wednesday and Saturday nights and urged prospective players to come out for the team.

This news clip suggests that baseball went dormant for a period in Clarendon and was resurrected again in 1950.

July 19, 1950 – *Rutland Indians Defeat Clarendon Nine, 15 to 3* – Rutland's Indians, behind the sharp chuckling of Larry Duval, whipped the newly organized Clarendon nine 15 -3 at the Clarendon diamond Sunday afternoon.

April 5, 1951 – An advertisement (one of multiple ads to come) for a dance to be held at the Clarendon Town Hall.

April 11, 1951 – *Clarendon Lays Plans for Fielding Baseball Team* – Arrangements to finance the purchase of new uniforms and equipment for the Clarendon Town Baseball team were made here recently at a meeting of baseball directors. Funds will be raised by promoting dances and other socials every Thursday until the beginning of the season. The directors arranged to hold another meeting April 18 and urged all persons interested in baseball to attend the meeting.

Aug. 13, 1951 – *Davis AC 2-1 Victor Over Clarendon Baseball Team - Wallingford* – Bruce Tubbs held the Clarendon diamond crew to two hits here today, getting 13 men on strikes in the process, as the Davis AC of Wallingford took a 2-1 victory. Armand LaPine hurled six-hit ball for the invaders but four Clarendon errors put him at a disadvantage.

July 2, 1953 – *New Horizons Camp will open its 1953 baseball season July 4, at 2PM at the camp against the Chippenhook Wildcats.* Rickie Smith will be on the mound for New Horizon while Manager Jimmie

Tiraboschi of the Wildcats has not named his moundman. New Horizon Camp has also issued challenges to several other camps in the area.

See the *New Horizons Camp* entry in the Buildings & Enterprises collection.

Dec.7, 1979 – An article about Jon C. “Skip” DiDio that notes he was active in the Chippenhook Blue Jays, a Babe Ruth baseball team. He had received an all-star trophy earlier in 1979 for his performance as catcher for the team.

Nov. 14, 1980 – *Ron Peche, a former major league pitcher for the Milwaukee Brewers and currently a scout for the Montreal Expos organization, was the featured speaker recently at the Long Trail Baseball Association Awards Banquet at Mill River Union High School.*

Peche told the junior and senior little leaguers from Clarendon, Chippenhook, Danby, Mendon, Mt. Holly, Shrewsbury and Wallingford that they must be prepared for a “lot of hard work” if they wish to make it to the big leagues.

Following Peche’s talk, the Shrewsbury Bears were honored as the champions of their junior league. Wally Fabian of the Chippenhook Blue Jays was awarded the Most Valuable Player trophy.

Players from the Chippenhook Senior Blue Jays who ended the season undefeated, were also presented trophies. Team members included Duane Carleton, Jon DiDio, Mike Gilman, Mark Gilman, Jeff Kent, Jonathan Wehse, Jim Mumford, Kenny Black, Jeff Fredette, David Patch, Scott Stebbens, and Darren Bradley.

Blue Jays star pitcher Jeff Kent received the Most Valuable Player Award.

Norman Gilman and John Kent, co-coaches of the Blue Jays, were presented special plaques of appreciation from team members.

July 19, 1986 - *A tip of the hat to former Rutland Post 31 stalwart and Mill River star Mike Lord who has moved on to gain success in his first coaching venture. Lord’s Wallingford club beat the Chippenhook Blue Jays in the championship of the Long Trail Senior League last week.*

Aug. 4, 1994 -.....*In the months before they were chosen to represent their league, these 11 and 12 year olds faced one another on the field, representing eight different teams from six Rutland County towns. Season rivalries between the Clarendon A’s and Shrewsbury Bears or Wallingford Warriors and Chippenhook Blue Jays were forgotten.*

Their practice field was in Wallingford, the best available in the league. Chippenhook has a modified pasture. Clarendon has playground equipment in right field. Shrewsbury has bugs. Danby is swampy and Mount Holly is still working on its field.....

The above are excerpts from a very long article about the Long Trail Little League All-Stars team.

April 4, 2010 – An article about the volunteer effort to clean up the Chippenhook and Rt 7B Central baseball fields and raise money to support the teams.

Baseball Fields: There is much history missing as concerns baseball fields. Ignoring the Mill River athletic fields, all that is currently known of baseball fields in Clarendon is as follows:

Clarendon Springs Field – referenced in the Aug. 3, 1896 news clip – where was this field?

North Clarendon Field – referenced in the 1921 & 1922 news clips – where was this field?

East Clarendon Field – referenced in the May 16, 1934 news clip – where was this field?

New Horizon Camp Field – this was somewhere on camp property on New Horizons Lane

Clarendon Flats Field – This was described by Ed Congdon in 2020 as:

Another field, ca. late 1950's, was in front of the Powers House on the Flats. It was complete with backstop and bleachers. The field faced south and the backstop would have been just a few feet south of the driveway to what was then the hired man's house. Not sure who lives there now. The bleachers faced the first base line. I don't remember anyone getting a ball as far as the brick house! Apparently the windows were safe. Carlene Ackley taught me how to burn my initials in the bleacher seat with a magnifying glass.

The Powers House is the brick home to the south of the Town Hall (see the *Powers House* entry in the Homes collection). When was this field built? By who? When was it removed?

Rt 7B South Field – This is the former baseball field that can be seen in a 1957 aerial in the Mysteries collection (see *Former Ballfield* entry). It was lost in conjunction with the construction of the new Rt 7.

Congdon Farm Field – This baseball field on the Congdon farm was possibly the successor to either the Clarendon Flats Field or the Rt 7B South Field and continues in use to the present by adults. When was it built? By who?

Rt 7B Central Field – This field, adjacent to the Transfer Station, is the only field currently in use that is owned by the town. How long has it been there?

Chippenhook Field (Original) – (see *Original Chippenhook Baseball Field* entry in the Places collection) This baseball field was on the southwest corner of the intersection of Walker Mountain Rd and Firehouse Rd. It was gone by 1981 when a home was built on the site. Per an account from Bette (Ewing) Fox) it was there by 1938:

Chippenhook baseball Field was an extension of the Chippenhook School play yard. When my family moved to Chippenhook, I was a first grader from the town of Rutland to live with my grandmother Ewing in 1938, that field was the destination at recess time and lunch hour for the endless baseball game. Of course, only the "big kids" who at that time included Clarence and Marion Ballard, Howard and Geraldine LaForest even Juliet Lavictorie. We little kids had the swings and marvelous teeter boards.

The time came when we “little kids” were allowed to play baseball and this occurred through 1944 when I graduated. Guess what! This custom was still going in 1952 when I was the teacher. (Secret, even this teacher looked forward to the lunch hour for a good game with the students!).

From Duane Carleton we have comment about a practice field in the lower area across the road heading towards the Clarendon River:

I remember practicing in the field by the river which was soggy and not flat. Good times.

Chippenhook Field (Current) – This was the successor field to the original baseball field in Chippenhook when that field was discontinued and a house built on the site. Who built it? What year? Interestingly, given the original location of the Chippenhook School across the road from this site, this site would have been more convenient for the school than the one at the corner of Walker Mountain Rd and Firehouse Rd. See the *Chippenhook Baseball Field* entry in the Places collection.

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June 2020