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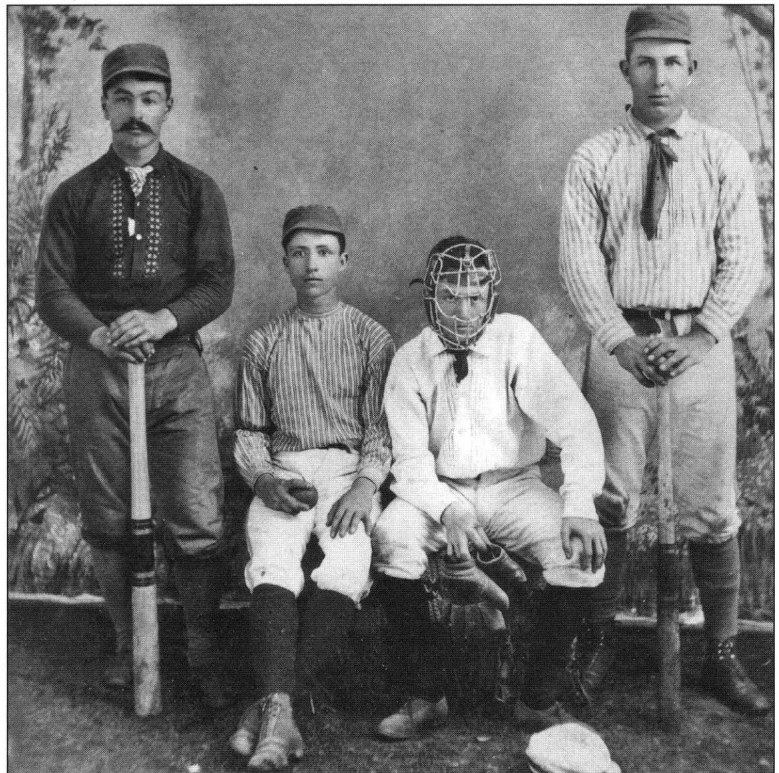
PLAY BALL! AMERICA'S PASTIME IN CALAVERAS COUNTY

by Bonnie Miller

The origins of baseball are murky. Some believe that a similar game played in Britain, “rounders,” was the basis of the game. Others believe that a Civil War soldier invented the game in this country. Still others believe it was formalized by a Colorado mining engineer. Regardless of its origin, by the end of the 1800s the game had gripped the country as the primary form of entertainment and the single most widely played sport.

There were no televisions, no computers or game devices in those days and children had to make their own play. Baseball was what everyone did and everyone understood. Whether people played it or watched it, baseball was how the country passed the time. Hence it came to be known as America's Pastime.

The country was enthralled with baseball and so was California. In the 1800s the Stockton area was often a delta-land of mudflats, giving it the nickname “Mudville”, yet residents still managed to



F.O. Washburn, J.F. Treat Jr, Sam Redmond and Al Francisco are pictured circa 1890. Note the non-tapered “barrel” shaped bat, and only one glove among them used by the catcher. The dapper neckties were a baseball uniform fashion up until the turn of the century. Calaveras Archives photo.

play ballgames. It is believed to be the origin of the great poem “Casey at the Bat.” The poem’s author in fact grew up near Stockton and never disputed the perceived origin of the poem despite others’ later interpretations of his poem.

The sport was embraced by the communities of the Mother Lode and heartily here in Calaveras. Baseball was the favorite pastime for school children during the week and adults on the weekends. This was the time of hard rock mining, ball doping and segregation. Paradoxically, a “strike” meant the opposite for baseball than it did for mining. Regardless the miners of Calaveras played the game with gusto every summer. Ballgame headlines and stats were front-page news.

There were A Leagues, Junior Leagues, Minor Leagues, Night Softball Leagues, Divisions, etc. Generally each county held games between their communities and determined a winner for their county. The best teams went on to compete in the Mother Lode League. The foothill teams were considered semi-pro, just short of minors. They didn’t earn a salary but they

*“The game was
all kinds of ball—
good, bad and
indifferent with the
noise, confusion
and wrangling of a
Donnybrook fair.”*

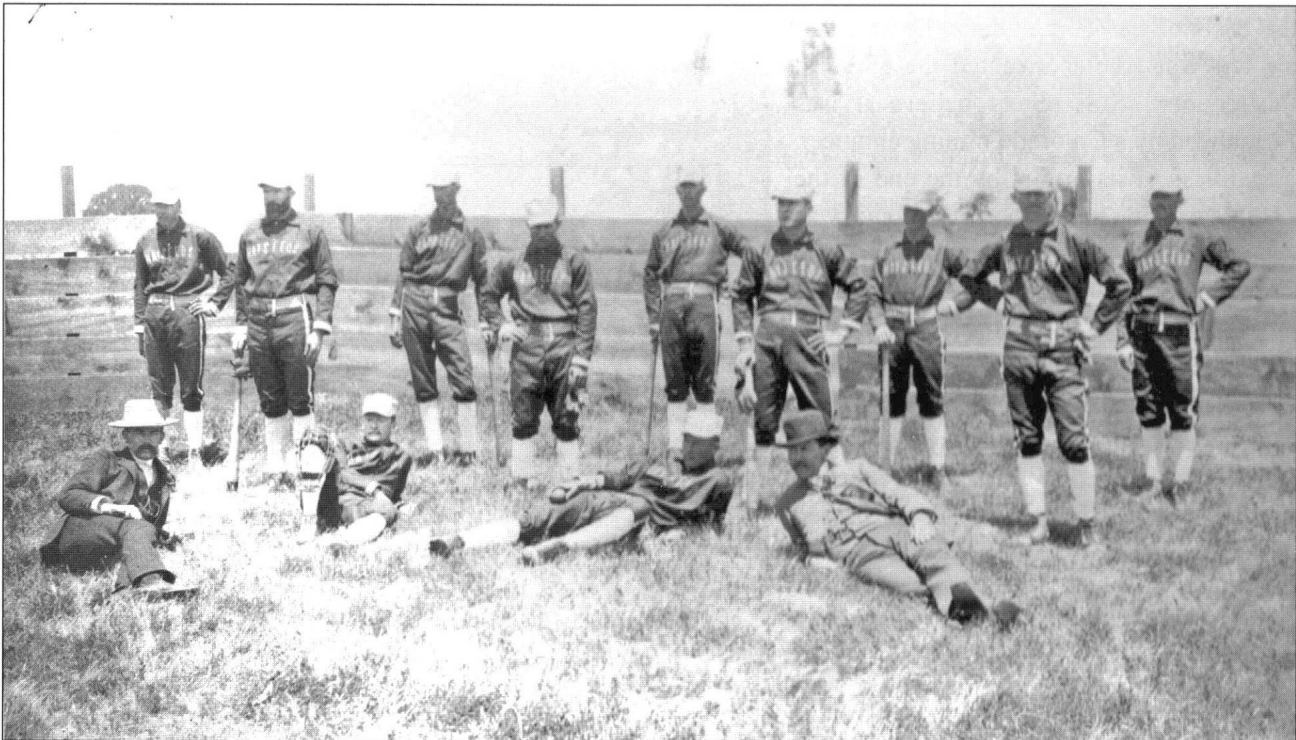
—*Calaveras Prospect,*
6/9/1900.

often won purses. The Mother Lode League included the best of the county teams plus all of the other teams that could get up the entrance fee to join the league. The winner of the league would go on to play the winner of the Central California or the Coastal League in their own championship series. The best ball players from these games were recruited into the minors, and hopefully on to a career in the Pacific Coast League.

The ball clubs around the Mother Lode were amateur clubs just for fun.

In theory the players never received pay for their play, but teams often received prize money if they won a particular game. Sometimes a team would resist playing until the purse was big enough. Players were also rewarded with uniforms or equipment to outfit their team, or lavishly entertained by their community. Mary Taylor of Rail Road Flat recalled that the ball players were the hard workers, the champions, prized and admired by their communities.

Amateur status was not a stumbling block toward making it into the minors and did not have the stigma that it has today. There were no restrictions regarding players and it was not unusual to see teenagers



The San Andreas Hayseeds strike a casual pose in the summer grass, circa 1895. Calaveras Archives photo.



A San Andreas team poses in front of the jail yard. Left to right, F Treat, Geo Stewart, Bill Coulter, Bill Toon (umpire), Frank Thomas, Frank Washburn, Al Francisco, Sam E Redmond. Front, Hugh Gillen on the left was the pitcher, Bob Thomas on the right was the catcher; circa 1900. Calaveras Archives photo.

playing with older men on the same team. Some enthusiastic players even played for more than one team in a season.

Highlight of the Weekend

Social life in the hot foothill summers revolved around the weekend baseball games. One community would host the game while another community's team and fans were the visitors. Festivities often started Saturday evening with a dance. The host would be sure to provide the best food and a band for entertainment. The following morning the game would start after church. Fans went directly from church to the game to support their team. If they hadn't gone to church they dressed in their Sunday best none the less.

"Everyone went to the baseball games," recalled Elaine Segale, when asked what attendance was like.

Teams typically consisted of just nine or ten players. An injury or absence could severely hurt a team's performance. Each team was also required to supply one umpire for their games. Originally only catchers were outfitted with gloves. Later all outfielders began wearing rudimentary gloves to protect their

hands. When teams changed places at the end of the inning the outfielders always left the glove at their position by throwing it down on the ground. This tradition came from the lack of equipment, so that any fielders who had gloves readily shared them with the opposing team. Even if the oncoming player had a glove, the first player left his glove as though claiming his spot in the field. The habit was quickly abandoned in the pros as the players found they could trip over the glove, yet the tradition carried on in the minors for a few more years.

Games had to be played during the long summer days as there were no lighted fields. Later, games were lit with the headlights of automobiles. Baseball was almost a year-round sport, weather and daylight permitting. Ball players began practice in large open fields such as out at Frogtown as early as March in anticipation for opening day. "We're born again—there's new grass on the field" enthused John Fogarty in his famous baseball song 'Centerfield,' echoing the enthusiasm of earlier years. Regarding the pending season opener, "...exciting games will be played," predicted the *Calaveras Weekly Citizen* on 14 April, 1900. Such was the confidence and enthusiasm for the sport.

*"Oh boy; oh boy;
oh fan; oh fan!
Wasn't that game last
Sunday a humdinger
and a whopper?"*

—Calaveras Prospect,
10/22/25



Nine players from a Sheep Ranch baseball team pose with their bat boy, circa 1900.
Calaveras Archives photo.

Any excuse would suffice to get up a game. Regular scheduled games were played as part of the annual ball season. Other games came from friendly rivalries between communities or mines. Fourth of July activities almost certainly included a ball game, whether part of regular play or just for fun for the holiday. And then there were the exhibition games. The 1921 Fourth of July celebration in Sheep Ranch hosted the team from San Andreas. Gate proceeds were split 60/40 between the host and their guest. The game was charged with rivalry, billing it as the battle *“For the supremacy of the southern mines.”*

The best of the players from the Mountain Ranch and Sheep Ranch area made up the Sheep Ranch team, sponsored by the mine. It was said that so long as the team had their fans loudly rooting for them they couldn't lose. Sheep Ranch fans rang the dinner bell at the nearby hotel until their opponents were rattled. Before the automobile the team traveled by wagon donated by the Sheep Ranch livery. On their return trip in the evenings they always stopped for dinner at the Mountain Ranch Hotel.

Some exhibition games ran on all day, as a triple header or more. The entertainment was designed to appeal to the entire family and captivate their interest for hours. The early games were three-inning spectacles with grammar school students then progressing in age and game length from there.

Baseball games were great fun and usually boisterous and rife with the infusion of alcohol. The ballplayers were highly regarded members of their communities like local folk heroes. Those who did not imbibe were considered even more gallant. A ballplayer who could withstand his alcohol until the completion of the game was particularly admired. *“The Murphys lads deserve great praise for keeping away from evil influences,”* crowed the newspaper in 1900, *“and remained a moral, temperate crowd until the close of the game.”*

Baseball was originally strongly segregated. Black players did not play with the pros. They had their own teams and sometimes their own leagues. There were many

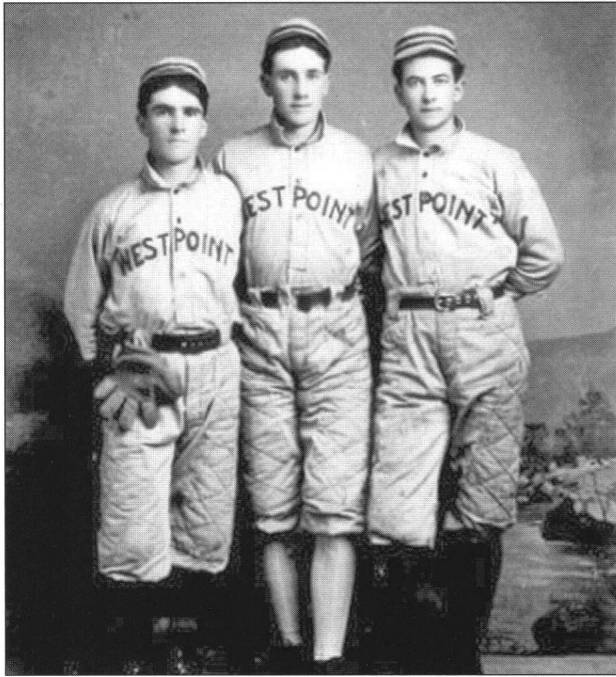
instances though where men of color passed themselves off as Cuban or Native American. Even Babe Ruth was suspected of having African blood.

Fortunately such class rules were more relaxed in the amateur leagues. Black or colored teams regularly played within the amateur leagues. In some cases a team might have had a black player. One year a visiting team from Stockton had a black pitcher. The newspaper felt obligated to point out that the team had a *“negro-hurler”* pitching for them.

Eventually baseball rules and traditions stabilized, and baseball had seeped into every corner of American culture. Sayings such as ‘getting to first base,’ ‘striking out,’ ‘he’s a hard hitter,’ or ‘hitting a home run’ all have their origins in baseball. Today one only has to look at the ubiquitous baseball cap to understand

Names and Nicknames

The numerous ball clubs that dotted the Mother Lode towns had a variety of sponsors. The sponsor could be the town itself, a local business or a mine. The winning teams from Angels Camp in the mid-1920s were sponsored by the local businesses. Calaveras Cement, the Big Tree Hotel, the Boosters Club, Shell Oil, Associated Oil and the Stockton Record all purchased a team shirt (with their advertising on the



Artie Wilson, Charles Ham and Tony Legaggi of the West Point team, circa 1900. Historical Society photo.

back) to outfit the Angels players. With several leagues to play in, a community might have two teams.

During the Depression the Civilian Conservation Corps had a camp at the Big Trees. The corps got up

their own team that competed heartily in the Mother Lode League.

The team names reflected the town, mine or business that sponsored them. When more than one team represented a community then there had to be two team names. Often the names were creative expressions reflecting the driving economy (mining) or other influences of the day. Some amusing names were:

- Altaville IronWorkers
- Calaveras Diggers
- Angels Camp Angels
- Calaveritas Cripples
- Sheep Ranch Giants
- Angels Cherubs
- Groveland Excavators
- Patterson Panthers
- Calaveras Cement Hot Clinkers
- Copper Gilt Edges
- San Andreas Hayseeds
- Sheep Ranchers
- Copper Pioneers
- Tunnel Camp
- White Pines Nine
- Stockton Warehousemen
- Wallace-Camanches



The County Hospital sponsored a team for San Andreas in 1914. Photo courtesy Sal Manna.

VALLECITO.

	ab	r.	a.	po	e
O. Wermuth, 1st b.....	4	1	3	12	1
L. Edwards, s. s.	4	0	3	3	0
A. Carley, p.	4	1	4	6	0
Saunders, 2d b.	4	0	0	0	0
A. Sletten, c.	4	2	6	5	3
J. Oneto, 3d b.	4	0	1	1	2
F. Fuzher c. f.	4	0	0	0	0
Eltringham, l. f.	4	1	0	0	0
Carley, r. f.	4	0	0	0	0

32 5 17 27 6

MURPHYS

	ab	r.	a.	po	e
"Keyser" c. f.	4	1	0	2	0
Keilbar, 1st b.	4	0	0	15	0
G. Mitchler, r. f.	4	0	0	0	0
J. Segale, p.	4	0	2	3	0
J. Morley, 3rd b.	4	1	1	0	0
G. Segale, s. s.	4	0	6	1	0
E. Mitchler, c.	3	1	5	2	0
E. Segale, 2d b.	3	1	2	1	3
L. Mitchler, l. f.	3	2	0	0	1

33 6 16 24 4

Home run—A. Carley; 3 base hits—E. Segale, "Keyser"; struck out by Segale, 7; by Carley, 7.

RUNS BY INNINGS.

Murphys	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Runs	0	1	1	0	4	0	0	0	*—6
Hits	1	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	*—5
Vallecito	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Runs	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	—5
*Hits	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	—5



George Stewart, circa 1895.

FIGHT IS ON FOR PENNANT

The second half of the race for the pennant in the Mother Lode League is nearing its close, and there is going to be some hustling to see who can carry off the prize.

There are but two more games and on the evening of August 26 the people will know who and what and all about it. Conjectures are many but it would take a Missouri lawyer and a corps of expert accountants to figure out the many things that could and might happen.

MT. RANCH

A Lively Ball Game at the Little Town at the Head of Murray Creek.

MT. RANCH, April 5, 1917.

Quite a base ball game was held here Sunday the 1st. A large crowd of people from the surrounding country coming in to witness it. A game was billed to take place that day between the team from Railroad Flat but for some reason the boys from the tall timber were unable to come so a pick-up nine was formed from the visitors and gave battle to the El Dorado team. The regulars won by a large score, but the Yannigan's gave them a lot of good practice. Will Cleary from San Andreas umpired the game in big league style. The following is the box score:

BASEBALL

Oakland Colored Giants
VS.

ANGELS

Champions of the Mother Lode

Sunday, October 18th

GAME CALLED AT 2:30

ANOTHER FAST GAME

BASEBALL

MODESTO REDS

Champion of San Joaquin Valley

VS.

ANGELS

Champions of the Mother Lode

Sunday, September 6

GAME CALLED AT 2:30

Babe Periotti pitching for Anges

Best Game of Season

THE RUNS ARE PLentiful. V. S. WINS OVER CCC

Runs were as plentiful as hot August in the softball games Thursday night. The first game Valley Springs places with the Big Tree CCC I shoved them in the cellar in the standings by nosing out a victory. CCC did all their scoring games, the first, with six runs seventh with three runs. Valings spread out their runs and to the seventh with a 10-6 lead.

SOFTBALL BOYS PLAY WITH RUTH AND GEHRIG

A number of the Angels baseball boys went down to Stockton last Monday and played in the game with Babe Ruth on the Stockton side and Lou Gehrig on the Angels side. The boys report that it was a good game they ran out of balls. Every one of the big league boys would take a ball some ardent fan would race and nail it as a souvenir. After a dozen balls had been lost it was decided to call off the game. The Stockton side with Babe Ruth first won the game by a score of ten to four. Frank Crespi and Ed Golob were among the players going from Angels.

THE COLORED BOYS TAKE HOME BACON

It was a dandy game, attended by the largest crowd ever assembled at the local ball park but, sad to relate, the Colored Giants won the game by a score of 2 to 1. This makes the games 1-1 between the clubs and a third one will be played at a date to be selected later. Two errors in the third inning gave the visitors the victory. Lumpkins singled with two out. Collins made first on an error by Segale and Lumpkins reached home. Collins later made the rounds on a single by Hamilton and an error in the outfield by Pic.

The outfield did all the feature playing, Reese grabbing a line drive by Periotti and Pic grabbing a long one by Walker.

This is the way it looks in figures.

ANGELS		AB	R	H	O	A
Crespi 3b	.....	5	0	0	0	1
Golob s.s.	.....	5	0	1	2	1
Segale 2b	.....	5	1	2	0	3
Paredes, 1b.	.....	4	0	1	10	1
Allen, cf.	.....	4	0	2	0	0
Periotti, p.	.....	2	0	0	1	2
Custi, c.	.....	4	0	1	8	1
Pic, rf.	.....	3	0	1	4	1
Cardini, lf.	.....	4	0	0	2	0
Total	.....	31	1	8	27	10

COLORED GIANTS		AB	R	H	O	A
Walker 2b.	.....	4	0	0	4	5
Dedws, lf.	.....	4	0	1	3	0
Lpkins, ss.	.....	4	1	2	2	1
Collins, 3b.	.....	4	1	1	2	2
Hmltn., lb.	.....	4	0	3	9	1
Rchrds., c.	.....	3	0	1	5	0
Beasley, rf.	.....	2	0	0	0	0
Reese, cf.	.....	4	0	0	2	0
Elliot, p.	.....	4	0	0	0	2
Total	.....	33	2	8	27	12

Colored Giants002 000 000-2
Base hits112 011 011-8
Angels001 000 000-1
Base hits012 021 110-8
Errors—Lumpkins 2. Collins. Hamilton (Colored Giants 4) Segale, Pic (Angels 2). Two base hits—Lumpkins Paredes, three-base hit—Hamilton. Sacrifice hits—Richards, Beasley. First base on balls off—Elliot 3, Periotti 1 Struck out by—Elliot 3, Periotti 7 Stolen bases—Meadows, Lumpkins, Collins, Allen. Double plays—Lumpkins to Hamilton. Left on bases—Colored Giants 6, Angels 10. Umpires—Castle, Baker and Ford.

Base Ball Heros On Angels Diamond

A Fast Ball Game as Doped From
The Bleachers.

ANGELS WINS IN BALL LEAGUE FOR THREE YEARS

By DAN TERZICH

Led by the big bat of Marvin "Smoky" Airola, who crashed out a home run, triple and a double in four attempts, Angels defeated the Calaveras Cement Club Sunday for the title of the second half. As Angels had already won the first half, no playoff will be necessary.

Landing hard on the offerings of Bill Priest, chucker of the Cementers in the first inning, climaxed by Floyd Segale's home run with two men on, Angels stepped out into a lead and was never headed. The final score was 19 to 5.

A great deal of credit should be given to George "Buck" Segale for handling the team for the past three years. In the face of a lot of discour-

BASEBALL

SAN FRANCISCO'S

Fastest Semi-Pro Team

VS.

ANGELS

Champions of the Mother Lode

Sunday, August 9th

GAME CALLED AT 2:30

Babe Periotti pitching for Angels

Best Game of Season

It's easy to mistake past baseball stats with those of today. Some of the names haven't changed. Familiar names such as Segale, Eltringham, Airola, Raggio, Stewart, Jasper, Winkler and Castle have dominated game rosters for eighty years.

The ballplayers and the fans alike favored nicknames for the players. The players earned their nicknames because of their skills or reputations as players. One long evening full of game fun and excess liquor left Copper player Frank Reddick incapable of speech. When asked about the game he could only respond "putt, putt, putt." Ever after his name was Putt Reddick. Judge Connell and teammate George Treat were referred to as the Jesse James Brothers. Other amusing player names were HomeRun Beyer, Mugsy McGraw, Bonehead McFall, Tug, Juice, Chappie, Lank and of course a player called Miner.

Local Action

An amusing rivalry came from two civic groups. The Angels Boosters played the San Andreas Progressives in a series of three games. The players from the two organizations had to all be men over forty years of age. The purpose of the

"Both teams showed plenty of pep and gave the lusty fans plenty of chances for lung display."

—Calaveras Prospect,
5/22/15

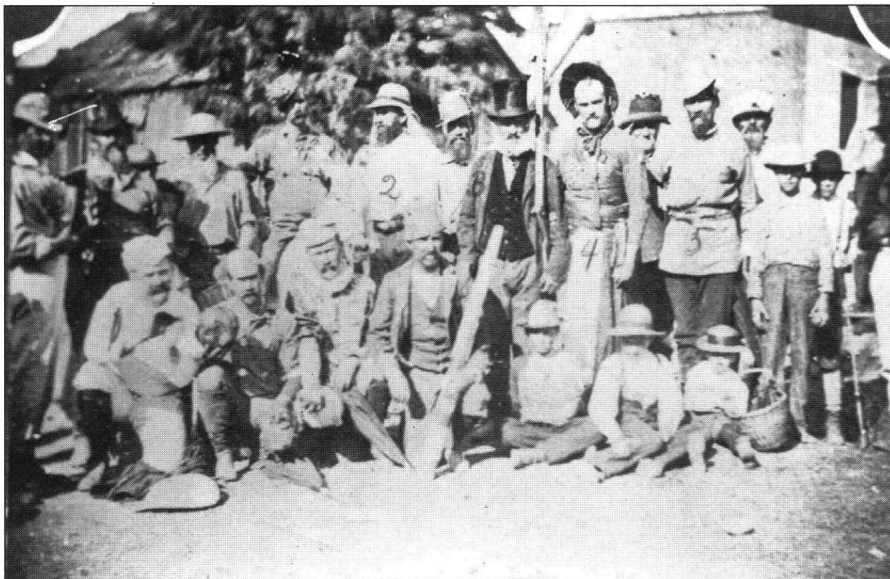
games was to raise money for the Boy Scouts of each community. In another game, the outstanding citizens of San Andreas dressed as women. The games provided immense amusement to the families and communities of the players.

Most foothill communities had a ball park. In Calaveras County San Andreas, Wallace, Sheep Ranch, Angels, El Dorado and West Point all maintained ball

fields plus many more. Several locations were used in Murphys, on land owned by Mitchler or Heulard including one referred to as the "Murphys Ball Orchard." The field in Rail Road Flat, called Taylor Field, has hosted baseball for more than 150 years. The wooden backstop and bleachers are still standing.

George Stewart, later of Stewart's Garage in San Andreas, loved sports. He loved fly fishing, deer hunting, or participating in America's pastime. In the 1890s he organized a team of "younger" players, called the San Andreas Hayseeds, to take on the regular San Andreas team. The Hayseeds won and went on to win many more. Stewart and his catcher offered a strong incentive to try to beat them: they put up a cash prize to any member of the opposing team who could steal second base behind them.

By the 1920s automobiles were making their way into the Mother Lode. Fans and players alike could travel more easily between towns for games if they were lucky enough to have a car. One year the Angels team played a team in Bodie, likely the result of a wager between two mining companies. The Angels Camp undertaker offered a ride to the team in his pallbearer's limousine, adding an ominous pallor to the trip. Imagine the looks on the Bodie ballplayers when the Angels showed up in a limousine! The Angels need



Amusing exhibition games were played to raise money for community causes. Here the players dressed as women. The tall man in the rear is Sheriff Ben Thorn, sporting a particularly fetching bonnet and apron, circa 1890.

Calaveras Archives photo.

not have feared, as Smokey Airola's homerun won the game. The ball he blasted into the thin mountain air was never found. Some say his nickname Smokey came from his hard batting, but he really earned it because his Italian skin was so dark.

Lee Raggio was a well known player from Calaveras County. "Of more than local fame," noted one newspaper account. Raggio played for Sheep Ranch and Angels Camp but his reputation spread far wider than the foothill leagues.

Another Calaveras hero was Hy Lester. He lived at Alabama Hill and played for the Rail Road Flat team. He was the team's star for several seasons in the 1930s. The list of Calaveras luminaries was seemingly endless.

Lester Canevara made it to the minors in San Francisco in 1920. After a successful career pitching for Sheep Ranch he was picked up by the minors. He joined spring training with the San Francisco Seals, the same team where Joe DiMaggio started. Charlie Stone of Copperopolis recalled that when Lester first wrote home from his new job he asked his parents to send his shoes. Apparently the teams and the league were so financially limited that players had to furnish most of their own gear. Lester did not make it past that spring training, but his roommate Lefty O'Doul went on to professional baseball fame. Nevertheless Lester Canevara was ever after a hometown hero.

Another contribution to baseball from the Mother Lode was George Metkovich. His parents were immigrants from Austria who lived in Angels Camp when



The 1921 Sheep Ranch team was known throughout the Mother Lode. Lester Canevara is second in the rear with the untucked shirt.

Photo courtesy Phil Alberts.

George was born in 1920. He went on to graduate from high school in southern California, and was signed into the majors straight out of high school.

Metkovich played ten seasons in the majors in addition to time in the minors. He played on the winning minor Oakland Oaks team, considered one of the greatest minor teams of all times. During one stint in Boston he went fishing one day. He wrangled with a hook caught in a catfish and ended up injured in the foot as a result. He missed several games due to the subsequent infection to his foot. From then on he was known as George "Catfish" Metkovich.

Because of Metkovich's ethnic background, today he is regarded as a favorite son of Croatia.

An interesting rivalry came of the 1925 season. The team from Angels Camp won the Mother Lode League. Their next match-up was with the winner from the Coastal League, a team from Oakland, the Colored Giants. The two teams played each other in a series of three games. The equally

*"The day was all the
could be desired, and
the sun smiled askance
upon the players who
became warmed up to
their work in good style
and also gave the boys
the proper 'pep' and
speed necessary to keep
the onlookers engaged
to full tensions all the
way through."*

—Calaveras Prospect,
4/5/19

matched teams promised exciting games and did not disappoint. The Angels won the first game 8-7 in the eleventh inning, shattering the eight-game winning streak for the Giants. The following game the Giants struck back and after a grueling game managed to win over the Angels at just 2-1. With both teams tied in their series the game was guaranteed to be a sensation. Sadly the Giants won. The newspapers reported that the "Giants Take the Cake," disappointingly winning the last game 6-5 and bagging the series.

Regardless of the outcome, in the foothills the Angels Camp team of 1925 was a winner. At the end of their season the Angels Camp Boosters decided to host the team, the "Champions of the Mother Lode" at their next meeting. Seventy members of the Boosters proudly showed up for their monthly meeting in December to host the ballplayers.

The Angels continued their winning streaks over the next several years. In 1936 they again took the league for the third straight year. The Angels took the series by defeating the team from Calaveras Cement. Smokey Airola of Angels Camp was again the Angels' star.

National baseball fame touched our Calaveras players. National heroes often played exhibition games with players from the minors or semi-pro leagues. In 1927 the winning Angels team went to Stockton to play in such a game. Babe Ruth played on the Stockton side and Lou Gehrig played for the Angels' team. Good fun was had by all but the game was never finished. Each time one of the pros hit a ball a fan would run onto the field and retrieve it.

"And just take a look at the stolen bases! It is a wonder those old cripples have kept out of jail as long as they have. Had the District Attorney Snyder been there, he would doubtless filed an information against them for grand larceny, and Sheriff Cosgrave would have had them all locked up. Eleven stolen bases, against two for their opponents, was certainly some larceny."

—Calaveras Prospect,
8/30/1919

Stockton was declared the winner as they were ahead when the game ran out of balls.

There is a long standing rumor about baseball great Ty Cobb and Calaveras County. It is believed that he had a friendship and maintained ties with a family from Angels Camp.

Babe Ruth changed the image of baseball across the country. His slugging brought attention to the skills of the hitters. In the 1920s the image of national baseball stars changed from pitching prowess to hard hitting.

Baseball to Softball

By the mid-1930s softball had emerged as another avenue for ballplayers. The San Andreas Progressives proposed a night softball league and staged a game to generate interest. The 1936 Mother Lode Softball League was launched and eventually expanded to include Divisions I, II and so

on. The first teams were from the Big Trees CCC, Angels Camp, Jackson, Skull Creek, San Andreas and Union Oil of Sonora. Over the subsequent years the CCC team proved to be better than good. They were often a game winner and leader in the league.

From Iowa came a comedy softball team called the Sioux City Ghosts who travelled the country playing exhibition games, similar to basketball's Globetrotters. "They dance, sing, wise-crack and have a burlesque show that will have you holding your sides with laughter," promised the paper. In the fall of 1936 the Ghosts visited Calaveras County and played a game against Angels Camp. The game was coordinated with the dedication of the



George Metkovich was born in Angels Camp and played in the pros from 1943-54.

Internet image.

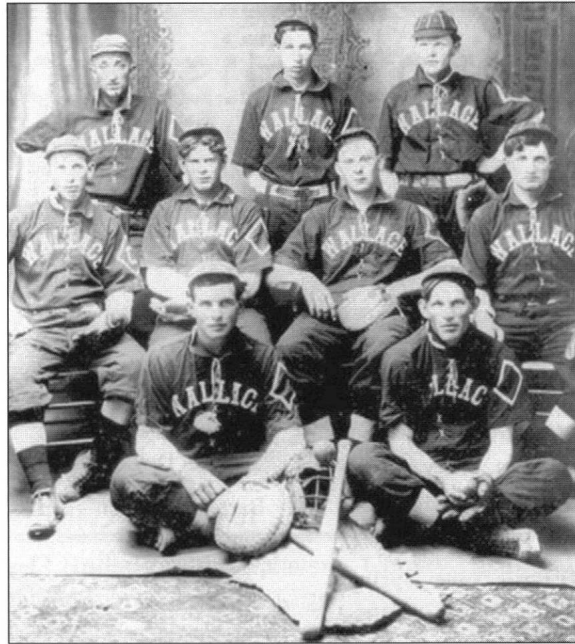
newly lighted field at Bret Harte High School.

In June of 1937 the Progressives again staged a game to observe interested players who could field a team. Essentially the game was a tryout for the players. The Progressives pitted the married men of San Andreas against the single men and selected the best players for the town's team. The married men "*ain't what they used to be,*" reported the paper, noting the single men's win of 17-6. The game was entertaining and did its job. The best nine made it to the town team.

San Andreas decided it was not to be outdone by Angels' new lighted field. The Progressives raised money for lights, a grandstand and backstop. Citizens dug the holes for the field poles. Angels softballers came to town to play under the new lights with a ceremonial dedication game. Unfortunately for San Andreas the visiting team won.

Also that year the softball league was expanded to include women. To kick off the new league a triple-header series was played between the single women of San Andreas against the married ladies. The singles took the series with a final 13-8 win.

The year 1941 again saw the team from Angels as an all-around winner. They bagged the county title 13-6 over Murphys, but it seemed to be the end of an era. With the onset of war across the globe attention moved from sports to more serious matters. In an interesting twist, the newspaper column celebrating the Angels victory lies alongside another article about the war draft. Twenty-four local young men were called up to serve the day after the big game. The following week nineteen more men were



The 1907 Wallace Camanches included in the rear Louis Arata, Walt Haddock and Bernie McGorray, center Ern Gooding, Gene Zimmerman, Geo Reinking and Jack Derivi, and front Lee Dean and Elmer Gooding. Historical Society photo.

called to action. The war depleted the ranks of the pros and amateurs alike and baseball declined for several years.

The men that made up the ball teams of the Mother Lode were miners, rural businessmen, ruffians who lacked the polish of the easterners or the Ivy Leaguers. But they were hardworking men and the soul of their town. Those who made it beyond the Mother Lode League to the minors and the pros were considered hometown heroes. At the time the west coast players were regarded as rookies, yannigans or bush-leaguers.

That image changed over time as latter day baseball observers found that the west coast semi-pro teams were every bit as talented as the east coast pros.

Baseball eventually recovered after WWII and continued to provide entertainment, but things had changed a lot in just a few short years. Many rules had altered the game and it became more structured, more "professional." College experience became as important as skill. In 1947 segregation in professional baseball ended. Lighted fields allowed for games to be played in the evenings, any day of the week. The radio and later the television brought ballgames in to the home. America's favorite sport had perhaps passed its time.

"A community fields a team. These players were hard workers and the soul of the town."

—Brent Harrington,
baseball enthusiast

Las Calaveras is grateful for the research of old newspapers conducted by Cate Culver, and the extensive photo collections available at the Calaveras County Historical Society and the County Archives. We regret that we could not include all of the fine photos and stories from our neighbors.

Calaveras County Historical Society

30 No. Main Street P.O. Box 721 San Andreas, CA 95249

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The Calaveras County Historical Society is a non-profit corporation. It meets on the fourth Thursday of each month in various communities throughout the County. Locations and scheduled programs are announced in advance. Some meetings include a dinner program, and visitors are always welcome.

The Society operates the Calaveras County Museum which is open daily from 10:00 to 4:00 in the historic County courthouse located at 30 Main Street in San Andreas; and the historic Red Barn Museum at 891 Mountain Ranch Road, also in San Andreas, which is open Thursday to Sunday, 10:00 to 4:00.

The Society's office is located in historic San Andreas, the Calaveras County seat. Visitors are always welcome to stop by the office for assistance with research, and are encouraged to visit the museums while in the area. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:00, and the telephone number is (209) 754-1058, or contact us at: CCHS@goldrush.com; Red Barn Museum (209) 754-0800.

April–June 2013

New Members

Peter Pike—Greenbrae, California
Bill & June Foster—Angels Camp (gift membership)
Peggy Willcox—San Andreas (gift membership)
Michael Doyle—Los Osos, California
Barry Hutchison—Aptos, California

Donations

The Historical Society appreciates the following generous donations:

Wally Motloch—Books for used book sale
Michael Scott—Crucible found on Murray Creek
Steve Yothers—framed photo of Jenny Lind, framed lithograph of Murphys, Chinese sewing basket, Chinese pottery, Indian basket
Kit Alley—mounted Sheepranch Mine Hoist Bell Chart
Colette Lantzy—baby clothes worn by her father, approximately 110 years old; photos and articles regarding her father, an actor in old western movies
Betty Raggio—Cash donation in memory of Clyde Seeman
Lupe Arness—Certificate from the United States Treasury Department to Ruth Hernandez at Calaveras High School, class of 1946, "For patriotic service in the Fourth War Loan Campaign through the sale of War Bonds"
Phyllis Raggio—Cash donation in memory of Clyde Seeman
Barbara & Cal Berger—Cash donation in memory of Pearl Cosgrave

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