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Local Ball Game

Beatrice Mattice

October 22, 1908, Potter Hollow:

The present ball team defeated the “old boys” Thursday to the tune of 14 to 6.

Two items from Manorkill (probably circa 1920 from the Monitor or Prattsville News):

Medusa [a hamlet in the town of Rensselaerville] and Manorkill played ball at the grounds here, Geo. Rickard’s flats. Our boys got slightly trimmed, but of course it is only chivalrous to give the visitors the victory. [no date]

Last Saturday afternoon our Manorkill baseball nine went over and played a real game with the Potter Hollow boys and defeated them on their own grounds by the score of 24 to 5. [no date]

Gilboa Town Ball Team 1928:

Maude Haskin went along to many of the games as her brother, George Bailey, was on the team. She doesn’t know where they had the home games, how they raised the money to buy uniforms, or what other teams they played. She does remember going to the Partridge Nest where there was a ball field, a pavilion, and was a favorite picnic and swimming area on the Schoharie Creek in Fultonham.



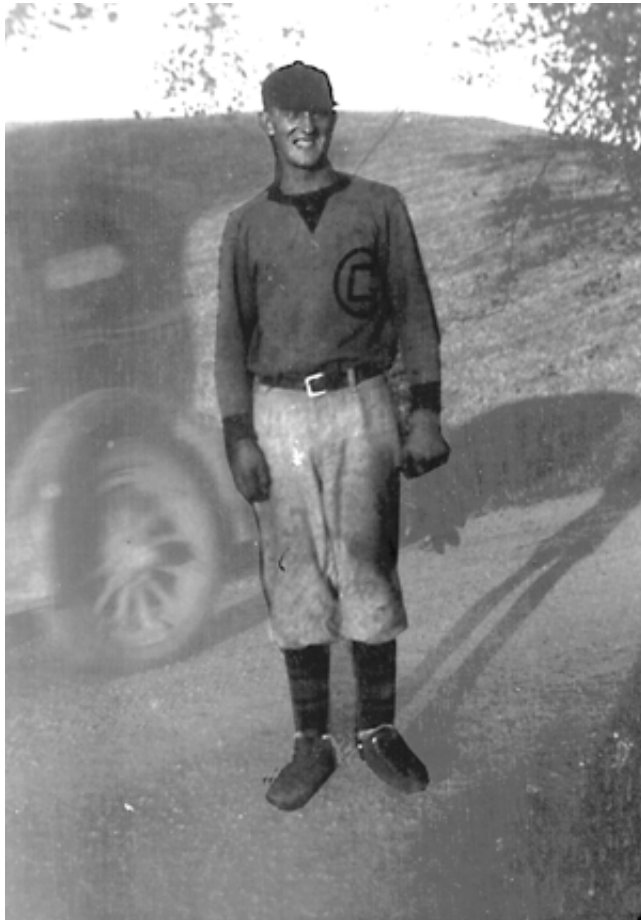
The 1928 Gilboa Baseball team: front row: Merel Hubbard Sr., John Henry Briggs, Clifton Hubbard, Earle Hubbard; back row: Back Row: Everett Wood, Clayton Jackson, Eniel Briggs, Leland Jackson, George Bailey. Photo courtesy of Beatrice Mattice

One time after a game, some of the boys had all the young girls line up by the pavilion, and they chose three to go with them to Proctor's Theater in Schenectady to a movie. The boys were Earle Hubbard, Clifton Hubbard, and Everett Wood. The lucky girls were Margie DeWitt, Lorraine Hubbard and Maude. The fellows told the other girls to go on home. Everyone at the theater looked at them like they were big-league ball players as they were wearing their uniform and spikes. For supper they pooled their money and bought Fig Newtons and bananas.

Ball Games from the 1950s:

Waterfall House Town Team, played behind the Grand Gorge Civic Center, against Middleburgh, Stamford, Hobart, and Bloomville. Bill Snyder was the catcher until he turned 40, in 1970. Some others on the team when he played were Preston VanDusen, Sam Tompkins, Duane Ely, Frank and Ernie Saccaro. They had games Sunday afternoons and one night a week. John Casmer and Joe Magro also played with these men from the Grand Gorge area. Merle Hubbard, Jr. and Willie Latta played on the town ball teams for many years in the 1950s and '60s.

There also was a Basketball Town Team in the 1940s. Bill remembers when he was on the Grand Gorge High School Varsity, they played against the Town Team.



Raymond Maybie (1907–1990)
played for the Gilboa team,
photo courtesy of Maude Haskin

Ball Games—Present Day:

Ted Latta played on the local town teams from the age of 16, 1976 to about 1993. His father was Willie Latta who played on the teams all the time Ted and his sister were growing up. This was, and still is, a family affair. Very often the children of the players formed teams and would have their own ball games while their fathers are playing.

Ted and his friends played on Sundays. In the earlier days, they played on DaBramo's field in Conesville. Local businesses sponsor the teams. Some sponsors are the Prattsville Tavern, Waterfall House, Clark's, and for a time, Hughes Lumber, the Rondevo, and Shirley's. Later they played at Minekill, Stamford, and now most games are at the field in Prattsville. They have tournaments occasionally and played at the CCC Camp in West Fulton, at the Covered Bridge and Boreali's near Cobleskill.

Forrest Ballard and Kelly Smith were the organizers of the teams for years. Here are just a few of the players: Wayne Clark, Willie Karlau, Joe Haskin, Randy Mudge, Ken Clark, LeGrand Buel, Raymond Buel, Pat Buel, Daryl Buel, Tony Marsh, Gene Brainerd, Pat Marsh, Bob Gurley, Jim Higgins, Doug Wisse, and Marty Fleischmann.

Today there are several Town Teams in this area with active teams. Town Team Ball Games have been entertainment here in the hills since the 1800s.

Told to Bee in 1976 by Paul Stryker (1892–1981)

“Ball games between village teams were very exciting events. Those old-time boys could really play ball! There were a few heated arguments but on the whole everyone had a good time. Games would be played on “Stubbie’s Flat” near Diamonds or on the large field where H. B. Scarey and Jerry Hughes have recently built homes. From E. R. Eastman, *Journey to the Day Before Yesterday* (Prentice Hall): “Now, you may be a modern baseball fan as I am, and watch every big league game that you can, but if you never attended a baseball game between the teams of two neighboring villages 50 years ago, you have never seen a real ball game. “In the first place, we knew every man on our own local team, so that we were bitterly partisan for our own boys. The crowd was so close to the base lines that the local constable couldn’t prevent masses of people from surging onto the diamond and taking part in an argument when there was one—which occurred in practically every inning. And God help the umpire! There never was but one, and how he ever survived the rows which usually centered around him, I’ll never know. About the only peace that prevailed during the entire game was when the boys lost a ball and all hands joined to help find it. Those old-time boys could play ball. I have seen some games with low scores played by town teams that were just as good as those played by professionals today.”



Beatrice Mattice is the prolific historian for the Town of Conesville who has contributed to the *New York Roots* web site, is the author of *She Walked These Hills Before Us*, and has written a number of articles and small treatises. She loves music and plays the organ at Gilboa’s Methodist Church.

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