

Old Philmont #12

Baseball, Part One

By Charles R. Nichols

In the age before television, and when children were actually encouraged to go outdoors and play, the game of baseball was a thriving local sport.

Just when organized baseball started in Philmont is difficult to pin down – about the best that can be determined is somewhere between the wars. The Civil War and the Spanish American War, that is.

A Philmont man named Ormand Jones (known locally as ‘Ormi’; ‘Jonesy’ or ‘Ginger’) said he formed the first Philmont team about 1898. Jonesy ran a grocery store in Philmont in his early years, later a small gas and oil business on the Harlemville road.



Also, while there are a number of photos of early baseball teams, few are dated, and pinning down definite dates is also difficult. Where dates are estimated here, they are subject to correction, and hopefully

anyone reading this with knowledge of the subject will contact the writer!

The first photo is one of the earliest I’ve found. All the players are identified by the photographer, so presumed accurate. The manager is shown as ‘Jones, Mgr. 1b’. Jonesy indicated he gave up manager when he was about 40 years old – about 1912. The Philmont team won championships in 1910 and 1912, and it is possible this is a photo of one of these teams.

In the early years the Philmont baseball field was a place called ‘Bidwells’. This was farmland in Mellenville, just about where the present Claverack Town Park is now located. The photo above was probably taken there as were all of the early outdoor team photos.

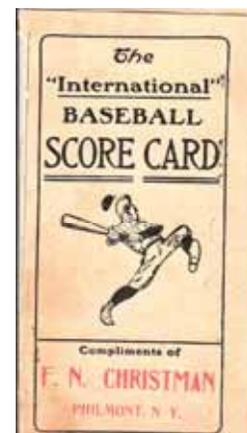
Base Ball
BIDWELL PARK
MELLENVILLE

THURSDAY, JUNE 11
PHILMONT
--VS--
MOHAWK COLORED GIANTS
Of Schenectady
6:30 P. M. ADMISSION 25 CENTS

SUNDAY, JUNE 14th
PHILMONT
VS.
KINGSTON HOME LEADERS
3:00 P. M. Admission 25 cents

Richards Advertising Co., Hefon, N. Y.

The advertising flyer for June 11th and 14th unfortunately has no date, but given the 25 cent price, was probably early 1900's. The advertising score card for Christman was also 1900's and one of the giveaways of the time to promote business.



There are at least two different photos of 'Philmont's First Team'. The outdoor photo seems the earlier one – the only 'P' is on the mascot's uniform, and I'm not sure what the other emblem was. The gentleman in the straw 'boater' may be the manager? The team shown on the steps of a building now has a uniform 'P' on all except the civilian in the back row – again, probably the manager.



At least one star player came from the early Philmont team. Born in 1881, left hander Claude Rossman was a pitcher for the early Philmont team, later he played in the American League as first baseman with Cleveland 1904 & 1906, Detroit 1907-1909, St. Louis 1909. The photo is from a cigarette card from his Detroit days. Rossman died early at 46 years of age. His biographic references say he is buried in 'an unknown cemetery in Philmont', but family members say he is buried in the family plot in the Union Cemetery in Mellenville. The team photo here is the Detroit team of 1909 including Rossman.

Many of the team photos are well worth preserving, even though the dating and many team members identities are guess work. The team with “JC” on their shirts may be a Crusader Club team, and judging age, a Junior team. The postcard which had this photo is postmarked 1910.



The team shown in the next photo was probably taken in Philmont village, probably on the Fowler Block. A mixed lot of uniforms, with only one ‘Philmont’ and several ‘P’s’. The mascot is identified as Bert Robertson.



Another team photo probably shot in Philmont village – there was such a stairway at the east end of the Fowler Block. Not everybody here has a ‘Philmont’ uniform – maybe a ringer or two ? I have no identification of these players, or firm date, but would judge early 1900’s.



A very formal team photo, shot inside – perhaps in the Crusader Club – with all in new uniforms sporting a ‘P’. These men are identified, and the mascot is Bert Robertson. Since the new uniforms, and equipment, would constitute a fair amount of money, probably either Miss Clara Harder of the Crusader Club, or the High Rock Mills were responsible.

A very informal uniformed team in the next photo. These have tentative identification, including Percy Ferris (in civilian clothes), and his son Sam in the next row below on Percy's right. A tentative date of 1927 has been ascribed.



The team in this photo has what appear to be new uniforms, all with 'Philmont'. The gentleman in the straw 'boater' is probably the manager, and appears to hold a score book. His hat would indicate a date of mid-twenties.



The manager of the team in this last photo is identified as John Decker. He took over the managing of the team when Ormie Jones stopped – early 1900's. It has been identified as the High Rock Team about 1919.

Since there is more to the story of Baseball in Philmont, I'll follow up with a part two.

Charles R. Nichols