

This month's theme:  
The Origin of Baseball



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The Newsletter of the Idaho State Historical Society's Junior Historian Program

# PROSPECTOR

March, 2006

## The History of



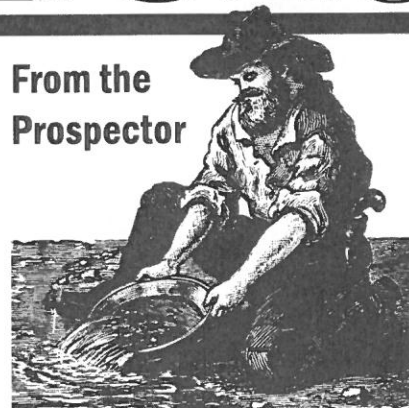
Even if you're not a fan, everyone in the United States recognizes baseball. From enormous stadiums filled with cheering fans to grassy back lot diamonds scattered across rural America, baseball is known as the national pastime. At least once in their lives, most people have picked up a bat or a mitt or a ball. Yet, even though we're all familiar with the game, not many of us know baseball's history.

For many years, a man named Abner Doubleday was credited

with inventing baseball. Doubleday, a resident of Cooperstown, New York supposedly came up with the rules to the game in 1839. Recent historians have looked closely at this story and have decided it is a myth. In fact, as far as anyone can tell, no one person invented baseball. Instead, baseball is a combination of many different ball games that have been played throughout the years.

Games involving balls and bats had existed in Europe a long time before they started being played in America. Historians have re-

## From the Prospector



## Howdy Prospectors!

Well, spring is in the air. The snow is melting off the mountains, my mule is off in the fields eating the wildflowers, and I'm glued to my television set. Spring means only one thing to this old prospector, baseball. I can't help it; I love the game! The crack of the bat, the scream of the fans, the smell of hot dogs, there is nothing better. In honor of our national pastime, I thought it might be fun to write about the origin of baseball this month. After all, even games have history.

*Lucky Noah*

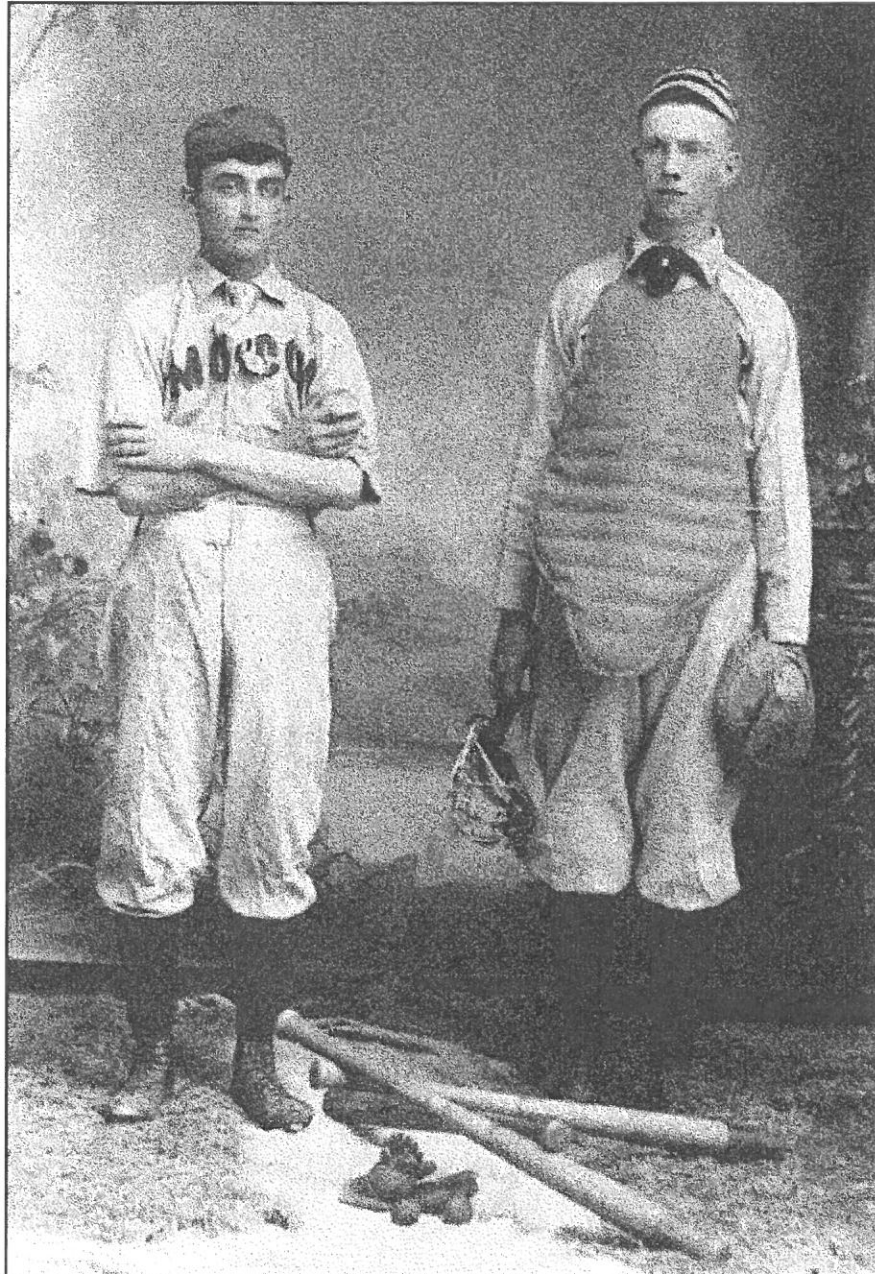
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# Baseball Continued

sought games called one-a-cat, catapult ball, and stool ball that all have similarities to baseball. But the closest match is a game called rounders or town ball that not only featured a bat and a ball but four bases and a pitcher.

Early baseball had some unusual rules. One of the ways to force a batter out was throw the ball and hit the runner instead of just tagging him. Luckily, the ball wasn't as hard back then as it is now. In fact, baseballs were filled with a soft yarn that made them difficult to hit hard or bounce. Another difference was how the players caught the ball. Mitts hadn't been invented yet, so the players caught with their bare hands.

In the 1840's informal baseball leagues started to form and the first teams began to agree upon rules of play. One of these early teams was the New York Knickerbockers. Although they didn't invent baseball, they are credited with the first set of



*Two early Players from Weiser*

formal rules. As the game went on and more and more teams began to play, baseball began to evolve into the sport we enjoy today.

When did baseball start in Idaho? Nobody knows for sure when our first state game was played, but we do know there were a few baseball clubs playing in Boise as early as 1868. Some of these historic games were played between soldiers stationed at Fort Boise and civilians of the booming territorial capitol. Quickly the game spread across the state and by the 1880's town teams were traveling across the territory to play one another.

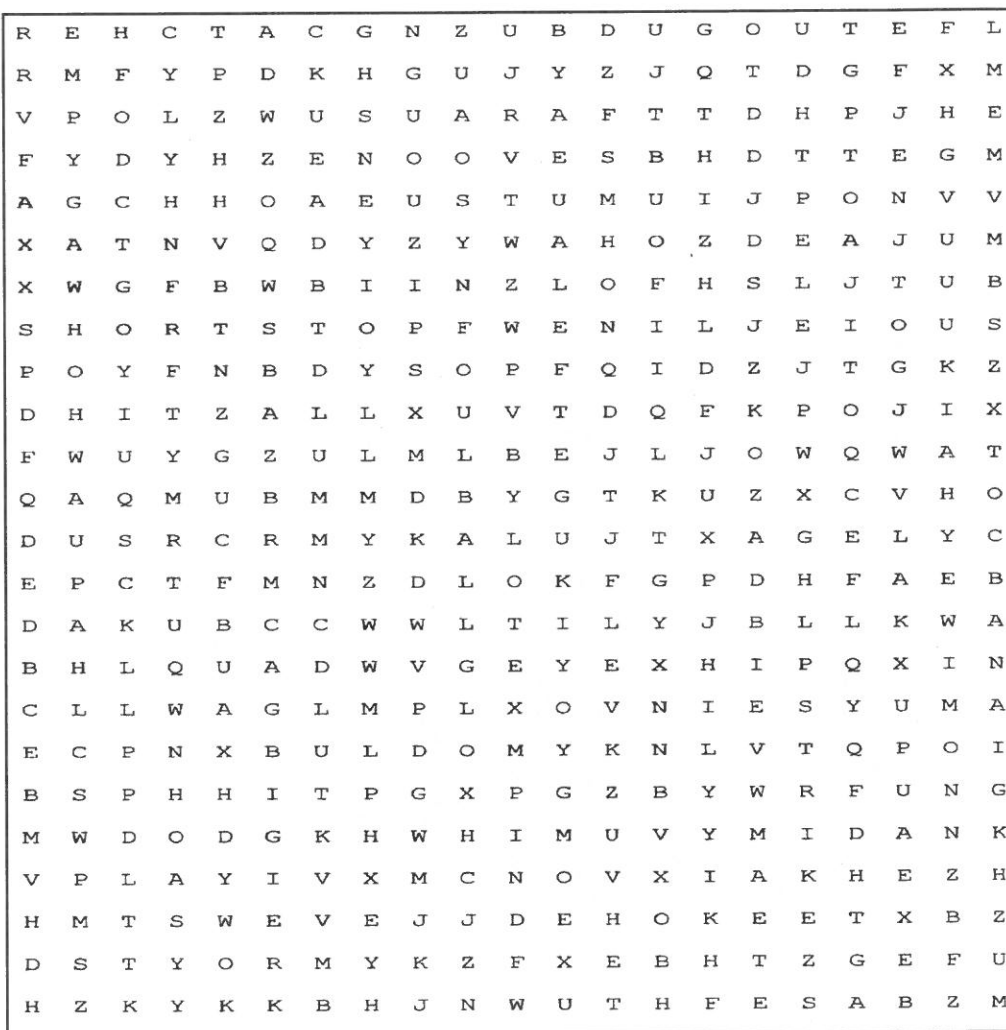
It's hard to imagine that baseball has been around in Idaho for almost 150 years and in the United States for much longer. Will

baseball still be around in another 100 years? Since we can't predict the future, the best thing to do is sit back with a hot dog and soda and enjoy this year's season. ☞



## The Fun Page

# Baseball Word Search



Base  
Doubleplay  
Foulball  
Out  
Shortstop  
Strike

Bunt  
Dugout  
Homerun  
Outfield  
Slide  
Team

Catcher  
Fastball  
League  
Pitcher  
Stadium





## Next Month's Activities

**W**ell, we've told you all we know about early baseball, so we need your help to learn more. Pick from one of the activities below or make up your own baseball project and send it in to our Prospector Headquarters. We'll take some of your best work and print it in next month's magazine. Remember to include your name, where you're from, and the name of your Prospector Chapter. We can't wait to see what you send in!

### Team Mascot:

Nowadays most professional sports teams have a mascot. A mascot is usually a funny character in an outrageous costume who tries to get the hometown fans cheering. Imagine you are a baseball league owner in early Idaho. You want to add team mascots to the local games to make them more interesting. Your job is to design a costume for one of the

local teams. Pick between the Idaho Falls Spuds, the Emmett Loggers, the Meridian Buttermakers, or the Boise Monarchs and draw us a picture of the mascot's costume.



**Scouting Report:** Are you a big baseball fan? The 2006 season is just starting and it's anybody's guess which team will come out on top. Do you have a favorite for this year's World Series? Have you had your eye on a player who's going to have

a big year? Write a small report from the dugout giving us your baseball predictions for the year.

**Baseball's Evolution:** Baseball has changed a lot over the years.

Although the general game has stayed the same, many of the details and rules have changed. For instance, when the sport first started the ball was soft and stuffed with yarn and players caught with their bare hands instead of mitts. What will baseball be like in the future? Will players wear jet packs? Will the umpires be robots? Look into your crystal ball and tell us about baseball in the year 2106.

Send in your work by April 17th to:

Prospector Club  
Lucky Noah  
Idaho State Historical Museum  
610 North Julia Davis Drive  
Boise, ID 83702

Or email it to us at  
[kzwolfer@ishs.state.id.us](mailto:kzwolfer@ishs.state.id.us).