



~ Part 22 ~
Reflections on a Common Theme
Town Teams Sports

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CLOUD COUNTY

In Sports, Glasco A Triple Threat

by Joan Nothern

March 21 through May 3, 2015, Glasco was a partnership site for the Smithsonian Museum on Main Hometown Teams Exhibit. The year of re- search preparing for the exhibit, using family scrap-books and newspaper articles, revealed memorable accomplishments on the baseball diamond, football field, and basketball court.

The news coverage was by far skewed toward men's teams because they were the primary competitors over the years. But not always! The 1904 Glasco High School Girls' Basketball Team challenged the Men's Town Team. The game was advertised, the girls were intent on playing, but the principal threaten them with expulsion from school if they played that game. The women's basketball teams played through 1937, when the team members' parents implored the principal to allow the girls to compete. That was the final year until the 1970s, when Title IX established equal opportunity for women's sports competition.

News coverage for men's sports was more generous in revealing their history. Glasco fielded the Red Line Basketball Team in 1915, scheduling games from Kansas City to Denver in towns that were on the newly established Red Line division of the Midland Trail. This was a publicity stunt to boost awareness of the towns and route. And it ended in drawing attention to the team itself! They painted telephone poles with the Red Line route bands of red and black by day, and played games in the evening. Their winning record of 35 victories, no losses, won a reputation as a state basketball power house.

Another well documented chapter in Town Team history was of the semipro baseball teams, the Glasco Eagles and the Glasco Knights. The teams were unusual in that they were volunteer players. In 1949 the Glasco Eagles were presented a trophy for being the Best Town Team in the 19th Annual Kansas semipro Tournament by the National Baseball Congress.

In 1956, boys eleven and younger were introduced to PeeWee Baseball. Their development was closely followed in the Glasco Sun, taking them to the state K-18 tournament in 1961. Some of their success was attributed to Mr. Brock, father of two players, who built a pitching machine so the boys could improve their batting. The pitching machine was reported on in the Salina and Topeka press, for it was a novelty in 1955.

Headlines like success. Two high school football teams, in 1945 and 1963, made headlines for "All-Victorious" seasons.

The effort to display this sports history was rewarded by the hours visitors spent recalling their team years, discovering things their dads had done, and acquainting youngsters with their family and community sports tradition. The Kansas Humanities Council sponsored the Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America Kansas Tour, and the partnership site exhibits.

GRAHAM COUNTY

Nicodemus Baseball History

by Angela Bates

1886 First Team

Nicodemus's first baseball team was organized in 1886. The Manager was Joe Patterson. Members: F. Turner, Ed Patterson, George Duncan, A. G. Van Duvall, Sanford G. Craig, Silas Hays,

Alvin Miller, H. S. Henrie, Porter Stewart, Wm. Switzer, Tom Hawkins. They played the teams of surrounding towns.

1891-1903 Team

The Manager was John Sadler. Members: Andrew Scott, Ralieg Hickman, Quincy Bradford, Cliff Reece, Bud Taylor, Walter Dannis, (2) Porter Boys, and Neal Sadler.

1907-1908 Team

The Manager was James Merrit, and the Associate Manager was Neal Sadler. Members: Inky Black- burn, Steve Demery, Walter Kirk, Bill Kirk, Raleigh Stewart, John Sparks, Cassie Bibb, Charles Vaughn. They played the surrounding teams as far east as Solomon City, Kansas; west to the Colorado line; south to Ness City, and north to Nebraska line.

1920-1950 TEAMS

During 1920-1950, teams were organized and played other local teams. Satchel Paige from the Kansas City Monarchs, a prominent Negro Baseball League team, was said to have come and played on the team. Games were held at a baseball field across the road from the Scruggs Grove, where the annual Emancipation Celebrations were held. During the 1970s a new baseball field was constructed on the townsite and baseball was held there until 2013 when it was moved to the present diamond, at the Roberta Robinson Field, south of the Nicodemus Villa Housing complex.

Team Names

The Nicodemus baseball team names were Cyclones, Nicodemus Blues, Old Hickory, and the Nicodemus Hill Billies, which was a secondary team in the 1940s. Uniform colors were blue and white, burgundy and grey.

NICODEMUS BLUES II

During the mid 1990s, after Nicodemus became a National Park, a period baseball game was sponsored and two local teams were organized to play, the Western Cyclones and the Enterprise. The game was held at the Jones baseball diamond east of Nicodemus School District #1. Buck O'Neal of the Kansas City Monarchs came and threw out the first pitch. In 2012 the Nicodemus Historical Society sponsored the new Nicodemus Blues II team to play period baseball, playing by the 1870s rules. Lewis Dean Iams of Phillipsburg arrived in his original uniform from the 1930s and threw out the first pitch. He remembered playing Nicodemus while playing on the Stuggart, Kansas team. The Nicodemus Blues II have played the Hodgeman 9 period baseball club from Jetmore, Kansas each year since. The Nicodemus Blues II still have not won a game against them, but they play fun and entertaining ball. The games are always a treat to watch.

Take me out to the baseball game at Nicodemus! This year it is August 1, during our 137th annual Celebration!