

Softball and the 4th of July By Charles H. Pembroke

Editor's Note: In 1990 Charles Pembroke put together a pamphlet of his memories and called it "Walworth....As I Remember It." This story was one of several that were not included, but it is appropriate to share excerpts of it in this July issue.

One of the greatest sports of days gone by as well as of today is baseball. Some of our town's ball players have been forgotten by many people as they have been gone a long time, and some are still in existence. Our town was very competitive as far as sports were concerned. The fellow that should be writing this is Bernard Porray. He keeps up on the school sports of today, but some of the players I remember he might not have known as he went to Ontario High School and I went to Walworth and see many players come and go.

One of the greatest ball games we all looked forward to was the game on the Fourth of July. After a big parade, they would have games and races for the children of all ages, which were usually run on the school ball diamond. At 12:00 o'clock noon the churches would put on a dinner. One church would have chicken and the other church, beef, pork or ham. People would then assemble at the school ball diamond and have a competition game with Marion or Ontario town teams. One of the instigators would be Henry Bean, along with Wally Clark and Charles Tuttle.

One member of our family was usually the catcher, namely Robert Pembroke, but he would occasionally be retired by Frank Finley. I can recall one game when Frank was catching and a high fly ball went in the air and Frank was after it. The pitcher, William Soudan, was also trying to catch it and each one did not see the other fellow and they collided. Frank's catcher's mitt had a buckle on it and it cut Frank's face. He had to be taken to Dr. Ernest Esley's office to get stitched and patched up. Frank wore that scar on his cheek for the rest of his life with the four stitch marks showing as a reminder of that game.

Howard Southwell was usually the man on first base with Marvin Ebert on 3rd base. Floyd Boiden was second base player with Henry Massielye as shortstop. Arthur Pembroke was an outfielder as was Laren Duell at times and Ernest Esley or Howard DeWind. Charles Griswold was one of the players. There was a rooting section of Freeman Fulmer, Charles Fulmer, Harry Conant, Arthur Hall, Walter Hall, Wally Clark and Charles Tuttle. When any games were played in DeWitt Tuttle's pasture lot east of Walworth, DeWitt would be there cheering them on.

Jacob Pembroke was another man who loved a ball game. At one time they had a ball diamond in back of his barn and they were playing against a team from Lincoln. Someone hit a foul ball and it went in Jake's pasture lot where the grass was high. His dog was hunting for the lost ball and one of the players kicked his dog, resulting in an argument with Jake. He said to the Lincoln player: "You get right out of the pasture; that dog will find that ball and if you ever do that to my dog again, you'll be bared from playing here."

Folks today wonder what we used to do for entertainment and recreation, but this is just a little that I can recall. After George Fehr did not take any more interest in baseball, Howard DeWind managed the team for a short time. In 1933 or 1934 the Work Progress Administration paid for a ball diamond to be cleared and graded on the Walworth Fire Department's property south and west of the dance hall on Walworth-Penfield Road. The bleacher was built from used lumber. Many of the team members also put in a lot of time raking and leveling the diamond.