

## Grand Ol' Time

The year of 1930 was a grand ol' time, an era when bread was the staff of life and beans were steaks...and, yes, when St. Joseph Church had a winning CAC softball team!

The energetic, ambitious youth of the parish wanting so badly to capture the loving cup, and the faithful parishioners who rooted and cheered them on to victory...those were the days!

After the invocation had been given by Jake "Moses" Lorino, the crowd eagerly awaited the start of the game by joining Frank "Caruso" Ciccornardi in singing the National Anthem.

What a thrill when Umpire "Tod" Robino yelled "Play Ball!" and "Friki" Ranelli wound up for the pitch to catcher "Hooks" Lovoy for the first strike!

Joe DiMaggio had nothing on "Pug" Lovoy... what sensational catches he made in center field! And who would come barreling home on a bunted ball...no other than Anthony "Fast Man" Lovoy...move over Lou Brock!! Anthony "Sturdy" DeJohn and "Bony" Tombrello were a deadly combination in the infield, and "Vic" DeJohn never made a wrong call as 3<sup>rd</sup> base coach.

Aba-Jaba LaRussa, incapacitated by a sore thumb, sat in the dug-out yelling "Stamo vinceno!!" Bless Tony "Slow Leak" Scalisi who was always at the rescue with the water bucket when the players got hot and tired.. of course, the bucket had a hole in it.

But, Paisani, you tell me, what is a ball team without support of its fans? St. Joseph's parishioners are noted for their generosity, so to spark extra interest in the game, Pete "Waterhole" Rouss contributed (1) free haircut per home run...Can General Motors beat that??? And then there was good ol' Joe "Shoemaker" Pizzitola, the sole-saver of the team...he kept the team's shoes in good shape for FREE...many thanks to "Waterhole" and "Shoemaker"!!!

And then there was the generous Scalisi Leather Co...they supplied the players with the finest leather belts, to keep them from losing their pants when they ran for a stolen base.

Pom-Pom Miranda, famous for arguments with the umpire, had to be led off the field on occasion.

Manuel "Larry" DiChiaro was the official scorekeeper because he has always been quick with pencil, facts and figures!!!

Be assured, Paisani, the games were always a sell-out...Rosalie Vetrano and Nata Rouss saw to that...they were the parish's prime hustlers.

To make sure no one would crash the gate without a fee were Sam "Pig Iron" Tombrello and Charlie "Bullet-Proof" Zicarelli.

Lest we forget the fans who encouraged these brave young men...Pete "Big Mama" Tombrello and Charlie "Big Daddy" Tombrello were there with their young'uns, "Baby" Joe Sicola, Big Chris Artale, Sam "Up and Down" Lorino and Claude "Buddy" Aquillino.

The crowd was well represented by all ethnic groups...to name a few...Paul "Chink" Lorino, Paul "Cleveland Coolidge" Latino, Joe "Canileri" Tortorici and Pete "Mangooch" Tombrello.

I especially remember the game when Natch "Higgins" Tortorici and Milton "Tommy Glaze" Vetrano just sat on the bleachers rather disinterested until Mike "Perk" Puccio and Leon "Nag" Vetrano shook them to their senses by telling them that Pat "Boo-Boo's brother-in-law" Lovoy had heard that Ben "Furine" Lovoy and his brother "Pie Trainer" Lovoy had been caught shooting dice behind Moore School.

It was the time when the crowd was taking its 7<sup>th</sup>-inning stretch and Virginia "Wine-taster" Juliano had taken her flask out of her pocket, took a swig of wine, nudged her friend Signora Mangiapani and said, "Cuma, questo vino e bello fino...a la salute!! Play ball..!!" When suddenly, the excitement of the ball game was interrupted by the melee going on at the gate..."Furine" and "Pie Trainer" Lovoy trying to get past the gate, scrambling and arguing around with "Pig Iron" Tombrello to let them past the gate...with the cops hot on their trail..."Stop or I'll shoot!", yelled the cops...they kept running...the cops shot and good thing "Bullet-Proof" Zicarelli was at the scene...he caught a few bullets, saved their lives and lived to brag about it.

These two youths got lost in the crowd and sat by Marie "Figlia di Nino Bambino" Lombardo and Jockey "Mouthpiece" Tortorici, who were shocked at

their sinful act, so they made it their Christian duty to inform these youths that they had to confess to the good Patri Lorenzo. Mama mia, they said they'd rather face the law and took off running again, this time headed for Village Creek!!

Needless to say, the game was won, the cup was clinched and the crowd was treated to free pani and sazziza...compliments of Cann's Sausage Co...yes, Paisini, those were the good ol' days!

Salute a tutte and may god bless you one and all.