



Kansas Baseball, 1858-1941

Mark Eberle

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As baseball was becoming the national pastime, Kansas was settling into statehood, with hundreds of towns growing up with the game. The early history of baseball in Kansas, chronicled in this book, is the story of those towns and the ballparks they built, of the local fans and teams playing out the drama of the American dream in the heart of the country.

Mark Eberle's history spans the years between the Civil War-era and the start of World War II, encapsulating a time when baseball was adopted by early settlers, then taken up by soldiers sent west, and finally by teams formed to express the identity of growing towns and the diverse communities of African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans. As elsewhere in the country, these teams represented businesses, churches, schools, military units, and prisons. There were men's teams and women's, some segregated by race and others integrated, some for adults and others for youngsters. Among them we find famous barnstormers like the House of David, the soldiers of the Seventh Cavalry who played at Fort Wallace in the 1860s, and Babe Didrikson pitching the first inning of a 1934 game in Hays.

Where some of these games took place, baseball is still played, and *Kansas Baseball, 1858-1941* takes us to nine of them, some of the oldest in the country. These ballparks, still used for their original purpose, are living history, and in their stories Eberle captures a vibrant image of the state's past and a vision of many innings yet to be played—a storied history and promising future that readers will be tempted to visit with this book as an informative and congenial guide.

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