

MEDINA BUGLE

A Publication of the Medina Historical Society

Spring 2012

President's Message

Spring is here and our thoughts turn toward flowers, lawns, gardens and of course Baseball. Below are two great articles with regards to Babe Ruth and Medina.

I have some exciting news our roof was in need of repair and with the help of Craig Lacy and the Ridgeway town board we have a new roof. A special thanks goes to Brian Napoli town board president for making this happen.

Please mark your calendars for June 02, 2012 for our first annual Doll show and sale. Georgia Thomas has been working hard to make this happen and please let her know if you can help.

I would like to plan a spring clean-up on Saturday May 19 as our Museum could use a good cleaning inside and out. Your help is needed and if we can arrive around 10:00am we should be done by early afternoon with enough hands.

Next Monthly Meeting

**Monday 4/30/2012
7:00PM
Lee-Whedon Memorial
Library**

Officers 2012

**President Reinhard
Rogowski
Vice President: Craig Lacy
Treasurer: Sandy Tompkins
Secretary: Shane Sia
Board: Cindy Robinson,
Georgia Thomas, Catherine
Cooper, Frank Berger**

"Ike" Recalls the Babe

By Don Cook

Major league baseball is fast approaching a fever pitch as the Yanks, A's, Dodgers and Expos all cling to hopes of winning their divisions this week and finding themselves ready to do battle in the big pot-of-gold, the World Series.

Following the action closely as he has done for probably seven decades, is Walter "Ike" Whittleton of 1402 South Main St., Medina.

In a chat with Ike yesterday we found it more interesting to learn of the day the great George Herman "Babe" Ruth visited Medina.

Displaying a neatly kept scrapbook, Whittleton recalled the incident with enthusiasm and pointed out an article of the game from a Journal-Register clip dated Oct. 19, 1920.

The headlines read "And Along Came Babe Ruth And Made Good."

Whittleton emphasized baseball was big in Medina in both pre-World War I and post war days.

"We drew big in those days," he recalled, "and had a big crowd in old Oak Orchard Park to see the Babe."

Surprisingly enough, Ruth didn't hit the first home run of the game. That distinction belonged to Fenton "Darb" Whalen of Lockport.

Whalen was known as an excellent ball player and just as well known as the droll comic of Western New York baseball. According to word passed along, as Whalen drilled one over the left field fence, he rounded the bases and called to Ruth, "You may be the

big shot in the city, but I'm a big shot in the country."

Two of Medina's ballplayers who played with Ruth that day are still living. They are Eddie Cotriss of North Gravel Road and George Butts of Prospect Street, Medina.

The story as it appeared in the 1920 edition of the J-R follows:

Yesterday Medina officially ushered out the 1920 baseball season in a fitting way. The main attraction of the day, the famed hitting Babe Ruth, lived up to all expectations of the fans and hit the ball hard and high over all sides of the fence.

Ruth was in excellent form yesterday despite the injury to his wrist.

Ruth was accompanied by Vick Hoffman and Carl Mays, a battery from the New York Americans, and Jeff Tesreau, former New York Giant pitcher.

During preliminary batting practice, Ruth made some of the longest hits of his career, according to members of his party. (Note: This was still in the dead-ball era.)

The game started with Mays and Hoffman the battery for Medina, and Lewis and Brown for All-Lockport.

The game was scoreless until Lockport's half of the third inning when the first home run of the day was made, and not by Ruth. Fenton Whalen, the pride of the Lock City, lifted the ball over the left field fence.

Ruth at bat in the first inning fanned.

The next time up he hit for three bases, and the next time he did the trick and hit over the right field fence.

Eddie Cotriss relieved Mays in the fifth inning and in his five innings of work he fanned 10 of the 15 men to face him.

BABE RUTH LOST A DOZEN BALLS OVER THE MEDINA FENCE

Lockport Fans Saw Great Star
Perform In Game Against Jimmy
Mack's Team

“Fin” Whalen divided honors with the great Babe Ruth in the Lockport-Medina game yesterday when Ruth and his compatriots of New York, four in number, appeared in the Medina lineup. The Lockport star poled a homer in the fourth inning right after Ruth had fanned in his first time up before Lewis. Whalen lifted one of those bewildering underhanded inshoots of Carl Mays’ and sent it soaring far over left center. “Beat me to it, eh Red,” said Ruth as Whalen passed first in his trot around.

But Ruth gave the crowd a show –some show. Before the game he “exhibited” at the bat, and sent 15 hits one after another over the outfield fences. “Bing” Cleary finally had to call a halt as Ruth threatened to lose all the balls the club had in stock. Ruth lifts them with a mighty power. As he stands up to the plate left-handed he has the right foot forward and his body half turned toward the catcher so

that when he swings there is a tremendous force. In practice he electrified the fans not only by the length of his hits but also by the altitudes to which he sent some of them.

In the game he played first base throughout and dared not pitch because of the sprain to his left hand. But the big fellow scoops them up cleverly around first though he had one fumble. Babe’s good nature was in evidence. The kids rushed him and at one point he held up the game a moment while a girl from the bleacher crowd took his picture and that of Whalen.

Mays pitched for the Medina team, Hoffman performed beautifully behind the bat and Big Jeff Tesreau romped in center field. The New York four were bunched at the top of the Medina batting order and the crowd was on tip toe when Ruth came up the first time. Lewis didn’t appear to worry. From second base “Fin” Whalen was yelling “let him hit it,” “Make him hit it” and so on. But Ruth couldn’t or didn’t connect. He swung one, two, three. The crowd was disappointed.

In fourth Ruth sent a hard fast one against right field fence and right field fence is some deep in Medina grounds. It was tagged for three bases and scored Mays. In the sixth with one on base Ruth had three and one. The next pitch was high over Ruth’s head.

Umpire Cleary called, "Strike Two." He knew the crowd wouldn't stand for a pass as they wanted to see Ruth hit. On the next ball Ruth lifted it with a sharp crack and it traveled clear beyond the right field, scoring Mays ahead of him. In the eighth Ruth had a fast single down right field line.

A number of Lockport fans saw the contest and enjoyed it. The great Ruth is truly a marvel in action. A powerful fellow through the chest and shoulders he gives one the impression that he could pull a tree up by the roots. At the same time he is light limbed and fast on his feet.

Following the game the New York squad, Ruth and his pals were given a banquet by Medina Council Knights of Columbus. Grand Knight David White presided. Ruth had to plead he isn't a speaker but said he was happy to have the privilege of trying to entertain Medina fans and expressed the hope he could come back next fall. He pulled one on Catcher Hoffman whom he introduced as a good speaker. Hoffman protested vainly but Babe forced him up and Hoffman in attempting to say "I can't make a speech" nearly swallowed his tonsils. Tesreau and Mays made neat little thank yous to the Medina Knights. The hit of evening was old "Darb" again. He

is popular with the Medina fans and when introduced at the banquet was given a thundering reception. Fin told some of his inimitable baseball stories of league days and had Ruth and the rest of the crowd in roars. Ruth was so amused he asked Whalen to write out some of the stories for him. "I am called on so much," he said. "I never know what to say and could use some of those stories. Red, you're a wonder."

Others who spoke were W. Barry Murphy and John Cleary of Medina, and A.C. Dwyer of Lockport.

Ruth's left wrist is badly swollen as a result of the sprain he received when sliding a base at Binghamton. However, he does not believe a bone is broken, he stated to a Union-Sun and Journal representative. He advised also that he will wind up the barnstorming tour on Sunday and sail then for Cuba for a series of exhibition games for which it is understood he will receive \$35,000.

Medina paid \$2,000 for the New York quartette yesterday, but Manager Cleary says the gate was \$400 short of the amount.

Membership

INDIVIDUAL \$15.00/YR
Family \$20.00

PHONE: _____

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