

Finding aid for the Kent Base Ball Club constitution Collection 213

By-laws and minutes of the meetings

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department

March 1998

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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Creator	Kent Base Ball Club.
Title	Kent Base Ball Club of Grand Rapids constitution
Date [inclusive]	1867-1868
Extent	0.21 Linear feet One box
General Physical Description note	19 x 17 cm. (6 ½ x 7 ½ in). Red textured binding, with later black tape on spine. Signatures broken or loose, with loose pages. Grand Rapids Public Library book plate and ID stamp inside front cover. No title page. Manuscript, handwritten pages. First written page is numbered "5". Last page available is 62, with possible additional pages once included after page 62. Paging: 5-20, 27-62.
Language	English
Abstract	The Kent Base Ball Club was an early baseball team in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The collection includes an original manuscript containing the group's constitution, bylaws and minutes from 1867 to 1868. Also included are signatures of the original 37 members. Minutes of the club meetings describe new members and officers, proposed and passed motions, scheduled games and other information about the club.

Biographical/Historical note

The Kent Base Ball Club was formed on April 4, 1867 after two earlier attempts to form a club had failed. The founding officers were Silas Perkins, president; D.K. Hulburt, vice president; artist Lawrence Earle, secretary and A.P. Sinclair, treasurer. The team's first game was played against the Custer Base Ball Club of Ionia, with the Kent club losing the game by lopsided scores before a crowd estimated at two thousand.

The Kents were just one of many Grand Rapids base ball clubs. Other clubs included the Dexters, the Centrals, the Young Americans, the Stars, the Hickorys and the Peninsulars. The Kents also played games against the Wolverines of Muskegon and the base ball club of Grand Haven.

On the fourth of July in 1867, the Kents defeated the Centrals 88-39 winning the silver ball. As the score suggests, the rules of the game differed from the rules of modern baseball. Overhand pitching and leading off were not allowed, balls caught after the first bounce were recorded as outs, and a hitter could watch an unlimited amount of pitches before swinging. Umpires enforced a no-profanity rule by issuing a 25 cent fine. The club lasted only two seasons but sparked enough interest in the sport for baseball to continue in Grand Rapids.

Scope and Contents note

The book is divided into three sections: Constitution, Bylaws and Minutes. The Constitution is divided into five articles describing the club, membership, officers and their corresponding duties, meetings, and amendments. The Bylaws (p. 11) are divided into six articles describing the order of business, fees, match expenses, fines, captains, and amendments. The minutes (p. 27, with pages 21-26 missing) from seventeen meetings between April 4, 1867 and September 29, 1868 describe the business of the club. The minutes list members present or absent, new members or officers, motions to elect, remove, or propose and scheduled games.

Pages 18-20, 29-30, 38, 46, 52, 54 of the original are blank, and were not copied. Pages 21-26 are missing from the original, and could contain additional information.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department March 1998

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

A.B. Porter, 1914, accession number 1998.06

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Coll. 058, Grand Rapids Chicks Collection

Coll. 121, Marguerite King Moran Collection. (Grand Rapids Chicks scrapbook)

Coll. 125, Robinson Studio Photographs Collection. Chicks Series

Coll. 160, Helen Earlene Risinger (Beans) Collection of Grand Rapids Chicks Baseball

Coll. 251, Kent County African American Baseball Teams Exhibit Collection, including the Jess Elsters

Coll. 271, Grand Rapids Baseball Research Collection

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Kent Base Ball Club.

Genre(s)

- business records

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

Subject(s)

- Baseball -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids -- History

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Kent Base Ball Club records. Facsimile 1867-1868	1	1
		Box
Original book 1867-1868		1

Conditions Governing Use note

Due to the fragile nature of the original, please use the fascimile copy whenever possible.