

BRITAIN BOASTS GREATEST BASEBALL FAN IN WORLD



NELSON P. COOK.

(Copyright by Curtis Brown.) London, April 18.—Strange as it may seem, the greatest baseball fan in the world is not to be found among any of the supporters of the various American teams, who, through the sweltering summer days, do their rooting from the front seats of the grandstand in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, or any of the other great baseball centers. The man who is best entitled to that distinction is an American, to be sure, but it is in John Bull's tight little island, where he has lived for the last 16 years that he has made his claim good. For 13 of these years he has been trying to make our English cousins "play ball," and it is the fact that he has at last succeeded which makes him the premier fan of the universe. His name is Nelson P. Cook, and he is the founder and organizing secretary of the British Baseball association.

more than one team of players, belongs the honor of being the birthplace of this greatest of baseball rooters. Cook is a rooster pure and simple; his love for the game is that of a spectator, for he has never played a match in his life. Thus it will be seen that he is unique, for it would be difficult to locate many American boys who have never swung a bat or "muffed" a fly. The British league games began early in June, 1906, and from the first "caught on." The attendance grew from a mere handful of 200 half interested spectators to 2,500 wildly enthusiastic rooters, exhibiting all the earmarks of the real, genuine, American original. The final game for the British cup—one of the two trophies between the Tottenham Britons, and the Nondescripts, was witnessed by upwards of 4,000 spectators, and it was evident that baseball had made a British place for itself in English sport. To be sure, its public was still very limited, but a start had been made and in those days Cook wore a smile that wouldn't and hasn't come off.

Many Clubs Formed.

During the same summer—that of 1906—in addition to the major league, various junior clubs were formed and knocked into playing form and the season of 1907 opened with 18 clubs in existence. And while the clubs were increasing and the attendance growing the players were adding considerably to their skill. Cook regards the English

man as the best raw baseball material in the whole world and the results he has obtained seem to bear him out. The feature of the season of 1907 was a game between an all-American team made up of men who had played the game in the United States and an all-British team made up of men, who, with four exceptions, had never seen a baseball game before the season opened. And the all-British team won in a rather tight match. The natural supposition is that the all-American team were a lot of dubs at the game, but such is not the fact, for they were a very snappy bunch of ball tossers.

The casual reader can have very little idea of the difficulties that have been surmounted by Nelson Cook in planting baseball in England. His has been in the best sense of the word a labor of love, for the organizations that have been brought into existence by his efforts are strictly amateur. He gets no pay for his work as organizing secretary and he expects none. If the truth must be known he has expended out of his own pocket more than \$100,000 toward the interests of the sport.

When he first started people said he was in it for money. When that impression cleared away some said he was a millionaire with a hobby. Later it was rumored that he longed to bank in the base of the limelight, but he stood steadily in the background and in time this idea went the way of its predecessors. Gradually it is beginning to dawn upon Nelson Cook that he is doing it because he cannot help it; in short, because he is the greatest baseball fan in the world.

He told this story myself because Cook himself refused to tell it. He has a sense of modesty that covers him like the hide of a rhino. A 30-year-old man would not draw a personal tale like this from him. But he did tell me some of his experiences in introducing the game over here that will illustrate better than anything I can say the enthusiasm of the man.

How He Got Players. "One day," he said, "I received word from the captain of one of the league teams that three of his men would not be able to play on the coming Saturday afternoon and that the captain would have to be abandoned. I called the captain up on the phone and said, 'Go ahead with the game, I will get you three men that can play the game. Now of course, all the other league teams were to play on the same day, so I could hope for no help in that direction.'

"London had been exhausted of men who could play the game when I picked up the teams, so I was utterly at a loss as to what was best to do until a bright idea struck me. The following morning I went down to the Strand and took up a position in front of the Hotel Cecil. I knew I was pretty certain to meet some Americans, and sure enough it was not long before a couple of them came along. You know you can spot them a mile away. I immediately stepped up to them and said, 'Excuse me, but would you like to play a game of baseball?'

"One of the men was tall and the other short. The taller one grabbed his companion tightly by the arm and, turning his back upon me, marched him quickly across the street. The shorter one turned and regarded me with reproachful glances. There is no street in the world where the petty 'con' man is so numerous as the Strand, and I did not blame the two men. I suppose they had been warned before they left home. I persisted, despite this rebuff, and finally induced three men who were willing to fill up the gap in the team.

"A little later in the same season a similar difficulty arose and I was compelled to go on the hunt again. I finally spotted two Americans on the top of a bus crossing Piccadilly Circus. At first they took me for a woman article, but I eventually landed them. They were two brothers from Pittsburgh and were making quite a long stay in London. They played for me on several occasions and were glad to get the chance.

TWO AGED WOMEN OF DAYTON DEAD. (Special Dispatch to The Journal.) Dayton, O., April 18.—The funeral of Mrs. Eleanor Darr will be held from the Methodist Episcopal church this afternoon. She died Thursday at her home eight miles south of Dayton at the age of 82 years. She was born in Virginia, November 4, 1824, and at the age of 18 crossed the plains. In 1849 she was married to L. S. Morin. In 1859 she was married to Addison Darr. She leaves five children, Joe Morin, John Morin of this place, Calvin Morin of Fayette, Addison Darr and Mrs. Ella Urub of this place. She also leaves a brother living at The Dalles.

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HIGHWAY FROM PORTLAND TO SEA

Automobiles Will Be Able to Reach Seaside in Comfort This Summer.

Nineteen hundred and eight will see at least one big achievement by the Portland Automobile club, in the completion of the proposed highway from Portland to the sea. This project has long been agitated in a desultory way by various interests, and until the Automobile club took up the work and directed concentrated effort upon it little progress was made.

With the active cooperation of the Astoria chamber of commerce, and the county authorities of Columbia county, the road will become a reality within the next 90 days, and before the end of July a vehicle may make fast time from Portland to Seaside, over one of the most picturesque roads in the high-way out past Linnton and along the Willamette river through Hobbrook, Scappoose, Warren, Yankton, Peris, Pittsburg and Mist. The Portland section of the road will end at Vesper, and from that point it will be built by the Astoria people. The latter have the west division already well under way, and will have their contract completed by the middle of July. The road will run inland some distance after passing Vesper, and will touch Jewell, thence back toward Columbia. It will pass through Olney, and from there direct to Astoria, Warrenton, Gearhart and Seaside.

Between St. Helens and Vesper the new highway will open a region now comparatively isolated, but which, with easier transportation of products, will be developed into a rich dairy country. The improvement of the road from Portland to Vesper will cost \$1,000 per mile, and the distance is 40 miles. One third of this amount will be raised by subscription by the Automobile club, and the other two thirds will be paid by Columbia county.

SEATTLE AUTOS IN LONG PARADE

Coming Show Promises to Be One of Prettiest Ever in West.

(Special Dispatch to The Journal.) Seattle, Wash., April 18.—As a fitting beginning for the coming automobile show, which is to be held in Seattle April 22-25, an automobile parade, in which several hundred motor cars will participate, will take place at noon on Wednesday. The line of march has not yet been arranged, but it will include all the principal downtown streets, as well as some of the most important residence streets.

Enthusiasm for the show is very high, every dealer in the city is working on his exhibit, and when the doors are thrown open the first day everything will be in readiness to welcome the visitors. This show will be one of the most elaborate ever staged in the west, and will contain half a million dollars worth of automobiles and accessories. Space has practically all been sold, and has been so divided that everyone has enough to meet all requirements without crowding. This is the first real automobile show to be held in the northwest, and nothing is being left undone to make it a success from an artistic and social standpoint. The decorations will be elaborate, consisting of native greens, flags and bunting, and the lines marking the di-

visions of each booth will be designated by a pot containing the state flower. Altogether it will give the impression of an automobile trip through fairy land.

Gifts to Hospitals.

From the Washington Star. "Many witticisms fell daily from the lips of our late king," said a Portuguese consul.

"The king was, you know, a splendid shot. At a dinner the rather inferior shooting of an English visitor was praised and some one said: 'And Lord Gadabout, you know, sends everything he shoots to the hospital.' "The king laughed, and taking a long black cigar from his lips he said: 'Naturally, since he never shoots anything but gamekeepers.'

BOY BURNED AT STAKE PLAYING WILD WEST

Fire Started in Fun Seriously Injures Ten-Year-Old Theatrical.

Philadelphia, Pa., April 18.—Burning the villain of a wild west show at the stake, a number of boys playfully inflicted probably serious injury upon one of their heavy Theatricals, 10-year-old Mooney Franz, whose parents live at 1015 Master street, last night.

According to the cast, Franz played the role of horse thief. After a spirited chase around the neighborhood, he was captured in Warnock street, south Girard avenue. Then the "ranchmen" tied him to a telegraph pole, and with newspapers built a stake at his feet. With shouts of joy he started an Indian war dance, and the unflinching villain laughed with the Howlers. The flames grew larger than any had expected, and soon they were burning Franz. In his agony he shouted to his mates to release him, but they thought he was only playing his part. Not long later Mooney Franz, but not before his feet and legs had been badly burned, that it was necessary to take him to the Children's Hospital hospital for treatment.

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