

American Cricket: Players and Clubs Before the Civil War

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Cricket was America's first modern team sport. But despite its considerable popularity in the United States before 1861, sport historians have given it little serious scholarly attention.¹ The neglect of American cricket has an obvious explanation. After the Civil War, baseball emerged as the national pastime, while cricket survived mainly as an amusement of the nineteenth century Philadelphia elite. The purpose of this essay is to examine some of the most significant demographic, social, and cultural characteristics of American cricketers and clubs before the Civil War. It will summarize what is already known about antebellum American cricket, and it will present new information and interpretations. This article will concentrate on those eastern states which gave the greatest support to England's favorite game. It will also compare trends in the leading cricketing capitals of New York City, Brooklyn, Newark, and Philadelphia.

The history of American cricket extends far back into the colonial era. British-Americans played the sport before 1776, and after independence the new nation produced a few clubs in several eastern cities and towns. But the sport's modern phase began with the founding of New York's St. George Cricket Club in 1839, and Philadelphia's Union Club in 1843. By 1850 at least twenty organizations in more than a dozen American communities fielded elevens, enrolling perhaps five hundred active players. During the next decade English immigrants and their native converts promoted their pastime throughout most regions of the country. With the help of New York City sporting periodicals and local newspapers, they formed numerous associations, and scheduled intercity, all-star, and international matches. Enthusiasts even organized annual cricket conventions in New York City. As a result of all of this activity, cricketers competed in at least twenty-two states and more than one hundred twenty-five cities and towns in antebellum America. *Wilkes' Spirit of the Times* estimated the number of clubs at nearly one thousand in

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1. For works on American cricket, see John A. Lester, ed., *A Century of Philadelphia Cricket* (Philadelphia, 1951); William R. Wister, *Some Reminiscences of Cricket in Philadelphia Before 1861* (Philadelphia, 1904); John I. Marder, *The International Series The Story of the United States Versus Canada at Cricket* (London, 1968); Melvin Adelman, "The Development of Modern Athletics: Sport in New York City, 1820-1870." (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1980), 251-318. See also the comparison of cricket and baseball in Ian Tyrrell, "The Emergence of Modern American Baseball, c. 1850-80." in Richard Cashman and Michael McKernan, eds., *Sport in History* (St. Lucia, Queensland, Australia, 1979), 205-226.

1859, but a more realistic figure would probably be between three and four hundred created before the Civil War. Philadelphia had clearly established itself as the cricketing capital of the nation, with by far the most clubs and the largest contingent of American born players. The sport also had a following in Boston and in several New England factory towns, but the mid-Atlantic states provided its greatest concentration of interest. In 1859 *Porter's Spirit of the Times* claimed that about six thousand cricketers lived within one hundred miles of New York City, including Philadelphia. England's national game had also spread to such southern towns as Baltimore, Savannah, and New Orleans. Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, and even San Francisco were among the two dozen western cities that fielded teams. While many clubs lasted only a brief time, and while certainly many members were inactive, it is possible that there were between eight and ten thousand men and boys in the United States in 1860 who had played cricket for at least one year.²

Why did these Englishmen and native Americans play cricket? An enthusiast from Philadelphia gave part of the answer in 1859: "Look at the cricketers in their loose fitting, comfortable uniforms, their faces beaming with, good humour and ruddy health, engendered by exercise. Note the eager anxiety of the fielders, their mortification at an overthrow, or a chance for a catch not taken advantage of; see the high ascending ball, and hear the joyous shout of the triumph, as some unfortunate batsman gets permission to retire to the tent, and if you do not leave the ground impressed with the beauty and the utility of the game, why then-you were not cut out for a cricketer."³ This personal treatment demonstrates the popularity of the new amateur American team sport. Home grown and foreign, young and old, white collar and craftsman, affluent and middle class, all participated. They played to relieve themselves from the toil and tedium of their work, for exercise for their bodies, and refreshment for their minds. They competed for the excitement of the contests, and they frolicked for the fun of being young again.

Once bitten by the cricket bug, those addicted devoted countless hours to its pleasures and pain. One of them explained:

To the uninitiated, particularly foreigners, cricket appears very tame and stupid: they cannot conceive what amusement there can be in standing up with a log of wood in your hand and devoting all your energies in preventing a ball from hitting three pieces of stick which are placed in the ground. But such men know nothing of the quickness of eye and hand, the bodily strength and activity which

2. These estimates of the number of cricketers and clubs are based in a careful checking of the New York City sporting periodicals cited below. Manhattan, Staten Island, Brooklyn, and adjacent Long Island had at least twelve clubs in 1860, while New Jersey field a minimum of two dozen from 1845 to 1860. During the 1850's there were probably more than one hundred junior and senior clubs in and around Philadelphia. Many of the towns and cities of New England, upstate New York, the South, and the West reported two or three organizations during the 1850's. If one figures that an average cricket club had between twenty- and twenty-five members, an estimate of as many as four hundred clubs and ten thousand players does not seem unreasonable. The Newark, New York, and Philadelphia Cricket Clubs each had more than fifty enrolled in 1860, while New York's St. George probably had more than one hundred. See *Wilkes' Spirit of the Times*, October 1, 1859, 27, hereinafter cited as *Wilkes' Spirit*, and *Porter's Spirit of the Times*, July 23, 1859, 329, hereinafter cited as *Porter's Spirit*.

3. *The New York Clipper*, July 2, 1859, 84, hereinafter cited as *Clipper*.

are required; and, to one not skilled in the game, it must appear wonderful that a good bat is not only able to stop, but even to hit a ball delivered with immense velocity at such an instant of time that the ball shall fly off at any particular angle which he pleases.

At mid-century a fanatic nicknamed “Old Gruel” played at Hoboken, and became the subject of a satirical piece published in *New York’s Spirit of the Times*. “Old Gruel” was a

practical enthusiast-by day, by night, he “draws” and “drives,” sometimes with real, and sometimes with imaginary balls and bats-with umbrellas, or with cane, he attitudinalizes in the street, or in his bed chamber-studies his gestures in mirrors amuses himself with ‘cuts” at jug-handles, cutting them clean from the jugs, by way of showing himself with what precision he can hit, and then cries out, “how’s that Umpire?”

It is also true that novices sometimes failed to appreciate the sport’s appeal. In 1846, a young Philadelphian recommended that

any young gentleman who may be desirous of acquiring a knowledge of the art of *Cricketing* engage a friend to tie him fast to a fencerail, and then pitch half-bricks at his head for one hour or two; after which, the friend should break a stout hickory club over his sconce, if possible. The “learner” should then be released-to run a mile or two, at top speed, and if by any chance he *returns*. after this last feat he promises fairly, with continued practice, to become “one of ‘em!”

But many who became passionate for cricket carried their love of the game to their graves. Thomas Dodworth, speaking at the twenty-first anniversary dinner of the St. George club, proposed his own epitaph: “Bowled out by death, here lies old Doddy, / A cricketer both soul and body, / Who hoped he’d cricket find in Heaven, / That he might join some good eleven.”⁴

While all antebellum American baseball players were amateurs, there were a few professional cricketers in the United States who competed for both the love of the sport and for money. *Porter’s Spirit* estimated their number at eleven in 1859. All were Englishmen, and most were hired by organizations in New York City, Brooklyn, and Philadelphia. They were paid to instruct members, keep the grounds in good condition, and compete in interclub matches. Since their wages were low, they normally also worked at some other trade. They were also supported by the generosity of some of their more affluent teammates, and many earned extra income from special benefit matches held in their behalf at the end of the season. Although some clubs refused to play against an eleven that included professionals, the English practice of employing experts was accepted by most American cricketers. There were also a few special contests between amateurs and professionals, modeled after the popular English event of the “Gentlemen versus the Players.” Base-

4. *Spirit of the Times*, September 29, 1859, 389, December 8, 1849, 498, August 15, 1846, 300, hereinafter cited as *Spirit*; *Porter’s Spirit* April 9, 1859, 84. For prose and poetry extolling the virtues of cricket, see *Spirit*, June 16, 23, 1849, 204, 211, July 17, 1849, 235, September 15, 1849, 353, October 13, 1849, 403, August 3, 1850, 282, October 6, 1855, 397, December 1, 1855, 498; *Clipper*, September 4, 1858, 157, April 26, 1860, 13. For a humorous story lampooning cricket as too dull and too serious, see *Wilkes’ Spirit*, December 3, 1859, 204.

ball thus followed the example of cricket when it moved toward professionalism in the 1860's.⁵

At the grass roots level of American amateur athletics were neighborhood street games and factory, shop, and office contests. Many boys first learned to play on open lots and fields in cities, towns, and villages. Some youthful Philadelphia cricketers made it common practice to choose sides, play their game, and then send their score to *The New York Clipper* for publication, in order to see their names in print. Although one of the *Clipper's* readers did not believe that results of such street games should be published, that journal's editor wished to encourage these pastimes. "Let the boys go on-let their rude bats and ball be brought into play-and let them send on their scores, if they will," he wrote, "for their publication gives additional interest to their games, and creates a feeling of pride and ambition that must ultimately be the means of bringing forward some valuable acquisitions to the ranks of cricketers."⁶ Despite local ordinances banning sports on the Sabbath in many cities, people also enjoyed early forms of "folk-ball" on Sundays. In Newark, New Jersey in 1858, two police officers arrested several members of a noisy party playing cricket, then released them with a reprimand from the Justice of the Peace.⁷

Sunday sports were popular for those who had little or no other leisure time, but factory workers, artisans in shops, and white collar employees sometimes played pick-up games during weekdays. In 1860 the *Newark Daily Advertiser* noted the practice of informal sports in its city: "The streets in the vicinity of our factories are now full at noon and evening of apprentices and others engaged in the simpler games of ball, thus counteracting the injurious effects of the sedentary pursuits in which some of them are engaged."⁸ A few of the more enlightened bosses gave working class cricketers time off from their toil to play their sport. In 1859 the employees of Philadelphia's Landberger and Co. competed against men from Germantown's Spencer and Co. The *Clipper* was pleased to publicize this match, for earlier in that year a Philadelphia bank had barred its men from joining any athletic clubs. The New York journal hoped "to record many such friendly encounters between the wealth-producing classes of our country, which may be taken as a sure index of its and their prosperity." It praised the owners for having "the good judgment to perceive that 'all work and no play' is not the most liberal or humane maxim on which to conduct a business." It also emphasized that providing leisure time for wholesome recreation would serve the employers' interests: "they will secure the esteem and good wishes of their workmen to such an extent as will ultimately redound to their honor and success." In Manhattan, Henry

5. *Porter's Spirit*, October 17, 1857, 101, July 30, 1859, 345, September 3, 1859, 9; *Wilkes's Spirit*, September 29, 1860, 53, October 13, 1860, 87; *Spirit*, September 25, 1847, 366, October 20, 1847, 419, October 19, 1850, December 19, 1857, 529; *Clipper*, September 26, 1857, 183, October 24, 1857, 215, October 2, 1858, 189-90, January 1, 1859, 293, May 21, 1859, 4, November 3, 1860, 225.

6. *Clipper*, June 6, 1857, 52.

7. *Newark Evening Journal*, November 15, 1859. The possible penalty for this offense was ten days in Jail or a fine from \$3 to \$25.

8. *Newark Daily Advertiser*, May 14, 1860.

Sharp, President of the New York Cricket Club, and a house and church decorator, sponsored a series of cricket outings at Hoboken, New Jersey for his workers. In 1860 *Wilkes' Spirit* lauded Sharp for setting "a noble example to the employers of New York, in thus affording those engaged in his service a day's relaxation from the regular toils and cares of labor, for the purpose of enjoying in the green fields and pure air of the country a day of healthful recreation and social amusement." That paper added that his generosity "cements the kindly feeling which ought ever to exist between the employer and employed, and is productive of mutual advantage."⁹

The thousands who participated in these informal recreations must remain anonymous, for there is no way to identify them or to generalize about their demographic characteristics. It is possible, however, to gather personal data on those who joined clubs and whose names appeared in newspapers. Demographic information found in sporting and daily journals, city directories, and federal censuses reveals some patterns concerning the athletes' ethnicity, age, occupation, wealth, and neighborhoods. (See Table 1.) It is also instructive to compare cricketers with baseball players, and to note differences among several cities. The following discussion summarizes the results of a statistical study of Newark, New Jersey sportsmen, along with some data from New York City, Brooklyn, and Philadelphia. Newark differed significantly from these other major metropolitan centers of antebellum sport. The latter had some manufacturing, but they were primarily transportation and commercial centers. By contrast, Newark was mainly a factory town. With a population of 72,000 in 1860, it ranked as America's eleventh largest city, but it was far smaller than the others. Standing sixth in the nation in the value of its manufactures, Newark was also one of the first communities to catch the cricket and baseball fever of the 1850's.¹⁰

The nationalities of the men who created modern American team sport merit attention, for both cricket and baseball surged in popularity during a period of heavy immigration from Europe. As might be expected, the overwhelming majority of men who played the American national game were native born. Baseball had long been a familiar child's game in the United States, and thus home grown men were far more likely than immigrants to play it as adults. Cricket provides a more complex ethnic pattern, for England's national pastime did attract significant numbers of Americans in certain locali-

9. *Clipper*, October 8, 1859, 196 (quotation), November 26, 1859, 252, September 1, 1860, 155; *Wilkes' Spirit*, September 15, 1860, 26. Philadelphia's white collar professionals also held informal cricket games. In 1859 eleven local lawyers lost to their students. See *Wilkes' Spirit*, November 19, 1859, 172.

10. For a more detailed discussion of New Jersey's antebellum sportsmen, see George B. Kirsch, "New Jersey Cricketers, Baseball Players, and Clubs, 1845-1860," *New Jersey History* (forthcoming, 1984). For Newark as a factory town, see Susan E. Hirsch, *Roots of the American Working Class: The Industrialization of Crafts in Newark, 1800-1860* (Philadelphia, 1978). The statistics on Newark sportsmen cited in this article include 113 baseball players, 66 cricketers, and 7 who played both sports. This sample includes one professional-Frederick Hallis of the Newark Cricket Club. I would like to thank my research assistants, Frank Curci, Vincent Cuomo, and Robert Burnett, for helping me with the tedious task of working with the newspapers, city directories, and federal censuses. I would also like to thank Brother Anthony Flynn and Professor Dennis McCornac of Manhattan College, who taught me how to use the SPSS program for the computer analysis of this data.

American Cricket Before the Civil War

Table I—Newark, New Jersey Sportsmen: Nationality, Age, Occupation, Property, and Residence, 1855-1860

		<i>Newark Cricket</i>	<i>Newark Baseball</i>
<i>Birthplace</i>	N (sample size)	64	91
	%United States	45.3	89.0
	%Great Britain	45.3	6.6
	%Ireland	7.8	3.3
	%Other European	1.6	1.1
<i>Age</i>	N	59	87
	%21 and under	11.9	24.1
	%22-29	30.5	32.2
	%30-39	28.8	24.2
	5% Over 40	28.8	19.5
	Mean	33.6	30.2
	Median	30.4	28.2
<i>Occupation</i>	N	71	108
	%Students	1.4	6.5
	%Unskilled	4.2	0.9
	%Semi-skilled	2.8	5.6
	%Skilled		
	%Building	4.2	7.4
	%Metal	43.7	9.3
	%Leather	2.8	4.6
	%Wood	5.6	7.4
	%Cloth	15.5	6.5
	%Other	5.6	7.4
	%Total skilled	77.4	38.0
	%Low White Collar		
	%Petty Proprietor	1.4	7.4
	%Clerical	4.2	17.6
	%Total Low White Collar	5.6	25.0
%High White Collar			
%Merchants, Managers	4.2	17.6	
%Professional	4.2	6.5	
%Total High White Collar	8.4	24.1	
<i>Real Estate</i>	N	59	86
	%None	64.4	47.7
	%\$5000 and Under	23.7	25.6
	%Over \$5000	11.9	26.7
	%Mean (\$)	2110	7411
%Median (\$)	0	650	
<i>Personal Estate</i>	N	59	86
	%None	44.1	27.9
	%\$500 and Under	32.2	30.2
	%Over \$500	23.8	41.8
	Mean (\$)	1310	2853
Median (\$)	100	350	
<i>Residence</i>	N	72	115
	%Central Business Dist.	18.1	7.0
	%Old Core	36.2	68.7
	%Inner Ring	31.9	19.2
	%Outer Ring	13.9	5.1

ties—especially in Newark and Philadelphia. Englishmen controlled New York cricket, primarily because British merchants and professionals had founded its leading clubs and had not exerted themselves in recruiting many Americans. However, Albany, Yonkers, and Long Island (including Brooklyn) fielded an impressive number of home grown players, and hosted a number of special contests that matched Englishmen against Americans.¹¹ In Newark, natives and “old countrymen” each contributed forty-five percent of the total number of club members before 1861. It appears that in that New Jersey city English craftsmen actively encouraged native factory workers and shop owners to play cricket. In August, 1854 the Newark Cricket Club organized the first all-Native American match ever played in the United States, as it split a home and home series with the New York Cricket Club.¹² In 1857, Daniel W. Baker, an American jeweler and former President of the Newark association, urged a New York City cricket convention to Americanize the rules and regulations of the game, so that it might become more attractive to his fellow countrymen. The following spring the convention elected him to serve as its secretary.¹³

Philadelphia (including its surrounding towns) was the center of native American cricket for the antebellum period, and for the rest of the nineteenth century. In 1858 the *Clipper* estimated that the City of Brotherly Love had more native players than in any other ten cities, and later that year eleven of them proved their superiority over a local English side.¹⁴ In 1860 *The New York Times* stated that in Philadelphia, cricket was “as popular with Americans as Base Ball is in New York; and no other reason that Americans have controlled it.” According to the *Times*, native sportsmen deserved the credit for the Philadelphia cricket boom, while the Englishmen who dominated the sport in Manhattan had “almost utterly squelched the rising spirit of cricket amongst Americans in New York, and driven it into base-bail, as a means of out-door exercise and recreation.”¹⁵

Why did cricket become so much more popular among Americans in Philadelphia than in New York City, Brooklyn, or Newark? This is an important but difficult question to answer. The explanation seems to be found both in the willingness of British immigrants to promote their sport to natives, and in the receptiveness of middle and upper class Philadelphians. During the 1830’s and 1840’s groups of affluent and working class English enthusiasts demonstrated their favorite sport to local residents. They apparently welcomed the natives to join in the fun. Perhaps more importantly for the long term future of American cricket, a few of these pioneer sportsmen nurtured a love of cricket among students at Philadelphia’s schools and colleges. For example, as early as 1831 several members of the influential Tichnor family played on a ground

11. *Porter’s Spirit*, October 25, 1856, 133; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 15, 1857, August 10, 26, 1858, July 12, 1859.

12. *Spirit*, August 12, 26, 1854, 306, 336.

13. *Porter’s Spirit*, May 9, 1857, 156; *Newark Daily Advertiser*, May 5, 1858.

14. *Clipper*, July 3, 1858, 84, November 27, 1858, 253.

15. *New York Times*, July 6, 9, 1860.

on the west bank on the Schuylkill River. A few years later a party of mechanics competed on the Kensington commons. Around 1840 a group of hosiery weavers at Wakefield Mills scheduled matches on Whitmonday, holidays, and Saturday afternoons. These games apparently impressed a few of the local boys and young men. William Carvill, a gardener at Haverford College, supplied a more direct influence when he encouraged native students to try the sport as early as 1834. This Haverford club, probably the first composed entirely of Americans, lasted only a few years. But when the college reopened in 1848, it fielded two elevens.¹⁶

The first modern cricket organization in Philadelphia, the Union Cricket Club, played a crucial role in stimulating interest in the English sport among Americans. It was born in 1843, when Robert Wailer of New York's St. George club moved to Philadelphia and brought together several English importers, a few Kensington artisans, and a sprinkling of American baseball players. Soon after its creation the Union sponsored the Junior Cricket Club at the University of Pennsylvania. The elder players recruited William Rotch Wister, who rounded up about forty of his fellow scholars to form this association. For an annual rent of fifty dollars, these young Philadelphians sublet the Union's house and ground for one afternoon a week. At about this time a group of schoolboys and the sons of local English weavers formed another junior club. Led by John Wister, this eleven challenged the University team to a series of matches in 1845.

Although both the Union club and its junior offspring vanished after the 1846 season, Philadelphia cricket revived during the early 1850's. Leading its rebirth were many of those who had learned the sport at local playgrounds and at college during the 1840's. William R. Wister played a central part in popularizing cricket among natives for the next half century. The Philadelphia Cricket Club was organized at his office in 1854. He was known successively among the local fraternity as the "father" and then as the "grandfather" of American cricket. He was remembered as a "genial, sparkling, lovable" and "conversational cricketer"—a "gusty, chirruping captain who urged on his men with cries of encouragement, side remarks, quips, and cracks."¹⁷

These forces that promoted cricket among native Philadelphians were weaker in other cities. New York City, Brooklyn, and Newark did not experience a rage for the sport in their schools and colleges, and they did not produce families like the Wisters or the Newhalls that championed cricket among the native elite. In New York City, British merchants and professionals were not eager to enlist large numbers of Americans; in Newark, English craftsmen did convert many of their native fellow workers, but failed to win over the city's upper class. Certainly the earlier popularity of baseball in the mid-1850's in New York City and Brooklyn, as compared with its introduction

16. This and the following two paragraphs are based on Lester, ed., *Philadelphia Cricket*, 9-14; Wister, *Reminiscences*, 5-14; *Spirit*, September 27, 1845, 363, October 4, 1845, 380, November 21, 1846, 459; *Jones Wister's Reminiscences* (Philadelphia, 1920), 113-121.

17. Lester, ed., *Philadelphia Cricket*, 9, 11, 16.

into Philadelphia in 1860, retarded cricket's growth in the former cities. But in the final analysis, it seems that Philadelphia cricket was exceptional in the enthusiasm of its English boosters and in its appeal to Philadelphia's upper class and its students.

The age distribution of these early sportsmen also reveals some interesting points. Baseball was originally a child's game, but during the 1850's it was embraced by many adults in their twenties and thirties. It was also not uncommon to see active participants in their forties and even fifties. In cricket, the age structure (like the ethnicity) differed among several cities. In New York and Brooklyn, older men dominated; in Newark, there were more young cricketers than across the Hudson or East Rivers. But even there the average club member was about six years older than his baseball counterpart, with a mean age of 33.6 (median = 30.4). Nearly sixty per cent of Newark's cricketers were over thirty, with half of these over forty. By contrast, only about forty-four percent of Newark's baseball players were over thirty. This seems to be because cricket was not well known among American boys, and was more difficult for adults to learn. Of course, the higher proportion of English immigrants playing cricket also affected the sport's age structure, since most arrived as young men.

In its age distribution, as in its nationality trends, Philadelphia cricket differed sharply from the cases of Brooklyn, New York, and Newark. Its first generation of players were mainly young natives, primarily because English and American enthusiasts promoted the sport in the city's schools and colleges. In 1859 the *Clipper* reported that "every boy in Philadelphia, who plays ball at all, knows cricket thoroughly." When seventeen Philadelphia Americans (plus one from Amsterdam, New York) defeated eleven Englishmen in all-star match in 1860, the average age of the native side was only twenty. Several of them were still high school students; about three hundred out of the local Free Academy's five hundred pupils played the sport that year. Of the several boy wonders produced by that region, two of the very best were Waiter S. and George M. Newhall. Both were members of a famous cricketing family, second only to the Wisters in the Philadelphia area. Walter was perhaps the best American batsman of his era. Born in 1841, he scored one hundred five runs in one contest at the tender age of fifteen. He was talented enough in the field to play in two games against the touring All England Eleven in 1859. He doubtless would have improved upon these impressive beginnings, but his tragic death at the Rappahannock in the Civil War cut short his brilliant career. George was born in 1845, and created a sensation at the age of thirteen when he bowled in front of about six thousand spectators in all star match of Americans against Englishmen. The *Spirit* correspondent called him "the *Little Wonder*, whose round arm bowling drew forth applause, firing of pistols, etc." He lived to play a prominent role in promoting Philadelphia cricket after the Civil War.¹⁸

18. *Clipper*, October 22, 1859, 212; New York Times, July 9, 1860; Lester, ed., *Philadelphia Cricket*, 21, 26-27; *Spirit*, July 17, 1858, 271.

An analysis of the occupations of these pioneer American club members reveals other significant differences among players in several cities. A recent study of antebellum New York and Brooklyn baseball shows that the sport was very popular among both white and blue collar men very early in its history.¹⁹ In cricket, working class English immigrants played a major role in popularizing that game in America during the 1830's and 1840's. But by 1860 most of the cricketers in New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, and Boston were professional and mercantile people. Yet there were still many factory towns where craftsmen patronized the game. In Newark, for example, more than three-fourths of the city's players were skilled artisans, and nearly eighty-five per cent were working class. It is striking that whereas nearly one-half of Newark's baseball fraternity was white collar, only fourteen per cent of its cricketers were in that category.

Since occupation is never the sole determinant of social class, it is also necessary to examine the wealth and neighborhood residence of the antebellum amateur sportsmen. While the case of Newark is not necessarily representative of other cities, its cricketers and baseball players did come from a broad range of social classes. Although the bulk of these men were middle class mechanics or clerks, a significant number of wealthy merchants, contractors, professionals, and other elites also joined in the fun.²⁰ When Newark's sportsmen are compared with the city's population at large, both cricket and baseball enthusiasts were more likely to own property and were more prosperous than the townspeople in general.²¹ When the real property holdings of cricketers are compared with those of baseball players, the results are consistent with the findings for occupations. A higher percentage of cricketers reported no real estate, while a much higher proportion of baseball players owned more than \$5,000 worth of property. Thus Newark's cricketing community had mainly mechanics with no land or houses, but a sizeable minority owned some property and were probably self-employed. The data on personal estates reinforces the conclusion that Newark's baseball players were wealthier than its cricketers.

Residential patterns of Newark's athletes reveals further distinctions between its cricketers and baseball players. The city had eleven wards in 1860, which may be divided into four zones. These are the Central Business District (CBD) of the Fourth Ward; the Old Core (OC) of the First, Second, and Ninth Wards; the Inner Ring (IR) of the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Wards; and the Outer Ring (OR) of the newer Eighth, Tenth, and Eleventh Wards. In the middle of the nineteenth century, before the advent of mass transit and suburbanization, the poorest and wealthiest of residents tended to cluster near the business core of a city. Those with middling wealth normally lived in the rings. Three-fourths of Newark's baseball players resided in either the CBD

19. Adelman, "Modern Athletics," 330-332, 356-364.

20. The wide disparities between mean and medium property values result from a small number of very affluent players in each sport.

21. See Hirsch, *Roots of the American Working Class*, 69.

or OC, while only fifty-five per cent of its cricketers lived there. About one-third of the cricketers and one-fifth of the baseball players lived in the IR. This pattern seems consistent with the occupation and property trends. Cricket players in Newark were mostly skilled artisans of modest estates; many lived in middle class neighborhoods of the Inner and Outer Rings. Baseball players were predominantly more prosperous white collar workers (along with some affluent artisans) who resided on the more well-to-do streets of the Central Business District and especially the Old Core.²²

The preceding statistical analysis of the players' demographic characteristics is essential for a full understanding of the creation of American team sports, but it conveys very little about the personal lives of the thousands who joined the earliest cricket clubs. It is now time to pause briefly to remember a few of these sportsmen. Some were prominent citizens of their communities during and after their playing careers, while others were more obscure. They came from different ethnic, religious, social, and economic backgrounds, but they shared a love of play and a desire to popularize American cricket.

Reverend Thomas W. Higginson was a minor figure in antebellum New England cricket, but he drew some attention from the New York sporting press because he was one of the few clergymen to play the sport before 1861. Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1823, he was a Harvard graduate who championed the cause of physical fitness throughout his lifetime. Although he was raised in a New England culture that discouraged sports as useless and even immoral, Higginson began attacking the old tradition in a series of magazine articles he published in the 1850's. In "Saints and Their Bodies," which appeared in an 1858 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, he argued that proper exercise and recreation were of vital importance and were entirely appropriate and necessary for a full intellectual and spiritual life. He practiced what he preached—in 1858 he served as President of the Lincoln Cricket Club of Worcester, Massachusetts. In his later life he distinguished himself as a Union officer in the Civil War, and as a writer and advocate of "muscular Christianity."²³

One of the founders of the New York Cricket Club gained some fame but little fortune during the 1840's and 1850's as an artist. William Ranney was born in 1813 at Middletown, Connecticut. At the age of twenty he journeyed to New York City, where he studied drawing. He then enlisted in a company that went to Texas to fight under General Sam Houston in the Texas War of Independence. There he found the subject matter for most of his art—the hardy and picturesque Southwestern and Rocky Mountain hunters, trappers, explorers, and pioneers. After his return to New York he became proficient in illustrating the life of the frontier, with all of its romance, barbarism, and spectacular scenery. During the 1840's he was a zealous cricketer, and he kept playing after the age of forty, until he was sidelined with illness. But

22. I have borrowed this scheme of zones from Hirsch, *Roots of the American Working Class*, 95-97.

23. John A. Lucas, "A Prelude to the Rise of Sport: Ante-bellum America, 1850-1860," *Quest XI* (December 1868): 54-56; *Porter's Spirit*, April 24, 1858, 117; *Clipper*, June 26, 1858, 75.

although his work was admired during his lifetime, he died nearly destitute in 1857, when he was still a member of the New York Cricket Club. His fellow artists raised enough money to save his home and studio for his wife and children.²⁴

Most cricketers never achieved the reputations of Higginson or Ranney, but some were quite successful in their vocations. One of these was James Higham, another member of the New York club, who was born in Gravesend, England in 1827. He was a tailor until about 1865, when he opened "The Office," a popular English pub that attracted a sporting and theatrical crowd. One of the leaders of early American cricket, he died in 1872 at the age of forty-four.²⁵ Several of Newark's more prominent citizens also played this English sport. Among them were John C. Jennings, a wealthy jewelry manufacturer and Vice President of his town's Mechanics Club, who was worth over \$30,000 in 1860. Another was James Douglass Orton of the Newark club, a banker who estimated his personal estate at \$10,000 that year.²⁶ One should not forget the countless early cricketers who lived and died as lower or middle class workers. They were little known outside of their immediate neighborhoods and families, and they are far more obscure today. But they deserve to be noticed, for they formed the rank and file of antebellum American cricket. During the 1850's the Newark Cricket Club enrolled dozens of English and American mechanics who reported little or no property in the 1860 census. Among them was James Kidd, an English carpenter, who was Vice President of that organization in 1859. Others were William Perren, a tailor who competed at the age of forty while he was a boarder in town, and James Ramege, a machinist who lived on Quarry Street and played in 1855.²⁷ These men were just a few who joined the sports boom of the 1850's, and who have long been forgotten, probably even by their own descendants.

It is now time to shift the focus from the individual participants to their clubs. America's first cricket associations were private, voluntary organizations. Political, religious, charitable, educational, and cultural societies were popular in colonial and Revolutionary America, and they multiplied during the rapid urbanization of the 1800's. As the pressures of life in the cities intensified, and as social diversity and tensions mounted, city people sought reaffirmation of their identities and recreation and relaxation in sports clubs. These small subcommunities, like hundreds of others of various kinds, were larger than the family but were also intimate enough to preserve a sense of fellowship and group loyalty. Sports clubs provided social interaction, exercise for health, and various levels of competition for all grades of athletes. They permitted people who shared common values to play together.²⁸

24. *Clipper*, December 12, 1857, 271; *New York Times*, November 24, 1857; *Dictionary of American Biography*, (New York, 1935), 377-378.

25. *New York Times*, July 10, 1872; Marder, *International Series*, 48.

26. 1860 Federal Census for Newark, Ward 5, 349, Ward 4, 21.

27. Newark city directories and the 1860 Federal census.

28. Benjamin Rader, "The Quest for Subcommunities and the Rise of American Sport," *American Quarterly*, 29 (Fall, 1977): 355-369.

Perhaps the most intriguing problem posed by America's first team sports associations concerns how the members grouped themselves into clubs. A cricket organization was born when a few enthusiasts succeeded in recruiting enough players who were willing to attend meetings, appear on practice days, and support all club activities. Members generally had more in common than their love of sport, but it is a difficult task to identify precisely those characteristics that they shared. When one looks at the players' demographic data by clubs, it becomes possible to see whether age, birthplace, occupation, wealth or any combination of these or other factors determined membership in a particular club.

Whenever ball players formed clubs, age was a decisive factor in choosing members. Skill level, physical maturity, and cultural norms all dictated that men and boys should not play and socialize together. Cricket had three age categories: boys (sixteen and under); juniors (young men under twenty-one); and seniors. There were of course some exceptions to these limits, as talented boys sometimes played with older adolescents, while skilled juniors competed with adults. Cricket flourished among boys and young men in Philadelphia. The Young America club of Germantown originated as a junior club in 1855, when the older boys in town excluded anyone under the age of sixteen from their ranks. The youngsters responded with an "apple barrage" against their elders, and banded together to found an organization that grew into one of the premier outfits in American cricket. Philadelphia had several dozen junior cricket clubs in 1860, while Camden, Newark, and Trenton, New Jersey, and Lawrence, Massachusetts, Baltimore, Maryland, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin also fielded a few elevens. Some senior cricketers tried to foster a love of the game among boys and youth by permitting their admission as limited, non-voting members. The 1854 Constitution of the Philadelphia Cricket Club provided that "persons under the age of twenty-one years may be elected Junior Members." They were exempt from the obligation of an entrance fee, but could not vote or hold office, and were still liable for special assessments. Upon reaching adulthood they were automatically elected members, upon payment of the entrance fee. In May, 1858 the New York Cricket Club followed this policy by decreeing that "lads under the age of eighteen be admitted to membership in the 3d or Novitiate's Eleven of our Club: and in all respects, excepting voting upon general club matters, have the same rights and privileges of the club-ground, practice, and property as the other members, by paying an Initiation fee and Annual Dues of \$1.00." The Brooklyn Cricket Club followed their example by organizing a "Junior Class" for youths under eighteen, who paid less than one-half the regular dues. The St. George club also sponsored a junior eleven, but in general the New York City region lagged far behind both Philadelphia and New Jersey in popularizing cricket among its young.²⁹

29. Lester, ed., *Philadelphia Cricket*, 23-25; *Clipper*, May 15, 1858, 28, March 10, 1860, 372, June 2, 9, 1860, 53, 60; *Spirit*, August 7, 1852, 294; *Porter's Spirit*, May 15, 1858, 164. A copy of the Philadelphia Cricket Club's 1854 Constitution may be found in its MSS. Minute Books, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

As public opinion shifted during the 1850's towards a more favorable attitude towards physical education and sports for America's youth, many schools, academies, and colleges produced student sponsored cricket clubs. The earliest appeared at Haverford College in 1834. which became a center for native American cricketers for the next several decades. Other colleges with cricket clubs before the Civil War were Assumption, Girard, the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, New York City's Free Academy, the University of Pennsylvania, Oberlin, Holy Cross, and Princeton.³⁰

Nationality was a more important factor in the formation of early American cricket clubs than it was for baseball organizations. Because it was introduced into America by English immigrants, its leading clubs were at first overwhelmingly British. The Philadelphia, New York, and St. George clubs served their respective English subcommunities by preserving and strengthening allegiance to old country customs. Yet they also admitted an increasing number of Americans during the 1850's and 1860's.³¹ In part because of the tendency of the British to monopolize play, several all native associations appeared in the Philadelphia vicinity, including the Germantown, Young America, and Union. All three apparently restricted their membership to men born in the United States. Brooklyn's short-lived American Cricket Club, founded in 1860, is an interesting example of this type. It was organized by several prominent Brooklyn baseball and cricket players, and its goal was to promote England's national pastime among Americans by "revolutionizing the mode in which it had been hitherto governed in this country." They did not intend to make any significant changes in the sport's rules, but they did wish to model interclub play after the example of the new National Association of Base Ball Players recently formed in New York. Most significantly, they desired to speed up play and inaugurate other changes which they believed "would put a stop to many evils which had kept Americans from joining in the game." The new association limited itself to Americans, but it followed a liberal definition when it included those who had been permanent residents of the United States since the age of five, and were also citizens. It began its brief existence with forty enrolled and a successful inaugural season, but the outbreak of the Civil War weakened the American Cricket Club and limited its prospects for popularizing cricket among the Brooklyn and New York masses.³²

Among senior cricketers, occupation appears to have been more significant than nationality in club formation, while wealth and ward residence could also

30. *Spirit*, September 27, 1845, 363; *Wilkes' Spirit*, November 26, 1859, 181, December 3, 10, 1859, 205, 215; *Clipper*, May 2, 1857, 10, September 5, 1857, 155, October 3, 1857, 188, August 13, 27, 1859, 132, 148 April 7, 1860, 407; *Porter's Spirit*, October 25, 1856, 37, September 20, 1856, 133; Lester, ed., *Philadelphia Cricket*, 11.

31. Adelman, "Modern Athletics," 300.

32. *Clipper*, March 10, 1860, 372, September 15, 22, 29, 1860, 170, 179, 186, October 13, 27, 1860, 204, 219, 221. Clubs organized at Rouse's Point, New York, Lowell, Massachusetts, and Franklin, New Jersey were virtually all natives Newark and other New Jersey towns had teams that were nearly evenly divided between Americans and Englishmen. See Table 2, and also the *Clipper*, April 30, 1857, 19, July 4, 1857 85; *Newark Daily Adviser*, May 3, 1855.

be influential. Cricket clubs were either predominantly white collar or working class, with very few if any of evenly mixed membership. The most prominent organizations of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston were dominated by merchants, managers, professionals, and other solid citizens of the middle and upper classes. Each included a few prosperous skilled craftsmen. For example, men of commerce comprised more than half of the rolls of New York's St. George club in 1859, while skilled artisans accounted for only about fifteen per cent. Although *Porter's Spirit* ranked it "at the head of all the Cricket Clubs in the United States," its membership was not as affluent as that of New York's top social, literary, jockey, or yacht clubs. It was "composed of gentlemen of unexceptionable standing," but with "several of wealth and very high position." The New York Cricket Club drew more of its men from the city's literary, artistic, and theatrical circles than from its mercantile community. Its players were also probably less affluent than the Dragon-slayers of St. George.³³ In Philadelphia, upper class enthusiasm for cricket before and after the Civil War made that city the capital of the sport. The prominent Philadelphia clubs recruited a higher proportion of the city's wealthiest residents than was the case in New York.

Although these white collar clubs ruled the sport in America, there were numerous working class cricket associations in the United States before 1861. Artisans had helped to introduce the game before 1840, and during the 1850's several groups of skilled craftsmen played in New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Jersey. On July 4, 1856, a few mechanics of the Ogdensburgh Railroad founded a cricket club at Rouse's Point, New York, composed mostly of natives. The New Brighton Mechanics Club was "principally composed of players whose livelihood is acquired by personal labor." To avoid confusion with the white collar New Brighton Cricket Club, the Mechanics changed their name in 1858 to the Staten Island Cricket Club. In 1857 the United of Waltham, Massachusetts was "composed chiefly of operatives, the thew and sinew of our land, in whom is found the wealth and prosperity of the nation." The tiny town of Berlin, Massachusetts gave birth to the "Shoemakers" Cricket Club in 1859. In Philadelphia in 1858 about thirty printers, most of whom were employed by daily newspapers, formed the Typographical Cricket Club.³⁴

The center of blue collar cricket was New Jersey, particularly in Newark. That city and other factory towns in the state attracted many British craftsmen, who brought with them their love of sport. Skilled artisans, especially jewelers, silver platers, and tailors, controlled all three of that city's top organizations—the Newark, Mechanics, and Essex clubs. The Newark club's membership was slightly more affluent than that of the Mechanics or Essex.

33. Adelman, "Modern Athletics," 269-270, 298-300: *Porter's Spirit*, April 2, 1859, 73. Baltimore's Franklin Cricket Club included both white and blue collar members. Founded in 1859, it enrolled compositors, reporters, editors, clerks, book-keepers, telegraph operators, "all who are in any way identified with the genius of Franklin." *Porter's Spirit*, June 11, 1859, 228.

34. *Clipper*, July 4, 1857, 85, September 5, 1857, 156, July 10, 1858, 91, August 14, 1858, 133, August 20, 1859, 143.

All three drew players from most of the city's eleven wards, but sixty-two per cent of the Newark club lived in the Central Business District or Old Core, compared to forty-three per cent of the Essex. More significantly, the Essex was apparently more of a neighborhood team than either of its rivals, for it had a high concentration (forty-four per cent) of its members in the seventh ward. All of this suggests that there were important residential (and also probably economic) differences among Newark's working class cricket clubs. (See Table 2.)

Table 2—Newark's Three Most Prominent Cricket Clubs, 1855-1860

		<i>New.</i>	<i>Mech.</i>	<i>Essex</i>
		<i>Cr.</i>	<i>Cr.</i>	<i>Cr.</i>
	N (sample size)*	50	15	16
<i>Birth-place</i>	%United States	46.5	33.3	31.2
	%Great Britain	46.5	50.0	62.5
	%Ireland	7.0	16.7	0.0
	%Other European	0.0	0.0	6.2
<i>Age</i>	Mean (years)	33.1	38.8	33.5
	Median (years)	32.0	40.0	29.5
<i>Occupation</i>	%Student	0.0	0.0	0.0
	%Unskilled	2.0	14.3	0.0
	%Semi-skilled	2.0	0.0	6.2
	%Skilled	81.6	78.4	81.3
	%Low White Col.	4.1	7.1	12.5
	%High White Col.	10.2	0.0	0.0
<i>Real Estate</i>	%None	59.5	63.6	62.5
	;%\$5000 + Under	24.3	27.3	25.0
	%Over \$5000	16.2	9.1	12.6
	Mean (\$)	2678	1336	1719
	Median (\$)	0	0	0
<i>Personal Estate</i>	%None	41.0	50.0	50.0
	;%\$500 + Under	35.9	25.0	37.5
	%Over \$500	23.1	25.0	12.5
	Mean(\$)	908	2725	463
	Median (\$)	200	100	50
<i>Zone Residence</i>	%Central Bus. Dist.	20.0	14.3	6.2
	%Old Core	42.0	28.4	18.6
	%Inner Ring	24.0	35.7	62.4
	%Outer Ring	14.0	21.4	12.4

* These samples include players who were members of several clubs. Some of the players in the cricket sample in Table 1 competed for junior or minor clubs that are not shown in Table 2.

It is clear that in some of these artisan organizations, factory owners were either officers, patrons, or influential members. Thus journeymen joined with at least a few of their bosses to play cricket together. It should be remembered that before the Civil War, the industrial revolution had not yet completely

separated workers from manufacturers. Some shop owners still toiled as master craftsmen, and thus had close relationships with their employees. At least in the case of Newark, the various cricket clubs probably did not enhance a feeling of shared working class consciousness. Rather these organizations probably strengthened the ties between the bosses and their hired men. In that sense these sports clubs retained some pre-modern characteristics.³⁵

Before a group of sportsmen could consider themselves a cricket club in good standing, they had to choose a name, ratify a Constitution and Bye-Laws, and reserve and improve a playground. They followed traditional American democratic procedures that governed voluntary associations. A club's Constitution spelled out general principles, the rules for meetings and the election of officers and members, and their respective duties. The Bye-Laws listed the financial and personal obligations of all who enrolled. Each person was required to pay an initiation fee and annual dues (generally ranging from \$2 to \$5); special assessments for elaborate match day collations were normally voluntary. The purchase of a uniform was the principal expense for most players. Each man was also expected to attend practice days regularly, and to behave in a gentlemanly fashion. Officers were empowered to levy fines for disorderly conduct, arguing with umpires, disobeying captains, and using profane language.³⁶

While a few associations insisted that their members play regularly to remain in good standing, most tolerated inactive men as long as they paid their dues and assessments. Typically, an organization would have a strong first and perhaps a reliable second eleven, but only sporadic attendance beyond these leading players. For example, the annual reports of the ground committee of the Philadelphia Cricket Club lamented the lack of interest in practice sessions by too many men. In 1856, only thirty-five out of eighty-five members appeared either for matches or playdays. Early in 1861 the club listed seventy-six on its rolls, but an official complained that it could not "count on more than twenty active members; while an attendance of ten members on a practicing day is an unusual thing and not occurring more than once in a season." An officer fretted that "unless our members show more energy and interest in the game we will lose our reputation as the foremost club in the City,"³⁷ It appears that many enrolled in the Philadelphia Cricket Club for social status reasons rather than for the love of cricket. Partly because of its low level of participation, by 1861 that organization probably had already lost

35. Over the past ten years, several labor historians have studied nineteenth century American working class culture, but they have paid very little attention to sports clubs. See Bruce Laurie, "Nothing on Compulsion: Life Styles of Philadelphia Artisans, 1820-1850," and Paul Fader, "Cultural Aspects of the Industrial Revolution: Lynn, Massachusetts, Shoemakers and Industrial Morality, 1826-1860," *Labor History* 15 (Summer, 1874): 337-394. See also Faler, *Mechanics and Manufacturers in the Early Industrial Revolution: Lynn, Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Albany, New York, 1981), esp. chapter 9, 10; Alan Dawley, *Class and Community* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1976).

36. For example of cricket club constitutions, see the *Clipper*, August 27, 1857, 148, May 8, 1858, 20; *Constitutional and Bye-Laws of the Philadelphia Cricket Club*, 1858 (Philadelphia, 1858).

37. MSS, Minute Book, Volume One, Philadelphia Cricket Club, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

its privileged place to other more dynamic associations, especially those from Germantown.

Before a club could practice or play intrasquad or interclub matches, it had to secure a suitable ground. This was no simple task in America's rapidly expanding towns and cities of the 1850's: vacant lots and rented estates of sufficient size were becoming increasingly scarce. Cricketers had more trouble than baseball players in finding and improving a good held, for cricket required a well manicured grass surface for high quality performance. For example, the Newark club played its earliest matches in the 1840's on a lot near a chemical factory, then moved several times before it settled on a new field near railroad tracks in 1855. The new ground was apparently still below standard, for the cricket reports of the *Spirit* and *Clipper* severely criticized it. The wealthier associations naturally could afford better fields. By the late 1850's New York's leading elevens were using Hoboken's lush Elysian Fields, while Philadelphians sported on first class "pitches" across the Delaware River in Camden, New Jersey, and on estates on the fringes of the city.³⁸

Clubs scheduled practice days and arranged contests with rivals to provide their men with various levels of competition. Most exercised two afternoons a week, but not on Sundays. On playdays captains chose sides from those who appeared on time. If places remained open they would invite any visitors to join in their game. The officers used these scrimmages to select the first and second elevens, and to sort out the worst athletes for their "muffin" squad. St. Louis' Old Hickory Club used a novel method of choosing its first team: its bye-laws restricted eligibility to those who weighed at least two hundred pounds! For more fun, clubs held special intrasquad games. Their methods of selecting sides are interesting, for they reveal traditional cultural distinctions that antebellum Americans drew among themselves. By far the most common type matched the married ("Benedicts") against the single men ("Bachelors"). Other competitions include the heavyweights versus the lightweights (under 145 pounds), and seniors versus the juniors (under age 32). Clubs sometimes matched the North Counties of England against the South, and the Americans versus the "old countrymen." Muffin contests were exercises in ineptitude, and provided amusement for participants and spectators. There were also a few unusual intrasquad games, such as alphabet contests ("A to N" versus "N to Z"), and the Newark club's games that matched right-handers against left-handers and tall versus short. Once the New York club placed its powerful first eleven against the rest of the players, with the top cricketers required to use baseball bats as a handicap. All of these contests show the spirit of playfulness, while they also reveal significant personal, social, and athletic distinctions within every organization.³⁹

38. *Spirit*, June 5, 1852, 192, August 26, 1854, 336, May 31, 1856, 187, *Clipper*, July 17, 24, 1858, 101, 110, June 11, 1859, 60.

39. *Spirit*, October 15, 1842, 385, July 1, 1843, 210, May 31, 1845, 158, June 14, 1845, 177-178, 188, November 5, 1853, 451, *Porter's Spirit*, June 20, 1857, 245, July 11, 1857, 292, September 5, 1857, 4, November 21, 1857, 180, May 7, 1859, 149, *Wilkes' Spirit*, August 11, 1860, 363, *Clipper* May 30, 1857, 45, August 29, 1857, 151, September 5, 1857, 159, May 22, 1858, 36, May 7, 1859 19; *Brooklyn Daily*

Since these amateur sports clubs were also social organizations, they scheduled periodic entertainments to supplement their regular business meetings and playdays. The wealthiest gave extravagant parties and fancy winter balls or "hops," while many of the middle class white collar and artisan associations held more modest affairs. Many clubs held annual dinners at the beginning and end of each season. Typical of these all male events was the 1858 celebration of the New York club, when members and guests ate, drank, sang, told stories, and reminisced until the "gentlemen received an inward admonition that the solemn hour of midnight was fast approaching, and that their fond wives and little ones were anxiously awaiting their return home."⁴⁰ Newark's Mechanics club concluded their winning season of 1856 with an intrasquad game. After their sport, the members and their guests retired to Mr. T. Smith's "Punch Bowl," where they consumed a fine supper. Next came a long series of toasts: to "the President of the United States; the Ancient and Manly Game of Cricket ('May its *field* be the only one on which America and England shall contend'); The Mechanics Club of Newark; the Press ('The Score Book of the Universe'); the Bowler; the Batsman; The Wicket Keeper; The Umpire; The Scorer; The Fielders;" and more. New rounds of drinks, toasts, and cricket songs carried the hilarity to the wee hours of the night.⁴¹ Some organizations also sponsored intellectual as well as physical and social activities. The Pacific Juvenile club of Lawrence, Massachusetts enjoyed year-long access to a library and reading room, along with its gymnasium. A member of that state's Dorchester club reported: "In Summer we are cricketers, in Winter skaters, and orators at all times, inasmuch that on appointed evenings we meet for debate, declamation etc."⁴²

While second stringers and muffins enjoyed their playdays and parties, the better athletes competed in interclub matches. These generated excitement and promoted both sports; they provided the players with much fun and exercise while they produced quite a spectacle for the fans. Clubs generally limited their games to their localities, but intercity and even interstate contests were common, especially in the New York City vicinity. Secretaries and match committees had a delicate task in issuing and responding to challenges for a "friendly game of ball," because they normally preferred to play only those organizations with a similar age and social class membership to their own. A few of the elite associations restricted their play to other white collar teams or those that shared their home ground. But there were also many contests that pitted mechanics against white collar players. The Newark club regularly played both first and second eleven matches with the New York and

Eagle, September 24, 1855, October 26, 1856, October 14, 1858, July 12, 1859; *Newark Daily Advertiser*, May 12, 1857, July 17, 1858, May 3, June 16 1859; *Newark Evening Journal*, August 25, September 3, 1858, May 4, June 15, 1859, May 15, November 14, 1860. The Milwaukee Cricket Club once played a charity match for the benefit of the local orphan asylum. *Spirit*, October 29, 1853, 433.

40. *Spirit*, December 11, 1858, 522.

41. *Spirit*, November 22, 1856, 487. When the Trenton Cricket Club entertained the Lambertville eleven in the first match ever played in Trenton, "they had a collation served upon the field, and though at war, were the best of friends." *Clipper*, August 26, 1858, 149.

42. *Porter's Spirit*, August 7, 1858, 356.

St. George elevens. In a few factory towns, leading citizens matched their skills against machine operators. In September, 1857 in Waltham, Massachusetts, the Rumford club, composed mostly of the town's elite, defeated the United, who were mainly factory workers. An observer viewed this game as an example of cricket's democratic tendencies. He noted that in such matches, "employers and employees meet in friendly strife and intercourse, where all distinction is for the time being, entirely removed, promoting as it does the improvement, happiness, and health of all concerned."⁴³

Interclub matches combined traditional pre-modern customs and rituals with the new scientific styles of batting and bowling. Play invariably began one or two hours late, because of the habitual tardiness of the competitors and the need for pre-game practice. After a few hours of sport, the hosts treated their guests to an elaborate lunch between innings. After the game, the President or captain presented the game ball as a trophy to an official of the victorious team, with the hope that the losers would prevail in their next encounter. Often the ball would then be wrapped in gold foil, with the score and date of the game inscribed. Brief speeches accompanied this ceremony, as each club praised the sportsmanship and skill of its opposition. Sometimes special prizes or bouquets of flowers were awarded to the highest scoring batsman. In October, 1858 the two best batters at a match between the Essex and Mt. Washington clubs of Newark won "a splendid plated cup and a gold mounted cable chain," courtesy of two of the city's jewelers."

In the majority of interclub contests, good will and sportsmanship ruled the day. Yet there is also much evidence that suggests that controversy and hard feelings among competitors frequently marred these early encounters. America's players were raised in an intensely competitive culture, which stressed individual and group achievement and success as well as good manners. Club officials and sportswriters encouraged an atmosphere of amicable play, but winning and losing did matter a great deal. As early as July, 1858, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* noted a disturbing trend in recent cricket contests. That newspaper praised the harmony that was apparent in a game between the East New York and New Durham teams, while explaining that the sport "was originally intended for amusement, recreation, and interchange of good feeling; not for a test of exclusive strength and supremacy." It continued: "We have often witnessed cricket matches, and often have been disgusted with the manifest want of respect, good fellowship, and hospitable bearing between the opposing clubs. There has been no feeling in common—there has been too much hostility developed—too much of the *vulgar brag* unbecoming to cricketers and men."⁴⁵ Two years later the *Clipper* praised the Queens County and East New York clubs for their "very friendly and kindly feelings" during a contest. But its reporter also remarked:

43. *Clipper*, September 5, 1857, 156.

44. *Newark Evening Journal*, October 16, 1858.

45. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 1, 1858.

That acrimonious spirit, resulting from the too general desire to win at all hazards, provided the mere letter of the law is adhered to, has been generally creeping into cricket matches, alike to the detriment of the best interests of the game, and the entire prevention of all pleasure in the contests that are marked by it. Cricket is a game designed for the *recreation* of all classes and conditions of men, and is eminently a social game, and one in which the amenities of social life are of vital importance to its existence.⁴⁶

Among the specific causes for these controversies and ill will, the most frequent were differences over access to grounds, the eligibility of players, and rules and umpires' decisions. In some cases one or more of these points fanned class tensions that already existed among rivals. Organizations that shared the same playing fields normally got along well, but there were exceptions. The New Brighton club, composed mainly of bankers, dry goods clerks, and other white collar men, rented out its ground to the Staten Island club, made up chiefly of mechanics, for two days a week. Their dispute occurred over which club had the right to use the field on the national holiday of Monday, July 5, 1858. A New Brighton club committee demanded that the Staten Islanders yield their regular day to their superiors; if they did not, they would lose their lease. But the President and founder of the Staten Island club (and the employer of many of its members) also happened to be a gentleman member of the New Brighton club. When his protest failed, he resigned from the white collar association and declared a break in all further relations between the two clubs. Fortunately for his mechanics, he was able to secure a new ground from a ferry company.⁴⁷

The eligibility of players to participate in interclub matches sometimes caused friction. Following the English custom, cricketers often performed for more than one organization without objection, but on a few occasions clubs challenged this practice. In Brooklyn, the Long Island and Satellite (Williamsburg) clubs refused to play against those who competed for more than one team. They maintained that allowing outsiders to play in matches discouraged the regular members, and thus hurt the cause of American cricket. According to this logic, weaker players would have a greater incentive to practice if they had a better chance of making the first eleven. But others rejected this thinking, and argued that multiple memberships gave everyone more opportunities on more playdays, and that the system had worked well in England in popularizing the sport. There is some evidence that native cricketers felt that multiple memberships tended to give preferential treatment to the Englishmen.⁴⁸

In second string contests, bad feeling sometimes arose over the selection of players. When the Newark Mechanics club's second eleven easily defeated the first eleven of the Essex in 1857, a controversy appeared that reflected the strong rivalries among Newark's leading organizations. The Spirit reported that some spectators who were envious of the success of the Mechanics

46. *Clipper*, May 12, 1860, 31.

47. *Clipper*, July 10, 17, 1858, 91, 102.

48. *Wilkes' Spirit*, August 25, 1860, 396. For bad feelings between the Philadelphia and Germantown clubs in 1958 over eligibility of players, see *Clipper*, October 3, 1858, 215, November 6, 1858, 229.

thought their second eleven included too many strong players. That journal noted:

When the outsiders saw that the Mechanics were playing well and were likely to win. they commenced insulting them by accusing them of taking an unfair advantage of the Essex. . . . Charges of that nature are in bad taste. coming as they do from a Club that is remarkable for playing the same men in first. second. and third elevens. . . . there is a remarkable degree of unanimity in their antagonism to the Mechanics. arising from envy at its success. and a hope that by crying 'stop thief' they may divert the attention of the public from their own misdeeds.⁴⁹

Although the reporter does not identify the "outsiders." it is likely that they were members of the Newark Cricket Club.

Numerous disputes over umpires' decisions and interpretations of rules indicate the intensity of interclub feelings. Although the leading clubs tried to maintain good relations. in several notorious cases referees' judgments produced much ill will. Perhaps the most famous interclub cricket feud of the antebellum period resulted from an 1857 match between the New York and St. George elevens. On that occasion the former club was forty-four runs behind with only one wicket remaining, when its captain refused to permit his last player to bat because of a six o'clock curfew. After the umpire decided that the contest should continue. the New York side withdrew and refused to concede defeat. Both clubs then appealed for a decision to the foremost sporting journal of England. *Bell's Life in London*. The acrimony intensified over the next winter. as the two captains argued their positions in the pages of *Porter's Spirit* and the *Clipper*. In February. 1858 a prominent observer of the New York cricket scene, William N. Bradshaw, tried to persuade "those two excellent clubs to do away with this painful exhibition of animosity which is rapidly growing to personalities; it is doing more harm than good to the game. and is promulgating an opinion in the public mind that this noble exercise is a BITTER CONTENTION instead of FRIENDLY STRIFE." He hoped "that each party will let honor. integrity. and friendship unite them to form two active and respectable links of society."⁵⁰ In the summer of 1859 the two rivals agreed to a binding arbitration by a third party in Albany. who ruled in favor of St. George. The New Yorkers finally gave up the ball, but in 1860 they refused to play at the Dragon-Slayers' new enclosed ground. because of their ten cent admission charge. It was not until 1865 that the clubs resumed their first elevens series.⁵¹

49. Spirit, July 18, 1857, 267. There were also some hard feelings between at least one member of the New York Cricket Club and the Newark Cricket Club. See the *Newark Daily Advertiser*, June 22, 25, 1857.

50. *Clipper*, February 27, 1858, 354; See also August 15, 1857, 152. January 16, 1858, 306, February 20, 1859, 348, May 7, 1859, 19; *Porter's Spirit*, January 30, 1858, 341, February 27, 1858, 405; *Spirit*, September 19, 1857, 373.

51. Adelman, "Modern Athletics," 277-278. See also *Clipper*, May 8, 1858, 20, 27, June 5, 1858, 52, July 24, 1858, 109, August 21, 1858, 141, September 18, 1858, 173, July 9, 23, 1859, 92, 108, August 4, 1860, 124; *Porter's Spirit*, August 7, 1858, 356, October 16, 1858, 101, November 13, 27, 1858, 171, 1907, July 30, 1859, 341. For earliest evidence of the intense rivalry between the New York and St. George clubs, see *Spirit*, September 25, 1852, 379, October 9, 1852, 402.

Before the Civil War, thousands of boys and men across the United States exercised their bodies and refreshed their minds through cricket. Philadelphia's natives took the lead away from New York City's British contingent, while New Jersey's working class elevens challenged both cities for supremacy in the sport. New England, the South, and the West also fielded many players and clubs. Englishmen and Americans, young and old, craftsmen, clerks, small proprietors, merchants, and professionals all joined in the action. While the English game attracted many upper class adherents, it also won a following among blue collar artisans. To a considerable degree these cricket clubs provided wholesome recreation and promoted good will among the sportsmen. But they could not eliminate the social and athletic tensions inherent in all sports competition. Players and clubs aimed for "friendly strife," but fought hard for victory in each contest. Winning was joyous, but defeat was bitter. In cities that were diverse in religion, nationality, and economic class, interclub rivalries inevitably heightened personal and social conflicts. While in many cases sport did help to provide a sense of fraternity and cohesion that was so lacking in mid-nineteenth century America, at times it also contributed to further contention and fragmentation in society. Cricket was not destined to flourish in the United States, but its early enthusiasts did contribute much to the rise of modern American team sports. Americans still enjoy the combination of athletics and social life so evident during cricket's formative years in the United States.