

Sumner, Jim L. *A History of Sports in North Carolina*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1990. p. 119. Selected bibliography, photographs, index. \$6.00 (paper).

The mention of sports in North Carolina brings to mind minor league baseball, stock car racing and ACC basketball. All three of these sports and more are discussed in Jim L. Sumner's *A History of Sports in North Carolina*.

This slim volume of little more than 100 pages was written by Sumner, a sport historian employed as a research historian by the State Historic Preservation Office of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History. His employer published the paperback book.

The weakness of *A History of Sports in North Carolina* is that it is so short, hence most sections were little more than an overview of events. But the strength of the book is the stunning breadth of coverage of sport practiced by different social classes, women, and Afro-Americans, from colonial North Carolina through the founding of the Charlotte Hornets in the Fall of 1988. This breadth of information provides an overview of the practice of many sports, as well as some delightful anecdotes.

Sport in pre-Civil War North Carolina consisted of the usual rural folk sports such as cock fighting, gander pulling, gouging, hunting, and fishing. Just as in Virginia, horse racing was the most popular of the early sports in North Carolina. Much of the success of North Carolina racing can be traced to the thoroughbred, Sir Archie, who in the early 1800s raced out of and later stood at stud in North Carolina. Sir Archie is known as the "Foundation Sire of the American Thoroughbred," because of the success of his 400 offspring. Unfortunately, North Carolina has never legalized pari-mutuel betting and horse racing languished.

The North Carolina State Fair was important in establishing baseball and football in North Carolina. As Sumner also mentioned in an earlier article (*LSH* Sumner, 1988) Pittsboro played Goldsboro in an 1873 State Fair baseball exhibition and later Wake Forest defeated the University of North Carolina (UNC) 6-4 at the 1888 State Fair. Both events provided those new games with a fairly large audience in a rural state. Baseball spread through the state and by 1910 minor league teams were firmly in place. By 1949, North Carolina had 49 minor league teams. In 1988, the Durham Bulls, in a classic example of the resurgence of minor league baseball, drew 270,000 fans.

Sumner attributes the rise of ACC basketball to the success of the "big four" on the national level after World War II, the development of an ACC regional television package in the 1950s and excellent coaches from the late 1940s through the mid 1960s. Some of those coaches were North Carolina State's Everett Case, Frank McGuire at UNC, Vic Bubas at Duke and Wake Forest's Bones McKinney.

Formalized stock car racing is of fairly recent vintage. The first NASCAR race was held at Charlotte in 1949, but Sumner points out that sport has its roots in the moonshine runners and small dirt tracks in North Carolina. Today, the multi-million dollar business continues to feature races in North Carolina at the Charlotte Motor Speedway and at the North Carolina Motor Speedway near Rockingham.

The above mentioned sections were given brief treatment by Sumner because the book is essentially a survey of North Carolina sports. However, despite the abbreviated length, this book covers an amazingly diverse number of sports and North Carolina sports figures. Included are sports and people not often found in

books of this nature. For example, the book included such diverse people as: golfers Estelle Page of Chapel Hill and Arnold Palmer of Wake Forest University, basketball coaches Clarence "Bighouse" Gaines of Winston-Salem State and Kay Yow of North Carolina State, famous people like Wake Forest guard Billy Packer, Michael Jordan and Lawrence Taylor, less well know people such as Junior Johnson (shine runner and car racer), April Hendricks (UNC soccer) and Cal Irwin (North Carolina A & T basketbal coach), great nicknamed people such as "Choo Choo" and "Catfish," and of course, living legend Dean Smith. The list could go on, but perhaps the best anecdote in the book concerns John Franklin Crowell, a Yale graduate who in 1888 was the president of Trinity College (now Duke University). He used his Yale football experience to teach the Trinity players "scientific football" which led them to a 16-0 shutout of UNC. This moved President Crowell to gloat that that game broke the condescending attitude "certain friends" held toward Trinity.

Sumner's *A History of Sport in North Carolina* is small in size. Fortunately the book provides an excellent and diverse overview of the history of sport in the Tar Heel State.

Marshall University

C. Robert Barnett