

Putnam County High School Baseball

Dan Kern's Collection of Putnam County History on Baseball

The materials collected for this book would not have been possible without the help of many people. The coaches and athletic directors who provided me with each school's baseball statistics, the librarians who gave me access to the yearbooks, the secretaries and principals who gave me help in finding various people in the school or by passing on messages and all the representatives of the county newspapers who providing me access to their older papers were of invaluable service. If I have omitted anyone, I apologize.

When I first started this project, many were skeptical. They did not believe that there would be any records or information on high school baseball in the earlier years. It is true that there were not as many games of baseball played in the earlier years as in basketball, but many of the scores, names, and individual achievements have been recovered.

This book focuses on only spring and fall high school baseball. I didn't include legion, summer, little league, pony league or town baseball because

that is a book by itself. However, I would like to thank the gentlemen who have coached or helped organize these various teams. I know that these jobs are unpaid and done for the love of your children and communities.

Two men that I know of personally who have contributed much to Putnam County baseball, to their community and to me are John VonSossan of Fort Jennings and Gene Stechschulte of Kalida.

John coached ACME baseball at Fort Jennings from the 1960's through the 1980's. He decided to give it up when he became the varsity boy's basketball coach at Fort Jennings; baseball's loss, basketball's gain. John 'helped' me into the District Commissioner's position for ACME in 1977 which I held for 27 years. I have many fond memories of coaching and working with John over the years. John, his wife and I solved many 'world problems' at Macs after the tournament drawings. Thanks John!

Gene has coached at every level of baseball at Kalida from little league,

pony league, ACME, high school to the legion team at Ottawa. He was my legion coach in 1966. I learned so much from Gene and I credit him for much of my success in knowing how to work with kids. In addition to these side activities, he, his wife and family, still found time to help other troubled children by bringing them into their house until the kids could get back to a normal life. Thanks Gene!

The history of Putnam County baseball is a treasure that many of us share with each other when we talk about the great players, coaches or games of the past. I remember listening to Bud Leis from Miller City, a great town ball and minor league player in the 1920's, telling a story about playing in a baseball game against Babe Ruth. I didn't believe him at the time, but found out later that it was true. In my research, I discovered that major league players played in Lima on a regular basis in the 1920's. My father played against Babe Ruth in a barnstorming game in Lima. He never told me. There is an article in the GENERAL ARTICLES section about that game.

My Dad, a pretty good town ball player in his day also, was always envious of how nice Miller City's field was in comparison to the fields he played on. The next time you are watching a major league baseball game on ESPN Classics, pay attention

to the field conditions. Many high school fields today are in better shape than the major league fields of old.

This book will give you more information on the history, statistics, scores, schools, players, records, individual feats, team feats and just baseball trivia over the past nearly 100 years than anyone could possibly remember. It is a book of facts and nostalgia. Use it as a pleasurable read on a cold, winter evening by the fireplace. Enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed putting it together.

Special Dedication

Charlie Bennett and Ted Miller

I would like to dedicate this book on Putnam County baseball to Charlie Bennett and Ted Miller. Charlie was always a class act as an umpire in representing high school baseball in Putnam County and the state of Ohio for nearly 50 years. Ted's relationship to me began as an opposing 'enemy coach' in 1975. It then moved to a 'friendly rival' in the 1980's and finally to a 'great friend' for the past 25 years. Thanks Ted for letting me watch you and Darren Henry perform your famous hat throwing trick.