

1. Profitability depended on building monopoly and monopsony (and thus baseball became part of larger debates about the rise of trusts and the rights of labor), but ironically monopoly and monopsony created a model of a competitive economy where no one ever went bankrupt, where proprietorship remained a possibility and skilled labor remained at the heart of the enterprise.
2. Forever Baseball suggests mythic stature of the sport, but what sort of myth?
3. Myth as flattering and misleading view of ourselves, but also work of imagination that may have meanings of value within it.

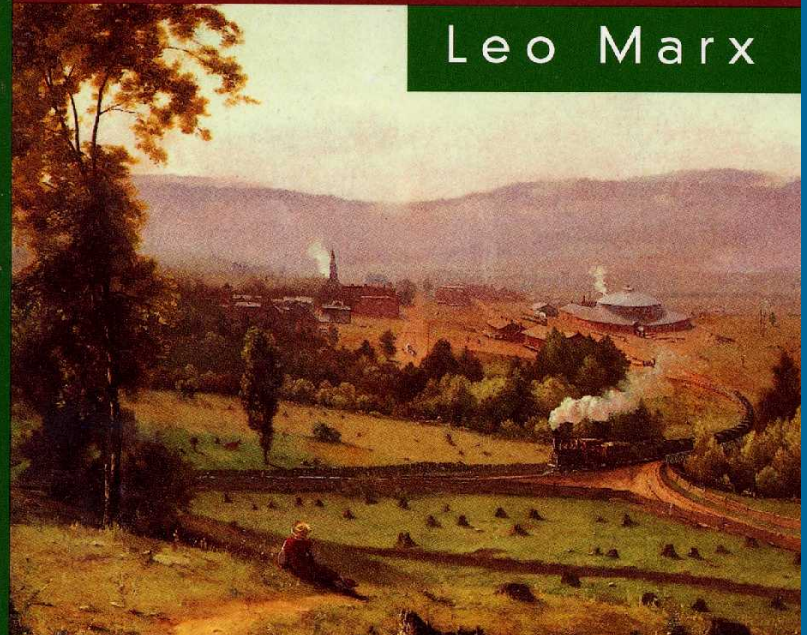
Leo Marx's study of the machine in the garden as both wishful thinking and disturbing image

THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The Machine in the Garden

TECHNOLOGY AND THE
PASTORAL IDEAL IN AMERICA

Leo Marx

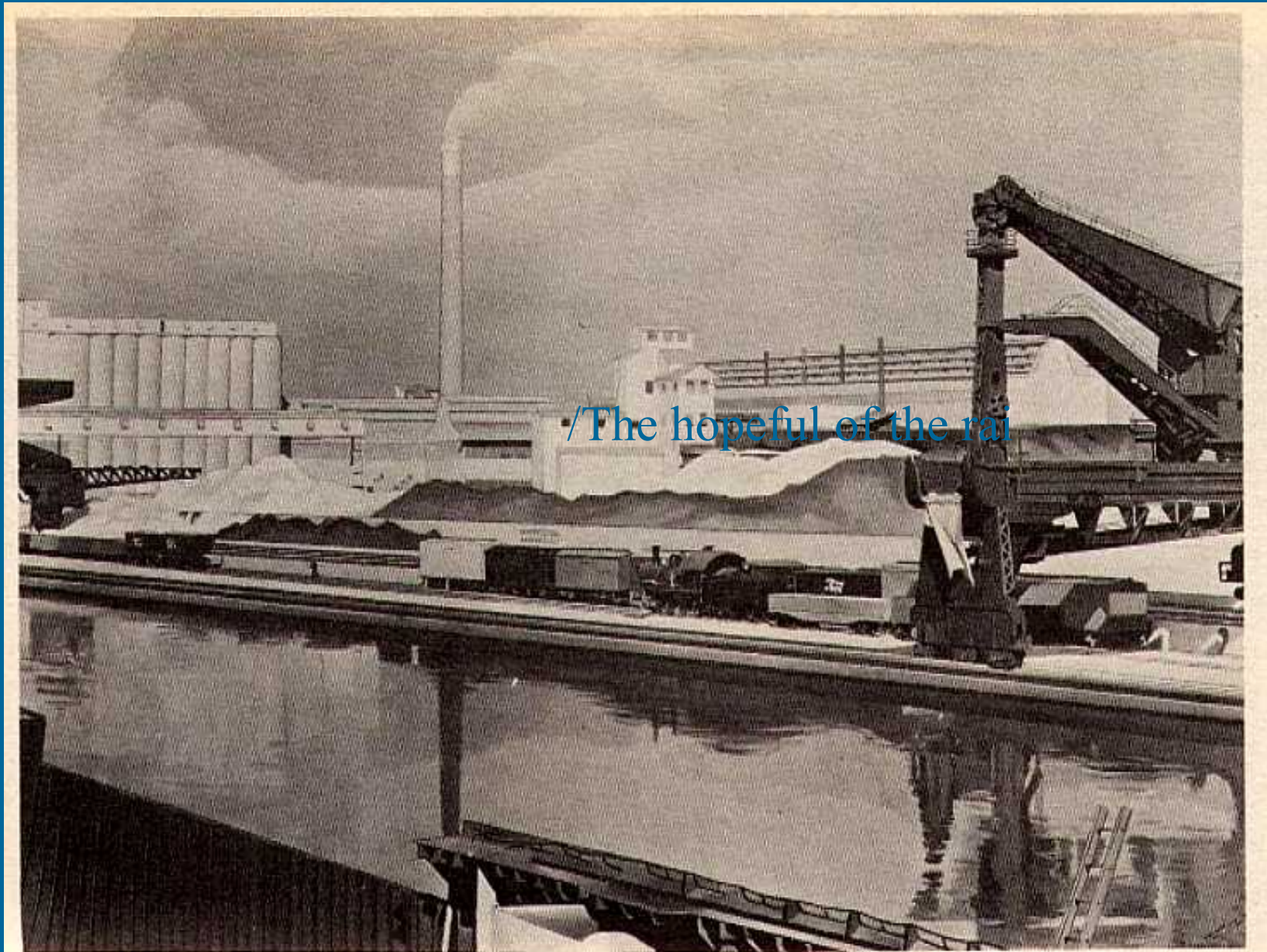


“The Lackawanna Valley” by George Inness



The hopeful, if fraudulent, integration of the railroad, and the roundhouse, into the pastoral

“American Landscape,” by Charles Sheeler: Henry Ford’s River Rouge plant as pastoral landscape



/The hopeful of the rain

But the machine
in the garden
could also be a
disturbing image,
especially in the
work of our
greatest artists:

Consider Twain,
Melville and then
clip from The
Natural



Consider The National Game (1938)



This 1848 painting by Edward Hicks suggests the pastoral ideal that Americans eagerly embraced. Living in harmony with nature, the farmer shepherded his flocks and rotated his fields.

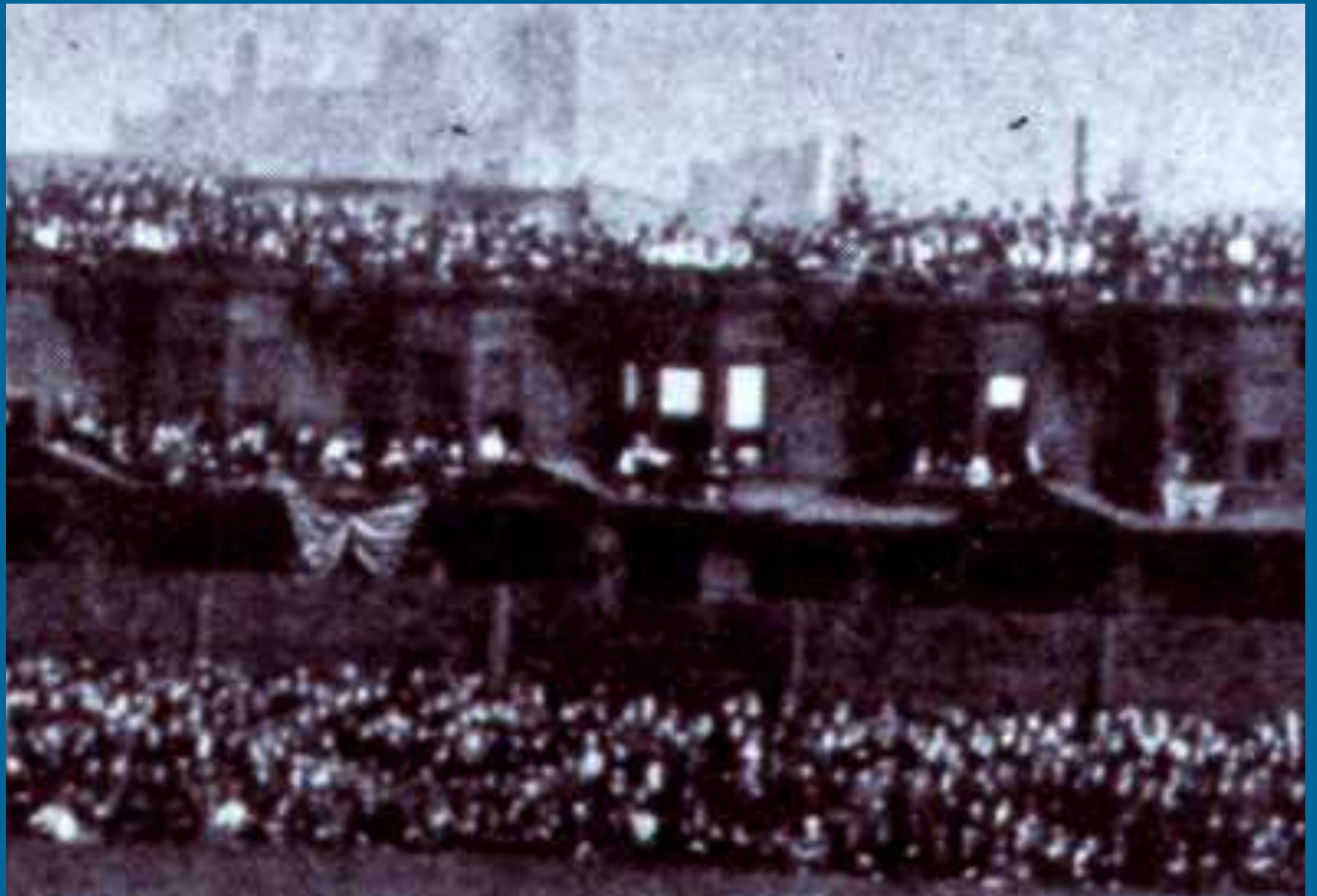


So...baseball as a pastoral game (no clocks, spring training, fall classic, green grass, horsehide, wood, leather, long summer days)



But it was born among clerks and artisans in industrial cities....





Images of the good: The park in the city (as opposite of machine/garden)

The game appears to combine the urban and rural, the machine and the garden. What about the site where the game is played?



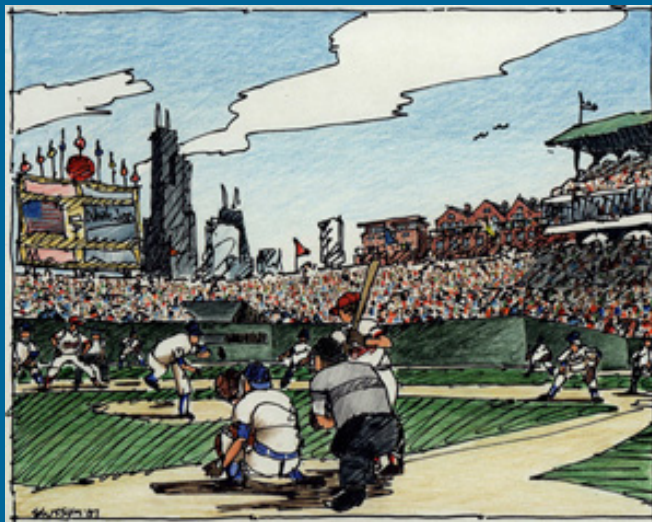
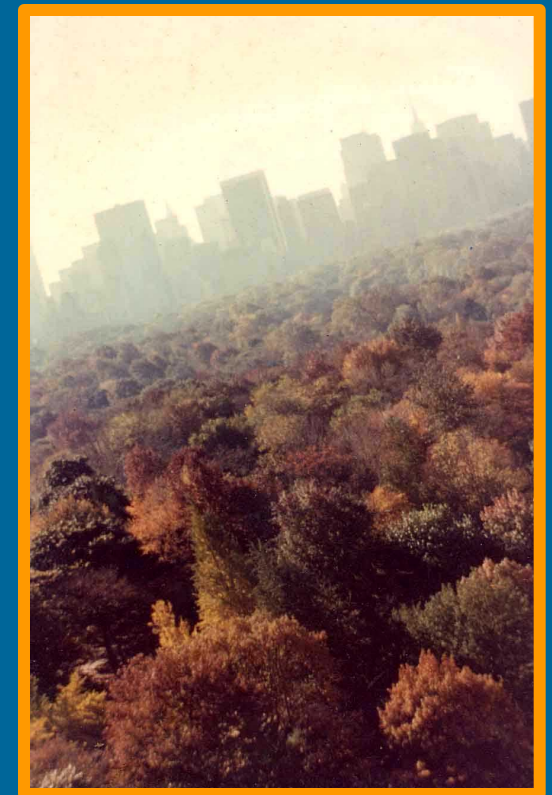
“Squares containing circles containing rectangles,” Bart Giamatti wrote of the baseball field, “precision in counterpoint to passion; order compressing energy.” Rectangular batter’s box and pitcher’s rubber sit inside the dirt circles, which sit inside the infield diamond, which sits inside the semi-circle created by the edge where infield dirt meets outfield grass, which sits inside the larger half diamond extended outward along the foul lines, which sits inside the semi-circle created by the outfield fence from foul line to foul line, which sits inside the city block on which the ball park is built, which sits inside the city as a whole. At the center of game and field is the “curious pentagram,” home plate whose “irregular precision” organized “the field as it energized the odd pattern of squares tipped and circles incomplete,” expressing the combination of “boundary and freedom” that is essential to the game.

The baseball field, Giamatti concluded, evokes paradise, an “enclosed, green place” of the Edenic myth. But at the same time, Giamatti links the baseball field to urbs and polis, the political and culture-making elements of city life. The recent documentary Forever Baseball more simply describes the baseball field as “a geometrically perfect landscape.”

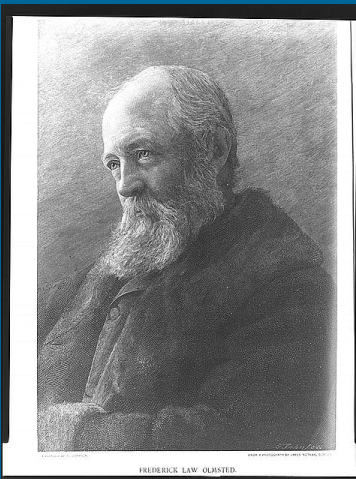




The Park in the City as the antidote to the Machine in Garden: Integral to the landscape of baseball, the park in the city is also the foundation of landscape architecture. The association of baseball with landscape architecture links it to the most promising response to the greatest problem of American civic life, the encounter with nature. In discussing the legacy of pioneer landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Lewis Mumford stressed that city life did not, as we carelessly assume, lessen humanity's dependence on nature but elaborated it. Open, green spaces and a respect for nature, Olmsted's parks suggested, would civilize America's cities.

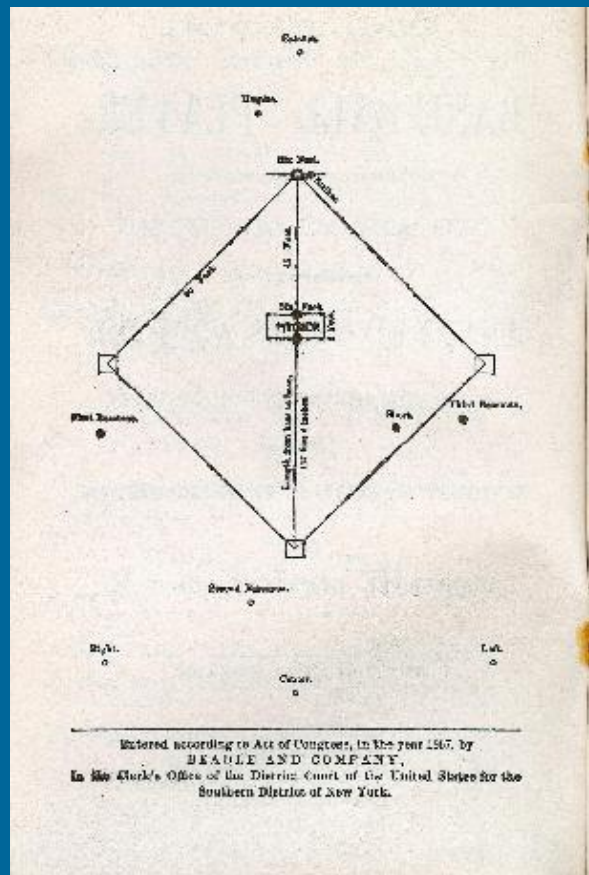


At the same time the baseball field and baseball park were being designed, Frederick Law Olmsted was creating Central Park and embarking on a long career as a designer of urban parks. The same sense that the city was overwhelming the country that gave rise to the call for Central Park and for Olmsted's philosophy of parks was generating the mania for baseball. In an era when innovations in construction and communication were allowing cities to enclose more activities than ever before, what should be understood as the great incarceration intensified the thirst for the great outdoors. In the 1850s, Porter's Spirit of the Times reported, every vacant lot "within ten miles of [New York] was being used as a playing field." When entrepreneurs began building fences and grandstands around baseball fields and charging admission, the baseball fraternity derided it as "the enclosure movement." But enclosure did not extinguish the park-like character of the baseball field. Turning William Cammeyer's Brooklyn skating rink into the first enclosed baseball field in 1862 required the same sort of landscaping skills (the Brooklyn Eagle reported on Cammeyer's "draining, leveling, sodding, and converting") that Olmsted's parks did and promised to serve some of the same civic and social purposes.



“In selecting a suitable ground,” the guide (written by Henry Chadwick) explained, “there are many points to be taken into consideration. The ground should be level, and the surface free from all irregularities, and, if possible covered with fine turf; if the latter can not be done, and the soil is gravelly, a loamy soil should be laid down around the bases, and all the gravel removed therefrom.”





There are several methods by which the ground may be correctly measured; the following is as simple as any: Having determined on the point of the home base, measure from that point, down the field, one hundred and twenty-seven feet four inches, and the end will indicate the position of the second base; take a cord one hundred and eighty feet long, fasten one end at the home base, and the other at the second,

and then grasp it in the center and extend it first to the right side, which will give the point of the first base, and then to the left, which will indicate the position of the third; this will give the exact measurement, as the string will thus form the sides of a square whose side is ninety feet.

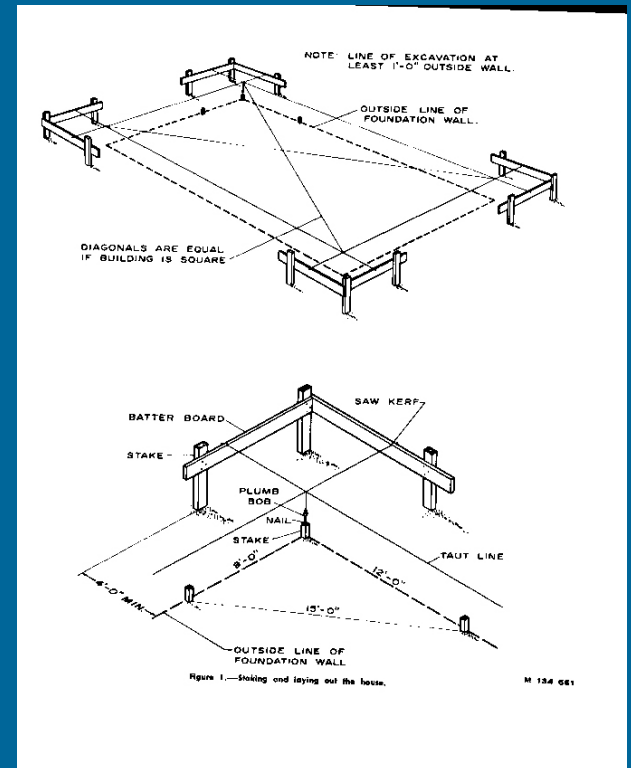


Figure 1.—Staking and laying out the house.

In Ball, Bat and Bishop: The Origins of Ball Games Robert W. Henderson argued that "folk customs and religious ceremonies, undertaken not as idle pastimes, but as grim supplications to various deities, are the roots from which our modern sports have sprung. Baseball, he provocatively concluded, one of several "merely vestigial remains of religious rites of ancient times, designed to influence the pagan gods that they might make the crops to grow, and so ensure the continued existence of a grateful people." Of course, late-nineteenth century urban Americans had few anxieties about crops or the annual return of spring. But the game was about to become the National Pastime and a central ritual in our culture. "[B]all tossing had a deep symbolical meaning when played in the spring of the year," Albert Spalding wrote in America's National Game (1911), and the "early church adopted this symbol...to typify The Resurrection." Spalding's book was part of a concerted campaign to establish baseball's impeccably American origins and to offer the game as expressing quintessentially American values and concerns. As a central myth of industrializing America, baseball did give expression to certain anxieties and aspirations.

Ball, Bat and Bishop

The Origin of Ball Games

Robert W. Henderson

Foreword by Leonard Koppett

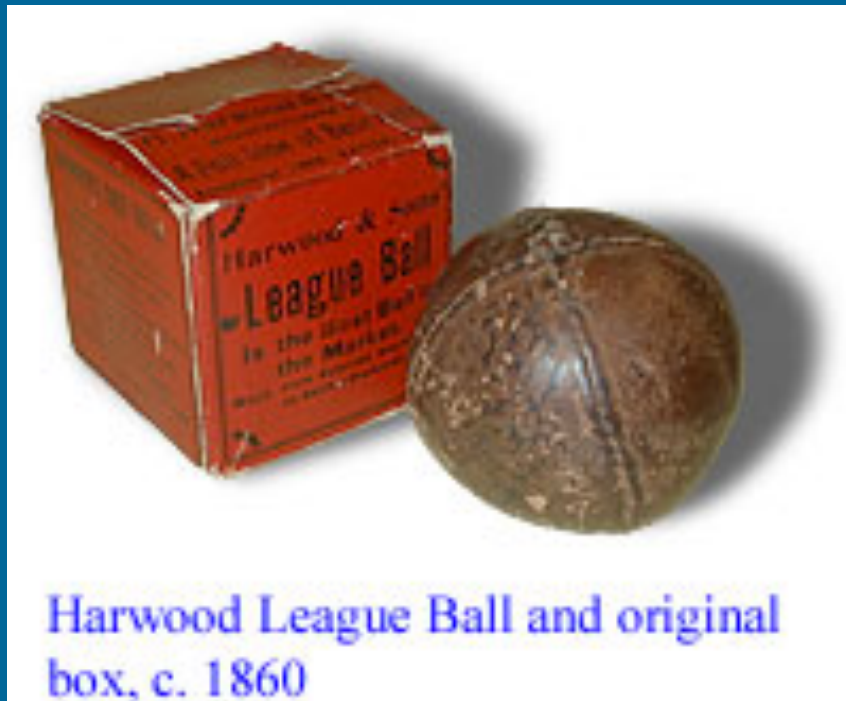


SHOW BURNS on urban crafts: The game, of course, has strong rural and pastoral associations. The green enclosure, grass, leather, wood, its pre-industrial sense of time (no clock), the agricultural rhythm of spring training and fall classic. Images of youth, innocence, and nostalgia (“If you build it, he will come”) surround the game. But the game is also a quintessentially urban phenomenon. The sport of clerks and artisans, it emerged with and in industrial America. It relies upon the city crafts of woodworking, lathe-work, stitching, tanning, leather working. The railroad network and the telegraph were central to its commercialization. A major part of its appeal is precisely this mixing of rural and urban, of the pastoral and technological. In The Machine in the Garden, Leo Marx argues that the clash of a pastoral ideal with technology (of Jefferson’s yeoman republic, for example, and Hamilton’s Paterson mills) was the central conflict in American culture. The “machine in the garden” was a disturbing image to Americans (especially its writers from Hawthorne and Melville to Twain and Faulkner) even as it was also an aspiration and, increasingly, a reality. Baseball, with its “geometrically perfect landscape” (the phrase is from the documentary Baseball Forever), was not a simple pastoral sport, but one that linked pastoralism and dynamism, in a more satisfying way than “the machine in the garden” image seemed to indicate was possible.

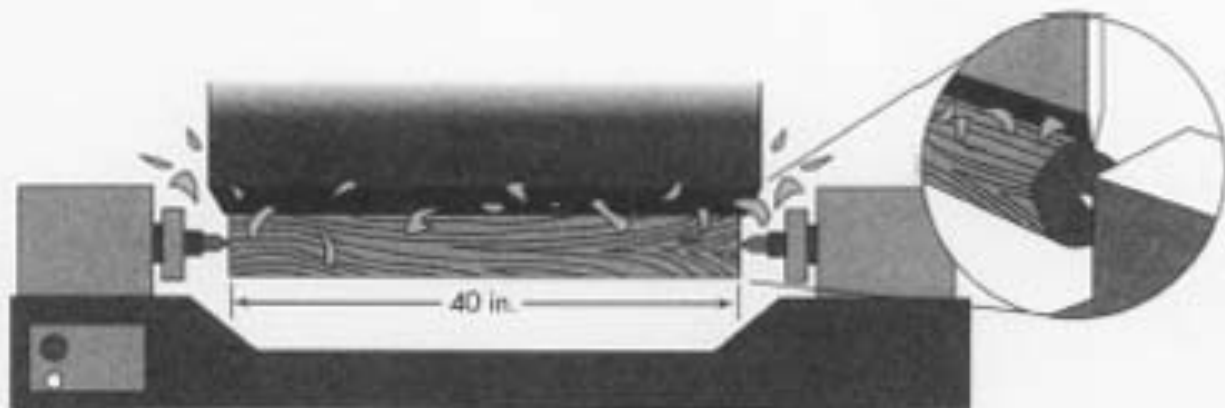
Horseshide and wood, leather and grass.....

The Ball.

The rule states that the ball must be composed of India rubber and yarn, covered with leather, the proper weight being five and three-quarter ounces avoirdupois, and its circumference nine and three-quarter inches. The balls are easily made, but it would be advisable to obtain them from some well-known maker, as there will then be no chance of their being wrong in size or weight. The covering is usually sheepskin, and on a turf ground this covering will last some time.



Hand-stitched exactly 216 times



40-inch splits of wood are placed on a lathe which shaves the rough edges. These pieces are called billets.



The billets are bundled and sent to the lumberyard, where they are "seasoned" for 6-24 months. This seasoning removes the sap and gum and strengthens the wood.

The Bat. The rule regulating the form and dimensions of the bat is as follows:

“Section 2. The bat must be round, and must not exceed two and a half inches in diameter in the thickest part. It must be made of wood, and may be of any length to suit the striker. While all are limited to a particular size in diameter, it will be observed that no objection is made as to any particular length or weight. Bats are from thirty to forty inches in length, and from two to three pounds in weight, the former weight being most desirable. The description of wood most in use is ash, but maple, white and pitch pine, and also hickory bats are in common use, weight for the size governing the selection. For a bat of medium weight, ash is preferable, as its fiber is tough and elastic. The English willow has recently been used, and is favorably regarded by many. This latter wood is very light and close in fiber, and answers the purpose better than any other wood for a light bat. In the choice of a bat, select a light one, as it can be wielded better, and in match games it is desirable that the player be able to strike quick enough to meet the rapid pitching that has recently come in vogue. We would not recommend a bat much under two pounds in weight, as some weight is required to overcome the resistance of the ball.”



1903 National League [Previous Year](#) / [Next Year](#)

Team		W	L	WL%	GB
Pittsbgh	PIT	91	49	.650	--
NewYorkG	NYG	84	55	.604	6.5
ChicagoC	CHC	82	56	.594	8.0
Cincnnti	CIN	74	65	.532	16.5
Brooklyn	BRO	70	66	.515	19.0
BostonBr	BSN	58	80	.420	32.0
Phildlpa	PHI	49	86	.363	39.5
St.Louis	STL	43	94	.314	46.5

Postseason

[World Series \(5-3\)](#) [Boston Pilgrims](#) over [Pittsburgh Pirates](#)

1952 National League [Previous Year](#) / [Next Year](#)

Team		W	L	WL%	GB
Brooklyn	BRO	96	57	.627	--
NewYorkG	NYG	92	62	.597	4.5
St.Louis	STL	88	66	.571	8.5
Phildlpa	PHI	87	67	.565	9.5
ChicagoC	CHC	77	77	.500	19.5
Cincnnti	CIN	69	85	.448	27.5
BostonBr	BSN	64	89	.418	32.0
Pittsbgh	PIT	42	112	.273	54.5

Postseason

[World Series \(4-3\)](#) [New York Yankees](#) over [Brooklyn Dodgers](#)

1903 American League [Previous Year](#) / [Next Year](#)

Team		W	L	WL%	GB
BostonRS	BOS	91	47	.659	--
Phildlpa	PHA	75	60	.556	14.5
Clevelnd	CLE	77	63	.550	15.0
NewYorkH	NYY	72	62	.537	17.0
Detroit	DET	65	71	.478	25.0
St.Louis	SLB	65	74	.468	26.5
ChicagoW	CHW	60	77	.438	30.5
Washngtn	WSH	43	94	.314	47.5

Postseason

[World Series \(5-3\)](#) [Boston Pilgrims](#) over [Pittsburgh Pirates](#)

1953 American League [Previous Year](#) / [Next Year](#)

Team		W	L	WL%	GB
NewYorkY	NYY	99	52	.656	--
Clevelnd	CLE	92	62	.597	8.5
ChicagoW	CHW	89	65	.578	11.5
BostonRS	BOS	84	69	.549	16.0
Washngtn	WSH	76	76	.500	23.5
Detroit	DET	60	94	.390	40.5
Phildlpa	PHA	59	95	.383	41.5
St.Louis	SLB	54	100	.351	46.5

Postseason

[World Series \(4-2\)](#) [New York Yankees](#) over [Brooklyn Dodgers](#)

The “machine in the garden” metaphor was one response to the disruptions associated with industrialization, a myth that sometimes soothed and sometimes disturbed. As a version of that myth, a version that appeared to reconcile the irreconcilable, Organized Baseball served as an idealized model of America’s industrializing economy. (The ten cities that composed the AL and NL for 50 years after 1903, were linked by railroads and telegraphs and largely defined the extent of industrial America). A competitive economy of small businesses none of which ever went bankrupt or were gobbled up by larger firms and in which skill and craft still dominated, major league baseball reassured Americans that monopoly does not necessarily destroy entrepreneurship, the small businessman, and the skilled artisan.

Of course none of this happened naturally, it was elaborately stage-managed from behind the scenes. Organized Baseball's profitability depended upon close pennant races and good teams in the major cities. This could not be made to appear contrived, as fans have always rejected anything that smacked of syndicate ball. Dependent upon the drama of competition, baseball teams nevertheless colluded to preserve competition in a variety of ways, splitting gate receipts with visiting teams, allowing the worst teams to draft first, making some talent available for bargain prices through the waiver system, limiting the number of players a team could control. Since the 1961 Sports Broadcasting Act, the teams no longer competed with one another for national broadcasting revenues - negotiating as a cartel and sharing revenues. More recently the owners have illegally colluded to undercut free agency and provoked a strike in an unsuccessful effort to force a salary cap.

The irony of the 1922 anti-trust exemption
and the reserve clause as baseball's dirty little secret

See essay in Tuesday's handout

But, don't miss what we have: "To change the situation we require new symbols of possibility, and although the creation of those symbols is in some measure the responsibility of artists, it is in greater measure the responsibility of society. The machine's sudden entrance into the garden presents a problem that ultimately belongs not to art but to politics." - Leo Marx, last lines in The Machine in the Garden

