

Pa was a Baseball Player

Pa played baseball on “Town Teams” until around 1951.

Almost every town had a team.

The teams were organized into leagues.

They played on Sunday afternoons in the summer.

The players had proper uniforms, professional umpires, announcers.

There even was a weekly newspaper, with statistics, team rankings, advertisements, and articles.

This small sheet newspaper was distributed at the Sunday games.

Important contests were on the AM radio.

Best of all for a young boy, this was just a few years after WWII, and this was the Greatest Generation in their youth.

Every man was as solid as your own Dad.

Pa was a good player.

He was normally the catcher, but I remember him playing every position except pitcher and first base.

The Dayton and Rogers ballfields are much the same as they were seventy-five years ago.

The St. Michael ballfield had covered bleachers in a brick shell.

That building was used when we went high school in St. Michael but is gone now.

The Hanover field was south of the Crow River about a mile south of town.

It was a clearing in a wooded pasture.

Ann and I recall clearing the field of cowpies before games.

The ballfield is gone now; the woods is filled with houses.

The Loretto field was in a deep depression on the north side of town.

One Sunday in Loretto, John got a big slash on bare foot from a broken pop bottle.

There were no plastic containers in those days.

I did not see John’s wound before it was bandaged.

At the time. I was sitting on a blanket with Ma, up high in right field.

The old field is now part of a huge outdoor sports complex, heavily landscaped with many ballfields.

The Nowthen, Elk River, and Albertville fields were unremarkable.



After the games both teams would get together at a local Bar & Grill. One bar I recall is still in the same business. The building and name have gone through many changes.

Mama G's, 9705, Hwy 101, Maple Grove.

The bar part of the afternoon was always fun.

Pa and everyone else were in a good mood, win or lose.

And if we were good, we would get a nickel candy bar.

Ann remembers baby Pat sitting on Pa's lap at the bar.

We could only stay for a short hour though, we needed by 5:30, milking time.

In the second photo, Pa is wearing an Albertville baseball uniform.

Gauging from the original garden in the background, Ma took this picture in the early 1940s.

In 1963, Pa joined an old-timer's softball team in Albertville.

Pa asked to come along because they were short-handed.

They used me mostly as a catcher, although I could not throw to second base without standing up.

I could catch the ball, and I suppose the old-timers thought better my knees than theirs.

I mentioned above that Pa did not pitch baseball.

To my surprise he was a powerful softball pitcher.

Pa used the standard underhand delivery.

This was not slow pitch!

That ball came steaming across the plate.

Most of the players were familiar to me, but the only one I can recall is Guido Hiuring.

He owned the farm just south of where Uncle Don built his bus garage.

There is a big grocery store where his house and barn were.

Everything changes.

Tom.

