



Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame

AUGUST 2010

Sharing Your Memories

An invitation was issued in the July newsletter of the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame for readers to share their memories of sports in our county by submitting vignettes, photos, scrapbooks and other memorabilia. The call has been answered.

- Charlie Carter (Jamestown) sent a copy of a trading card featuring his brother George, an NBA player and CSHoF inductee.
- Sally Corkery (Jamestown) donated seven scrapbooks belonging to her father Clayton Webeck, a CSHoF inductee.
- Phil Clark (South Carolina) submitted a follow-up to his story about Squirt Johns and Stateline Speedway that ran in last month's newsletter.
- Tom Hyde (New Zealand) e-mailed the vignette that follows about his father, former Post-Journal sports editor Frank Hyde, a CSHoF inductee.

"The Press Box"

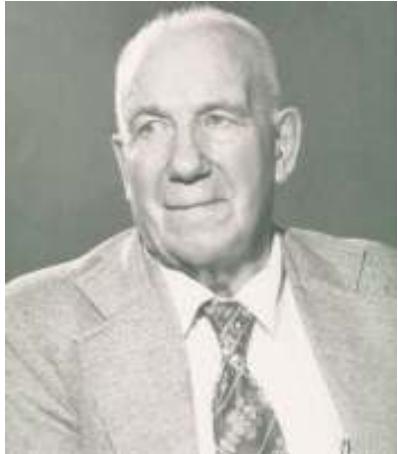
It rested then where, I guess, it rests today--on the roof of Diethrick Stadium looking out over the ballpark and the campus of JCC. Beyond the left-field wall was a nine-hole golf course but, my guess is, that's gone now. It was a simply wooden box really, with a work bench and chairs and a ticker-tape for scores coming in from other games clicking away at the back.

How he ever managed to get up there I'll never know. All I can put it down to was his love of baseball. Had it been just a job, he never would have made it for the climb was tedious even for someone with good legs. Frank Hyde barely had legs at all, such was the end-game of childhood polio and, later on, a wrestler's broken hip.

To reach the press box (and I guess again the climb is the same) you had to walk up two flights of stairs behind the grandstand and along the back to another flight of

stairs so narrow and steep it would have been easier for him to climb them using his hands as well. Only problem was, he had to carry a scorebook and other papers too. So he pushed himself up with his things grasped in one hand (he had strong hands) and the other pulling him using the rail.

He could have done other things for the sake of the job. He could have assigned the Jamestown team to someone else and stayed home at night, though whenever someone else did cover the Falcons/Tiger/Expos/Braves/Jammers it wasn't because he was staying home, it was because he had another engagement he had promised to cover.



But he loved baseball most and that sentiment and his dedication to the job is what drove him to make that climb to the press box, against the odds. He cared deeply about the success of baseball in Jamestown not just because he loved the game himself, but because it was good for the city. He took pride in compiling that list of former Jamestown players who had gone on to play in the big leagues. The list was always longer than imagined.

Once he had made the climb and once he was in his seat (and it was his seat) he relished covering the games. The view was so perfect, who wouldn't? For years he had, not one role, but three: reporting for the paper, league official scorer, and PA announcer. Once seated (off his legs) he did them all effortlessly while smoking a cigar.

The press box was his world but one night it came under fire from a fan sitting in the bleachers along the first base line. As official scorer, he called a play a Hit when the guy in the bleachers thought it was an Error, thus preserving a no-hitter. For the next few innings the guy kept calling out something like: "Hyde, get a new pair of glasses." And "Hyde, you're as blind as the umpires!" The guy went on and on.

It was the only time I know of that he was heckled like that. Finally, enough was enough. Frank leaned forward his chair, got up on his legs, stuck his head out over the edge and with a thumb planted firmly under his chin, wiggled his fingers at the guy. Sitting next to him, I said: What's that mean?" "It means," he said, "kiss my ass." Then he gave a thoughtful pause. "But don't tell your Mother."
