

Baseball Stars of Past Era Visited Often in Bonaparte

By O. R. Perkins

BONAPARTE — Although Meek Brothers Woolen Mills and clothing factory were chiefly responsible for making Bonaparte one of the best known towns in Iowa many years ago, the town had its name on the national baseball map through the efforts of J. S. (Boss) Entler.

Entler also provided the town with recognition by what many called the finest tinware in southern Iowa. All was made by hand in his shop and

only a minimum of machinery was used in shaping various products.

Baseball Held Him

Entler also sold good sporting goods of various kinds, baseball supplies, skates, bikes and his merchandise was probably the largest collection of its kind in southern Iowa, too. When the first bikes were introduced, Entler was host to the children of the town. After a ride on a hot day, the finale stop was always the ice cream parlor for the whole group.

Yet baseball held first interest in the life of "Boss" Entler. He was the best known baseball umpire in Southeastern Iowa. If there was a baseball game to be umpired, Entler left his business to the good management of Casady and took off. It was not uncommon for him to umpire a baseball game a day. He found that business in the tin shop and sport goods store was better when he was away than when he was there, so he never hesitated to answer the call of "play ball."

Entler managed to handle a baseball game, no matter what league caliber it was — by himself. Today as many as four umpires are needed. He umpired at the plate, but was "right on top of the ball" at any part of the infield. He was respected by semi-pro players of those days for his fast, accurate and fair decisions.

National Leaguer?

Boss Entler was invited to become an umpire in the National league. He thought long and hard over this. Finally, he declined — because of his age and his growing, extensive business here.

Some of baseball's biggest men were his guests in Bonaparte, for a day at a time, on their way south on hunting or fishing trips after the close of the season in the fall.

Friends of Comiskey

Baseball players and managers from all parts of the country assembled at Hickman, Ky. in the years gone by. There they were guests of Charles Comiskey on his palatial houseboat which was made ready for its annual trip south with its guests each season.

The trip would be made down the Ohio to the Mississippi and down the Mississippi to the Red river for hunting and fishing in Arkansas.

Two passenger trains each day between Keokuk and Ottumwa afforded ample transportation to the little town of Bonaparte. Guests would come up for the day, returning to

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