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1863-2013

**Hancock Sesquicentennial Publication**

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MISSION

Imagine a place of hidden gems and towering tales of visionaries, pioneers, artists and nationally renowned athletes... a place of undeniable heritage and incredible spirit. *In other words*, a place called Hancock that has and will forever showcase “**pure sisu**”.

The Sesquicentennial Publication (7” x 10”, approximately 120 pages) is a detailed celebration of our culture, histories and contributions... told through stories about folks that have fundamentally shaped both this place and others.

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ASSOCIATED EVENTS & PRESENTATIONS

partial list, still in planning stages

Gala Dinner featuring a guest speaker is scheduled for Friday, April 12, 2013

Selected Historic Discussions/Presentations

City Historic Tours

Bridgefest 2013

FinnFest 2013, June 19th-23rd

Copper Country Firefighters Tournament being hosted by the Hancock Volunteer Fire Department, June 29th

HANCOCK 1863-2013

# First National Base Ball Club

BY JOHN HAEUSSLER

The accompanying photograph of the Hancock First National Base Ball Club is the oldest known of a Hancock athletic team. Although “1868” is handwritten on the photo it was likely taken a short time later. The lineup depicted in the photo matches that from an August 11, 1870 game versus a Houghton team. [See *Baseball Fever: Early Baseball in Michigan* by Peter Morris for more.]

At least two team members later had leadership roles with the First National Bank of Hancock, yet the club was not affiliated with the bank – which did not yet exist in 1870. “First Nationals” and “Nationals” were common team names during the era.

Though the club members hail from multiple states and countries they are primarily of English descent. There are no representatives from the Nordic countries as they, particularly the Finns, were just beginning to immigrate to the area. Brief biographical sketches of the players depicted in the photo follow below. Ages are given as of the summer of 1870 and all were unmarried residents of Hancock at that time unless noted otherwise.

During the 1870s the First Nationals claimed multiple Houghton County and Upper Peninsula championships. The club and the developing sport also captured the attention of the community. A report in the June 18, 1874 edition of the *Portage Lake Mining Gazette* stated:

*“To one who has rather been inclined to belittle the importance of base ball as a game of sport, the scene at the Hancock grounds last Saturday, when the Independents, of Ripley, and the First Nationals played, was surprising. The crowd present was large. It was composed of all classes, and included many strangers sojourning in the neighborhood. The ladies, too, were well represented, and apparently enjoyed the game. That many people are not only interested in base ball, but that they grow as enthusiastic over it as do the members of political parties during a hard-fought campaign over the respective issues in contest, was last week fully illustrated. Though the game was between two local clubs, the lines were well drawn, and each side was continually urged on and encouraged by the cheers and bravos of its friends. It can no longer be denied that base ball is in reality the national game in the United States. When, day after day, it can call together crowds of people throughout the land, it is useless to deny it the position it claims. That it does furnish innocent amusement and excitement to thousands is patent, and, so doing, much of its alleged abuse can be forgiven.”*

10  
Hancock Sesquicentennial



1870

11  
Hancock Sesquicentennial

**John Bittenbender** (*top, 1*), left field, 20, was born in Pennsylvania and worked in a saw mill.

**Albert A. Brockway** (*top, 2*), center field, 22, was born in Copper Harbor, Michigan and worked as a warehouse clerk. He later opened a general merchandise store at Cliff Mine named D.D. Brockway & Son. His father, Daniel, was agent and superintendent of the mine among his many pioneering pursuits and Brockway Mountain is named in his honor. Albert held the office of Keweenaw County Treasurer from 1879-1882.

**William Harry** (*top, 3*), third base, 28, was born in England and operated as a tinsmith on Quincy Street. He later was elected a Hancock Fire Warden, served as President of the First National Bank of Hancock and represented Houghton County in the Michigan House of Representatives during the 1891 and 1892 legislative sessions.

**Joseph Johnson** (*top, 4*), right field, 23, was born in Canada and worked as a miner. He resided in Franklin Township with his wife and infant son.

**Otto Charles Kunath** (*bottom, 5*), first base, 19, was born in Wisconsin and worked in a tin shop. The 1870 U.S. Census identified him as Otto Cuniith. His parents were born in Germany.

**Thomas D. Meads** (*bottom, 3*), shortstop, team captain, 30, was born in England and operated as a watchmaker and jeweler on Reservation Street. He was married with an infant daughter. Later he served as a Village Assessor and member of the Village Board of Trustees and held the offices of Houghton County Clerk and Register of Deeds from 1877-1886.

**Archibald J. Scott** (*bottom, 2*), catcher, 22, was born in Canada and operated as a druggist at Tezcuco and Hancock Streets. He was a Civil War veteran and was with Maj. General Sherman on his celebrated “March to the Sea”. The most newsworthy team member, his future endeavors included founding the Hancock Times newspaper and serving as Village Assessor, Village Treasurer, Township Supervisor, Village Fire Chief, Village President from 1897-1903, Manager of Hancock’s Driving Park, Vice-President of the First National Bank of Hancock and President of the Park Brewing Company. He was the first Mayor of the City of Hancock serving 1903-1904 and 1905-1909 and proprietor of the Scott Hotel which bears his name to this day.

**James Walls Trembath** (*bottom, 1*), second base, 18, was born in England and worked as a miner. He is not the brother of **John T. V. Trembath** (*bottom, 4*), pitcher, 23, who was also born in England and worked as a miner. John resided in Franklin.

> PLAYERS ARE LISTED BY ROW AND NUMBERED LEFT TO RIGHT | PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY MICHIGAN TECH ARCHIVES

1863-2013

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**\$150 (Sesquicentennial Club) [\$100 for HB&PA members]**

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## CITY OF HANCOCK

Sponsorships can be returned to: **City of Hancock, 399 Quincy St., Hancock MI 49930**

Questions and/or other correspondence may be directed to Glenn Anderson (906-482-2720, [manager@cityofhancock.net](mailto:manager@cityofhancock.net)) or John Haeussler (906-483-0144, [john@johnhaeussler.net](mailto:john@johnhaeussler.net)).

Checks are payable to the City of Hancock and sponsors are encouraged to reference the sesquicentennial with their payment. Please kindly submit sponsorship information by July 31st, 2012.