

New York Sun - SEPTEMBER 28, 1875

(Found among family memorabilia)

“POOR OLD DAVIS”

The Peculiar Men That Gathered in Hoboken To Play Base Ball Yesterday

By invitation of Mr. James Whyte Davis a number of the oldest members of the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club assembled on the club grounds in Hoboken yesterday to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the active membership of “Poor Old Davis”. Mr. Davis joined the club on September 27, 1850 when the American game was in its infancy, and the Knickerbockers were its only champions.

Over the club house floated the old club flag, designed by Davis twenty years ago and worn to ribbons by long service. The players were hardly less dilapidated, and most of them were in uniform for the first time in fifteen years. Those who composed the first nine were Dr. D. L. Adams, age 58 [*], catcher; William [**] Avery, 62, first base; R.F. Stevens, 48, pitcher; William H. Tucker, 58, right field; William L. Tolman, 57, third base; John Murray, 47, left field; W.P. Bensel, 58, short stop; R. F. Purdy, 58, second base; John Stanton, 44, centre [sic] field. The second nine were composed of younger men. They were J. Whyte Davis, 50, pitcher; William H. Kissam, 43, left field, W.L. Taylor, 47, second base, Dr. W. O. McDonnald [sic], 40, catcher; Robert Dorsett, 53, right field; and Messrs. Righter, Robinson and A. and B. Kirkland, men whose heads have not grown white.

Just as Davis drew back his hand to deliver the first ball, Mrs. McClinton, his daughter, stepped forward amid the cheers of the spectators and bound around his waist a belt of blue ribbon on which was embroidered in silver letters the name of the club while from the left side depended [suspended?] two broad blue silk ribbons on one of which were the words “To Poor Old Davis” and on the other, “For His 25th Ball Birthday”.

The old boys threw down their canes, and went in to win, when play was called, but their years were too many for them, and though they did some surprisingly good playing, they failed to score a run. Their fielding was much better than their batting, and in the second and fourth innings they whitewashed their opponents. Davis’s side made five runs in the first, thirteen in the third and three in the fifth innings.

By the time the fifth inning was ended the sun had sunk, and the damps of the evening began to settle, and “Poor Old Davis” stopped the game and called out, “Come, get out of here, you old fellows, let the youngsters finish the game. It’s getting cold and I aint going to have you say you got sick on my account”, and with that he hustled them into carriages and took them down to “The Dukes”.

[*] Doc was 61 [**] Walter