

EDITOR'S CORNER

At one time in our history baseball was the national sport of the United States, in the same way that cricket holds that honor in England, buzkashi in Afghanistan, hockey in Canada, and soccer (more properly, football) in nearly every other country of the world, it seems. One can argue about whether or not baseball has been supplanted by basketball, football (our variety), auto racing, or professional wrestling (I'll withhold my comments on how many of these can legitimately be considered a sport) as the national pastime, but there is no question that for nearly a century baseball held unchallenged sway.

Not only did professional baseball capture the national imagination in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but baseball fever was rampant throughout the Great Plains as well. Some cities, like those mentioned in Daniel Ross's article, fielded professional or semi-professional teams, but nearly every small town in the region had its own "town team," and leagues were formed and games played all during the warm months. I have talked to old time Kansas town-team players from Sharon Springs on the Colorado border to LaCygne on the Missouri line. Their stories of intense rivalries, epic contests, and hired "ringers" would make a wonderful book that I hope someone will someday write.

Those readers seeking a theme for this issue might consider that these articles document a progression of struggle—the struggle of sports competition, the struggle for control of water, and the struggle of pro-and anti-slavery forces in Bleeding Kansas.

Jim Hoy
Editor