Early Base-Ball at Bucknell.

In the 60's, when base-ball was rapidly coming into favor as a national game, Bucknell, then young was among the schools that put a 'varsity nine in the field. This nine owing to a lack of funds on the part of the University with which to carry on athletics, and the poor traveling facilities of the times, had a schedule necessarily short. On its schedule were teams principally of near-by towns, few schools being within reach.

The 'Varsity nine were known as the 'Olympians' until 1887, when they assumed the name of the University. The name of the University that time was changed from the University at Lewisburg, to Bucknell University. To have had the nine known under the title of 'Lewisburg' would have confused it with a base-ball team then existing in the town.

The members of the Olympians paid their own expenses individually. The team—aided occasionally by a subscription from the student body—bought all needed outfits. No admission price was asked from spectators at the games; so the source of revenue from which all expenses of the team are now met did not then exist. In fact, the games were played rather to decide the superiority of teams and to afford exercise and pleasure, to the players than for the purpose of giving amusement to the spectators.
Many customs and rules of the sport in those days differed greatly from those now existing. A peculiar difference in customs was the manner in which the pitcher delivered the ball. Instead of swinging his arm around in front of the body, drawing it back and releasing the ball with a snapping movement, as is done at the present time, the pitcher, up until about the year 1878, would deliver the ball with an underhand movement beneath the shoulder and past his hip, the motion being made much like that of a "cricket" bowler. The catcher, like the rest of the players, wore no protecting mit on either hand. This last was in some measure responsible for the large scores since it increased the number of errors. But vicious swings of their long "wagon tongue" bats together with a ball like hard rubber aided in making the scores high and the games long. The scores were almost always to be written in two figures, usually running into the thirties or forties. At times the scores reached a height which seemed incredible without a knowledge of base-ball as it was played in the days of the Olympians.

The team was rarely beaten, so that the Olympians were very much respected as opponents, and it was considered a distinction to defeat them. For four years they held their record unspotted, losing it at the end of that time only by a small score. In '71 the
team, then at its best, went to Harrisburg—at that time considered a long trip—and defeated the Harrisburg nine, which had several players from the Philadelphia "Athletics" on its team for the contest.

Other records made from year to year might be mentioned which show that at all times the Olympians maintained a high standard of perfection. And the succeeding teams of the University have not put these early players to shame. For Bucknell’s team has been during the past and still is a team worthy of the institution it represents.

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THE "TRIUMVIRATE,"

[Three images of individuals holding brooms, labeled as the "Triumvirate".]