

#6D Charles Hassell Page 1 -- Baseball... "The Way It Used to Be"

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Baseball has been in Carteret County for a long time. Charles Hassell's father took young Charles and a "gang of neighborhood boys to Barkers Island on the ferry" to play ball on a sand hill filled with sandspurs and "pear-pads." That was in the '20's...

Before that, baseball was played in open fields and in the roads. What was learned was gained from "getting out and trying" because television was unheard of, and radios were scarce. Skills were learned from one another and rules varied with the team and the community. Yet even in its earliest stages, baseball filled many a hot afternoon with excitement and fierce rivalries. More than that, it laid a foundation for some of the best baseball talent anywhere.

By the late 40's, the Tidewater League had captured the energy and spirit of most every community in the county and surrounding area. Baseball diamonds were sprinkled throughout Down East, Beaufort, Morehead, Newport and later Salter Path. Saturday and Sunday afternoons were reserved for baseball— rain or shine — and everybody came! "Passing the hat" financed the operation, which eventually grew to be big business with "hired players" coming into the county from colleges and Class D semi-pro teams. Names like Roger Craig, Bob Porterfield, "Mo Bear," "Footsey" Palmer, "Pappy" Diem - all passed through the county to play for a weekend of fierce competition. In the process, Carteret County was producing its own list of hometown pro's.

The Tidewater League faded and the Saltwater League filled the '50's with teams from one end of Core Sound to the other end of Bogue. From Atlantic to Salter Path, the tradition continued to grow with a new generation of tremendous talent. Many of these players went on to college careers and several even spent time with the "big leagues." All the while, baseball in Carteret County was still an important part of every spring and summer for young and old, players and fans.