

= Doc Adams =

Daniel Lucius " Doc " Adams (November 1 , 1814 ? January 3 , 1899) was an American baseball player and executive who is regarded by historians as an important figure in the sport 's early years . For most of his career he was a member of the New York Knickerbockers . He first played for the New York Base Ball Club in 1840 and started his Knickerbockers career five years later , continuing to play for the club into his forties and to take part in inter @-@ squad practice games and matches against opposing teams . Researchers have called Adams the creator of the shortstop position , which he used to field short throws from outfielders . In addition to his playing career , Adams manufactured baseballs and oversaw bat production ; he also occasionally acted as an umpire .

From 1847 to 1861 , the Knickerbockers selected Adams as their president six times , and as a vice president , treasurer , or director in six other years . As president of the club , Adams was an advocate of rule changes in baseball that resulted in nine @-@ man teams and nine @-@ inning games . When the National Association of Base Ball Players (NABBP) was formed in 1858 , he led the rules and regulations committee of the new organization . In his role , Adams ruled that the fields ' bases should be 90 feet (27 m) apart , the modern distance , and supported the elimination of the " bound rule " , which allowed for balls caught after one bounce to be recorded as outs . He resigned from his positions with the Knickerbockers and NABBP in 1862 . Adams ' contributions in creating baseball 's rules went largely unrecognized for decades after his 1899 death , but in 1980 a letter about him appeared in The New York Times ; by 1993 , researcher John Thorn had written about Adams ' role . Other historians have given him credit for helping to develop the sport , and Thorn has called Adams " first among the Fathers of Baseball " .

A graduate of Yale University and Harvard Medical School , Adams began working in the medical field in the late 1830s , and practiced in New York City during his time as a member of the Knickerbockers . In 1865 , he left medicine and later became a bank president and member of the Connecticut legislature . He and his wife had five children .

= = Early life = =

Born in Mont Vernon , New Hampshire , on November 1 , 1814 , Adams was the fourth of Daniel and Nancy Adams ' five children . The elder Daniel Adams was a physician and author ; he wrote a math textbook that was widely used in the United States in the early- to mid @-@ 1800s . After being schooled at Kimball Union Academy in New Hampshire from 1826 to 1828 and Amherst , Massachusetts ' Mount Pleasant Classical Institution , Adams attended three colleges from 1831 to 1838 . He studied at Amherst College for two years , then transferred to Yale University , where he acquired a bachelor 's degree upon his graduation in 1835 . Nancy Adams , Daniel 's sister , indicated in a letter penned in the early 1830s that he began playing with " bats and balls " by this time .

Adams continued his studies at Harvard Medical School through 1838 , obtaining an MD . Following his time in college , he joined his father 's medical practice . The pair worked in Mont Vernon , before the younger Adams relocated twice , first to Boston and then to New York City . Adams also worked for the New York Dispensaries , which provided medical care to poor residents . He offered his assistance when outbreaks of cholera affected New York City . For providing vaccinations , Adams received yearly pay of \$ 400 for a time . His field of employment gave rise to his nickname of " Doc " , which was given as " Dock " at the time .

= = Playing career = =

According to baseball historian John Thorn , 1839 is the year Adams became a baseball player . In an 1896 interview in The Sporting News , Adams said that " soon after going to New York I began to play base ball just for exercise , with a number of other young medical men . " Starting in 1840 , he was a player with the New York Base Ball Club . This team began play five years earlier than the New York Knickerbockers , who are credited in several baseball histories as pioneering the modern

version of baseball . Adams played an early form of the game , but Thorn writes that he " understood [it] to be baseball , no matter what it was called " .

Adams received an invitation to become a member of the Knickerbockers a month or so after the team 's September 23 , 1845 , creation . He accepted and joined the club along with other men in the medical field ; he later said that players from the New York Base Ball Club were behind the formation of the Knickerbockers . Records of the club 's practice games indicate that he was a member of the Knickerbockers by November 18 , 1845 . In an inter @-@ squad game held that day , which was the Knickerbockers ' last of the year , Adams scored nine runs for his team as they defeated a side picked by William R. Wheaton , 51 ? 42 . The club organized its first game against outside opposition in 1846 ; at a June 5 meeting Adams was selected to a three @-@ man committee whose aim was to set up a game against the New York Base Ball Club . The committee 's efforts were successful , and a game was scheduled on June 19 . Adams participated in the contest , which the Knickerbockers lost 23 ? 1 . Batting second in the Knickerbockers ' lineup , he made one out and did not score a run .

The Knickerbockers did not play any known games against other clubs from 1847 to 1850 . During these years , the team split its players into two squads , which played against each other twice per week . According to Adams , he often attempted to compel members of the Knickerbockers to attend the sessions . He was only occasionally successful , and when few Knickerbockers came , they played variants of baseball that required fewer players than regular games . Twice in June 1851 , the club played against the Washington Base Ball Club , winning by scores of 21 ? 11 and 22 ? 20 . No individual statistics are available for the first game ; Adams scored twice for the Knickerbockers in the second . In 1853 , Adams played in two games against the Gotham Ball Club , tallying seven runs in a pair of victories . The two clubs met three times from June to October 1854 , and Adams had one run in each game . After splitting the first two contests , their October 26 , 1854 , game lasted 12 innings before being suspended due to darkness with the score tied 12 ? 12 ; both teams fell short of the 21 runs that were required to win a game under the rules of the time .

Following two November games against the Eagle Base Ball Club that Adams is not known to have participated in , he returned to the Knickerbockers ' lineup for a June 1 , 1855 , game against Gotham and scored three times , although Gotham prevailed , 21 ? 12 . He took part in two other 1855 games against Eagle and Gotham , respectively , scoring five runs total as the Knickerbockers won both contests . Adams competed four times for the club against outside opponents in 1856 as it won once , lost twice , and had one tie ; he scored ten times , and records for two games showed that his defensive position was shortstop . The Knickerbockers had a 2 ? 2 win ? loss record in competitive games during 1857 that Adams participated in . Playing three times at shortstop and once at first base defensively , he contributed 12 runs offensively , including a six @-@ run effort in the Knickerbockers ' 37 ? 23 victory over the Empire club on June 24 . In 1858 , Adams made four appearances for the Knickerbockers against outside opposition and scored nine runs , but the team went 1 ? 3 in the games . He varied his defensive positioning between second base , third base , and shortstop .

= = Playing style = =

As a player , Adams created the concept of the shortstop position , according to Thorn and Baseball Hall of Fame researcher Freddy Berowski . In the first five years the Knickerbockers played , the team fielded anywhere from eight to eleven players . The only infielders were the players covering each of the bases ; if there were more than eight players , extra outfielders were sometimes used . The outfielders had difficulty throwing baseballs into the infield , because of the balls ' light weight . Adams ' shortstop position , at which he started playing in about 1849 or 1850 , was used to field throws from the outfielders and throw to the three infielders . With the advent of higher @-@ quality baseballs , Adams moved toward the infield , since the distance the balls could travel increased . Prior to the invention of the shortstop , large gaps existed in the defensive positioning of infields ; defensive players tended to stand by bases , leaving empty space in between them for batters . The shortstop filled one of the two gaps .

Adams hit left @-@ handed ; he said that his batted balls occasionally went into a river by the Elysian Fields , the ground in Hoboken , New Jersey , where the Knickerbockers practiced and played . Adams had a long on @-@ field career with the Knickerbockers ; he remained a player with the team until 1859 . He did not limit his play to shortstop ; he fielded at every position except pitcher . Little is known about the relative performance of early baseball players , and the game was largely recreational , as opposed to competitive . Thorn speculates that Adams may have been " the best player of the 1840s " , citing his lengthy playing career as evidence .

= = Equipment maker and umpire = =

In addition to playing the game , Adams was involved in the production of early baseball equipment . He personally manufactured baseballs for a period of time , supplying many New York City @-@ based clubs . Adams found that when the ball was more tightly stitched , it became " livelier " : it traveled further when batted or thrown . According to author Peter Morris , Adams ' ball @-@ manufacturing efforts helped to keep the Knickerbockers in operation during their first few years , as they would otherwise have had difficulty finding balls . In later years Adams gathered rubber from old galoshes for the insides of baseballs . A tanner then used horsehide to create the balls . As late as 1863 , Adams was one of the three most prominent makers of baseballs in New York , continuing to produce them by hand . Adams also played a role in producing baseball bats , choosing which wood to use and overseeing the manufacturing process .

Adams also worked occasionally as an umpire in significant games . One notable example was the final contest of a three @-@ game series between all @-@ star teams from Brooklyn and New York City , held on September 10 , 1858 , in Long Island . During the game , which the New York City all @-@ stars won 29 ? 18 , Adams became the first umpire to use a new rule allowing for a strike to be called against a batter who did not swing at a pitch in the strike zone . Previously , strikes were only called when a batter swung at a pitch and missed . Three batters were ruled out on strikes called by Adams in the game . Otherwise , the called strike rule was not applied often in its first few years of existence .

= = Knickerbockers and NABBP executive = =

The Knickerbockers held elections annually to determine who would serve as officials . At the club 's second election , held on May 5 , 1846 , Adams was named the Knickerbockers ' vice president . At an April 1847 meeting , he became the president of the team , and was re @-@ elected in 1848 and 1849 . He was the leader of a " Committee to Revive the Constitution and By @-@ Laws " of baseball in 1848 . Adams was not chosen as an officer in 1851 , but the next year was named one of the club 's three treasurers ; he was elected to the same position the following two years . The number of baseball teams in the New York City area started to grow during the early 1850s , as the Washington Base Ball Club (also known as the Gotham Ball Club) and Eagle Base Ball Club were founded or reorganized . The Eagle Base Ball Club , desiring a unified set of rules , sent a message to the Knickerbockers requesting that a committee be formed . Adams was one of the three Knickerbockers members selected to be on the committee , and the clubs agreed on a set of rules , which were presented at the Knickerbockers ' meeting on April 1 , 1854 . At the same meeting , Adams was voted into the position of club director .

After again being named a director in 1855 , Adams became president of the Knickerbockers for the fourth time , winning an election held at the club 's April 5 , 1856 , meeting . He remained the team 's president in 1857 , and after not being named as an officer the next three years , was elected president in 1861 . During his time as the club 's president , the Knickerbockers ' organization was emulated by newly formed teams , and Adams himself was considered a " respected " figure by members of other clubs . According to author Andrew J. Schiff , Adams was among the most powerful baseball figures of the era . Concurrently , Adams maintained his New York City medical practice .

= = = Number of players and game length = = =

A supporter of nine @-@ man baseball teams , Adams favored a measure in 1856 which allowed for players from outside the Knickerbockers to join their intrasquad games when 17 or fewer team members appeared . No rules existed at the time regarding team size , but official games between clubs were typically played with nine men per club . The proposal was defeated by a 13 ? 11 vote , in favor of a rule forbidding non @-@ club members to play if there were 14 players (seven per team) .

A two @-@ man committee was created with the aim of working with the Eagle and Washington clubs to resolve the debate over how many players to field in official games . Duncan F. Curry and William F. Ladd were chosen as the committee members , but Ladd withdrew and Adams was named as a substitute . His partner on the committee , Curry , had led the opposition to nine @-@ man teams . Adams and Curry also differed on another issue : the length of games . At the time , a baseball game lasted until one of the teams had 21 runs ; that team was awarded the victory . A change in how games were won was deemed necessary after the suspended game in 1854 . Adams favored nine @-@ inning games , while Curry wanted contests to last seven innings . A convention was scheduled for early 1857 , and Adams joined a three @-@ man committee tasked with encouraging local clubs to send delegates . At the convention , which consisted of one session each in January and February , Adams was voted president . The Knickerbockers had voted among themselves to back seven @-@ inning games , but the other teams backed a motion for nine @-@ inning contests , which passed .

These changes were incorporated in the " Laws of Base Ball " , written by Adams . He authored the initial draft of the regulations with what The New York Times ' Richard Sandomir called " an upright script and strong hand . " The " Laws " included regulations governing bat and ball sizes , and a ban on betting by players and umpires . Fellow Knickerbocker William H. Grenelle copied Adams ' work onto blue pages and made modifications and notations as the convention progressed . Among other changes , Grenelle crossed out part of the rule Adams had written on game length ; he replaced the number nine with seven , before the motion that settled the issue was introduced . In March , the Knickerbockers changed their rules to match those passed at the convention . In May 1857 , Adams presided over a player convention where nine @-@ inning games were officially made part of the rules of baseball for participating teams .

= = = Distance between bases and campaign against bound rule = = =

In March 1858 , the National Association of Base Ball Players (NABBP) was formed at another convention . Adams was one of the Knickerbockers ' two delegates , having been selected at a February meeting attended by representatives from 25 clubs . He held the chairmanship of the association 's rules and regulations committee , and drafted the new organization 's initial set of rules . These included a clarification of the prescribed distance between bases , which under Knickerbocker Rules had been set at " forty @-@ two paces " between home plate and second base , and " forty @-@ two paces , equidistant " between first and third base . Historians differ on whether the bases were roughly 90 feet (27 m) apart , or a shorter distance . Thorn has written that the pace itself may have been " an imprecise and variable measure , to gauge distances by ' stepping off ' , " and Adams described the rule as " rather vague . " At the 1857 convention , it was decided that bases would be " securely fastened upon the four corners of a square whose sides are roughly thirty yards . " As rules committee chairman for the new NABBP , Adams made the baselines 90 feet (27 m) from one base to another , the distance seen in modern baseball . He ruled on the distance between home plate and the pitcher 's mound as well , making them 45 feet (14 m) apart . In addition , the committee mandated that clubs have nine players per side , which became the norm . It also created the called strike rule , in an effort to reduce pitch totals and the time required to play games .

Adams campaigned for a further change in the rules of baseball , involving when outs were recorded . At the time , an out was allowed when the ball was caught by a fielder after one bounce ;

this was known as the " bound rule " . Adams supported a ban on such outs , calling his preferred rule " the fly @-@ game " . Under the style of play he backed , when a fly ball was hit a fielder would have to catch the ball before it touched the ground for an out to be made . This was similar to rules on catches in cricket , and would serve to increase the level of skill required from fielders . The Knickerbockers had enacted a rule mandating the " fly @-@ catch " by 1857 .

The Knickerbockers attempted to introduce the fly rule more widely at the 1857 convention , with a proposal that permitted the continued use of the bound rule for foul balls . Despite widespread support from sportswriters , the proposed rule change was voted down . Writer William Herschberger said that the decision showed " the limits of the Knickerbockers ' influence and divisions within the baseball fraternity . " The rule change was proposed to the NABBP annually by Adams but did not pass . At the 1858 NABBP convention , a vote on eliminating the bound rule was unsuccessful . Opponents raised concerns that the proposal would dramatically lengthen game times . Despite his support for the fly rule , in 1858 Adams successfully motioned for NABBP regulations , including outs on bounces , to apply to the Knickerbockers . He did so because he was reluctant to oppose the rules of the NABBP . Shortly after his motion , he organized a Knickerbockers meeting to discuss the fly rule and " obtain a reconsideration " of the newly passed resolution . At the meeting , the Knickerbockers decided to exclude outs on bounces from their practice games and contests against teams that supported the fly rule . In future years , the club remained an advocate of eliminating the bound rule , but Adams ' continued efforts were rejected . A split in the rules and regulations committee caused it to avoid supporting the fly game at the NABBP 's 1859 convention , and votes at the 1860 and 1861 conventions maintained the bound rule . Adams ' final comments about the regulation at an NABBP convention indicated that he believed it would soon be modified . The bound rule started losing support by 1863 , after Adams left the Knickerbockers , and outs on bounced balls were outlawed in 1864 .

= = Retirement = =

In addition to his other roles , Adams regularly served as a delegate on behalf of the Knickerbockers at the NABBP 's annual meetings . He remained with the Knickerbockers in an executive role until March 26 , 1862 , when he retired having served 12 years overall in various non @-@ playing capacities . Upon leaving his position , the club named him an honorary member . He received a scroll from the Knickerbockers , which referred to him as " The Nestor of Ball Players " , alluding to a mythical king known for offering advice . Adams also resigned from his role as rules committee chairman of the NABBP .

= = Later life = =

Adams and Cornelia Cook married in 1861 , and remained together until Adams ' death . The couple had five children ; the first , a son named Charles , died less than a month after his birth in 1864 . The others , two sons (Frank and Roger) and two daughters (Catharine and Mary) , were born between 1866 and 1874 . Adams continued to maintain his medical practice during his baseball career , but was forced to abandon it in 1865 after he began suffering health issues . After relocating to Ridgefield , Connecticut , he went on to become " one of the leading citizens of the Connecticut village , " according to author William J. Ryczek . Adams served as a Republican legislator in the Connecticut House of Representatives for the town in 1870 . He contributed to the creation of the Ridgefield Land Improvement Association , and to a committee overseeing construction of a town house . In 1871 , he accepted a job with the Ridgefield Savings Bank (later renamed the Fairfield County Bank) as the company 's first president . After working there until 1879 , Adams took a break from his duties ; during this time , he helped found Ridgefield 's library and served as its treasurer . In 1884 , he returned to the Ridgefield National Bank and remained president there until mid @-@ 1886 . Adams and his family relocated to a house in New Haven , Connecticut , in 1888 .

Along with baseball , playing music was among Adams ' favorite activities . Occasionally , he and

Henry Ward Beecher performed flute duets . Although no longer actively involved in baseball , Adams was still a follower of the sport . He played in an exhibition as late as 1875 , and stories exist that he played recreationally into the following decade . Late in his life , he said of the growth of baseball , " We pioneers never expected to see the game so universal as it has now become . " Adams contracted pneumonia following a bout of influenza , and died on January 3 , 1899 , at the age of 84 . He was buried at New Haven 's Evergreen Cemetery .

= = Legacy = =

For decades after Adams ' death , his role in codifying baseball 's early rules was largely unremembered . Thorn included Adams among a group of " powerfully influential figures " from the period ? also including Louis F. Wadsworth and Wheaton ? who he writes " went unrecognized in their lifetimes and became mysteries to future generations . " Alexander Cartwright was more widely recognized as a pioneering figure for the sport . The Baseball Hall of Fame has claimed that Cartwright was the inventor of 90 @-@ foot (27 m) baselines and the nine @-@ inning game . However , by the time conventions led by Adams had enacted those rules in the late 1850s , Cartwright had traveled to California and was no longer a member of the Knickerbockers . Adams is said to have avoided " campaigning for credit " for rules changes after he left the Knickerbockers ; researcher Gary O 'Maxfield said of him that he " didn 't like to brag . " Several of the rules approved at the conventions survived to modern baseball , including the 90 @-@ foot (27 m) baseline distance . The 45 @-@ foot (14 m) distance from home plate to the pitching mound , however , did not last through the 19th century ; it was pushed back 5 feet (1 @. @ 5 m) in 1880 . The shortstop position , which for Adams was located between the infielders and outfielders , was later played in the infield , between second and third base . Dickey Pearce was the first player to field in that area , and his ability to prevent base hits in the formerly unoccupied territory convinced other teams to employ similar tactics .

The Hartford Courant points to 1980 as a year when Adams started to gain greater attention for his achievements . A share of the New York Mets was purchased by a publishing company led by Nelson Doubleday , Jr. that year , and claims that Abner Doubleday invented baseball in 1839 , which are considered flawed by modern researchers , were reported by the media . After the Doubleday reports in 1980 , The New York Times received a letter from the great @-@ grandson of Adams that the Courant said attempted " to try to set the record straight . " The newspaper ran the letter in its April 13 issue , and added a 1939 piece by Roger Adams . In 1993 , Thorn published research on Adams ' contributions in the encyclopedia Total Baseball . The New York Times published an article on Adams on September 23 , 2015 .

Various historians have given Adams recognition as an important figure from the early years of baseball . Thorn has written that he " may be counted as first among the Fathers of Baseball . " O 'Maxfield said of Adams : " Without [him] , we wouldn 't have the game we know and love as baseball today . " The " father " label was rejected by Ryczek ; he wrote that Adams did not conceive the sport , but called him a " collaborator " in its development . On July 31 , 2014 , the Society for American Baseball Research announced that it had chosen Adams as its 2014 " Overlooked 19th Century Baseball Legend " . Eric Miklich has called him worthy of induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame for his role as a pioneer . He says of Adams , " Should he be in the Hall of Fame ? Absolutely . You ask anyone who knows about 19th century baseball . They 'll laugh at Cartwright ; Abner Doubleday , they won 't even talk about ; but they all know Doc Adams . He was the glue that held things together in the early part of baseball . " Adams did not appear on a Baseball Hall of Fame ballot until 2016 , when he was up for consideration on the Hall 's Pre @-@ Integration Era Committee ballot . Ten of the 16 committee members supported him , two fewer than the number needed for induction .

While Adams ' contributions had received notice from historians , Associated Press writer Andrew Dalton called such reports " somewhat speculative " in nature before 2016 . That year , the 1857 " Laws of Base Ball " authored by Adams were sold at an auction . The documents were included in a batch of historical papers that brought \$ 12 @, @ 000 in a 1999 sale . Adams ' authorship of the

papers was unknown at the time , but was confirmed after the owner brought the documents to the attention of an auction house in 2015 . An anonymous buyer purchased the " Laws of Base Ball " in April 2016 for \$ 3 @. @ 26 million , the most a series of baseball documents had ever sold for .