

19th Century Regional Base Ball Slang

Base ball didn't always sound the way it does today. Here's a sampling of some early base ball terminology, as well as terms that could be used to describe the early residents of Taylor County. Use of this phraseology when playing will add to the color of the nine, as these are terms that many modern "cranks" and "rooters" would not understand.

Ace: Run

Apple, pill, horsehide, onion: the ball

Ballist: player

Basetender: an infielder stationed near one of the rag-stuffed bags that serve as bases

Behind: catcher

Blooper, banjo hit: weak fly ball that barely soars beyond the infielders

Bowler, hurler, thrower, feeder: pitcher

Break one off: to throw a curve ball

Bumpkin: rural resident

Club nine: team

Cranks, bugs, rooters: fans. The word "fan" did not become popular until 1889.

Dandy: city dweller

Daisy cutter, Bug-bruiser, Grass Clipper or Ant Killer: a well hit ground ball

Dew drop: a slow pitch

Dead: put out

Dish: home plate

Duff, muff: an error

Foul tick: foul ball

Hand: a player

Hand out: player out

Hayseed: rural resident

Huzzah: Alternative form of Hurrah. Used to congratulate a player on a well played ball.

Leg it: run hard

Muffin: a player of lesser talent

The line: batter's box. The umpire would often shout, "Striker, to the line!"

Make your first: a single. Also, "make your second" or "took his third"

Match: game

Player dead: out

Show a little ginger: play harder or play smarter

Side out: three outs

Sky ball: a high pop-up

Slicker: a person with stylish clothing and manners, not unlike the residents of urban Abilene.

Stinger: a hard hit ball

Striker or batsman: batter

Tally: a run or an ace counted after a runner has touched all four bases in consecutive order

Three hands out: side retired, teams must switch sides

Whitewash: to hold a team scoreless in an at-bat

Willow: the bat