

## Base Ball Uniforms, 1883-style

The Buffalo Gap Vintage Base Ball Club currently fields two nines (teams): The Buffalo Gap Chips, and the Abilene 407s. Although we may play together in some tournaments, when we play locally, the presence of two teams is designed to showcase different regions of Taylor county and how they were at odds in 1883, when both Abilene and Buffalo Gap were competing for the right to be home to the government of Taylor County. As the two teams are from different regions of the county and represent different social and occupational demographics, the uniforms selected for each team were chosen with the hopes of furthering notions of regional difference when they see each team take the field. It is also hoped that these differences would generate witty repartee and banter when the teams oppose each other.

**Buffalo Gap Chips** – Depicting farm and ranch hands of the area demands that the Chips be uniformed (or more technically un-uniformed) accordingly. With that in mind, the Chips have no uniform except for their caps, made locally and based upon one worn by a Nolan county team around the turn of the century. Photos of other regional teams depict rural players in civilian mufti, clad in working class farm and ranchwear of the era. Hence, the Chips look like farmboys and ranch hands of the area with little in the way of what would be recognized as a baseball uniform. Buffalo Gap Historic Village has a limited supply of clothing that they are willing to loan to new players on a first-come, first-serve basis. Beyond that, if you would like to play on the “Chips” you are encouraged to procure your own baseball “uniforms” or suitable substitutes. Suggestions as to what might constitute a period “look” maybe found at <http://www.lahacal.org/gentleman/informal.html>  
Contact Bob Wettemann for recommendations as to what to purchase if you would like to purchase your own uniform for playing with the Buffalo Gap Chips.

**Abilene 407s** – The 407s offer a more civilized appearance, something more appropriate to the urbanized environment that Abilene is rapidly attempting to achieve. Due to the largess of an anonymous donor, the BGHV has been able to obtain a number of pairs of vintage-styled base ball pants not unlike that which was worn by early teams. The 407s will offer what looks more like what a base ball team should look like. They wear the same hat worn by the Chips. In addition to the hat, players on the 407s are requested to wear white or natural color shirts, cut in a period style (lace up, 3 button with neck placket, or natural color long sleeve Henley T-shirt). In addition to the blue baseball pants, they are to also privately purchase a pair of red athletic socks and a black leather belt with a roller buckle. The resulting red, white and blue uniform is smart, functional, and correct to the period. Examples of reproduction base ball uniforms may be found at <http://www.vbbf.com/uniforms.html>

**Footwear** -- Although not technically historically correct, black athletic cleats provide much-needed traction for active ball players. In efforts to avoid serious injury, all players are encouraged to wear cleats in lieu of slick soled boots or brogans. Some players have had success searching for “vintage cleats” on Ebay, while others simply use modern black cleats with white markings and decorations painted out. Both options are acceptable.

**Road Games** -- There will hopefully be those instances where the Buffalo Gap Vintage Base Ball Club will take their show on the road. Since we will rarely bring both teams to a tournament or other event, when we appear at other venues (outside either the Village or McMurry), all players will attempt to conform in style to the uniform outlined for the 407s. This may mean that some uniform elements (primarily trousers) will need to be traded. Please turn in all clothing owned by BGHV laundered and ready to wear by the next user.

**Sources** – There are a number of purveyors of authentic 19<sup>th</sup> century attire. Some of the best are:  
<http://www.riverjunction.com/> (They tend to be a bit on the pricey side, but will give you a good idea of what sorts of things to look for)  
<http://www.wmmerc.com/> (Their “Bargain Corral” frequently has affordable options)

Both these companies offer apparel that is appropriate for the Buffalo Gap Chips as well as white or off-white shirts for the Abilene 407s. Shirts for both the Chips and the 407s are also available from most sutlers who sell Civil War-era reproduction clothing. All players are encouraged to consult with Bob Wettemann before purchasing anything, as there are some items that are not of a true period style that need to be avoided.