

SPORTS HISTORY IS SET DOWN IN TRIBUNE'S PAGES

Department Writers Win National Recognition

BY ARCH WARD

The history of The Tribune sports department is the history of sports in Chicago. One hundred years ago, Chicagoans were interested in trotting races, pigeon shooting, cricket, and foot racing around the public square. There were two billiard tables in Couch's hotel, on the northwest corner of Lake and Dearborn sts.

Fireman John Tierney of engine company No. 6 won a silver trumpet by outdistancing all competitors, April 14, 1856. A gymnastic training school was opened for ladies exclusively, by two female athletes, at 218 Wabash av. Charley Curtis, a champion walker, strolled away with a \$2,000 purse by skipping 1,056 miles in as many half hours.

A Different Form

These events were recorded in early editions of THE TRIBUNE, although not in the form familiar to present readers of the sports pages. The items were carried in the general news columns. It was public interest in baseball which finally brought about the establishment of a separate sports section.

THE TRIBUNE of April 26, 1876, carried the following headline:

SPORTING NEWS

First Game of Chicago's Great Champion Baseball Club

A Handsome Victory Over the Louisville Nine—Score 4-0

The game was played in Louisville, Albert G. Spaulding, the White Stocking manager, hurled a seven hit shutout before 2,000. The Chicago lineup included: Ross Barnes, 2b; Cap Anson, 3b; Cal McVey, 1b; Paul Hines, cf; A. G. Spaulding, p; Robert Addy, rf; James White, c; Johnny Peters, ss; Tom Glenn, lf.

That same year THE TRIBUNE was the only Chicago newspaper to report the birth of the present National league. The dispatch, dated New York, said: "... the new scheme, designed to lift baseball to the rank of a legitimate amusement, is the formation of a new association of professional teams ... Hartford, New York Mutuals, Chicago White Stockings, Boston, Philadelphia Athletics, Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis ..."

Horse Racing Flourishes

After the baseball breakthrough, increasing space was given to all sports, with early emphasis on horse racing, football, and boxing. Racing flourished at old Washington Park in 1884. Isaac Murphy, the great Negro rider, and Edward (Snapper) Garrison were leading jockeys—indeed, it was Snapper's ability to rally a horse in the stretch which produced the phrase "garrison finish."

THE TRIBUNE of May 31, 1879, described the first intercollegiate football game in the midwest. Racine met Michigan university in White Sox park, on the lake front between Randolph and Washington streets. Michigan won, 1 to 0, as "Chase caught the ball and De Tarr kicked it over. No bones were broken, but Torbert was stretched out on the turf once ..."

On Oct. 9, 1892, Amos Alonzo Stagg called a mass meeting of University of Chicago students. After a short address, THE TRIBUNE reported, Mr. Stagg and 11 players journeyed to Washington park and defeated Hyde Park High school in the university's first football game, 14 to 0.

Basketball's Debut

Basketball made its debut at the old West Side Y. M. C. A. Northwestern university started a girls' team in 1888, which was so successful that a masculine team was formed three years later.

Boxing flourished at the turn of the century in Tattersall's, a barn-like structure near the corner of 16th st. and Dearborn. Chicago headlines read like a Who's Who of boxing—Bob Fitzsimmons, Kid McCoy, Terry McGovern, Young Griffo, Tom Sharkey, Tommy Ryan, George Root, Benny Yanger and Joe Gans.

In addition to giving wide coverage to sports, THE TRIBUNE—then, as now—assisted in the promotion of worthy sports events. Samuel Medill, brother of Joseph, the prime moving spirit in the development of THE TRIBUNE, was a vice president of the Chicago Baseball club, forerunners of the present day Cubs. Potter Palmer was president and Gen. Phil Sheridan also was a vice president. The team was founded in 1870 and won its first game from New Orleans, 51 to 0.

Foremost Fight Authority

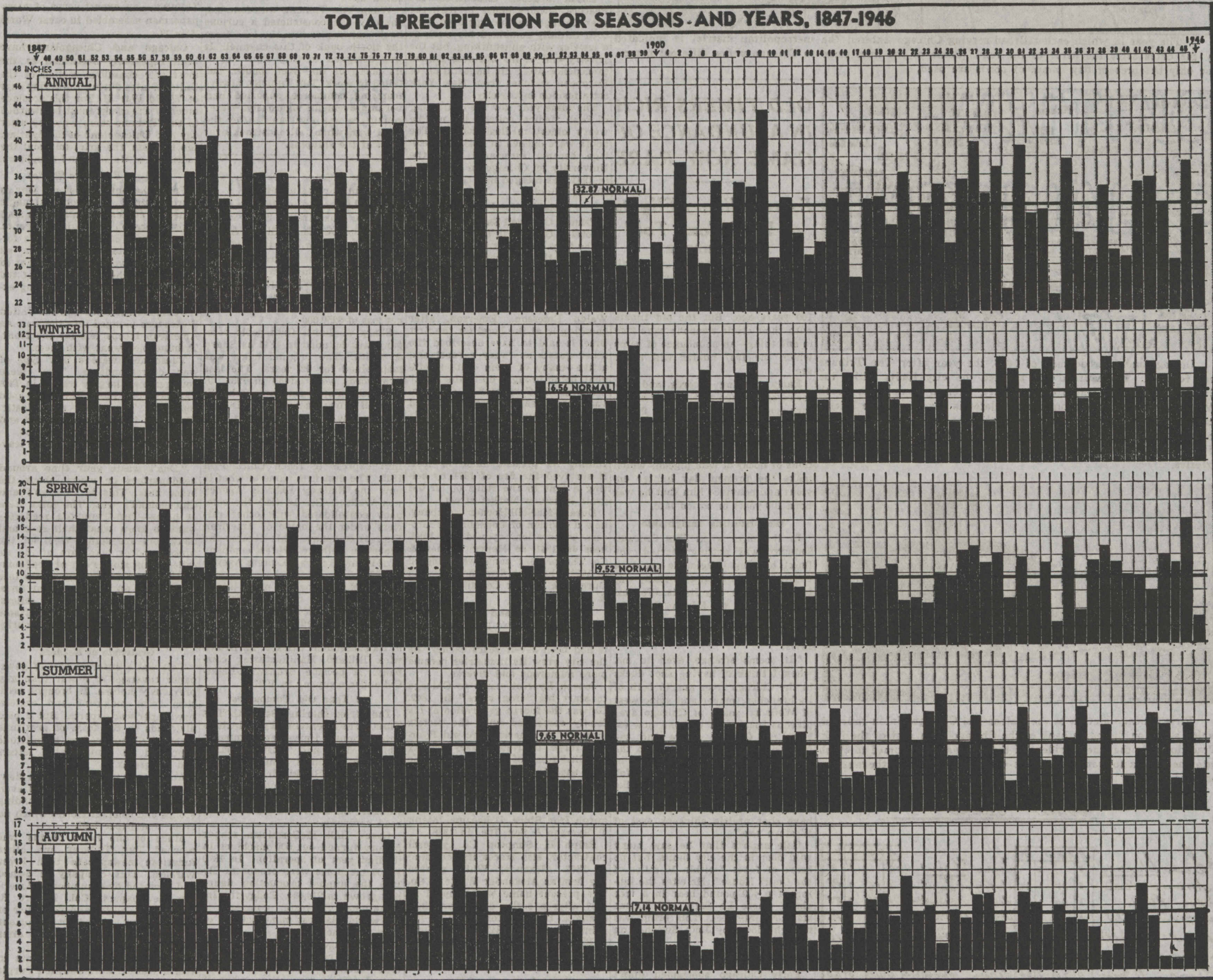
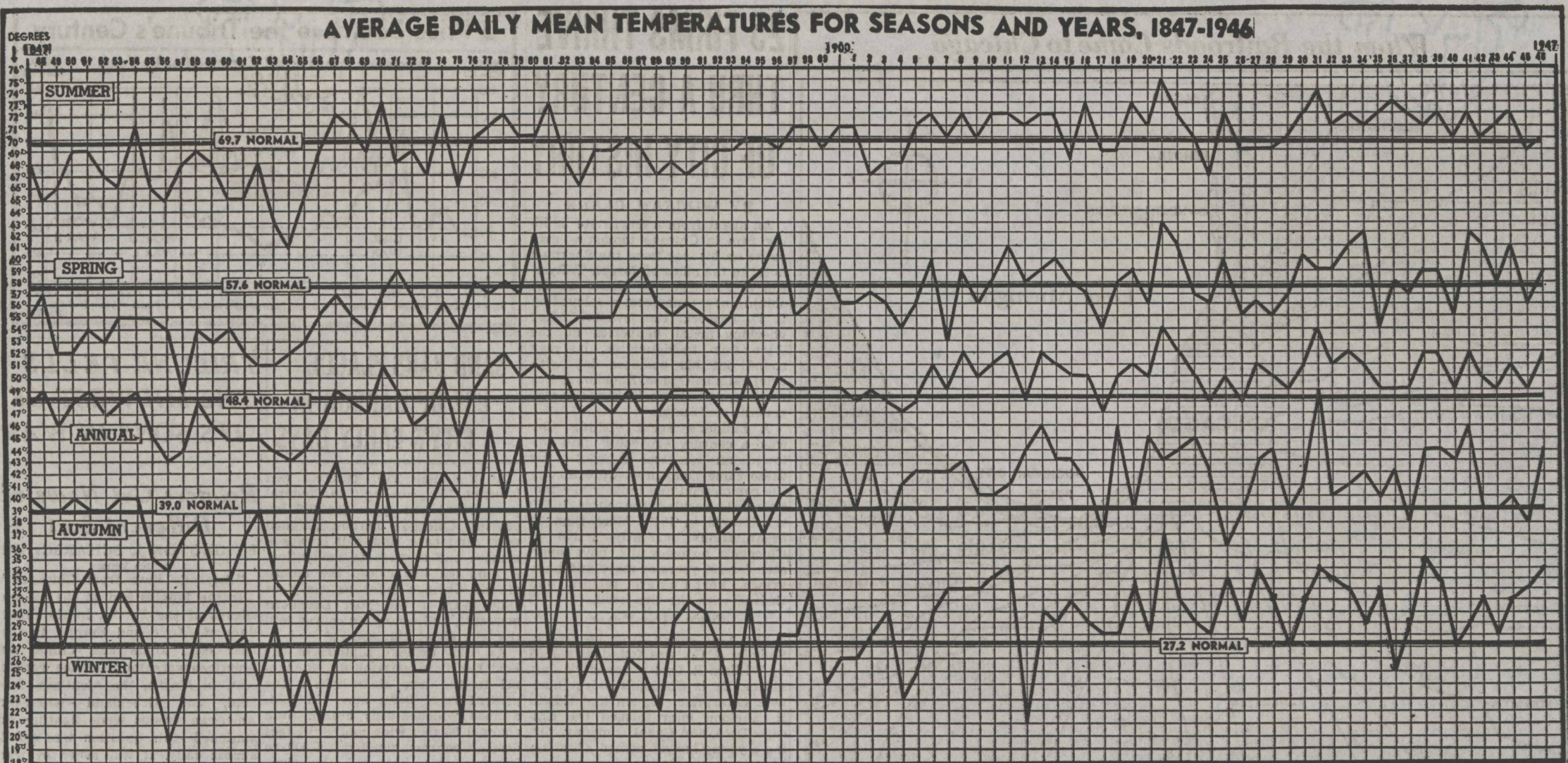
George Siler, the first Tribune boxing expert, was the nation's foremost fight authority in the "Sil" Siler referred the first "Battle of the Century" in which Bob Fitzsimmons won the heavyweight title by knocking out Jim Corbett in Carson City, Nev., March 17, 1897. THE TRIBUNE devoted two front page columns and its second and third pages to coverage of the Fitzsimmons triumph.

Harvey T. Woodruff, who later conducted the "Wake of the West" Western Jockey club, a Tribune golf writer, Henry Whigham, won the United States Open Golf championship at Chicago Golf club in 1897.

As sports coverage increased, Tribune sports writers attained national recognition. Hughey Keough's byline (By He) was the trademark of a good baseball story. Ring Lardner, Si Sanborn, Charley Dryden, Hugh Fullerton and Jim Crustinberry also helped establish the tradition of topflight baseball reporting being carried on today by Ivy Vaughan and Ed Burns.

Eckersall Joins Staff

The incomparable Walter Eckersall joined The Tribune sports staff in 1907 and was the nation's No. 1 football reporter until his death in 1930. Hughey Keough founded "The Wake," the oldest continuous newspaper sports column, in 1905. The



column subsequently was written by Hugh Fullerton, Ring Lardner, Jack Lait, and Harvey Woodruff before passing into the hands of its present conductor in 1937.

Eckersall founded the first of THE TRIBUNE's sports promotions—Silver Skates—in 1917, and also carried on under injunction in 1923 the Chicago amateur boxing tournament which was the forerunner of Golden Gloves in 1928. After Golden Gloves came the succession of Tribune sports promotions which are described elsewhere in this centennial issue.

34 in Department

Naturally, the tremendous growth of sports in Chicago is visible in the Tribune's sports department which has chronicled Chicago sports for 100 years. From four or five men in the '90s, THE TRIBUNE sports staff has grown to 34—more than twice the size of any other sports department in Chicago. Last fall Tribune reporters traveled over 100,000 miles to cover the nation's outstanding football games.

A lot has happened in Chicago sports since 1847 and you read about it in THE TRIBUNE, the only sports department which grew up with Chicago.

'Purer Than Jordan,' CHICAGO RIVER IS USED FOR BAPTISM

John Wentworth, early Chicago editor and congressman, gave this description of an immersion of converts to the Baptist faith in early Chicago in a lecture he delivered in 1879:

"There were no baptismal fonts in those days. But purer than old Jordan ever was, the Chicago river was good enough for immersion."

"I remember one cold day early in February, 1839, seeing 17 immersed, and Chicago's honored architect, present here tonight, John M. Van Osdel, was one of them."

HOW CHICAGO GOT ITS NAME Traced to Indian Phrase Meaning 'Great'

Apologetic historians have often tried to persuade themselves, and their readers, that Chicago did not receive its name from the lowly wild onion or crow garlic, known in botanical circles as the allium vineale and sometimes incorrectly called the skunk-weed. Others, more realistic, have admitted that the name was adapted from an Indian word describing this plant but have pointed out further that the Indians themselves derived this word from a more distinguished phrase meaning "great" or "strong."

There is considerable evidence to support this theory. Charts and records of early explorers abound with names such as Checagou, Chigagou, and Checaguar, and they are found in places between Green Bay and Mississippi. In De Soto's account of his journey of 1539, he mentions an Indian settlement named Chicaca in what is now Mississippi, and he refers to the Mississippi river as the Chicagua. The Mississippi still bore a similar name in a map made in 1673 for Louis XIV.—the Chicagua.

Meaning in Dialect

This name, variously spelled, has been applied to a number of tributaries of the Mississippi, including the Illinois, Kankakee, and the Des Plaines rivers; and also, probably in error, to the Calumet and St. Joseph rivers. In the dialect of the Illinois Indians the word meant "great" or "strong," derived from gitchi, or chi, meaning great, and kago, meaning thing. This would explain its application to the Mississippi and perhaps its tributaries,

and to any other geographical feature which might be called "great" or "big."

It was a roughly synonymous Algonquin phrase, "meche," meaning great, and "sepi," meaning water, that gave the river its present name. The meaning "great" or "strong" would likewise explain the name given to a line of Illinois chiefs. As early as 1674 Marquette encountered a chief named Chichagouessou. Later reports give the name as Checagua, and in 1725 a chief by this name was taken for a visit to Paris. There is no record of his reactions.

Applied to Portage

La Salle in 1682 found the name applied to the Des Plaines river and to the portage connecting it to the south branch of the Chicago river. He frequently mentions the "portage de Chicagou [Checagou or Checagou]." Since the Des Plaines is a branch of that "great thing," the Mississippi, some writers have concluded with patriotic satisfaction that the city's name means "great" or "strong."

They overlook several facts. First, La Salle in 1682 found the name applied to the Des Plaines river and to the portage connecting it to the south branch of the Chicago river. He frequently mentions the "portage de Chicagou [Checagou or Checagou]." Since the Des Plaines is a branch of that "great thing," the Mississippi, some writers have concluded with patriotic satisfaction that the city's name means "great" or "strong."

The annual precipitation average as indicated in charts above showed 6.51 inches during winter, 9.94 inches in spring, 9.53 inches in summer and 7.15 inches in the autumn. The figures for both temperature and precipitation are based on three month seasons—January, February, and March for winter, April, May, and June for summer, and so on.

Lake Michigan the Key

Weather bureau officials say Lake Michigan is the principal reason that Chicago has a healthful climate, with an absence of prolonged hot and cold waves. They say the lake wind is a powerful factor in determining the temperatures experienced during certain seasons. Air moving over a great expanse of water tends to acquire the temperature of that surface. If warmer, the air will lose a portion of its heat to the water by conduction; if colder, it will receive a portion of the water's heat by the same method. Chicago and vicinity have not been

VARIETY MARKS CITY'S WEATHER Lake Michigan Key Factor in Healthful Climate

BY STEPHEN TOOLEY

Chicago's climate is a healthful one.

Its snowstorms and cold waves stir the blood to renewed activities. Its rainfall is ample and well distributed. Its humidity is moderate. There are long periods of sunny weather.

A survey of statistics of the city's weather over the last 100 years reveals the following seasonal temperature averages: winter, 28.9 degrees; spring, 56.5 degrees; summer, 69.5 degrees, and autumn, 40.2 degrees.

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Where First Opera Was Heard



John B. Rice's theater at Randolph and Dearborn sts., where the first opera heard in Chicago, "La Sonnambula," was given. The theater, built in 1847, burned three years later. (Chicago Historical Society)

without their freakish weather despite the counteracting influence of Lake Michigan. Records disclose that on May 23, 1896, a tornado struck that portion of the city known as Norwood Park, another hit sections of the county on April 6, 1912, and three more struck on March 28, 1920.

Some of the long range statistical records for the city follow:

Longest consecutive period with zero or lower, 86 hours, from 1 a. m., Feb. 8, to 2 p. m., Feb. 11, 1899.

Greatest number of consecutive days with a minimum of zero or lower, 10, from Jan. 4-13, 1912; with maximum of 90 degrees or higher, from July 18-25, 1934, averaging 95.8 degrees and with an extreme of 105 on July 24, the highest on record in Chicago.

The greatest number of zero days in a winter, 25, in 1884-1885 and 1935-1936.

Greatest number of 90 degree days

or higher in a year, 34, in 1944; least, none in 1875 when the highest was 89 degrees.

The lowest temperature ever recorded here was 23 degrees below zero on Dec. 24, 1872.

Greatest Snowfall

Greatest depth of snow on the ground was 24.7 inches on Jan. 13, 1918, after two storms. The greatest snowfall in one storm was 19.2 inches on March 25-26, 1930; greatest in 24 hours, 14.9 inches on Jan. 30, 1939.

The driest crop season [April-September] was in 1897 with 10.68 inches of rain. The wettest was in 1885 with 29.06 inches.

The average date of the last killing frost in spring is April 16. It has occurred as late as May 25. This was in 1882. The average date of the first killing frost in autumn is Oct. 21 but it has occurred as early as Sept. 20. This was in 1896.

FIRST THEATER STARTS CURRENT THAT FLOWS ON

'Pilots' Needed to Get Thru Opening Rush

BY CHARLES COLLINS

When the first issue of THE TRIBUNE was printed 100 years ago, Chicago's first permanent theater was almost ready to open. See the historical marker as you pass along the south side of Randolph st., at the corner of Dearborn [United Artists theater].

This was John B. Rice's theater, formally named the Chicago but also called Rice's and merely the Theater. There had been earlier adventures in the drama, but they were short lived. Rice's establishment of a playhouse specially built for professional use in the arts of entertainment started a current in the life of Chicago that has never stopped. Moreover, its main stream has continued to flow up and down that street.

Opens Its Doors

Eighteen days after THE TRIBUNE's birth, ["A very creditable typographical appearance," according to a rival newspaper] Rice's theater opened its doors to an audience. The event was reported by the Chicago Democrat in this manner:

"Last night our Theater opened with a rush. Those who were late needed a pilot to get thru the crowd. If Mr. Rice intends keeping his present popular company, the large new building so honorably and enterprisingly erected by him will have to be enlarged."

"Dan Marble is here, and everybody knows him." [He had figured in a brief engagement at the Rialto, a crude adaptation of storage space above an auction hall, in 1842].

"Mrs. Hunt made herself known last night, and never will be forgotten. Rice proved himself a splendid actor, as well as theater builder."

"In fine, Chicago can boast of being ahead of any city of twice its size in the theatrical line. Those who doubt this had better go and see; and go tonight, and go early too; and those who can't go early should go late."

[Late arrivals would at least see the comedy or farce that followed the serious drama of the evening, and perhaps the song-and-dance turns that separated the double bill.]

A Frame Structure

Rice's theater was a frame structure, 40 feet wide and 80 feet deep, with seating arranged in "dress circle," "parquette" [a misspelling for "parquet"], and two tiers of boxes. Such designations are practically obsolete now. To interpret: The dress circle is the most favorable area of seating on the main floor; the parquette is back of the dress circle and was often separated from it by a rise in the floor and a railing.

The box-office scale at Rice's during its first season was: Dress circle, 50 cents; parquette floor, 25 cents; second tier of boxes, 25 cents. Performances began at 8 o'clock. The management's advertising called attention to this rule:

"No females admitted unless accompanied by a gentleman."

There was an excellent reason for this discrimination. In that period prostitutes visited theaters when they were tired of drumming up trade on sidewalks. They had given the theaters of the east a bad name—so much so that "museum" and "opera house" were often used as substitute names to comfort the respectable customers.

A Curious Omission

The Democrat's report of the opening of Rice's theater failed to mention the titles of the two plays that were staged on that auspicious occasion—a curious omission which offends the modern nose for news.

The first issue of THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE is not available to researchers, but other sources supply the title of the evening's most popular item: "The Four Sisters," a farce by William Bayle Bernard, first staged in 1831. (There are more than 100 titles on this playwright's record.) This piece gave Mrs. Hunt, leading woman of Rice's stock company, a quadruple role. By her second marriage she became Mrs. Mossop, by her third, Mrs. John Drew. She became the mother of John Drew and the grandmother of Lionel, John, and Ethel Barrymore.

The chief item on the second night's bill was "The Stranger," a drama which had started Chicago's stage history, late in the fall of 1837, in the fitted-up dining room of the Saganash tavern. This was a work of international popularity, borrowed by the Anglo-American stage, usually without credit, from the German dramatist, August von Kotzebue.

An Immediate Success

Rice's theater was an immediate success. The programs of its first season included numerous plays whose titles mean nothing to this generation, and also "Hamlet" and "Romeo and Juliet," given by the stock company with the widely known tragedian, James E. Murdoch, as guest star. The next year Rice brought Edwin Forrest and Julius Brutus Booth to Chicago for engagements as guest stars in impressive repertoires—"Hamlet," "Macbeth," "King Lear," "Richard III," "The Merchant of Venice," "Richelleu," "The Lady of Lyons," "Jack Cade," "Damon and Pythias," "The Gladiator."

Chicago's first permanent theater was destroyed by fire on July 30, 1850, at a performance of the opera "La Sonnambula," without loss of life. Rice promptly built another of brick, on Dearborn st. between Randolph and Washington, which opened on Feb. 3, 1851. He retired from its direction in 1857, in which year it was supplanted, as Chicago's leading playhouse, by McVicker's, founded by a former member of his company.

Rice thrived in real estate activity after closing his theatrical career, and also became a prominent political figure. He was mayor of Chicago from 1865 to 1872 (two terms). He was elected to congress in 1873.