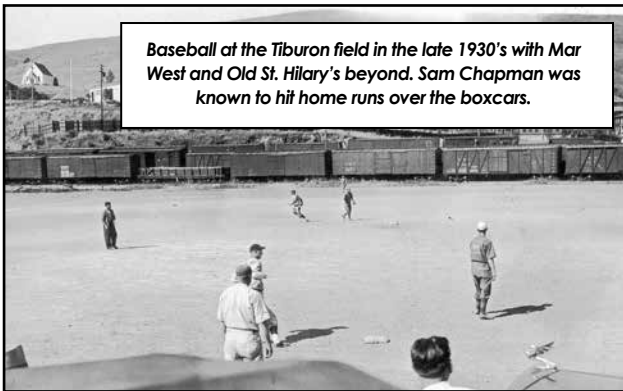


BASEBALL ON THE TIBURON PENINSULA

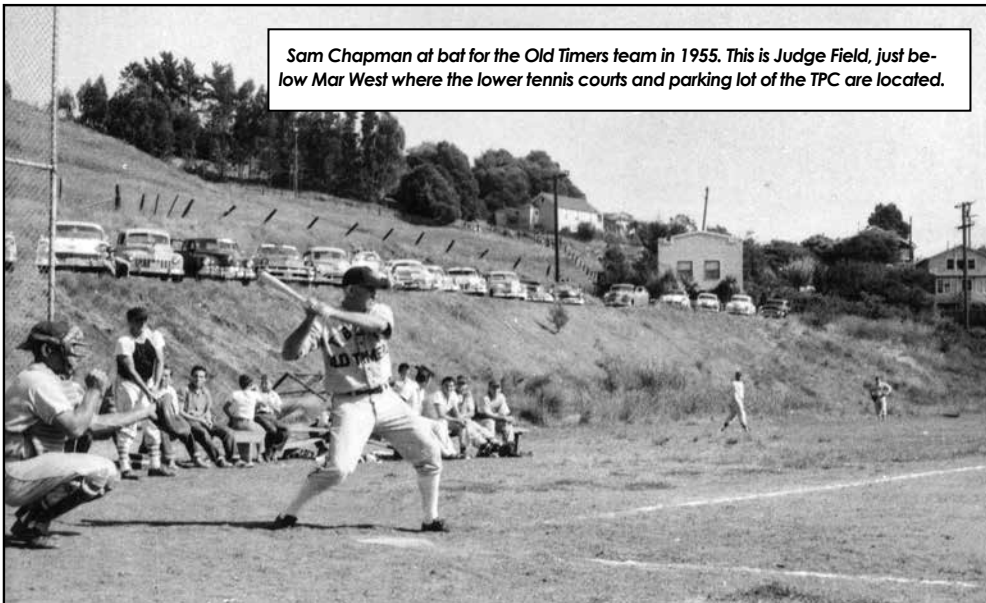
By Susan Cluff



Corinthians team pose at the far end of Belvedere in 1913. San Rafael Ave. and the Lagoon are just behind them.



Baseball at the Tiburon field in the late 1930's with Mar West and Old St. Hilary's beyond. Sam Chapman was known to hit home runs over the boxcars.



Sam Chapman at bat for the Old Timers team in 1955. This is Judge Field, just below Mar West where the lower tennis courts and parking lot of the TPC are located.

Baseball was the sport in early Belvedere and Tiburon, as it was every town in across America. Starting in the 1890s, Bay Area newspapers reported box scores of local town teams and fierce rivalries began. Belvedere's first "boys of summer" were the Corinthians, who played against teams from San Quentin, Mill Valley and Fort Baker at the practice field on the northwest end of Belvedere Island. In Tiburon, the Sharks, Tiburon Reds, the Time Cards, then Railroaders and NWP's played in weekly games near the trestle where Blackie's Pasture is and on the flats across from Main Street below Old St. Hilary's. In 1907, Sausalito News reported that the Sharks skunked the Northwestern Pacific team 15-1, rolling over and flapping their left "fins" as they crossed the bases.

In the 1920s and '30s, more than a dozen semi-pro town teams from Tiburon, Mill Valley, Fairfax, San Rafael, Fairfax, San Rafael and Novato played regularly. The Tiburon Pelicans were sponsored by local merchants, gathering additional monies by passing the hat in the stands. Home games were every other Sunday afternoon and friendly wagers were made at Jerry's barbershop on Main Street where weekly game information was displayed on a sign next to the barber pole. If the local team won, spectators would follow their team down to the bars to celebrate. In Both Sides of the Track, Carol Creighton Ericson (1914-1996) recalled going to Tiburon games to watch her brothers play. "There was fighting, betting, and drinking at the baseball game. But it was a lot of fun. You just didn't miss that!"

Top-level local high school talent, such as Sam Chapman (1916-2006), the future Philadelphia Athletics' slugger and outfielder, and NY Yankees pitcher Art Schalloch (1924-) played with the Pelicans. Marin baseball teams got to be so good, that the top teams chose their best players and formed all-star squads, inviting other top amateur clubs to play against them. At the end of the season, the local team always played the Tiburon Old Timers in a much-anticipated annual showdown.

In 1950, Judge Field opened across from the Southern Marin Recreation Center (now the Tiburon Peninsula Club), on land donated by William C. Judge. After the demise of the Pelicans, softball was the game, with the two local fire volunteer departments becoming active rivals after their first challenge game in 1964. Little League also played there with Tiburon and Strawberry fielding youth teams with names like the Dolphins, Green Frogs and the Crickets. Local parents and volunteers kept fields mowed and free of weeds, found sponsors, coaches and umpires, ran snack bars and held fundraisers to buy bats and balls, much as they do today for Tiburon Peninsula Little League and Girls' Softball.

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