

# Butler and Baseball

by Tom Riley



BUTLER STARS — 1908

Front Row, left to right: Joseph Rodda, George Trumbour Jr., Wm. Mullaly, Roderick Cullen, Thomas Trumbour. Back Row: James Yatman, Wm. Sanford, Merine DePuyt, James Whritenour, Garrett Mabey, Israel Paddock, George Trumbour Sr.

Butler and baseball go back a long way. Organized teams were playing teams from Bloomingdale, Pompton Lakes, Paterson and other local towns in the late 1800's, long before the town was officially incorporated in 1901.

One of Butler's more notable teams was the Butler Stars. They were organized in 1900 by George Trumbour, who served as their first manager. An article on the front page of the May 12, 1905 *Butler Argus* notes that the Stars defeated the People's Park team from Paterson 7-6 in their first game of the season. The Stars were ahead 7-0 until the eighth inning when their opponents exploded for six runs. The *Argus* reported that at the end of the game, "...our boys threw their hats in the air and shouted for joy over their victory." A classic photo was published in the February 22, 1989 *Suburban Trends* showing the crowd rushing the field at a Stars game over an argument at the "old ball field in Butler." *The Days That Used to Be* article included a picture of the field site today, which is under the parking lot of the town's municipal complex on Ace Road. The Butler Centennial History Book has another photo of the Stars playing at the same field in 1906.

The Stars appear to have disbanded some time after 1908, but shortly before that, a group of younger players formed the Butler Field Club. Many of the former Stars joined this new team. Two other teams were organized at about the same time; one was the Orioles managed by George Sebald; the other team was sponsored by the Pequannoc Rubber Company, with Charles

Cook and Irving Fredericks as managers. Sometime between 1909 and 1913, all three of these teams disbanded. About the same time, the Butler Stars were reorganized by Thomas Trumbour, brother of the original Stars manager. The new Butler Stars played for four or five years in the North Jersey Baseball League.

In 1935 the Butler Baseball Club was organized, and former Baltimore Oriole player John L. Upton was persuaded to manage the team. In addition to regularly scheduled games, they played exhibition games against show teams like the House of David, Kenny's, Detroit Clowns, and the Wonder Bakers. They played their last game in 1939.

As the town grew, finding a place to play was always a problem for Butler teams. One field after another was lost to home builders. It wasn't until the field behind Butler High School was built in 1927 that local teams had a secure hometown field.

In 1946, the Bloomingdale Troopers came to play at DeLazier Field. In 1948, they were a Class D farm team of the Cleveland Indians and played in the North Atlantic Professional Baseball League. When a group of local businessmen and fans purchased the team, they formed a stock company called Athletic Enterprises, Inc. Even though the team played in Bloomingdale, Athletic Enterprises was led by managers and employees of the Butler Hard Rubber Company. Thomas Mace, Bill Van Kirk, and John Shauger played key roles in the history of the team. As stated in the *Butler 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Book*, many fans from Butler and Bloomingdale considered the Troopers "our team."

