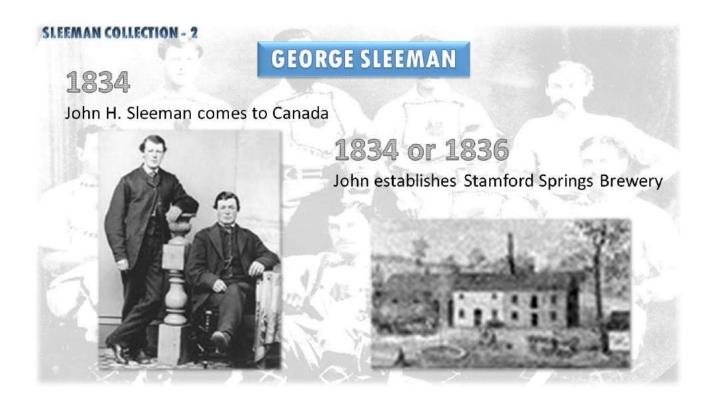
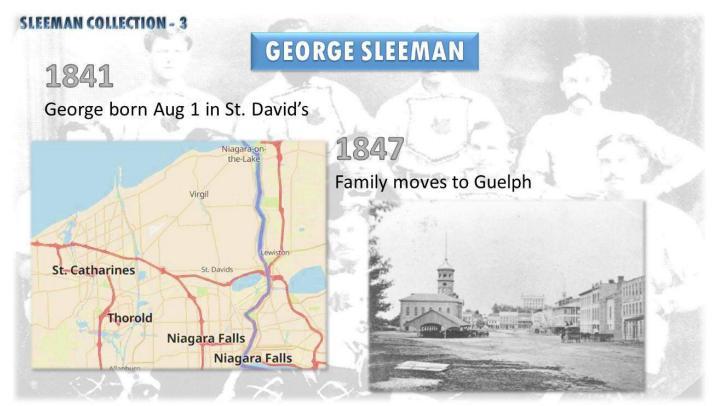


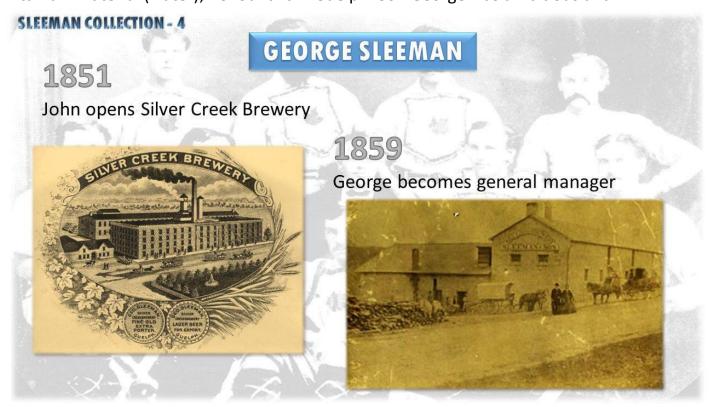
Thank you to the organizers for the opportunity to share with you some snapshots from a detailed inspection of the baseball component of the Sleeman Collection. There's a lot to get through, beginning with a little about the man responsible for the collection.



The story starts with John H. Sleeman, who comes with his wife and four children to St. David's in Upper Canada, now part of Niagara-on-the-Lake. There he established his first brewing operation. George was the first of his children born in Canada. John's 'product' was



being affected by heavy pollution in the Niagara River, so John sought a cleaner source of a vital raw material (water); he found it in Guelph. Son George was ambitious and



enterprising, becoming General Manager at the age of 18, and a partner 6 years later. He

#### **SLEEMAN COLLECTION - 5**

1863

Marries Sarah Hill



# **GEORGE SLEEMAN**

1867

Father retires; George takes over brewery



married in 1863, a union that would produce 7 sons and 5 daughters. His father retired in 1867, at which point George took over operation of the brewery.

### **SLEEMAN COLLECTION - 6**

1876

**Elected to Town Council** 



# **GEORGE SLEEMAN**

1880

Elected first mayor of Guelph

#### CIVIC ELECTIONS.

Full Returns of the Polling.

There has seldom, if ever, been so little stir over a municipal election in Guelph. as there was over the one on Monday. Although there did not seem to be an unusual hum about the polling booths or in the city in consequence of the elections a comparison shows that the votes polled were not less on an average than at the elections last year. The polling at the subdivisions in the different wards will be found in detail below:—

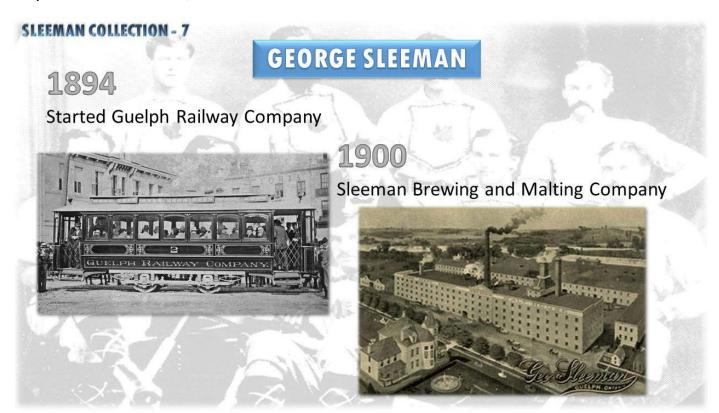
Mayor,—George Sleeman, elected by ac

Guelph Mercury, Jan 06 1880

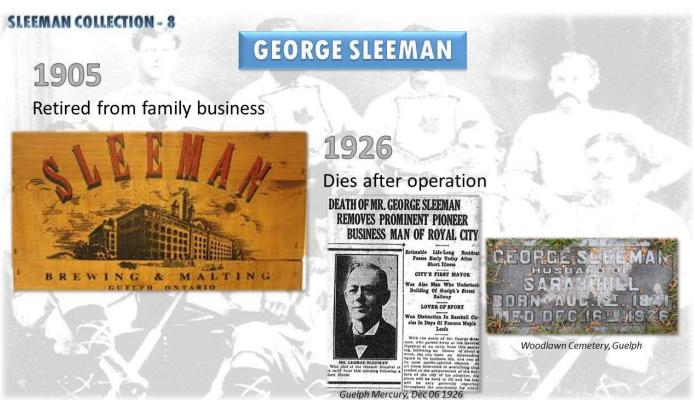


He began his political pursuits in 1876, being elected to town council. Four years later, Guelph, now a city, elected George by acclamation its first mayor; he would be elected

mayor four more times, the last in 1905.



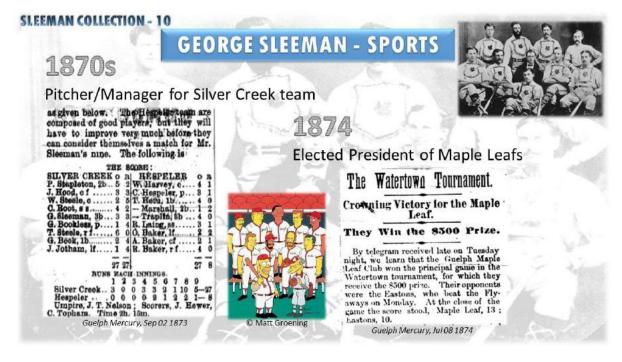
His business ventures prospered, as in 1894 he founded the Guelph Railway Company, featuring electric streetcars. And in 1900 his Silver Creek Brewery was renamed the Sleeman Brewing and Malting Company.



Upon George's retirement in 1905, his son George Alfred Sleeman took over the brewery. In 1926, at the age of 85, he went into the hospital for an obstructed bowel, but he died after the operation (having first refused ether!). It was said that while in hospital, he would regale nurses and doctors with vivid memories of his baseball days.

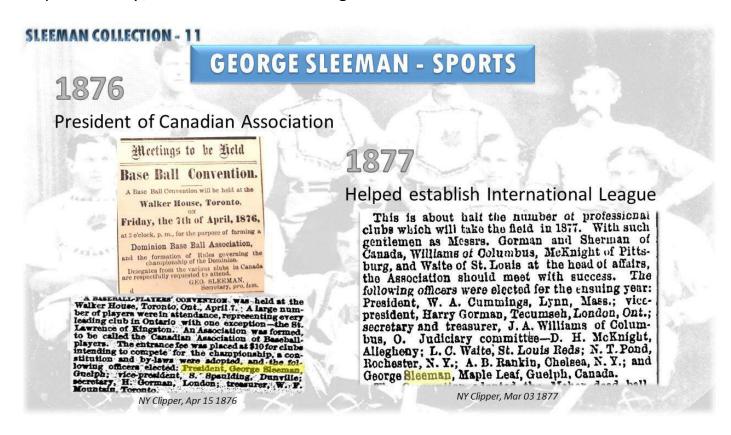


In addition to his brewing business and his political career, he was very much invested in local and international sports. As a younger man, he pitched for both the Maple Leafs and Silvercreeks. The Maple Leafs would become increasingly successful, and in 1869, then managed by George, they finally wrestled the Silver Ball Trophy away from the Woodstock Young Canadians.



Into the 1870s, he would take over as manager of the Silver Creek team, and much like another famous entrepreneur, Mr. Montgomery C. Burns, he would hire good local players to work at the brewery. He was in fact one of the first managers (or perhaps the first) to import American players.

In 1874, after being elected President of the Maple Leafs (by now, the two teams had merged), the Leafs entered a tournament in Watertown, NY and would defeat all comers, including the Ku Klux Klan team from Oneida, NY. They were crowned World Champions, although the crowning drew this response from one NY paper: "The idea that we should congregate here in Watertown, the amateur champions of base ball in the U.S., and then that a Canada club should come over, beat them all, and carry off the first prize is simply disgusting! Now let us adopt cricket as the national game and go over and clean out the Kanucks." This didn't prevent the Maple Leafs' team photograph from being featured in Harper's Weekly; it also serves as the background for this slideshow.



He played only sporadically in the 1870s, focusing more on management. He formed (and became President of) the first professional Canadian baseball league, the Canadian Association of Base Ball Players. A year later, he helped establish the International Association, to which both Guelph and London moved, although Guelph did not finish out the season.

George would later return as President of another all-Canadian Association, the Canadian

# SLEEMAN COLLECTION - 12

# **GEORGE SLEEMAN - SPORTS**

## TOOD

## President of Canadian League

A BASEBALL-PLAYERS' CONVENTION was held at the Walker House, Toronto, Ont., April 7. A large number of players were in attendance, representing every leading club in Ontario with one exception—the St. Lawrence of Kingston. An Association was formed, to be called the Canadian Association of Baseball-players. The entrance fee was placed at \$10 for clubs intending to compete for the championship, a constitution and by-laws were adopted, and the following officers elected: President, George Reseman, Guelph; vice-president, S. Spaulding, Dunville; secretary, H. Gorman, London; treasurer, W. P. Mountain, Toronto.

NY Clipper, Apr 15 1876

1999

#### Elected to Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame

Name: George Sleeman

Induction year: 1999

Born (date, year, place): August 1, 1841 in St. Davids, Upper Canada

Died (date, year, place): December 16, 1926 in St. Davids, Upper Canada

Primary Position: Builder

After being educated in Guelph and St. Davids, George Sleeman became the general manager of his father's Silver Creek Brewery at age 18. Just six years later, he was a partner, and by 1868, the enterprising 27-year-old owned the company. Sleeman was also passionate about baseball, pitching for the Guelph Maple Leafs in 1863. In 1869, his Leafs squad captured the Canadian

championship, downing teams from Ingersoll and Woodstock in

a three-day competition.

http://baseballhalloffame.ca/blog/2009/09/17/george-sleeman/

League, which lasted only lasted one year. He was elected to Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame as a builder.

Throughout his life, he'd remained a very active and busy man, as evidenced by his varied

## **SLEEMAN COLLECTION - 13**

# **GEORGE SLEEMAN - SPORTS**

~1883-85

## President of Guelph Bicycle Club

There was a large attendance at a meeting held in the Wellington Hotel last night, called for the purpose of forming a bicycle club. The following officers were elected: President, Geo. Sleeman; vice-president, Dr. McPhatter; sec.-treas., Dr. Allan,

Guelph Mercury?, ~May 16 1883

#### Miscellancous.

Mr. Geo. Sleeman has been elected President and Mr. J. G. Harris, Secretary. Treasurer, of the Royal City Bicycle Club, Guelph.

Hamilton Times, Apr 20 1885

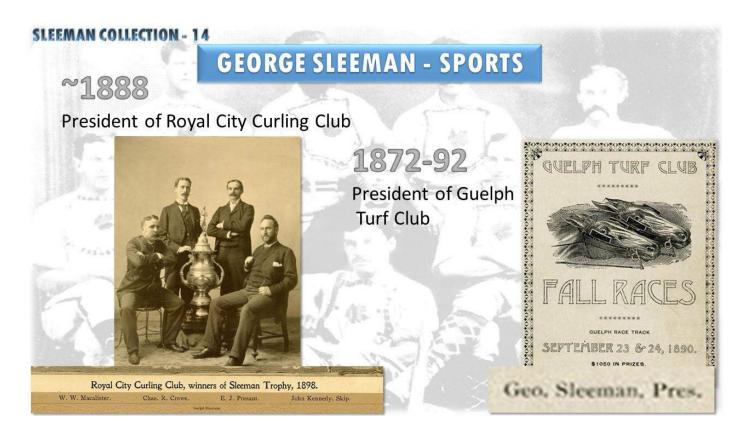
1886-1906

## President of Guelph Rifle Association

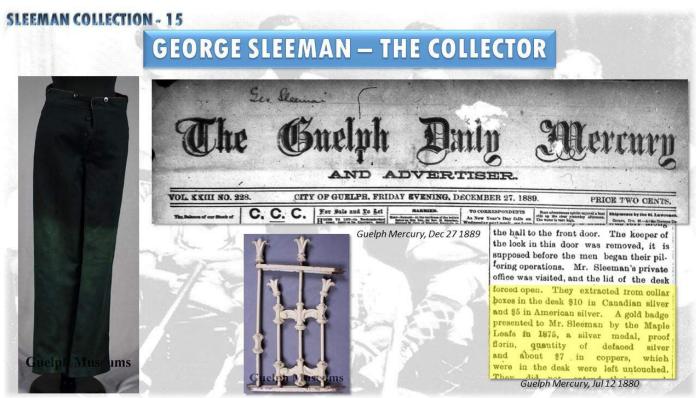
At the League Rifle match on Saturday No. 1 team Guelph did some good shooting. The total for the 10 men of No. 1 team amounted to 901 points, Chas. Crowe heading the list with 100 points out of a possible 105, the lowest score of the team being 78: This being the first season of No. 2 team they shot this match with two men short. This puts Guelph nearly at the head of the list.

NAME. 200 vds	TI	400	T'I	500	TI	GT
C. Crowe4455554	32	3555555	33	5555555	35	101
W. Young3554454	30	5555545	34	5355555	33	97
C. Armstrong5454543	30	5455535	32	5555545	34	96
J. Ogg445454	-90	4245555	30	5545545	34	93
Geo. Sleeman 5245445.	. 29	5545554	33	5354354	31	93
G. A. Sleeman 5534443	28	5455455	33	3345443	26	87
J. Gilchrist4545443	29	5545555	34	4439593	28	86
E. A. Sleeman	30	5565455	34	3232255	22	86
J. Goldre4555533	30	5554553	32	5252432	23	85
R. Holton2452514	\$6	4034545	27	3355522	25	78
1. 6	-	11.5			-	-
1. 1	294		322		255	901

and numerous interests. He'd been President of both the Guelph Bicycle Club and the Guelph Rifle Association, and of both the Royal City Curling Club and the Guelph Turf Club.



Perhaps in keeping with this high level of activity, or perhaps because of it, he kept or collected a great deal. He saved a pair of his pants (a shirt and jacket are also on display at



the Guelph Museum). He saved a section of his fence. He was an avid coin collector. And thankfully, he seemed to have kept many issues of the *Guelph Mercury*.

But he kept much more than that, and it's all part of the Sleeman Collection. The Collection was stored at the Western University Library until July of 1988, when it was moved to its

#### **SLEEMAN COLLECTION - 16**

# **SLEEMAN COLLECTION OVERVIEW**

- → to 1988: Western University
- → 1988 to present: University of Guelph Archival and Special Collections

#### CONTENTS (from U of G website):

 Collection consists of correspondence, photographs, account books, Maple Leaf Baseball, miscellaneous files relating to Sleeman Family (including genealogy), newspaper articles, John H. Sleeman, George Sleeman Sr., John W. Sleeman and the Sleeman Brewery in Guelph, Ontario.

#### **FXTFNT:**

• 5 metres of textual material; 4,213 photographs; 103 graphic items such as posters, certificates, artwork; 12 rolls (11,000 ft.) of 35 mm cinefilm; 80 video elements; 104 audio elements; 25 artifacts such as bottles with labels, medals; and 60,021,460 kb of electronic records.

#### **TYPES OF MATERIALS:**

- Artifacts
- · Audiovisual Material
- · Photographs
- Published Material
- · Unpublished Material and Manuscripts

present home at the University of Guelph.

This is the Collection description from the University of Guelph; I won't go through it, because the collection does contain materials pertaining to the various non-baseball facets

## SLEEMAN COLLECTION - 17

# **SLEEMAN COLLECTION DATABASE**



1876 Canadian Association & 1885 Canadian League



x 1334 (962 items)

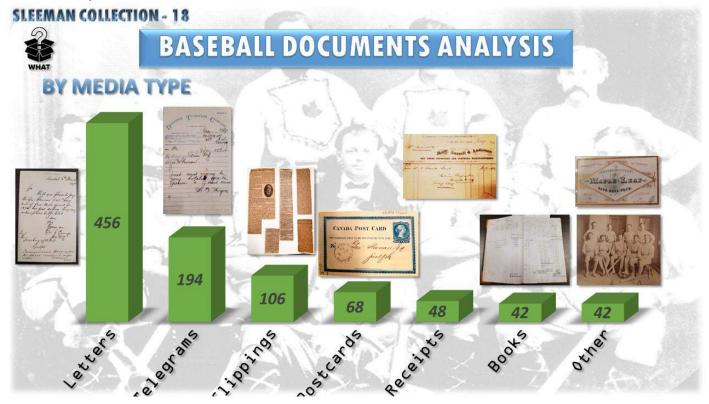


Image -	Sender	- Role	01 -	Catego -	Location		Date .	Pi v	Sub-Category -	Description • Person 1 •	Person 2	
B15F10 (1884) 001				Folder				32		Sleeman Family Maple Leaf Baseball Club 1884 [32 ite		
B15F10 (1884) 002	Little, J.H.	Secre	etary	Letter	Guelph		24 Jul? 1884		Game (Team)	"The Royal Oaks would like to know if you are going to Little, J.H.		
B15F10 (1884) 003	Dier, W.A.	Man	ager	Letter	Saginaw		20 Mar 1884		Game (Team)	"Can you give us game in Guelph guarantee of sixty Dier, W.A.		
315F10 (1884) 004	Little, W.J.			Letter	Guelph		02 May 1884		Equipment	"Enclosed find four dollars for the use of grounds yest Little, W.J.		
315F10 (1884) 005	Trebilcock, A.E.			Telegram	London		22 May 1884		Game (Team)	"Can your club play Atlantics of London on twenty sixth Trebilcock, A.E.		
315F10 (1884) 006	Jones, John			Telegram	Hamilton		18 Jun 1884		Game (Team)	"We would like to arrange a games on Saturday twent Jones, John		
B15F10 (1884) 007	Sangster, A.			Letter	New Haven,	Co	29 Feb 1884	1/2	Player	" I am going to play ball this season I have got letter Sangster, A.	Hunter, Billy	

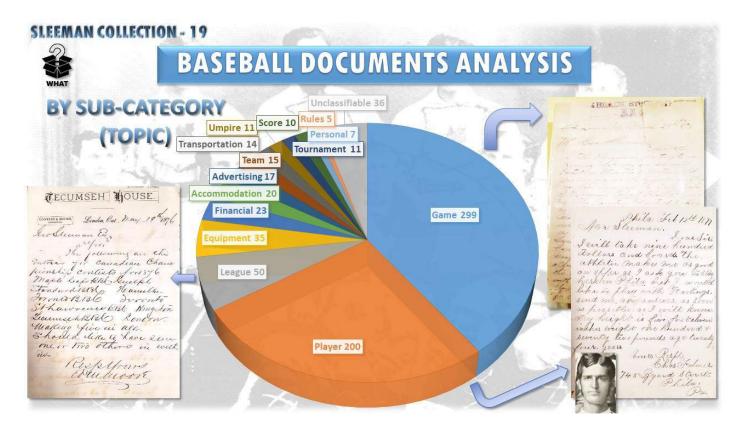




of his life (politics, brewing, etc.), but thankfully to baseball as well. We'll take a closer look at this last portion of the collection.



The above graphic categorizes the baseball documents by media type. The Other category includes photographs, envelopes, tickets, and advertisements. There are a total of 962 baseball-related items in the collection.



The pie chart above summarizes the 962 documents by topic, with Game and Player topics predominant. Here is a **Game** example, a letter dated March 29, 1883 from St. Louis:

"Mr. Geo. Sleeman:

Dear Sir:

I take pleasure in writing to you knowing that you are so well posted in Base Ball matters that you can give me the desired information. We have organized the only club of Professional <u>Colored</u> Ball Players in the Country and entered booking an extended tour, knowing that a colored club will be a novelty as well as a New Enterprise. Now which we want to know is Base Ball a success in Canada and could we arrange games that would pay us...

Yours respectfully, Henry Bridgewater, manager Black Stockings BB Club [St. Louis]"

And here is a **Player** example, a letter dated February 12, 1877 from Philadelphia:

"Dear Sir.

I will take nine hundred dollars and board. The Athletic makes me as good an offer as I ask you to stay to here in Phila but I would like to play with Hastings. Send me an answer as soon as possible so I will know. My height is five foot eleven inches weight one hundred and seventy two pounds age twenty four years.

Yours respectfully,

Chas. Fulmer"

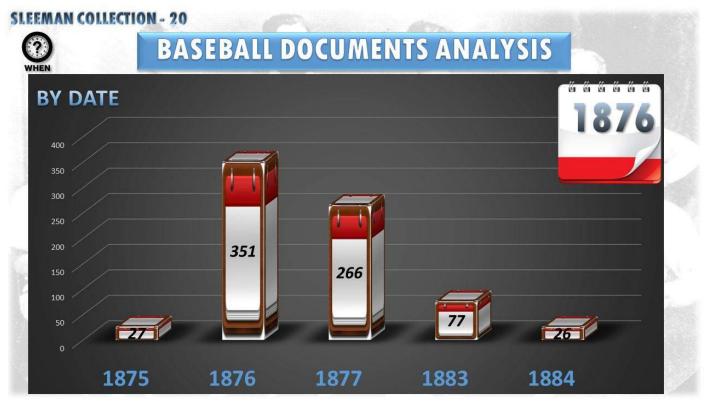
[This is Chick Fulmer, who played 11 years in the majors. Sleeman didn't bite; Fulmer played for Athletics in the League Alliance in 1877.]

The remaining sub-category topics are these:

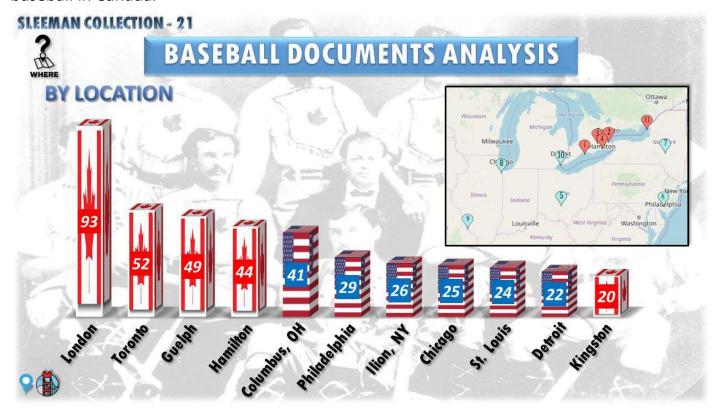
- **League**: operations of the leagues, judiciary committee communications, etc.
- **Equipment**: price lists and/or samples of baseballs, bats; use of fields/grounds.
- **Financial**: receipts for uniforms, meals, clothing, telegrams.
- **Accommodation**: e.g. hotels offering group rates for players.
- Advertising: letters regarding posters, photographs, printing.
- **Team**: postcards with lists of players under contract, etc.
- **Transportation:** e.g. telegrams from Great Western Railway offering group rates for players.
- Umpire: arranging umpires for games.
- **Tournament**: requests for details regarding tournaments.
- **Score:** relating to scores of games.
- Personal
- Rules

• Unclassifiable: hard to categorize, or vague.

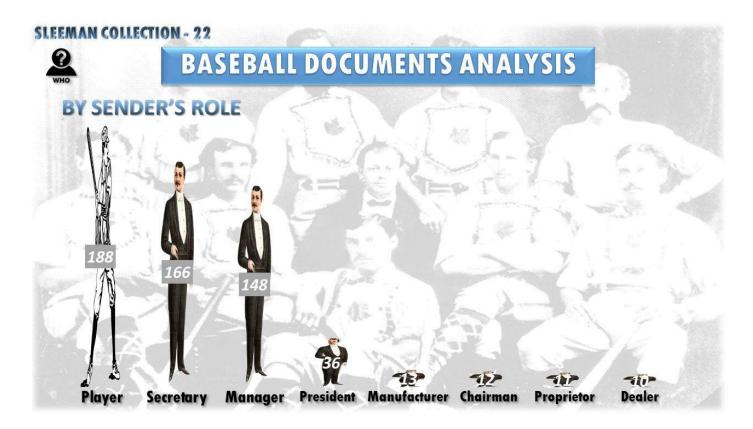
When? Nothing from 1885, but plenty from 1876 and 1877, formative years for organized



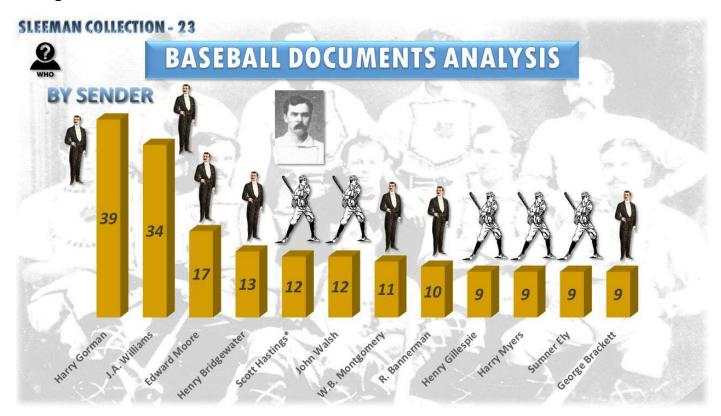
baseball in Canada.



Where? The most remote place of origin is San Francisco.



Who? On a general level, the majority of correspondents were players, secretaries or managers.

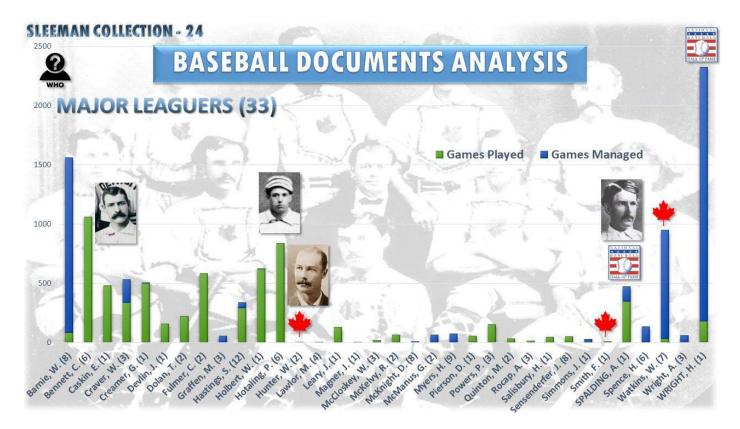


Who? On an individual level, the dozen most frequent correspondents are listed here:

Harry Gorman: Tecumsehs manager

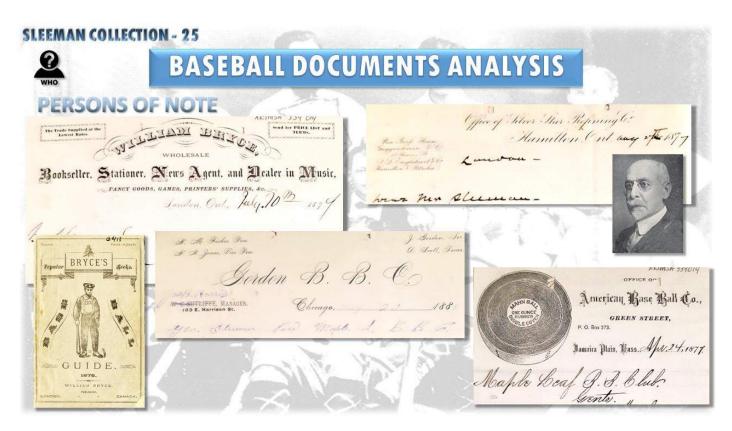
- J.A. Williams: Secretary of International League (1877)
- Edward Moore: Chairman of Judiciary Committee of Canadian Association
- Henry Bridgewater: Manager St. Louis Black Stockings
- \* Scott Hastings: Major Leaguer who played in National League in 1876 and 1877
- John Walsh: IF/OF/C for Guelph in 1875 and 1876
- W.B. Montgomery: Manager of Jackson Mutuals
- R. Bannerman: Secretary of Kingston St. Lawrence club
- Henry Gillespie: 3b who played with Guelph and Jackson
- Harry Myers: 1b from Ilion, NYSumner Ely: outfielder from NY
- George Brackett: Manager of Syracuse Stars in 1876 and Rochester

\*Scott Hastings was a catcher and outfielder who played with 7 clubs in the National Association and the National League. From Baltimore, on February 9, 1877, after a series of lengthy letters, he wrote: "Here I am again like a bad penny. My excuse is that since writing my last to you I have received letters from both Fulmer and Craver. The former can bring with him a first class pitcher whom you very probably have heard of... Now Mr. Sleeman could you secure these three men, I will forfeit the odd seventeen dollars a month if we do not win the championship of Canada."



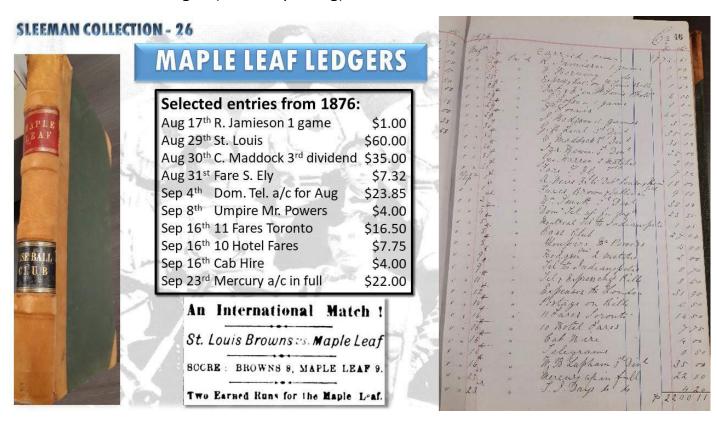
How many major leaguers? 33 in all, including 3 Canadians and 2 Hall-of-Famers. The numbers along the bottom indicate the number of documents.

- Charlie Bennett, catcher/outfielder with 4 National League clubs, including Detroit and Boston. From New Castle, PA on 24 Nov 1876: "As I have refused two different offers of \$100 I don't think it would be policy for me to go to Guelph for \$70...I would play for \$125 per month to catch some good easy pitcher what I mean by an easy pitcher is one that has command of the ball. I don't like wild pitchers."
- Pete Hotaling, center fielder with 6 clubs. From Jackson on 16 May 1876: "I must say
  that I cannot play with you this season. I have signed with another club near at home
  because my father is sickly and he wants me to get a place as near home as possible
  so I send you both contracts but I am sorry to do so because I would like to play with
  you this season but I can't this year."
- Bill Hunter, born St. Thomas, caught 2 games with Louisville (AA) in 1884. From London, 26 Feb 1877: "Dear Sir, Hearing that you are in want of a fielder for the Maple Leaf BBC this season and as I have withdrew from the Tecumseh BBC and would like to play ball in Canada next season thought I would write down to you and see if there would be any chance for me to get a situation with your team."
- Albert G. Spalding, Hall of Fame pitcher, manager, executive and sporting goods manufacturer. From Chicago, 9 Jun 1877: "I have received two letters from you this spring and I owe you an apology for not answering them before. Our first trip is so arranged that it will be impossible to give you a game then but will try and give you a date on our second trip, if possible." (The teams did not play.)



Examples are shown above of documents from other persons of note in the baseball community of the time:

- William Bryce, bookseller, stationer, news agent and dealer in music, and better-known to us as the publisher of the Canadian Baseball Guide in 1876 and 1877. From London, 8 Jul 1877: "As my baseball guide is going to press soon for 1877 you will confess a great favor on me to send by return mail, copy of the record of Maple Leaf Club for 1876 so as it will appear in the guide."
- Jacob Englehart, president of the London Tecumsehs, and later founder of Imperial Oil.
- Joseph Harris, manager of the Gordon BBC, another Chicago colored team who competed with the Black Stockings.
- L.H. Mahn, President of the American Base Ball Co., supplier of official baseballs for the National League (before Spalding) and the American Association.



Finally, the Sleeman Collection includes the ledgers of the Guelph Maple Leaf Base Ball Club. These ledgers provide a financial viewing lens through which we witness all aspects of the operations of a baseball club: player salaries/payments, umpires, transportation, accommodation, advertising, communications, and payment of opponents (in this case the St. Louis Brown Stockings of the National League, whom they played on Aug 29<sup>th</sup>, and beat 9-8!).

I'm happy to conclude the presentation with another Canadian triumph! We are indebted to

George Sleeman as the man who made it happen, and providing us with first-hand accounts to enable us to brag about it almost 150 years later!

Martin Lacoste November 2019