

# TRAVEL

SUNDAY, JUNE 15, 2003

## New York



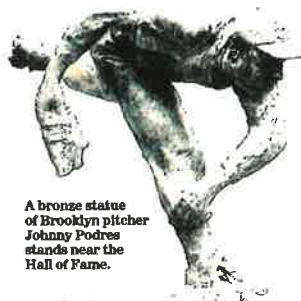
Visitors to the Baseball Hall of Fame study the plaques of the sport's greatest players. Former Oriole Eddie Murray is to be inducted July 27. ASSOCIATED PRESS

## HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE

Cooperstown and baseball's Hall of Fame are a winning team.



COOPERSTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PHOTO  
An inexpensive trolley transports visitors from parking lots to the sights downtown.



A bronze statue of Brooklyn pitcher Johnny Podres stands near the Hall of Fame.

By BO SMOLKA  
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

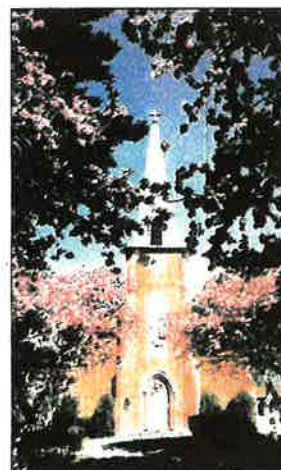
As visitors enter the main gallery at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., idle chatter quickly dies to a reverent whisper. The light streaming in from upper-level windows casts an almost heavenly aura around the bronze plaques of the 254 baseball legends enshrined there.

There is no stained glass or steeple, but make no mistake: To baseball fans, this is a sacred place, the resting place of the gods.

Hundreds of Oriole fans are expected to make the pilgrimage to Cooperstown this summer as Eddie Murray joins this pantheon of baseball immortality July 27. (Oriole fans likely will return in droves again in 2007, the first year Cal Ripken is eligible for induction.)

What those visitors will find — in addition to a celebration of baseball — is a charming lakefront town tucked amid rolling hills and farms in the shadow of the Adirondack Mountains. They'll find a sleepy, one-stoplight village seemingly frozen in a time before franchise restaurants, chain hotels and interstates.

Even someone who wouldn't know Eddie Murray from Eddie Munster can find plenty to do in Cooperstown, from a working farm museum to quaint Main Street shops and gorgeous Otsego Lake, nicknamed "Glimmerglass" by Cooperstown's most famous resident, author [See Cooperstown, 4A]



COOPERSTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
The settlement named for the family of author James Fenimore Cooper blends a respect for history with a small-town ambience. Christ Church helps contribute to the atmosphere of dignity.



## COVER STORY

# Exploring the place baseball calls home

[Cooperstown, from Page 1R]

James Fenimore Cooper.

Of course, the Hall of Fame is the main reason Cooperstown's population of 2,000 swells to as much as 20 times that in mid-summer.

And how did this blip on the map land baseball's crown jewel of a museum? Cooperstown is where Abner Doubleday, then a 20-year-old West Point cadet, allegedly invented the game in a cow pasture in 1839. Doubleday's role in the game's origin has long been the subject of vigorous debate — many of the rules he ostensibly created were already being used in a game called "town ball" — but the discovery of the first known baseball near Cooperstown in the 1930s bolstered Doubleday's case.

The hall — known as the Doubleday Baseball — was purchased by Cooperstown philanthropist Stephen Clark, who wanted to display it along with other early baseball artifacts. He teamed with Ford Frick, then the president of the National League, to establish the museum, which opened in 1939 as part of baseball's centennial celebration.

The three-story, red-brick museum, on the east end of Main Street, has expanded several times and now occupies some 60,000 square feet. Visitors this summer will get something akin to an obstructed-view seat, however — roughly one-third of the museum will be closed as part of a two-year renovation.

Defying national tourism trends, attendance at the Hall of Fame was up 6 percent last year, to about 352,500 visitors, according to spokesman Fred Horn.

Fathers and sons are a common sight at the hall, as are fans in uniform — or at least in the jersey of a favorite player.

Danette Johnson, 34, a Mount Airy native who now lives in Buckhannon, W.Va., was sporting a Cal Ripken jersey as she toured the hall recently with her husband, Steve.

"There is just so much here. Every possible record, every period of the game is represented," she said, adding that she'll be back for Ripken's induction.

Horn recommends about three hours for a thorough visit. But baseball zealots could spend much more time savoring the nostalgia that drips from the old wool uniforms, extinct stadium seats and primitive gloves that look more suited to gardening than catching a line drive.

The logical starting point is the marble-columned Hall of Fame Gallery, which features the plaques of all 254 inductees.

"That's the best of the best," said Richard Gilbert of Newfields, N.H., visiting with his father and 11-year-old son.

A display case at the front of the gallery is reserved for the most recent inductees. Early next month, artifacts from Murray and fellow 2003 inductee Gary Carter will replace those of 2002 honoree Ozzie Smith.

Walking from the gallery to the Bulpen Theater — where kids will love the daily trivia contests and multimedia presentations — you'll see enlargements of some of baseball's most cherished documents, including the original contract creating the World Series in 1903 and President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Green Light" letter to commissioner Kenesaw Landis urging baseball to continue during World War II.

(That letter, the Doubleday Baseball and some 500 other hall



Otsego Lake in Cooperstown, N.Y., is the source of the Susquehanna River, which threads its way for 444 miles to empty into the Chesapeake near Havre de Grace.



Three generations of the Dedlanko family — Steven Dedlanko Sr., his son, Steve, and grandson, Alex — admire a display on retired Baltimore Oriole Cal Ripken Jr. in the Baseball Hall of Fame.

artifacts are on their first road trip; they are part of a 10-city, four-year "Baseball as America" traveling exhibit. The exhibit will begin a four-month stay at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington next April.

The Hall of Fame library, tucked in a back corner of the first floor, is easy to miss but worth a stop. The library's treasures include the contract finalizing Babe Ruth's sale from the Red Sox to the Yankees and files on anyone who ever played in a major league game.

Requests for rare materials must be made in advance, but many other requests can be accommodated immediately. I asked for information about the Orioles of the 1970s, and a few

minutes later — after donning the requisite white gloves available at the front desk — I traveled back in time, thumbing through yellowed, brittle newspaper stories describing up-and-coming young Orioles like Bobby Grich and Terry Crowley.

Research staffer Gabriel Schechter said the library answers some 60,000 requests each year, including "a lot of calls from bars," questions from game shows and even the White House.

Politics and baseball mingled this past spring when the Hall of Fame canceled a 15-year anniversary celebration of the baseball film *Bull Durham*. Hall of Fame president Dale Petrosky benched the program because of the outspoken anti-war stance of two of

the movie's stars, Tim Robbins and Susan Sarandon.

Responding to a deluge of calls and e-mails about the cancellation, Petrosky posted a letter on the Hall of Fame Web site that said: "Politics has no place in the Hall of Fame. There was a chance of politics being injected into the Hall during these sensitive times, and I made a decision to not take that chance. But I inadvertently did exactly what I was trying to avoid."

Still, you can see Robbins' jersey from the movie, as well as props from *The Natural*, *A League of Their Own* and other baseball films in the "Baseball at the Movies" exhibit.

## Orioles' artifacts

The Orioles get their due in a

**8 a.m.:** Stop by Schneider's Bakery on Main Street for coffee and something freshly baked. Walk down to Lakefront Park and watch the morning mist dance off the lake.

**9 a.m.:** Tour the Baseball Hall of Fame. Fill out the visitor response card, and you'll earn free admission when the renovation is completed in 2005.

**Noon:** Lunch at the Doubleday Cafe. On your way, stop by Doubleday Field.

**1 p.m.:** Visit the Farmers' Museum. Ask about the kids' programs and guided tours.

**3 p.m.:** Return to the Hall of Fame for another helping of nostalgia. Less enthusiastic baseball fans can cross the street and visit the Fenimore Art Museum.

**6 p.m.:** Catch the last trip of the day on the Glimmerglass Queen tour boat.

**7 p.m.:** Get your land legs back under you with an Italian dinner at Nicoletta's on Main Street.

**9 p.m.:** Before retiring for the night, stop down into the 300-year-old taproom at the Tunnel Inn. Order a round and engage in some spirited baseball conversation.

— Bo Smolka

## An Ideal day

timeline of baseball history on the second floor, with a display case featuring artifacts from Earl Weaver, Jim Palmer, Brooks Robinson and Frank Robinson.

Longtime Orioles radio announcer Chuck Thompson, who brought those players into countless living rooms in the days before cable and ESPN, is enshrined in the hall's broadcast wing.

Babe Ruth is the only player with his own exhibit space. In addition to memorabilia from his time with the Yankees, you'll see Ruth as a 14-year-old with his teammates from the St. Mary's Industrial School in Baltimore.

One of the more popular and visceral exhibits is *Pride and Passion: The African-American Baseball Experience*. To see the hate mail Jackie Robinson received, or the locker room diary labeled "Colored Entrance," is to relive a sad era for the country and its national pastime.

Looking at the ticket stubs in the World Series display offers a lesson in baseball economics as much as in history. A lower box seat for the 1969 Orioles-Mets World Series cost \$10. By 1996, a field box in Atlanta went for \$70. A field box last year in Anaheim was \$145.

The Cooperstown collection of baseball cards numbers about 130,000, including the Holy Grail for collectors, a 1908 Honus Wagner card issued by the American Tobacco Co. Wagner didn't like the idea that children had to buy tobacco to get the cards, so he demanded the cards be recalled. Today, only about 50 remain. (One of them sold at auction in 1996 for \$640,500.) The card looks more like an oversized postage stamp than the cards I bought as a child, the ones that came with a stick of gum that had the consistency of drywall.

The cards I remember are in the [See Cooperstown, 5R]

**NIGHTS ARE FOR SWINGING**  
(AND PUTTING)

**Hersheypark**  
Discount Package!  
harrisburgpawndham.com  
800-253-0238

**CRUISE CRUISES**  
Celebrity Cruises  
Galaxy from \$849 pp  
incl. all Taxes & Fees  
1-800-236-7644  
www.cruisevacations.com

**X**  
**Lowest Prices**  
Rates Starting at \$599  
Cruise Vacation Center  
1-800-803-7245





COURTESY OF THE COOPERSTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
On a sunny day, reflections of the angles of Glimmerglass Opera shimmer in the waters of Otsego Lake in Cooperstown, N.Y.

## Great natural beauty encircles Hall of Fame

[Cooperstown, from Page 4R]

accompanying display, and I'm left to ponder my lost fortune. Is that 1970 Nolan Ryan card still in my parents' attic somewhere?

When I visited in mid-May, Cooperstown seemed to be still emerging from a long winter's nap, dusting off and sprucing up for the deluge of tourists that fuel the local economy.

In other words, I found a parking space. Parking on a Friday night in Federal Hill looks easy compared with Cooperstown in the summer. Plan to park in one of the three free lots on the outskirts of town and board the inexpensive Cooperstown Trolley, which stops at most attractions.

Besides, Main Street, with a collection of quaint shops, cafes and (one too many) baseball memorabilia stores, is just a five-block stretch from one end to the other.

Lodging, too, can be scarce — and pricey — in the summer. Cooperstown has a variety of bed-and-breakfasts, many of them century-old architectural gems. Almost every room in town, though, is booked months in advance of Hall of Fame Weekend, when fans share the cafes and tree-lined streets with baseball legends, nearly 50 Hall of Famers returned last year.

The actual induction ceremony, which is free, takes place in an

open field at the Clark Sports Center about a mile south of town. Take a blanket or lawn chair and binoculars.

If this picturesque town wasn't named for the Coopers, the Clarks surely would have earned the honor. Four generations of the Clark family are the impetus for not only the baseball museum, but also for the Otsego Hotel — a grand establishment dating to 1899 and a favorite spot for former ballplayers — as well as the Clark Sports Center, a local hospital and art and farming museums.

### 'Birthplace of baseball'

A long fly ball from the Hall of Fame sits Doubleday Field, a nearly 10,000-seat ballpark on the site of the former cow pasture where Doubleday allegedly invented the game. The original brick portion of the stadium dates to 1939.

From the grandstand, it's easy to see this town's cozy relationship with baseball. The steeple of the 196-year-old First Presbyterian Church has a bird's-eye view beyond the left-field foul pole, and houses beckon from just beyond the right-field fence. It doesn't take much to imagine Barry Bonds depositing a ball in an upstairs window. Major leaguers do, in fact, still play here in the annual Hall of Fame Game.

Camden Yarrick and his siblings have tried mightily to recreate the feel of an old-time ballpark. This place, with its brick

Getting there: Cooperstown is about 330 miles from Baltimore. You can cover most of the trip on Interstates 83, 81 and 88 before taking Route 28 for the final 20 miles. The nearest airport to Cooperstown is in Albany, 70 miles away.

Getting around: Foot travel is best. The Hall of Fame and majority of shops can be found in a five-block stretch of Main Street, and downtown parking is limited. Park in one of the three free lots on the outskirts of town and board the Cooperstown Trolley (\$2 all day for adults, \$1 children), which runs daily in the summer from 8:30 a.m. until 9 p.m.

**Attractions:**  
National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, 25 Main St., Cooperstown, NY 13326  
888-425-5633  
www.baseballhalloffame.org

Open daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Memorial Day to Labor Day, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at other times. Admission: \$9.50 for adults, \$4 for ages 6 and above, \$4 for ages 7-12; children ages 6 and under admitted free.

**The Farmers' Museum,** P.O. Box 30, Lake Road, Cooperstown  
888-547-1450  
www.farmersmuseum.org

A working farm designed to simulate life in New York state in the 1840s. Summer hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, with guided tours and kids' programs available. Admission: \$9 for adults, \$8 for ages 6 and up

and \$4 for ages 7-12.

**The Fenimore Art Museum,** Lake Road, Cooperstown  
888-547-1450  
www.fenimoreartmuseum.org

On the site of James Fenimore Cooper's former home. Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Admission: \$9 for adults, \$8 for ages 6 and up and \$4 for ages 7-12.

**Glimmerglass Opera,** P.O. Box 191, Cooperstown  
888-547-2255  
www.glimmerglass.org

A renowned summer opera in a scenic lakefront setting about five miles from the Hall of Fame. Performances on weekends and most weekdays, July 2-Aug. 26. Call for ticket information.



KERRY O. JOHNSON : SUN STAFF

and \$4 for ages 7-12.

**The Fenimore Art Museum,** Lake Road, Cooperstown  
888-547-1450  
www.fenimoreartmuseum.org

On the site of James Fenimore Cooper's former home. Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Admission: \$9 for adults, \$8 for ages 6 and up and \$4 for ages 7-12.

**Glimmerglass Opera,** P.O. Box 191, Cooperstown  
888-547-2255  
www.glimmerglass.org

A renowned summer opera in a scenic lakefront setting about five miles from the Hall of Fame. Performances on weekends and most weekdays, July 2-Aug. 26. Call for ticket information.

drawn in part by the pristine beauty of Otsego Lake, whose southern shore is two blocks from the Hall of Fame.

Paula Wilkoff, a third-generation Cooperstown hotelier who lived in Kansas for a while, said, "When I came back and saw the lake again, it took my breath away."

You can get a fantastic view from Lakewood Park on the brick path behind the Otsego Hotel. For a closer look, rent a canoe from Sam Smith's Boat Yard or board the Glimmerglass Queen, a 45-passenger tour boat that departs hourly, in season, between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. from the Lake Front Motel.

Maryland and Cooperstown are connected by more than great

**Lodgings:** Cooperstown has a variety of bed-and-breakfasts and small motels, but nary a chain hotel in sight. For Hall of Fame Weekend, most rooms have been sold out for months. One affordable summer option: The State University of New York in Oneonta, about 25 miles south of Cooperstown, rents dorm-like rooms in its Morris Conference Center, for \$55-\$95. Call 607-436-2078. Many chain hotels can also be found in Oneonta. Among the Cooperstown options:

**The Otsego Hotel,** 60 Lake St.  
800-348-6222  
www.otsego.com

A grand hotel, with the acclaimed Leatherstocking Golf Course on site. The white-columned veranda offers a stunning view of the lake. Rates from \$355, which includes dinner and breakfast and museum admissions.

**The Inn at Cooperstown,** 16 Chestnut St.  
607-547-5756  
www.inncooperstown.com

The 17-room Victorian Inn dates to 1874. Rocking chairs on the front porch evoke a simpler time. Rates from \$185, includes breakfast.

**Lake Front Motel,** 10 Fair St.  
607-547-9511  
www.lakefrontmotelandrestaurant.com

One block from the Hall of Fame, with rooms overlooking Otsego Lake. Rates from \$105.

**Cooperstown Best Western,** 50 Commons Drive  
607-547-9439  
www.bwcooperstown.com

The nearest chain hotel, this is actually 4 miles south of town. Rooms are frequently booked by teams playing at the nearby Cooperstown Dreams Park. Rates from \$135.

### Dining:

**The Doubleday Cafe,** 93 Main St.  
607-547-5662

Good, informal bar and grill fare a block from the Hall of Fame. Sandwiches cost about \$4-\$8.

**Hoffman Lane Ristro,** 2 Hoffman Lane  
607-547-7055

A chic spot with a varied menu tucked on a side street a block from the Hall of Fame. Dinner entrees start at about \$15.

**Nicoletti's Italian Cafe,** 96 Main St.  
607-547-7499

Well-regarded Italian food on Main Street. Dinner entrees from \$10.95.

**The Otsego,** 60 Lake St.  
800-348-6222

The Otsego's regal main dining room features a prix-fixe, five-course dinner for \$55. Jackets are required for men at dinner. The Hawkeye Bar and Grill is a less formal alternative.

**The Tunnel Hill Inn,** 34-36 Pioneer St.  
607-547-9611

For formal fare at this 200-year-old inn, try the James Fenimore Cooper Dining Room. Entrees start at \$16. Or head downstairs to the taproom, known by locals as "the pit." Dinner entrees run about \$15.

metal, and a homestead re-enactor bake bread in a fireplace chamber, admiring the independence of that bygone era. Then again, after visiting a circa-1940s doctor's office and seeing the box of primitive surgical supplies labeled "amputation instruments," I feel pretty good about progress.

Across the street from the farm museum is the Fenimore Art Museum, which features artifacts from James Fenimore Cooper's life and a renowned collection of Native American art. A few miles north of Cooperstown, you'll find the Glimmerglass Opera, a lakefront venue that stages summer entertainment and offers further proof that in Cooperstown, baseball is far from being the only game in town.

**Bigger! Better!**

# BAY & BEACH

Whether you're planning to go to Ocean City, Assateague or Rehoboth this season, make sure you go to SunSpot.net's Bay & Beach first. With newly added features on adventurous activities, outlet shopping and rainy day fun, Bay & Beach offers information on all the great destinations

Good things come in sevens, like a 7-night vacation for the price of 4!

**Introducing Disney's Fairytale Vacation package!**

Enjoy 7 nights in a Disney Resort, plus Theme Park tickets and specially created framed character art\*, all for the price of a 4-night package!\*\* Now with three extra