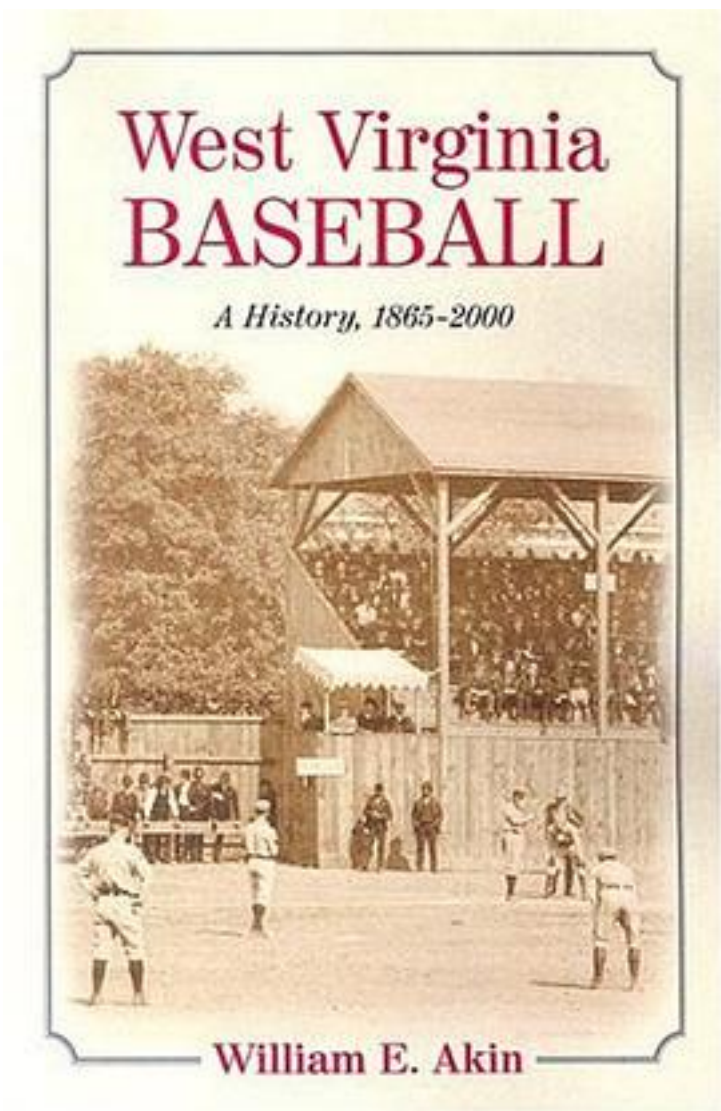


West Virginia Baseball



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A game in 1866 hosted by the Hunkidori Base Ball Club in Wheeling is considered the first "match game of Base Ball." Here, the author traces the history of minor league and independent league baseball in West Virginia. Baseball below the minor leagues has a rich and comparatively unexplored history, and West Virginia has made substantial contributions to this legacy. Chapters examine the chronological history of baseball and the larger economic and cultural changes that have influenced it. Eras include baseball as a social game (through 1873); the emergence of professional baseball (through 1895); its second boom (through 1905); the deadball era (through 1920); the Martinsburg dynasty (1914 to 1934); as a miners' sport (1920 to 1941); the Middle Atlantic League (1925-1942); the Mountain State League (1937-1942); the postwar years (1945-1955); the nadir (1955-1985); and "A Minor Miracle" (1985-2000), a chapter that heralds a comeback in the popularity of professional baseball.

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