



Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum
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Images at <http://www.bpmm.org/baseballimages.html>

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BRONX "BASE BALL" GAME TO SHOW 1864 ROOTS OF AMERICA'S "NATIONAL PASTIME:" BRING DAD

Get a lead on Fathers' Day, and transport Dad or Granddad back in time to an 1864 "match" of "base ball" complete with authentic rules and replica bats, balls, and uniforms—but no helmets or gloves!

The second annual "Take Me Out to the Ball Game: 1864," portrays the earliest roots of "base ball" and takes place Fathers' Day Weekend, Saturday, June 20, from noon to 2:30 p.m., at the mass-transit accessible Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum and gardens in Pelham Bay Park, the Bronx.

Playing by 1864 rules, the Mutual Base Ball Club of New York will take on the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club of New York, with the historic 19th-century mansion and carriage house as a backdrop. (Watch "dem" antique rippled windows, "will youse?")

This is only the second time the teams have played each other—at least in modern times. Both of the original teams were connected to the New York City Fire Department. The original New York Mutuals played from 1857 to 1876, and were named after the Mutual Hook and Ladder Company Number 1 of New York.

The original Knickerbockers, named for the Knickerbocker Engine Company No. 12, were organized in 1845 in New York, having begun informal play in 1842. They were the third organized baseball club nationally, the second in New York, and the first to adopt rules and jerseys. "The Knickerbockers were the very beginning of baseball," says the Mutuals' Tom "Big Bat" Fesolowich.

The Mutuals, also known as the Green Stockings, were immortalized as one of the teams in the famous Currier & Ives print "The American National Game of Base Ball." The club was a charter member of the first professional league in 1871, and the National League in 1876. The modern-day club, established in 1999, is known for its experienced ballists, historical accuracy and replica equipment.

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Bronx “Base Ball”--2

Bats in the 19th century were always wood and often heavier, longer and thicker in the handle. Some were 42 inches or longer, compared to the maximum-length bats of today at 34 inches. They tapered gradually from the handle to the barrel and were sometimes made without the knob on the handle. Painted rings on the barrel of the bat reflected the team's color. The uniforms were also distinct from modern day, featuring knickers; long, colorful stockings; and caps with short brims, rather than helmets.

While the Mutuals' home field is at the Old Bethpage Village Restoration on Long Island and they tour regularly, they rarely play in New York City. The Knickerbockers are a newer, less well-known team also based at Old Bethpage, and this is their second game in the City.

After the June 20 "base ball match", team members will play a game of Rounders with children—and maybe a few dads—from the audience. Rounders is a 19th-century English child's game similar to "base ball" with four bases and involving batting. The pitching configuration is different, and the opposing team can "soak" base runners out, by tossing the very soft leather-playing ball at them.

Other activities include a raffle of a signed vintage replica game ball, and tours of the mansion and carriage house. And, no, attending doesn't mean missing a home Yankees game—the Bronx Bombers will be away.

Cost for the historic games is \$15 for adults, \$5 for children 6 to 17. Children under 6 are free. Discounts for members apply. Tours of the 19th-century Bartow-Pell Mansion are free for the occasion, as is popcorn and water. Registration is requested, though not required. Severe inclement weather cancels; there is no rain date. For more, call (718)885-1461, email info@bpmm.org, or visit www.bpmm.org.

The Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, in Pelham Bay Park at 895 Shore Road, the Bronx, is mass-transit accessible by taking the 6 train to its end, Pelham Bay station, then the Westchester Bee-line #45 bus to the first stop (MetroCard accepted.) By car, Bartow-Pell is just off the Hutchinson River Parkway at the City Island/Orchard Beach exit.

A source of serenity amidst New York City's largest park, the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum is a National Historic Landmark surrounded by exceptional gardens. The furnished Bartow-Pell Mansion is a federal-style stone building with Greek Revival interiors, the sole remaining example of the type of country living that existed in the Pelham Bay Park area in the early 19th century. Annually, over 2,000 school children and their teachers participate in historic programs at the site.

At over 2,700 acres, Pelham Bay Park is best known for the 1.1-mile long Orchard Beach, the only public beach in the Bronx. The Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum is owned by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, operated by the non-profit Bartow-Pell Conservancy, and is a member of the Historic House Trust of New York City. Programs are also sponsored in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

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