

# ‘Base ball’ as played in 1800s, comes to Lewis and Clark site on May 7

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THE AMERICAN NATIONAL GAME OF BASE BALL.  
GRAND MATCH FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP AT THE EXETER HILLS, BOWDOEN, N.E.

**HARTFORD** – Underhand pitching? Strikers? Pitchers 45 feet from home? What game is this?

**HARTFORD** - It's vintage "base ball" as played 150 years ago, and the **Lewis and Clark State Historic Site** will host a game Saturday, May 7, at 10 a.m.

The gentlemen of the Vandalia Old Capitals, Springfield Long Nines, Alton Baseball Club and the Belleville Stags will compete. Visitors are invited to bring lawn chairs or blankets and enjoy the free entertainment.

Vintage base ball (it was two words back then) is played by rules and customs from long ago.

The games at Lewis and Clark will be played by rules from the 1860s, when the ball

was pitched underhand and the guy with the bat was called a striker. Balls caught on the first bounce, as well as on the fly, were outs. The distance from the pitcher to home was just 45 feet, not the modern 60 feet, six inches.

The competition was more kind than cut-throat. Players cheer good plays by the opposing team and help umpires make calls at the bases. The game closes with each team offering a cheer to the other.

The event is presented in cooperation with the Lewis and Clark Society of America.

The Lewis and Clark State Historic Site marks the spot where the Corps of Discovery wintered before launching the historic expedition to the Pacific Ocean. It is Site Number One on the National Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail and features an Interpretive Center about the Illinois role in the expedition.

It is open Wednesday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for free public tours, and is located along Illinois Route 3 a few miles north of I-270 in Hartford, Illinois.

The site is operated by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency ([www.IllinoisHistory.gov](http://www.IllinoisHistory.gov)). IHPA protects the state's historic resources, which contribute to education, culture and the economy. IHPA sites include ancient burial mounds, forts and buildings erected by settlers, and homes connected to famous Illinoisans.