

The Empire State of Base Ball

A look at the game in Upstate New York



Society for American Baseball Research

The Great County Fair, Sept. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

BURR PENFIELD'S

BASE BALL

Photograph Cards of the Haymakers



CHAS. J. FLOWERS, Short Stop.

IMPORTED AND DOMESTIC CIGARS,

No. 280 1-2 River Street, Troy, N. Y.

Hurley Bros., Printers,

265 River Street.

Troy Haymakers scorecard cover, 1872.

Cover: McClure, Albany Nationals, right, and an unknown Knickerbocker Base Ball Club player in 1866.

The Empire State of Base Ball

A look at the game in Upstate New York

Welcome to The Empire State of Base Ball. New York state has enjoyed a long and glorious involvement with the game of baseball. From the first days of the game's early development, through its rise to becoming America's National Pastime, New York state has held a unique role in the history of baseball.

It is only fitting that in this, the 150th anniversary of the founding of baseball by Abner Doubleday in the Elihu Phinney cow pasture in Cooperstown (as asserted by the Mills Commission in 1907) and the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, that this publication be produced to celebrate baseball in New

York in addition to celebrating the 19th annual convention of the Society for American Baseball Research, held in Albany, New York, June 23 — 26, 1989.

The editors of this publication would like to thank the 13 authors of the 20 articles which appear in The Empire State of Base Ball. Please enjoy these articles and the 38 photographs, many of which are being published for the first time.

Editors

Richard A. Puff — *Text*

Mark Rucker — *Photographs*

Table of Contents

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 2 | Albany Baseball: 130 Years Old and Still Going Strong,
<i>Richard Puff</i> | 32 | Johnny Evers: The Find of the 1902 Season
<i>Frank Keetz</i> |
| 5 | Bud Fowler: Black Baseball Star
<i>L. Robert Davids</i> | 35 | Nicholas E. Young
<i>David Pietrusza</i> |
| 8 | New York State Ball Clubs
<i>John Pardon and Jerry Jackson</i> | 38 | Baseball on the Lake
<i>Stephen Myers</i> |
| 14 | The 1878 Buffalo Bisons: Was it the Greatest Minor League Team of the Game's Early Years?
<i>Joseph Overfield</i> | 40 | The Canadian-American League
<i>David Pietrusza</i> |
| 17 | John Clapp and Club Base Ball in Ithaca
<i>W. Lloyd Johnson</i> | 42 | Why Cooperstown?
<i>William Guilfoile</i> |
| 19 | "We Wuz Robbed!" Syracuse in 1878
<i>W. Lloyd Johnson</i> | 44 | The Doubledays vs. the Cartwrights
<i>Edward Brooks</i> |
| 22 | The 1887 Binghamton Bingos
<i>James Delaney Jr.</i> | 49 | Silent George Burns: A Star in the Sunfield
<i>Richard Puff</i> |
| 25 | The Empire State League 1905 — 1908
<i>Edward Brooks</i> | 52 | Good Enough to Dream in Upstate New York
<i>Dick Beverage</i> |
| 26 | The First to Take it on the Road
<i>Richard Puff</i> | 54 | A Playoff to Remember: Schenectady vs. Amsterdam in 1947
<i>Frank Keetz</i> |
| 28 | Offerman Stadium in Buffalo. Hitters Welcome — Pitchers Beware
<i>Joseph Overfield</i> | 58 | Upstate New York's Ballparks
<i>David Pietrusza</i> |

Albany Baseball: 130 Years Old and Still Going Strong

by Richard Puff

The history of baseball in Albany is nearly as old as the game itself. As far back as the 1850s the game has been reported by the Albany Morning Times and the Evening Daily Times. While the city has had a somewhat insignificant role in the history of major league baseball, the state capital of New York has been a premier minor league city for nearly a century and a half.

Albany's first brush with baseball immortality is scarcely known. It occurred on July 2, 1860 when the Excelsiors of South Brooklyn traveled up the Hudson River to play the Champion club of Albany. While the game seems insignificant, it was the first time that a baseball team ever traveled a great distance to play another team. Unfortunately for Albany, the Champion club lost, 24-6.

By the late 1870s, Albany joined the professional ranks with two teams playing in the International Association. One of the teams departed in May 1879 for Rochester while the other finished the year in first place with a 27-13 record.

The 1880s brought numerous attempts to field a professional team with most failing to complete an entire season. The city tried an entry in the International Association again in 1880, but that lasted only 23 games. An Eastern Association team played just 17 games the following year. On July 27, 1885, the Albany entry in the New York State League folded after 44 games, however, the team was able to post a 24-20 record. The Albany Times the following day reported that "the baseball fever has not been severe enough this season to make it a paying investment." It's apparent that other Albany teams of this era failed for the same reasons. Albany also tried the Hudson River League in 1886, but that too was a failure.

Major League Ball

Fans in Albany from 1880 to 1882 did enjoy the only major league baseball that has ever been played in the city. The Troy Haymakers, an entry in the National League and the forerunners of the New York Giants, played five games at Riverside Park during those years. Riverside was used as Albany's home field for most of the late 19th century and parts of the early 20th century. (Albany did play some of its 1901 games at a field called Riverside Park on Bonacker's Island in Rensselaer. This was on a privately owned island across from Albany's State Street and did not have any grandstands.) The park, complete with large wooden grandstands, was located between Broadway and Quay Street and Herkimer and Westerlo streets near the Hudson River.

Success did not make an appearance for another Albany baseball team until 1891 when Albany fielded an Eastern

League team. The team placed second in an eight-team race. In fact, the season was such a success for everyone in the league, that the team owners decided to have a supplementary season with four of the top teams. Albany again finished second.

The team moved back into the New York State League in 1894 after a sixth-place finish the previous year. The move apparently did not work out as on July 5 the team disbanded, again for financial reasons. While the team was a financial disaster, it was superb on the diamond, leading the league when it departed. The failure of another city's team in 1896 helped Albany to get a franchise in the Eastern League in May 1896. But after 22 games, the team's attendance was even worse in Albany than it had been in Toronto, so it moved back to Ontario. The last year of the 19th century saw the first of 18 consecutive years for Albany in the New York State League, a very strong league throughout upstate New York which provided the majors with a number of talented players.

Championship Teams

Success, a winning record and a championship flag came during the team's third year in the league. Schenectady appeared headed for the championship throughout most of 1901. But the Senators, as the Albany club had been nicknamed almost 20 years before, managed to snatch the championship.

A victory banquet was thrown for the team at Keeler's on Maiden Lane on Sept. 6. Bill Quinlan, the team's owner, received cheer after cheer for bringing a victorious team to the city after so many disappointing failures. Team captain and third baseman Jimmy Tamsett, was presented with a silk umbrella while the rest of the team received "an elegant silver match safe suitably inscribed."

Another exciting pennant race involved the Senators in 1902. Binghamton had the championship within reach by mid-August, but while they lost eight of their last 20 games, Albany was winning 17 of its last 20 to take the flag by one-half game. A 6-0 and 4-0 doubleheader sweep of Schenectady the last day of the season clinched the team's second consecutive championship under manager Thomas O'Brien.

The Senators also were named champions of New York state as they defeated Plattsburgh of the Northern New York League in September by winning two of three games.

A pennant would not fly again in Albany until 1907 when the team, led by manager Michael Doherty, won nine of its last 10 games to take the pennant. In that stretch of victories was a game Spalding's "Baseball Guide" called "one of the

most brilliant and stubbornly contested battles on the diamond that had ever been seen." On Sept. 12, 1907, the Senators defeated the Utes 4-0 in 16 innings. Albany pitcher Lee Fairbanks went the distance allowing Utica just two hits while walking two and striking out 16. A week later, he threw 10 more shutout innings against Utica, although the scoreless game was called by rain. Doherty must have enjoyed those two games a great deal as Albany acquired Fairbanks several weeks before after Utica released him.

Most of the credit for the team's success in 1907 went to Doherty. An Albany Times-Union article after the season said: "'His (Doherty) work has been remarkable and is deserving of the greatest of credit. He is a quiet, gentlemanly player and keeps his men in line by the force of his personality without resorting to harsh words. Doherty's battle cry is 'Hang in there, boys.'"

The only excitement in Albany the next several years was the outstanding hitting of Bill "King Bill" Kay. The swift outfielder would become the first Albany player to lead his league in hitting when he batted .351 in 1909. Kay, who saw brief action with Washington's American League team in 1907, led the New York State League in hitting again in 1910 (.363) and 1912 (.341), and placed third in batting in 1911 (.337). Kay led the league again in 1915 and 1916 while playing for Binghamton. In 15 minor league seasons (playing with Albany in part or all of five seasons) Kay batted a lifetime .332.

The moving trucks backed up to Chadwick Park, the Senators' home field on Broadway in Menands, on Aug. 22, 1916 as the team moved to Reading, Pa. The team's record was not terrible at 48-58; however, financial considerations again played a part in the team's destiny.

Back to the Eastern League

Albany's chance to again play professional ball came in 1920 when the Senators took the place of the Providence team in the Eastern League to become the only league franchise outside New England. The league, a highly respected Class A loop, was formed four years before by combining the New England and Connecticut leagues. That season also was the first for the Senators under the leadership of William McCorry, who was soon to become one of the city's most popular players and managers. McCorry's only major league experience had come in 1909 when he pitched 15 innings for the St. Louis Browns. But as manager in Albany, the 5-foot, 9-inch McCorry won 944 games — more than any other Albany manager. McCorry later became the New York Yankees traveling secretary.

After McCorry managed the team to a seventh-place finish in 1920, the team nearly averaged a manager a year for several years. McCorry returned in 1925 and the only thing that forced him out of the Senators' managerial seat was the collapse of the league in 1932 making it the first Class A league to end in mid-season.

As the New York Yankees were tearing apart the American League in 1927, McCorry's men were involved in a tight pennant race. The team took first place and brought a championship banner home to Albany for the first time in 20 years. The championship brought good words about Albany as witnessed by the 1928 edition of the Spaulding's "Base-

ball Guide": "When Albany won the championship of the Eastern League more than one old-timer was gladdened because Albany represents that which was best in baseball years ago." The season also was called one of the most thrilling as the Senators were pressed into winning the season's last two games from Springfield (Mass.), which had been battling them for the lead.

The Senators then went up against the International League champion Buffalo Bisons in the Little World Series. Before 4,000 fans at Chadwick Park (named for Henry Chadwick) Albany's Yank Yordy hit a three-run homer late in the game to give the Senators a 5-3 victory in the first game. An exciting game followed the next day, but the Bisons won as 47-year-old former Senator George "Hooks" Wiltse threw a 1-0 three-hitter. Senator Jack Hopkins allowed just two Buffalo hits. Buffalo won the last game in Buffalo, 7-2, to win the series.

Another postseason series started for the Senators right after they left Buffalo. This one pitted them against second-place Springfield in the Eastern League. It was the league's first try at a championship series. The series was a dismal failure for the Senators as they lost all three games. It also was a financial loss as only several hundred fans attended each game. The highlight of the series for Senator fans however, must have been the final game as Bill McCorry started at pitcher and then played one inning at each position.

Albany was the location of memorable games for two of baseball's greatest players — Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth. For Cobb, Hawkins Stadium was the scene of the next to last game he would ever play for a major league club. Cobb played an exhibition game in Albany on Sept. 13, 1928 against the Senators while a member of the Philadelphia Athletics. He hit two singles in his five innings of play in the 10-6 Albany win. He played another exhibition in Toronto and then retired on Sept. 17. Ruth had two big days in Albany without knowing the significance of each as they happened. During an exhibition game with the Senators in 1929, he hit what has been called the longest home run in Albany. Then, 10 years later, he hit what probably was the last home run of his career. The Dodgers were playing the Senators in an exhibition game in 1939 while Ruth was a coach with the team. In the first inning, Ruth hit a two-run homer for what was his last home run in a major league uniform.

Five years later, Albany was again without a minor league team as the Eastern League collapsed on July 17, 1932. The second-place Senators defeated New Haven in a double-header that day and then discovered that they had no league to play in. Most teams were losing money while others had their financial support withdrawn from major league teams. Senators' president Samuel Aronowitz vowed to bring another franchise to the city as soon as possible. He made good on his pledge as the Reading (Pa.) Keys were moved into Hawkins Stadium (which was built in 1928 at a cost of \$240,000 on the site of Chadwick Park and was named for the team's former owner, Michael J. Hawkins) on Aug. 6 and Albany was a part of the International League.

Controversy from Sing Sing

The only excitement that the team managed to stir up during this period came in 1935 when Johnny Evers, the

future Hall of Fame second baseman who was the team's general manager, signed Edwin (Alabama) Pitts after his release from Sing Sing Prison. Pitts had been convicted of robbing a store in 1930. A controversy arose when Charles Knapp, president of the International League, and W.G. Braham, president of the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues, refused to OK Pitts' \$200 a month contract with Albany. A month later, however, he was granted permission to play. Pitts batted .233 in his only season with the Senators.

The team would stay around the International League until 1936 with very little success. Despite bringing a team comprised mostly of ex-major leaguers to Albany in 1932, the team could do nothing right. By 1938, the team was in the new Eastern League (which had a salary cap of \$3,200 per team per month) where they would stay for the next 23 years and would find their most success, both at the gate and on the field, under the ownership of Thomas F. McCaffrey. McCaffrey bought the Eastern League's Allentown (Pa.) franchise in 1937 and moved the team to Albany where the club was a member of the Eastern League until 1958. During that time, the team won pennants in 1942, 1949 and 1952. A number of outstanding players got their start here, including Hall of Famer Ralph Kiner who played his first professional ball game in Albany in 1941. One of the best seasons of all time for a minor league pitcher came in 1949 when Orie Arntzen, then a 40-year-old right-hander, went 25-2 and was named baseball's minor league player of the year. Arntzen took good advantage that season of the Senators fine play in Hawkins Stadium as they went 50-20 at home. A few seasons earlier, another Senator, James "Ripper" Collins, won

the same honor as the team's player-manager batted .396.

Other notable happenings during this period came in 1935 when Hack Wilson closed out his career in Albany with a .263 average and three home runs in 59 games. Four years later, Rabbit Maranville managed the Senators and played six games at second base at the age of 47. Additionally, Al Gionfriddo hit 28 triples in 1944, the highest total in the minor leagues, and Merrill "Pinky" May in 1947 and Herschel Held two years later collected 151 bases on balls.

The last game played at Hawkins Stadium came on Sunday, Sept. 6, 1958. The Springfield Rifles clinched the Eastern League pennant with an 8-4 win over the Senators. Only 800 fans were on hand for the game and ceremony where former Senator Frank Staucet presented McCaffrey with a plaque honoring him for all he had done for baseball in Albany.

Indeed, one of the saddest days in Albany baseball history came in November 1960 when workmen began tearing down Hawkins Stadium, unoccupied for more than a year and in great disrepair. The site is now home to MidCity Plaza.

In the 1970s, several games were played at Albany's Blecker Stadium in an attempt to entice a team to move to the Capital District. That dream finally became a reality in 1983 when the Albany-Colonie A's — appropriately members of the Eastern League — played their first game on April 26 in Blecker Stadium. More than 9,000 fans showed up for a memorable inaugural game at the new \$1.2 million Heritage Park Aug. 20, 1983. The game with the Nashua Angels was called at 1:09 a.m. after 12 innings with the score tied at 7-7. Most fans did not go home unhappy, however, as 66 kegs of beer were consumed that evening.



The Albany Base Ball Club of 1891, which finished second in the Eastern League

Bud Fowler: Black Baseball Star

by L. Robert Davids

New York state made a significant contribution to black baseball in the 19th century. Not only did such great independent clubs as the Cuban Giants and the New York Gothams originate here, but several of the top Negro players performed on state teams in organized baseball. Frank Grant spent three seasons with Buffalo in the International League, 1886-1888; Moses Walker caught for Syracuse in 1888-1889; George Stovey pitched briefly for Troy in 1890; and Bud Fowler starred for Binghamton in 1887. Fowler, however, was the only one to have roots in the Empire State.

Census and family information indicate that he was born John W. Jackson in Fort Plain, N.Y., on March 16, 1858, the son of John and Mary Lansing Jackson. The New York census of 1860 placed the family in Cooperstown, where the father was a barber. The same applies to 1870, at which time son John was listed as 13 and "attended school within the year." It is good to know that a century before Satchel Paige was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, an adolescent black boy was already familiar with that upstate village and developing his ballplaying talents.

No firm information is available on when Fowler began his baseball career — the New York Age of Feb. 25, 1909 said it was 1873 in Binghamton — or when and where he took the name of Fowler. It is known that the nickname "Bud" resulted from his inclination to call most others by that name.

Fowler's Debut

The first documented mention of Fowler as a player was in April 1878 when he pitched for the Chelsea team in Massachusetts. On April 24, he hurled an exhibition game victory over the Boston Nationals of George Wright, Jim O'Rourke and company, besting Tommy Bond 2-1. When the Lynn Live Oaks of the International Association (the first minor league) lost their lead pitcher to illness, they acquired Fowler from Chelsea. The Boston Globe reported on May 18 that "Fowler, the young colored pitcher of the Chelseas," held the Tecumsehs of London, Ont., to two hits and was leading 3-



0 in the eighth inning when the Canadians became irked over an umpire's decision and left the field. Lynn won by forfeit. Fowler pitched two more league games, losing to Syracuse and Utica. However, he did break the color line in organized baseball.

Fowler pitched in the Boston area in 1879 and next surfaced in Guelph, Ont., in 1881 when the local Maple Leafs signed him to pitch for them. However, his presence on the otherwise all-white club was vigorously opposed by one vocal member who led a revolt among his teammates. Fowler was dropped from the squad and wound up playing with the Petrolia Imperials. The Guelph Herald had this to say:

We regret that some members of the Maple Leafs are ill-natured enough to object to the colored pitcher Fowler. He is one of the best pitchers on the continent of America and it would be greatly to the interest of the Maple Leaf team if he was re-instated ... He has forgotten more about baseball than the present team ever knew and he could teach them many points in the game.

Fowler was still primarily a pitcher when he was signed by Stillwater, Minn., in 1884 to play in the strong Northwestern League. Stillwater had one of the weaker franchises compared to Fort Wayne, Grand Rapids, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and St. Paul. In fact, the club lost its first 16 games before Fowler broke the spell with complete game victories on May 26, 28, 29 and 31. He had several losses after that and started to play at other positions. On June 15 the St. Paul Dispatch noted that Fowler was presented with a \$10 bill and a suit of clothes for his strong contribution to the win over Fort Wayne. On June 23, however, he was "fined \$10 for the wild throw he made in Saturday's game." He apparently was not asked to return the clothes. Stillwater dropped out of the league in August, one of several clubs that disintegrated for one reason or another while Fowler was a team member.

In 1885 he was with Keokuk, Iowa, for only eight games before that team collapsed. His next stop was Pueblo in the Colorado League, where he played five different positions in

five games. Two interesting newspaper quotes resulted. The Denver Rocky Mountain News reported that "Fowler has two strong points: He is an excellent runner and proof against sunburn. He don't tan worth a cent." The Pueblo Chieftain of Aug. 18, 1885 stated: "Fowler bats right or left-handed. It all depends on whether there is a man on first or third."

That last quote is the only recorded mention that Fowler might have been a switch hitter on occasion. Similarly, it should be noted that Carl Sandburg, the author and historian, mentioned in his 1954 autobiography "Always the Young Strangers" that he remembered as a youth in Galesburg, Ill., watching "its second baseman, professional named Bud Fowler, a left-handed Negro, fast and pretty in his work." That is the only recorded mention that Fowler ever threw left-handed. However, it is known that he played to the crowd, that he was innovative, unpredictable and superstitious. It is entirely possible that playing second without a glove he could throw left-handed. Surely, if he had been a natural southpaw, it would have been mentioned during his pitching career, for lefthanded hurlers were rare in those days.

In 1886, Fowler led the Western League in triples and helped lead Topeka to the pennant. Returning to New York state the next year, he probably achieved his highest level of play with Binghamton. While he had been the only black in the Western League, there were seven in the International League in 1887. The list included pitcher George Stovey, who won 34 games for Newark; Moses Walker, his catcher; and Frank Grant of Buffalo, who led the league with 11 home runs. In a game report on May 8, the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle said: "The main interest was centered on two colored second basemen, Grant of the Buffaloes and Fowler of the Binghamtons ..." The paper concluded that Fowler "played the best game and won much applause" as the Bingos triumphed 8-7.

The league acquired another black player on May 31 when Oswego signed a Negro second baseman by the name of Randolph Jackson. He was from Ilion, N.Y., and had been "recommended by Fowler of the Binghamtons." There is speculation that Jackson might have been a cousin of Fowler, aka John Jackson.

Mounting Racial Problems

In the meantime, racial problems were building on the Binghamton club. Their fielders played poorly behind pitcher William Renfroe, a black teammate of Fowler who had the same experience when he pitched for Stillwater in 1884. The Chronicle reported on July 5 that Fowler had been released "upon condition that he will not sign with any other International club." He had batted .350 in 34 games. The Bingos folded later in August, at which time Fowler was playing with Montpelier, where he "seemed to be the favorite with the spectators and was greeted with applause everytime he stepped to the plate."

Fowler continued to play with white league teams whenever he could; however, his tenure was typically brief. He did play the full schedule with Greenville in the Michigan State League in 1889, and led the Nebraska State League in stolen bases in an aborted season in 1892. But in four sea-

sons he played with 10 different teams. In 1893 to 1894 he played with an independent team in Findlay, Ohio, and served as a barber (his father's occupation) there in the off-season.

With the prospect of playing in white leagues virtually eliminated, Fowler, with Findlay teammate Grant (Home Run) Johnson, organized the Page Fence Giants and toured through the middle West in 1895. Ironically, Fowler left the team on July 15 to play in the Michigan State League. He may have enjoyed more the individual attention he received playing on mostly white teams and this turned out to be his last opportunity to play in the minors. It was his 10th year as an official minor leaguer, four more than achieved by any other black player.

Fowler then returned to Findlay where he continued to play until July 1899 when the white members drew the color line and said they would quit if Fowler was not ousted from the team. He then turned to organizing black clubs to play against college, independent and minor league teams. He also tried to organize a black league, but the financial resources were not forthcoming. A new generation of baseball fans was reminded of Fowler's contributions as player and manager when Sol White's "History of Colored Baseball" was published in 1907. White, who played on Fowler's Page Fence Giants in 1895, called him "the celebrated promoter of colored ball clubs and the sage of baseball."

On Feb. 25, 1909, the New York Age ran an article on Fowler saying he was ill at the home of his sister in Frankfort, N.Y., and plans were being made to hold a benefit game for him in Ridgewood, N.J., near where he had been living. The game was postponed because of difficulty in getting the players together and apparently never was played. The next mention of Fowler was his obituary in the Herkimer Evening Telegram of March 1, 1913. He had been taken ill at his home in New York City and returned to his sister's home in Frankfort, where he died on Feb. 26, just short of his 58th birthday. He was buried in an unmarked grave in the Frankfort Cemetery.

On July 25, 1987, in a memorial program at the cemetery, the Society for American Baseball Research unveiled an appropriately engraved stone marker in the presence of the mayor, city and state officials, in addition to Monte Irvin and other former Negro League players, Little League team members and SABR members among a total audience of about 200. The black baseball pioneer who made a historically important impact on 19th century baseball finally received the recognition he deserved.





The semipro Schoharie Base Ball Club in 1886. Note the two black players on the squad, something which would have been highly unusual in the professional ranks of the era.



The Canton Base Ball Club represented this northern New York community in 1868.

New York State Ball Clubs

by John Pardon and Jerry Jackson

As long as there has been professional baseball leagues, there has been professional baseball in New York state. More than 70 cities have been or still are represented by professional franchises.

The following list is an accumulation of data based on years of research by Jerry Jackson, John Pardon and many other minor league baseball enthusiasts. Although a wealth of material has been compiled, there are still many holes to be filled. Any comments or additions are welcomed by the authors.

Albany

1879	International Association
1880	International Association
1881	Eastern Association
1885	New York State League
1886	Hudson River League
1888	International Association
1890	New York State League
1891	Eastern League
1892-1893	Eastern League
1894-1895	New York State League
1896	Eastern League
1899-1916	New York State League
1920-1932	Eastern League
1933-1936	International League
1937	New York-Penn League
1938-1959	Eastern League
1983-1989	Eastern League

Amsterdam

1894-1896	New York State League
1902-1908	New York State League
1938-1942	Can-Am League
1946-1951	Can-Am League

Auburn

1877	League Alliance
1878	National Association
1888	Central New York League
1888-1889	New York State League
1897-1899	New York State League
1906-1908	Empire State League
1910	Central New York League
1938	Can-Am League
1940	Can-Am League
1946-1951	Border League
1958-1980	New York-Penn League
1982-1988	New York-Penn League

Batavia

1939-1953	PONY League
1957-1959	New York-Penn League
1961-1987	New York-Penn League

Bath

1890	Western New York League
------	-------------------------

Binghamton

1877	League Alliance
1878	International Association
1884-1885	New York State League
1886-1887	International League
1888	Central League
1892-1894	Eastern League
1895	New York State League
1899-1917	New York State League
1918-1919	International League
1923-1937	New York-Penn League
1938-1963	Eastern League
1964-1966	New York-Penn League
1967-1968	Eastern League

Brooklyn

1872-1875	National Association
1877	League Alliance
1881	Eastern Association
1883	Inter-State Association
1884-1890	American Association
1890	Player's League
1890-1957	National League
1907	Atlantic League
1908	Union League
1913	United States League
1914-1915	Federal League

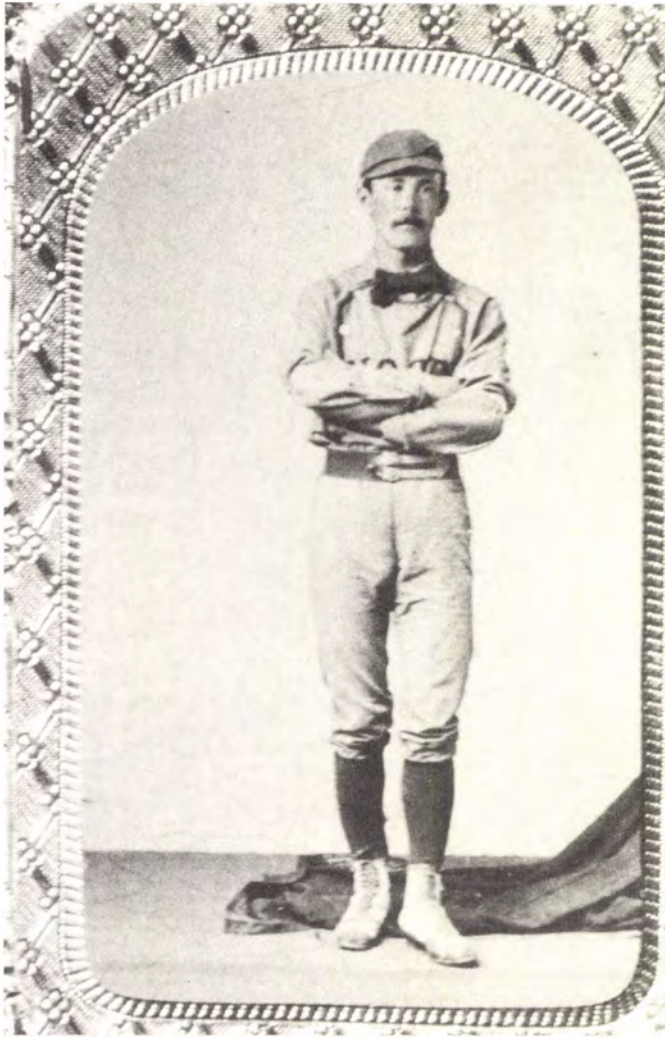
Buffalo

1877	League Alliance
1878	International Association
1879-1885	National League
1886-1887	International League
1888	International Association
1889-1890	International League
1890	Player's League
1891	Eastern Association
1892-1898	Eastern League
1899	Western League

1900	American League	1947-1951	Border League
1901-1911	Eastern League	1958-1973	New York Penn League
1912-1970	International League	1977-1988	New York-Penn League
1979-1984	Eastern League		
1985-1989	American Association		
Canandaigua		Glens Falls	
1888-1889	New York State League	1906	Hudson River League
1897-1898	New York State League	1980-1988	Eastern League
1905	Empire State League		
Canisteo		Gloversville	
1890	Western New York League	1890	New York State League
		1895	New York State League
Canton		1902-1908	New York State League
1900	Northern New York League	1926-1927	New York-Penn League
		1937-1942*	Can-Am League
		1946-1951*	Can-Am League
		* with Johnstown and Amsterdam	
Catskill		Green Point	
1903	Hudson River	1970-1872	National Association
Chatauqua		Haverstraw	
1898	Iron and Oil League	1888	Hudson River League
Cobleskill		Hornell	
1890	New York State League	1878	International Association
Corning		1890	Western New York League
1951-1956	PONY League	1914-1915	Inter-State League
1957-1960	New York-Penn League	1942-1946	PONY League
1968-1969	New York-Penn League	1957	New York-Penn League
Cortland		Hudson	
1886	Central New York League	1885	Hudson River League
1897-1898	New York State League	1903-1906	Hudson River League
1899-1901	New York State League		
1905	Empire State League	Ilion	
1910	Central New York League	1901-1904	New York State League
		1905	Empire State League
Dunkirk		Jamestown	
1890	New York-Penn League	1890-1891	New York-Penn League
1898	Iron and Oil League	1906*	Inter-State League
		1914-1915	Inter-State League
Elmira		1939-1956	PONY League
1888	Central League	1957	New York-Penn League
1889	New York State League	1961-1973	New York-Penn League
1891	New York-Penn League	1977-1989	New York-Penn League
1892	Eastern League	* with Oil City, Pa.	
1895	New York State League		
1900	Atlantic League	Johnstown	
	New York State League	1890	New York State League
1908-1917	New York State League	1895-1896	New York State League
1923-1937	New York-Penn League	1898	New York State League
1938-1955	Eastern League	1902-1908	New York State League
1957-1961	New York-Penn League	1909	Eastern Association
1962-1972	Eastern League	1926-1927	New York-Penn League
1973-1986	New York-Penn League	1938-1942	Can-Am League
		1946-1951	Can-Am League
Fulton		Kingston	
1905-1908	Empire State League	1886	Hudson River League
Geneva		1903-1905	Hudson River League
1897	New York State League	1906	Hudson River League
1905-1908	Empire State League	1909	Eastern Association
1910	Central New York League	1913	New York-New Jersey League
1930	Central New York League		

1947	North Atlantic League	1982-1985	New York-Penn League
1948-1950	Colonial League		
1951	Can-Am League	Norwich	
		1886	Central New York League
Little Falls		Nyack	
1977-1988	New York-Penn League	1946-1948	North Atlantic League
Livingston		Ogdensburg	
1877	League Alliance	1908	Empire State League
Lockport		1936-1940*	Can-Am League
1942-1950	PONY League	1946-1951	Border League
1951	Middle Atlantic League	* with Ottawa, Ont.	
Lowville		Olean	
1886	Central New York League	1890-1891	New York-Penn League
Lyons		1905-1908	Inter-State League
1897-1898	New York State League	1914-1916	Inter-State League
1905	Empire State League	1939-1956	PONY League
1907-1908	Empire State League	1957-1959	New York-Penn League
		1961-1962	New York-Penn League
Maspeth		Oneida	
1886	Eastern League	1886	Central New York League
Malone		1889	New York State League
1887	Northeastern League	1905	Empire State League
1900	Northern New York League	1908	Empire State League
1902	Northern New York League	1910	Central New York League
Middletown		Oneonta	
1909	Eastern Association	1890	New York State League
1913	New York-New Jersey League	1924	New York-Penn League
1914	Atlantic League	1940-1942	Can-Am League
Newark		1946-1951	Can-Am League
1973-1979	New York-Penn League	1966-1989	New York-Penn League
1983-1987	New York-Penn League	Ossining	
Newburgh		1903	Hudson River League
1886	Hudson River League	Oswego	
1903-1907	Hudson River League	1885	New York State League
1909	Eastern Association	1886-1887	International League
1913	New York-New Jersey League	1888	International Association
1914	Atlantic League	1898-1900	New York State League
1946	North Atlantic League	1905-1908	Empire State League
New York		1910	Central New York League
1871-1875	National Association	1936-1940	Can-Am League
1876	National League	Palmyra	
1881	Eastern Championship Assoc.	1897-1898	New York State League
1881-1882	Eastern Association	1905	Empire State League
1883-1887	American Association	Peekskill	
1890	Player's League	1903	Hudson River League
1896	Atlantic League	1905	Hudson River League
1883-1957	National League	1905	Atlantic League
1903-1989	American League	1946-1950	North Atlantic League
1962-1989	National League	Penn Yann	
Niagara Falls		1888	New York State League
1908	International League	1906	Empire State League
1939-1940	PONY League	Plattsburgh	
1946-1947	Middle Atlantic League	1902	Northern New York League
1950-1951	Middle Atlantic League	1905	Northern League
1970-1979	New York-Penn League		

Port Chester 1947-1948	Colonial League	1918 1920-1927 1928-1929 1934-1955 1956-1957 1961-1989	New International League International League New York-Penn League International League Eastern League International League
Potsdam 1902	Northern New York League		
Poughkeepsie 1886 1903-1907 1909 1913 1914 1947-1950	Hudson River League Hudson River League Eastern Association New York-New Jersey League Atlantic League Colonial League	Troy 1871-1872 1877 1879-1882 1886 1888 1890 1891 1892-1894 1895-1896 1899-1916	National Association League Alliance National League Hudson River League International Association New York State League Eastern Association Eastern League New York State League New York State League
Rochester 1877 1879 1885 1886-1887 1888-1889 1890 1891 1892 1895-1911 1912-1989	International Association International Association New York State League International League International Association American Association Eastern Association Eastern Association Eastern League International League	Utica 1878 1879 1880 1885 1886-1887 1888 1890 1892 1898-1917 1924 1939-1942 1943-1950 1977-1989	International Association National Association International Association New York State League International League International Association New York State League Eastern League New York State League New York-Penn League Can-Am League Eastern League New York-Penn League
Rome 1898-1901 1905 1909 1910 1937-1942 1946-1951	New York State League Empire State League New York State League Central New York League Can-Am League Can-Am League	Walden 1946	North Atlantic League
Saratoga Springs 1886 1906	Hudson River League Hudson River League	Waterloo 1888	New York State League
Saugerties 1903-1905	Hudson River League	Watertown 1886 1908 1936 1946-1951 1983-1988	Central New York League Empire State League Can-Am League Border League New York-Penn League
Schenectady 1895-1896 1899-1904 1909 1946-1950 1951-1957	New York State League New York State League Eastern Association Can-Am League Eastern League	Waverly 1901	New York State League
Seneca Falls 1888-1889 1905-1907	New York State League Empire State League	Wellsville 1890 1914-1916 1942-1956 1957-1961 1963-1965	Western New York League Inter-State League PONY League New York-Penn League New York-Penn League
Syracuse 1877 1878 1879 1885 1886-1887 1888-1889 1890 1891-1892 1894-1901 1906 1902-1917	League Alliance International Association National League New York State League International League International Association American Association Eastern Association Eastern League Empire State League New York State League	Yonkers 1894 1905	Eastern League Hudson River League



The Troy Haymakers, also known as the Unions of Lansingburgh (a city adjoining Troy to the north), was a baseball power in the 1860s. Owned by Saratoga Springs gambling king John Morrissey, the Haymakers were famous in triumph and folly. Morrissey was known to have placed large bets against his own club, which explains the bobbled ground balls and the foolish third-strike swings.

Left: Bill Harbidge had this tintype made of himself while with Troy in the 1870s.

Below: The 1869 team is posed during a tour of the Southwest. The players are, front row: Bill Craver, C; Mart King, CF; Cherokee Fisher, P; Baerman, 2B; Mike McAtee, 1B. Back row: Powers, SS; Clipper Flynn, RF; Steve King, LF; and Steve Bellan, 3B.

Top Right: A trade card issued by Burr Pennfield to advertise his store (see inside front cover). The 1871 squad was Troy's entry in the National Association's first year.

Bottom Right: Though the old Haymakers franchise died out, Troy once again raised a major league organization in 1882. Listen to these future stars: Mickey Welch, standing second from left; Tim Keefe, standing far right; Buck Ewing, middle row, far left; Roger Connor, middle row, second from right; and Fred Pfeffer, bottom right.



**Imported & Domestic Cigars
AND OTHER SMOKING ARTICLES,**

HAYMAKER NINE FOR 1871.



**These Pictures can be obtained at BDBB PENFIELD'S,
No. 280½ River Street, Troy.**

1. W. H. CRAVER, Capt. and 2d B.; 2. M. H. MCGEARY, C.; 3. J. F. McMULLEN, P.; 4. W. FLYNN, 1st B.; 5. C. J. FLOWERS, S. S.; 6. S. B. BRILLAN, 3d B.; 7. S. KING, L. F.; 8. T. YORK, C. F.; 9. L. PIKE, R. F.; 10. E. CONNERS, Tenth Man.



The 1878 Buffalo Bisons: Was it the Greatest Minor League Team of the Game's Early Years?

by Joseph Overfield

In baseball's modern era there have been many outstanding minor league teams. Coming to mind immediately are the 1937 Newark Bears, the 1934 Los Angeles Angels, the 1925 San Francisco Seals, the 1939-1940 Kansas City Blues, the 1933 Columbus Red Birds, the 1928-1931 Rochester Red Wings, and those special minor league dynasties, the 1919-1925 Baltimore Orioles of Jack Dunn and the 1920-1925 Fort Worth Panthers of Jake Atz.

To choose one as dominant from such a galaxy is a formidable task. Instead, a nomination will be offered for greatest minor league team of the game's early years. Certainly the Eastern (International) League, which traces its beginnings back to 1884 and is still going strong, boasted several outstanding teams in its early years, including George Stallings' pennant and Junior World Championship Buffalo clubs of 1904 and 1906. The Western League of 1899, which became the American League in 1900 and then achieved major league status in 1901, was loaded with major league players, past and future. The records of these teams and leagues notwithstanding, the vote here goes to the 1878 Buffalo Bisons of the International Association.

The International Association

The International Association, the game's first minor league, was organized at Pittsburgh on Feb. 20, 1877 when representatives of various clubs met to formulate rules of operation and to elect officers. William A. (Candy) Cummings, reputedly the first curveball pitcher, representing Lynn, Mass., was elected president; Harry Gorman of London, Ont., became vice president and James A. Williams of Columbus, Ohio, was elected secretary-treasurer and chief administrative officer. Also represented were clubs from Guelph, Ont., Manchester, N.H., Rochester, N.Y., and Pittsburgh. These were the seven which had paid an extra fee and would be competing for the championship. They were to play a set schedule of games, very short by modern standards, but there was no limit to the number of outside games. Twenty-five cents was the admission rate for championship games, and the visiting clubs received a \$75 guarantee, or half the gate, whichever was larger.

The league survived its first season and it is an oddity of baseball history that the first minor league championship was won by a Canadian ball club, the Tecumsehs of London. Its players, however, were American. Their roster included Joe Hornung and Fred Goldsmith, the league's leading pitcher with a 14-4 mark. According to averages compiled by SABR member Ray Nemec, the leading batter was Steve Brady of Rochester with a .358 mark. More famous names were the

aforementioned Candy Cummings, who fared poorly for Lynn (1-7), King Kelly, who appeared in three games for Columbus, and Jim Galvin of the Alleghanies, who hurled the minors' first shutout — 2-0 over Columbus on April 30.

During the winter, elaborate plans were made for the 1878 season. Not only was the league expanded to 11 teams (four including, the champion Londons were to drop out during the season), but also concerted efforts were made to sign National League players. The New York Clipper was a strong supporter of the Association and offered to donate a championship pennant and gold badges to players with the best fielding averages at each position.

Buffalo, one of the new cities, had been represented by a professional nine only since August of the previous summer. The 1877 Buffalo club was not league affiliated, but played an ambitious schedule against National League, International Association and independent clubs. While its record was unimpressive (10-27 with three ties), it did number on its roster three players who were to make names for themselves in the future — John Montgomery Ward, Larry Corcoran and James Roseman.

Assembling the Team

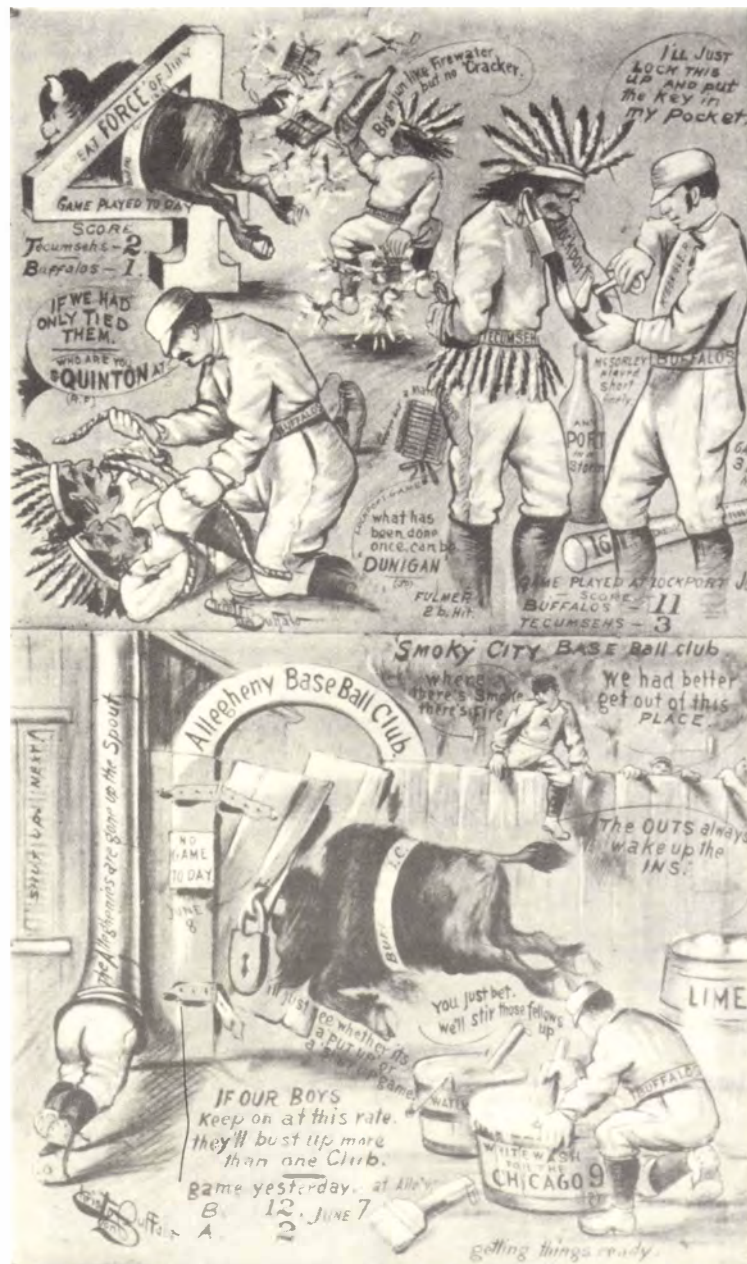
Buffalo management cleaned house completely after the disappointing 1877 season, even dropping the promising teen-age pitcher Corcoran ("He was a poor team player and showed no sympathy for his catcher.") and proceeded to round up a group of young and promising players plus a sprinkling of experienced hands. With no reserve clause in effect, it was possible to negotiate with any ballplayer once the season was over. The distinction between major and minor league was not important, if indeed there was any distinction at all. That the National League of the day was a major league and the International Association a minor league was not recognized then, but was decided by historians long after the fact. It was therefore possible for the Buffalo club to sign the diminutive Davey Force, a capable shortstop with eight years experience with National Association and National League clubs, as well as second baseman Charley Fulmer, a seven-year veteran.

But it was in the signing of young players that the Buffalo club showed its greatest perspicacity. Signed was the young battery of the Alleghanies of Pittsburgh, 22-year-old Jim Galvin and his 19-year-old catcher, husky Tom Dolan. Center fielder Dave Eggler was recommended by Alfred Wright, sports editor of the Philadelphia Mercury, and agreed to come for "seven months for seven hundred dollars." Another Philadelphian, Cyrus (Dick) Allen, a dental

Almost as challenging as assembling the team was the task of getting a new ballpark ready. During the winter, a block of land on the city's west side had been leased, and there was

The practice game on April 15 against a local amateur nine was the first of a 116-game schedule that was not to end until Oct. 25. In that six-month period, the Bisons (they were called that from the beginning) won not only the International Association championship, the New York State championship and the bitter intercity competition between Buffalo and Rochester, but also defeated National League clubs in 10 of 17 games. Every one of the six National League clubs, including the famous Bostons who were 41-19 in league play, were victimized at least once as the Bisons were 1-2 with Boston, 2-1 with Cincinnati, 2-2 with Providence, 3-2 with Chicago, and 1-0 with both Indianapolis and Milwaukee. Against all competition, the Bisons were 81-32 with three ties. They registered 17 shut outs and were shut out themselves just five times.

The Buffaloes were not a particularly hard hitting team,



A cartoon about the Buffalo club
by famed sports cartoonist
Christo von Buffalo.

relying instead on sharp fielding and the incredible pitching of Jim Galvin. With the pitching distance at just 45 feet and a dead ball in use, home runs were a rarity. The Bisons hit but two the entire season. The first, off the bat of Steve Libby, came on June 21 in a game at Buffalo against Binghamton and was reported as follows in the Buffalo Express: "Libby struck the ball squarely and it went on a beeline to the left field corner. For a few seconds the crowd did not comprehend the magnitude of the hit. Suddenly the fans became frantic and the applause was the loudest ever heard here, lasting several minutes. Several ladies threw bouquets at the blushing Libby as he crossed the plate." The other Buffalo home run was hit by Galvin at Utica. His drive bounced past the center fielder and lodged itself in the spring of a carriage parked against the fence. Before the ball could be retrieved, the Buffalo pitcher was able to round the bases.

On June 12 in a game at Buffalo, the Bisons suffered their most humiliating defeat of the year, bowing to the bitter rival Rochester, 16-3. Local fans, many of whom had bet heavily on the game, gave vent to their frustrations by attempting to mob umpire George Campbell at the end of the game. Only prompt action by two stout policemen prevented serious trouble. A few days later, the Buffalo Express reported that the Buffalo club had hired two private detectives to investigate Campbell and that they had uncovered some shocking information. They learned that Campbell had sold out to two gamblers (one from Rochester and one from Syracuse) for \$200 with a resultant profit to the gamblers of \$1,600. Campbell, who lived in Syracuse, denied everything and immediately brought suit for libel against the newspaper. The legal papers for this action are inconclusive because Campbell never showed up for the trial. It will never be known if he was the game's first dishonest umpire.

Two of the year's most exciting games were played against National League clubs. The first was a 13-inning, 4-2 victory against the Chicago White Stockings played at Buffalo on Aug. 19. It was a bitterly fought game and at one point manager Bob Ferguson of Chicago became so incensed at the umpire that he threatened to pull his team from the field. Only the soothing words of Cap Anson ("Of all things don't leave the field, Bob," according to the Buffalo Courier) kept him at his post. In this game, Galvin demonstrated his mastery of the pick-off play by knocking off no fewer than five White Stockings runners. The second notable game against a "league" club took place in Boston on Oct. 2, when Buffalo beat the champions in 12 innings, scoring six runs in the bottom of the 12th after Boston had scored one run in the top half.

The Ironman Pitcher

The real story of the 1878 Bisons was Jim Galvin, the stocky, mild-mannered pitcher with a buggy whip for an arm. It is doubtful if any pitcher in baseball history, including Charles Radborn in his epochal year with Providence in 1884, ever had a season to match Galvin's ironman perform-

ance in 1878. Of the 116 league and nonleague games played by the Bisons, he pitched in 101, of which 96 were complete games. He won 72, lost 25 and tied three. Seventeen of his wins were shutouts and he was 10-5 against National League clubs. He started and finished the first 23 games the team played and was finally relieved by McGunnigle in the 24th. The next day he "rested" by starting in right field, but then came on in relief. From Sept. 2 to Oct. 4, the Bisons played 22 games and Galvin started and finished every one of them. On Oct. 2 he beat Boston in the 12-inning game previously mentioned; the next day he beat Providence in 13 innings and then the following day was the loser in another game at Boston, after which it was announced he had a sore arm. McGunnigle pitched the next two games, but Galvin came back on Oct. 8 to beat Utica in the game that clinched the International Association pennant for Buffalo.

How many innings did Galvin pitch that season? Unfortunately, the box scores of five of his incomplete games do not indicate the number of innings he pitched. It can be stated, however, that he pitched a minimum of 895 innings and a maximum of 905.

Five players on the Buffalo team — Force, Libby, McGunnigle, Hornung and Galvin — were chosen on the New York Clipper all-star team, with the selections being based solely on fielding averages. With the exception of Steve Libby, whose record shows just one game for the 1879 Buffalo National League club, all of the 1878 Bisons went on to major league careers of varying lengths. Galvin, of course, became a Hall of Famer. Force continued in the majors until 1886 and Joe Hornung until 1890. The old campaigner returned to Buffalo in 1891 and 1892 to play with that city's Eastern League club, still disdaining the use of a glove. Bill McGunnigle played and managed off and on in the majors until 1896 and along the way gained the distinction of being one of the first managers to be fired after winning a pennant (Brooklyn, 1890). Dick Allen, after a year of major league ball, became a dentist and later a lecturer in dentistry at Buffalo Dental School. Fulmer was in the majors until 1884 and later became a magistrate in Philadelphia.

Despite the team's great record, the 1878 season was not a howling financial success. The team's bank account at season's end showed a balance of just \$248.94. Apparently this was enough of a nest egg to permit the team to apply for membership in the National League. The application was accepted and the team went on to play "league" ball until the tag end of the 1885 season when the franchise was sold. It is interesting to note that the Bisons, with much the same team that won the International Association pennant in 1878, finished in a tie for third place in their first year in the National League.

As for the International Association, it struggled along for two more seasons before fading into oblivion. But it had played its role in the game's history: it has been the first of the minor leagues and one of its teams, the 1878 Bisons, were baseball's first great minor league club.

John Clapp and Club Base Ball in Ithaca

by W. Lloyd Johnson

Catcher John Clapp jumped the Philadelphia Athletics on July 17, 1875 to play for his home town Ithaca team. They were playing the famous Binghamton Cricket Base Ball Club for the championship of central New York. Ithaca won 8-5 as Clapp was fined \$200 by the Athletics for leaving his team. At the end of the season when his fine appeal was rejected, he resigned from the Philadelphia club. In a bidding war the St. Louis Browns National League club hired catcher Clapp for \$3,000 a season.

John Clapp had initially left the Ithaca Athletic Club (IAC) in 1870 to become a professional ballplayer. His obituary claims that he learned his skills from the IAC. He played into shape each spring with the local club before joining his professional team. Clapp's letter to Harry Wright asking for a tryout evoked a classic reply that gives one an intimate window through which one can see early 19th century baseball. Wright remarked that Clapp seemed very confident of holding his own in any position with the best of them — "the kind of player I want" — but that he wished to ask a few more questions. He wanted to know what kind of pitching Clapp caught the previous year and how fast it was; what other position did he play; did Clapp think he could play third base; was he confident he could "catch a swift pitcher" like Spalding "up to or close behind" the batter; was he able to fill in satisfactorily for any of the infielders who might be injured; could he bat swift pitching with confidence; was he prepared to come at his own risk and show what he could do? Wright added dryly that he was taking it for granted that "you are gentlemanly and temperate at all times."

In the early days of baseball, a team issued a challenge by correspondence or public notice. Once the gauntlet was picked up, the two managers negotiated the ground rules, which included game site, gate division, and a banquet. When the two teams met at the selected site, a mutually agreeable ball and umpire were chosen. The dignified Professor Horatio S. White of Cornell University was frequently called on to umpire. He was the arbitrator for a game in 1877 between the Syracuse Stars and St. Louis Browns played in Ithaca.

After the 3 p.m. starting time, the game took one to one and a half hours to play. Then the two squads would meet in the club's house or local dining tavern to enjoy tale-swapping companionship. The most memorable occasion of the Ithaca's 1875 season was the banquet held for the Norwich Comet Club at the IAC's gymnasium. John Clapp resided as the master of ceremonies and baseball wit. Norwich responded with a public letter of gratitude that was published in the Ithaca Journal.

The Ithaca Athletics or Ithacas, played the 1875 season at the Willow Avenue Fairgrounds, East and West Railroad avenues between Willow Avenue and North Cayuga. Today, Short Street dissects the old Fairgrounds.

The 1875 opening day lineup was Jillett, SS; Sandy Burns, CF; Smith, C; Aaron Clapp, RF, (John's younger brother); Finch, P; Denmead, LF; Treman, 2B; John Vant Jr., 3B; and William Ireland, 1B. Substitutes during the 1875 season included Spencer, Frawley and John Clapp.

Late September found Ithaca hosting the professional Athletics from Philadelphia. The visitors, sparked by catcher John Clapp, routed the Ithacas, 12-0. Hall of Famer Cap Anson played first base for Philly and scored three runs on four hits. Three days later in a return match, Ithaca lost, 8-4. John Clapp, suffering from puffy hands, did not play. The great Anson drew the collar.

In October, the citizens of Richford offered a \$60 purse for a contest between the Ithacas and the Oswego Amateurs. The Amateurs consisted primarily of Binghamton players, and Ithaca again called on home-grown John Clapp. Ithaca's Frawley hurled for Oswego and defeated his home team, 11-6. The purse was split \$40 to the winners and \$20 to the losers. Each member of the winning team got four bucks. Ithaca later won a return engagement, but no purse was offered. The rubber game was canceled due to snow.

By now the enthusiasm for baseball ran so high that the directors of the Ithaca Athletic Club undertook a campaign to collect \$2,500 by selling \$100 allotments to raise the standard of baseball in Ithaca. The next year saw the short-lived professional era in Ithaca baseball.

Professional Base Ball

Since the town's businessmen had subscribed to the IAC's fund-raising drive during the winter, the beginning of the spring was eagerly awaited. April saw youngsters playing ball in the streets, the Ithacas practicing on the Willow Avenue grounds, and a convocation of central New York base ballists in Syracuse, N.Y.

Early in the summer of 1876, Driving Park was built in an area now occupied by Topps Supermarket. Admission to the new park was 25 cents with 15 cents extra for a covered grandstand seat. Ladies were admitted free of charge.

The directors put together a strong team to compete for the championship in 1876. Their roster included J.H. Richmond, C; Nick Alcott, P; J.G. Smith, SS; Williams Ireland, 1B; R. Treman, 2B; J. Burns Jr., 3B; Hick Carpenter, inf/of; E. Spencer, CF; Aaron Clapp, RF; and McCaffery, LF.

Richmond was a seasoned slugger from the Philadelphia

Athletics, where he had been a teammate of John Clapp. Nick Alcott had pitched previously with Shibe's Base Ball Club in Philadelphia. Later in the same season, Lew Say, SS, John Piggott, 3B, A. Lawrence, P/inf, and Chub Sullivan, 1B, were added to the squad.

The Ithacas found their May schedule practically washed away. They played only five games between April 22 and June 8. By June 12 the team had seven wins and two losses. Both defeats, before large home crowds, were at the hands of the Syracuse Stars. Failure to beat a close rival overshadowed sterling performances against Rochester and Binghamton in the eyes of the fans.

The local newspaper further misled supporters as to the strength of the local club with such statements as: "A very fine contest is anticipated and although there is, of course, no certainty as to the result, it is quite generally believed that the Ithacas will be successful." The fans went to Driving Park expecting to defeat the Syracuse Stars, who were one of the finest ball clubs of the late 1870s. The populace wanted a team like the Stars, which beat National League nines.

The town's newspaper, the Ithaca Journal, led, what seemed to be, a vendetta against the team. The directors were publicly admonished to present their ballplayers in top physical condition, reduce the team's laziness, and deter its tendency toward dissipation. In a late season contest, several Ithacas played for Binghamton against the Syracuse Stars and it was trumpeted in Syracuse newspapers. The Ithaca Journal defended the team by stating, "Syracuse papers erred ... there are no revolvers on Ithaca's team. The Directors would not retain such, as they uphold the purity of the game."

"Revolvers" were those who jumped contracts. Since the many clubs and leagues of the 1870s had no written agreements with each other, team officials pirated whomever they wished. Standard player contracts went from April 1 to Nov. 1. Players received pay at no other time. A club usually sounded out many baseballists before choosing their team. Players sought to protect themselves by initiating deals rather than waiting for the owners.

The Ithaca Journal also suggested that the captain should police the crowd and remove unruly spectators. Captain Hick Carpenter resigned after the appearance of that article. An unfortunate incident precipitated this public advice. On Sept.

15 at the Firemen's Day game, the umpire called the game in the sixth inning in the anticipation of rain. Ithaca had scored six times, had two runners on base and had only one out at the time. The score reverted to the fifth inning, or 12-2 in favor of Auburn. The crowd turned ugly and several fights broke out.

The high point of the season came a few days later on Sept. 19 when Ithaca battled the National League Hartford in 11 innings before losing 5-4 to Hall of Fame curveballer Candy Cummings. Two days later, Ithaca walloped a good Detroit ball club, 11-1. They followed with two victories over Binghamton, but once again failed to defeat the Star club of Syracuse.

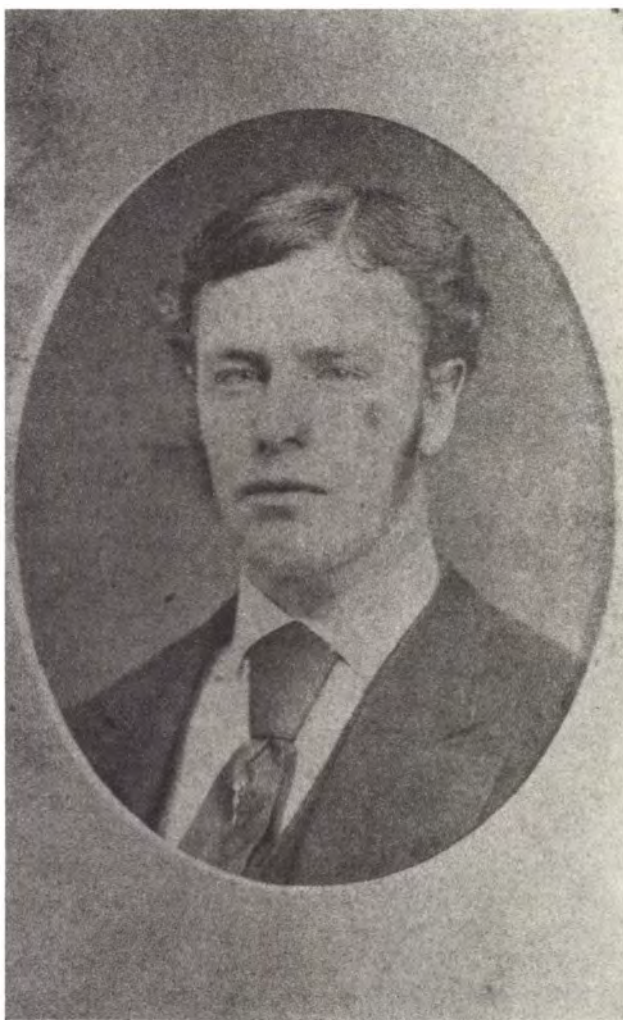
Al Spalding of league champion Chicago called off a late date in October on short notice. When word of the Chicago postponement was received, the directors disbanded the team. Neither Captain Carpenter, the Ithaca Athletic Club, nor the Ithaca Journal could fill empty seats. Fans stayed away because of disappointments in club capabilities, uncertainties due to inclement weather, and last minute cancellations by League clubs. Little hope was given at the time for another season of IAC baseball.

Hick Carpenter went to Syracuse and later to the National League, where he was a left-handed third baseman for 12 years. He, Lew Say and John Clapp played for Cincinnati in 1880. John J. Richmond spent three years in the National League and four in the American Association. Aaron Clapp played for Troy and Hornell while Alcott went to Binghamton in 1877 and moved with the team en masse to Utica the following season. Smith shortstopped at Buffalo in 1877 and Piggott returned home to star for Lowell. McCaffery went to Detroit, Chub Sullivan spent the next two

years at Cincinnati before heading east to finish his career, and the rest of the team became amateurs again.

Its one excursion into professional ball seemed to satisfy the IAC as it never again supported professional baseball. Club baseball was not sponsored for many years. Public support instead shifted to collegiate athletics.

The Ithacas compiled a 45-27 record including a combined 21-13 versus upstate rivals Auburn, Binghamton, Rochester and Syracuse. These stats were reported by J.G. Burns.



John Clapp of Ithaca, N.Y. in 1872
with the Philadelphia Athletics.

“We Wuz Robbed!”

Syracuse in 1878

by W. Lloyd Johnson

On Sept. 14, 1878, more than 3,000 howling, waving, screaming people shoved into the Buffalo, N.Y., ballpark to watch the Bisons confrontation with the Syracuse Stars. Pitchers Patrick Henry “Harry” McCormick and future Hall of Famer James “Pud” Galvin faced each other in the box. The umpire — notorious for favoring his hometown Bisons — was C.W. Nichols. The International Association pennant was at stake, however, despite a clear outcome in the game, it would be six months before the league champion would be named.

In February 1878, a lively organizational meeting had been held in Buffalo, N.Y. The International Association chose the Tecumseh club as the 1877 pennant winner, made new by-laws and settled ever present disputes among members. A controversial issue was the case of the Binghamton Crickets versus the Uticas. The Cricket players had signed contracts to play in Utica for the 1878 season. The Binghamton Cricket Base Ball Club then inked the former players to 1878 contracts and claimed that within last year’s agreement was the implied right of first refusal. This controversy was decided in favor of Utica because the Utes held the prior dated contracts. Before the Reserve Clause in 1879, baseball contract law was the law of prior contract. The entry fee was raised to \$30. Assessed annual dues were \$20 per club. The visiting team guarantee was upped to \$75 and the number of deadheads (non-playing attendees) allowed jumped from 10 to 12.

L.H. Mahn, the ballmaker, represented Holyoke at the meeting and gave a successful baseball demonstration. The association accepted the Mahn ball as its official baseball.

The congenial group of club representatives decided to gather next year in Syracuse. They adjourned and prepared to start the season.

Fourteen teams began the pennant chase. By special agreement, the squads were competing for prize money as well as the championship banner. Soon the club directors found that they had been duped. They paid Mahn \$10 per dozen for the same baseballs that the National League had paid \$7.50. In a bit of controversy, the league adopted the Spalding ball. Many of the subsequent unused Mahn baseballs are today on display at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N. Y.

The Stars

In 1878, the Stars peaked in their remarkable four-year meteoric history; they were the best team ever to play in Syracuse. Every man on the ’78 team played in the major leagues. The regulars were assembled by a thrifty and prudent management. McCormack, Hotaling, Farrell, McKin-

non, Mansell and Carpenter formed the nucleus of the Star team. Harry McCormack was found pitching against the Stars for a local Syracuse club in 1875 and was signed on the spot. Lithe and agile Harry is the first National League pitcher to win his own 1-0 shutout with a home run.

Pete Hotaling split time between Syracuse and home town Ilion in 1875. He caught for the Ilions in 1876 in order to be with his boyhood friend Lew “Buttercup” Dickerson. He came to the Stars in 1877.

Jack Farrell was signed off the Princeton town team during an Eastern road trip in May 1876. The Stars inked him for \$25 per month.

Alex McKinnon was picked up on the same road trip. He tended first base for an amateur Boston squad called the Star Base Ball club. His playing career was beset by controversy and tragedy that culminated in his death during the 1887 season. Alex was hitting a robust .340 at the time.

Mike Mansell was one of three brothers who played major league baseball. The trio performed for the local Franklyn club of Auburn, N. Y., before each ventured into the professional world.

Hick Carpenter, the left-handed third baseman for whom the term “Hot Corner” was coined, jumped to Syracuse when his Ithaca Athletic club team disbanded following the 1876 season.

Jimmy Macullar came from the 1876 Lowell and 1877 Auburn teams. He plugged the shortstop gap. Salt City (Syracuse) favorite Mike Dorgan returned from the St. Louis league team to fill the catching position. George Derby signed on to play right field and serve as change pitcher.

The 1878 team also included a returned original Star, George Adams, who had patrolled the outfield in 1876. He was one of the two survivors of the original Live Oak jumpers. (In order to build a competitive team, Star management in 1875 secured the services of five players, Dorgan, Adams, Madden, McGlynn and Crossup, from the Lynn Live Oaks for the 1876 season. Not completely satisfied, Star directors raided the Live Oaks during the ’76 campaign and came away with Al Hall and James Tipper. Of these players only Dorgan was a real nugget. He starred for Syracuse, went on to shine for Jim Muties’s “We are the People” Giants and resurfaced on Syracuse’s American Association club of 1890.)

Denny Mack had a long and varied baseball career until 1878. He was a utility infielder/outfielder for the National Association Philadelphia Athletics and the Philadelphia Base Ball Club, National League St. Louis Browns, the independent Fall Rivers, and in 1878 he appeared for both Interna-



The 1877 Syracuse Stars. Top row: Tom Mansell, Hick Carpenter, Pete Hotaling. Center row: Pat McCormick, Alex McKinnon, Jim Clinton, an unknown player, and Dick Higham. Bottom row: Will Geer, Jack Farrell.

tional Association pennant contenders — Buffalo and Syracuse. Denny became an evangelist after his playing days.

John Richmond held down infield positions for the 1875 Philadelphia Athletics and the 1876 Ithacas. He shortstopped for the Binghamton Crickets in 1877 before coming to the Stars.

Frank Heifer started the '77 season with the Eries and later jumped to the reorganized Buffalo team when the Eries disbanded. He played on the 1875 Champion Boston Red Stockings.

Tom Smith played for Binghamton and came with Richmond to be a part-time infielder for the 1878 Stars.

Hal McClure played many years in the New England area and filled in when needed for the Stars.

The Season

On June 2, the "Twinklers" had a remarkable 23-3 record. The first defeat was a 4-2 contest with Utica. The second was a forfeit to Auburn when the Stars walked off the field to protest the umpiring. The third loss came at the hands of the defending International Association champion Tecumsehs.

The Stars were a tremendous draw on the road but suffered from lagging attendance at home. In Albany, the Stars drew crowds of 2,600. At Buffalo, Cleveland, Troy and Utica, the Twinklers attracted more than 2,000 kranks. In

Cortland, against the Binghamton Crickets, the Stars performed before 1,500 while several thousand more watched from beyond the enclosed park. Many gatherings of more than 1,500 saw the Rochesters routed by the Stars.

At Syracuse's newly built Newell Park, followers did not fully support the shining orbs. Discounting May 1 and July 4, the Twinklers had only five crowds in excess of 1,000. Three were against Utica. Utica was the team which had played in Binghamton the previous years when they were the Star's bitterest foes. May 1 was a holiday and the first anniversary of Syracuse's 16-inning scoreless tie with the St. Louis Browns as 2,500 expectant rooters saw McCormack Chicago the Uticas 3-0.

The Fourth of July traditionally was the biggest baseball box office day. The Twinklers thrilled an early morning assemblage of 3,000 in Utica by losing to the locals 5-1. The two teams then boarded a train and chugged into Syracuse for the afternoon game. More than 3,000 howling enthusiasts witnessed Alcott again besting McCormack. This time the score was 3-1.

Neither game counted in International Association standings because the holiday playing date was not one of the designated championship games. July 4 was the one day that baseball clubs could plan on making profits. Troy would play Albany on that day, Ithaca would go against Binghamton; Buffalo would play Rochester, and so on. Kranks

would pay 25 cents for admission to the grounds. A covered grandstand seat could be obtained for 10 cents additional charge. Visiting clubs worked out their own arrangements for splitting the holiday pot. Troy and Albany usually halved it. The home nine could pay a guarantee, 10 cents per head, or another agreeable arrangement. Faltering clubs and cooperative nines, which was a way of saying teams which did not get paid regularly, would stay together until the July 4 contests. The proud Binghamton Cricket Base Ball Club disbanded July 9 after paying bills and salaries due to poor attendance.

Rules were always a bone of contention and added spice to the game. The Stars protested a game with the Worcesters because the old-timer who umpired called Jack Farrell out when he was "plugged" with the ball. Even though this was a championship game and the rules had been misinterpreted, no attention was paid to the Stars' protests. Pinchrunners could run for the hitter by standing behind the catcher and running to first base when the ball was rapped. Pete Hotaling scored the only run of the game against Hornell while running for McCormick. Pete played center field and batted second as well as pinch running in the same game.

Pitcher George Derby was banished from an exhibition game at Utica for using an above-the-belt delivery. Maker of Hornell was injured while trying for a diving catch. Hornell had no substitute. The Stars agreed to call the game in the middle of the sixth inning with a 7-7 tie. Several times during the season both Syracuse and Buffalo, as visitors, had walked off the field in the bottom of the ninth when the opposing team led. The clubs had become too professional to play a useless half inning.

All summer defending 1877 champ Tecumseh found itself locked in a ding-dong battle with Buffalo, Syracuse and Utica for the championship. Buffalo, with Alleghany stars Galvin and Fulmer, put together a great team and grew more troublesome as the season progressed. Utica, pushed by their slugging center fielder Hardie Richardson, hung tough but could win only one of four from Buffalo. Tecumseh made a good defense, but due to the inclusion of Syracuse and Buffalo, the Association was stronger than the previous year. The London, Ont., Tecumsehs disbanded when they saw that they had no chance of repeating as champion.

The Tecumsehs' disbandment changed the demeanor of the league and threw the standings into turmoil. According to the Association rules for disbanded teams, the lowest number of games played with every team was the number of games that counted for championship purposes. It was similar to the lowest common denominator. Many Star victories were thrown out.

The pennant race came down to Buffalo, Syracuse and the umpires in a one-game season. Buffalo had won 13 straight games on a homestand late in the season. Rivals claimed that it was due to the umpiring of Nichols. A Rochester umpire, George Campbell, filed a lawsuit against the Buffalo Express newspaper for libel in its description of his work in a 16-3 Rochester rout of Buffalo.

Game Time

The Buffalos scored nine runs in the first two innings of the championship game and held the Stars to a single tally. That was the pennant. Buffalo surged into the lead, but the Twin-klers had one last trick to play.

Rochester disbanded on Aug. 21. The Stars claimed a forfeit from them for a scheduled Aug. 23 championship game. The Stars explained that though Rochester had released its players, it still existed as a club. If the win counted, Syracuse and Buffalo would be tied for the prize money and the championship bunting.

So it was that the 1878 pennant was not decided until March 1879 at the plush Baggs Hotel in Utica. Team representatives voted to disallow the Rochester forfeiture, thus awarding the championship banner to Buffalo. Little hoopla ensued because both Buffalo and Syracuse had been invited to play in the National League for the 1879 season. Both teams did so.

One of baseball's earliest and most exciting leagues quietly drifted away. The pennant winner often wondered for half a year if it was the real champion. It was the National League which gained. Such stalwarts as Hardie Richardson, Chick Fulmer, Pud Galvin, Mike Dorgan, Hick Carpenter, Ned Hanlon, Doc Bushong, Larry Corcoran, Jack Farrell, and John Montgomery Ward joined the league and thrilled major league fans for many years.

The 1887 Binghamton Bingos

By James Delaney Jr.

On Aug. 20, 1887, the Binghamton, N.Y., Bingos (International League) folded. The Binghamton Daily Leader described the meeting which ended the Bings season:

The directors met ... and shook dice to see whether the Bingos should go or linger and the festive cubes said they should meander. And now we ain't got any Bings.

The Daily Leader felt the main cause of "the Bingo disfranchisement was the large crowds of people that didn't go see 'em." But, it had been quite a year for the Binghamton team: visits to Newark ("the benighted land of malaria and bad hotels"), to the Syracuse "salt marshes," to "Starch City" (Oswego), and contests against the Rochester "Lushers," a team which would have found the International League Guide useless, "because it doesn't furnish addresses of saloon keepers." The Elmira Gazette, which covered the exploits of Binghamton's closest (though non-league) rival, was subject to almost daily criticism by the Daily Leader. It was written that a man from Elmira happened to stroll by Riverside Park (home of the Bingos) and had asked someone what was going on there — evidently the "cheesy ball" the Elmira papers were "gushing over" had left the man incapable of recognizing a baseball game when he saw one. Or so it was reported in the Daily Leader.

This article will cover the 1887 season of the Binghamton Bingos, primarily through the pages of the Daily Leader. Binghamton's weekly papers, the Democrat and the Republican, made little mention about baseball. The Democrat, however, did have a story about "Base Ball Lunatics" in its May 12 issue. It is the story of a Connecticut man who was considered insane because all he talked about was baseball. The Democrat added that now there were "about 10,000,000 such lunatics in the country."

The Question of Black Players

The April 12 issue of the Daily Leader had two items of interest in its "Base Ball Notes" column. The first concerned the prospective unnerving of opponents when they visit Riverside Park since "the Binghamton Gun Club (is) in the next lot." The other item concerned Frank Grant, the noted black second baseman:

Complaint is being made that Grant ... is being used as a star player by Manager Chapman of Buffalo. This accounts for the amount of ground he is allowed to cover ... and no attention is paid to such a thing as another man's territory.

The Daily Leader was seemingly ambivalent about the black players in the IL. This is best illustrated in its coverage of the release by the Bings of two blacks, second baseman John "Bud" Fowler and pitcher William Renfroe. The lead note of July 13 read: "Gone coons Fowler and Renfroe." But, in the same group of notes is this comment on Renfroe: "He will return to his home in Memphis, whence he expects to join the Topekas of the Western League. Renfroe is a gentlemanly fellow, who deserves to do well."

Two June visits to Binghamton by the Cuban Giants, a top black independent team, were cause for the Daily Leader to break out the racial epithets. On the ninth, the Bingos defeated the Giants 12-8, with Renfroe hurling a complete game and allowing one earned run. The Giants were referred to as "the snow flakes," the "dark objects," and "the simmenian (sic) visitors," and a suggestion was made that "watermelons at home plate" might help the Giants. On June 30, the Giants returned, and this time emerged victorious, 8-6, in a game called after eight innings. The Daily Leader reported that "the sable, cimmenan (sic), colored Ethiopians, who make their lair at Trenton, N.J., jumped on the peripatetic Bings yesterday, and spilled innocent gore." Bud Fowler, in his Binghamton finale, went 2 for 5, but committed two of the 10 Binghamton errors.

Despite remarks such as these, which can only be judged today to be cruel and bigoted, the Daily Leader was generally sympathetic to the blacks in the IL. For instance, in the May 14 notes: "If Billy Hoover (umpire) made the remark that is credited to him, that on a close point he would give a decision against a team employing a colored player, he should be driven out of the League at the toe of a boot."

Hoover resigned by the end of the month to manage the Oswego team which soon disbanded.

On July 14, the International League directors met in Buffalo to discuss "the question of black players. Several representatives declared that many of the best players in the League were anxious to leave on account of the colored element, and the board finally directed Secretary White to approve no more contracts with colored men." The Daily Leader was quiet on this matter until after the season ended. But on Oct. 4, it commented: "We think the International League made a monkey of itself when it undertook to draw the color line." And, on Oct. 7, "We wonder if the International League proposes to exclude colored people from attendance at the games." It is obvious where the Daily Leader stood on the question of blacks in the IL.

Bud Fowler had an interesting run at Binghamton. He was one of the stars on the team, usually playing second and,

usually batting cleanup. **Minor League Baseball Stars** lists the righthanded batter's record as 34 games, a .350 average and 23 steals for the Bingsos. The Daily Leader reported on his exploits consistent with the attention his teammates received. Rarely was his blackness referred to in game stories.

Though there is no indication of how Fowler got along with his teammates, it does seem that there was no blatant hostility against him. The Oswego club respected Fowler's opinion enough to sign black second baseman Randolph Jackson upon his recommendation. On June 4, the Daily Leader reported that "Mr. F. F. Billings offered as a prize a life-sized portrait of the member of the Binghamton club who made the greatest batting average during home games of the current week ... the official score-sheet ... shows Fowler is the lucky winner of the prize." With a .500 (8 for 16) average for the week, Fowler beat out 10 teammates for the portrait, each of whom hit over .300. One would hardly expect that such a gift would have been given to a despised member of the community. After all, even "official records" could have been altered, but there seemed no reluctance in awarding the prize to Fowler.

Fowler continued to play for the Bingsos until June 30, when, according to the Rochester Chronicle, he was released upon the condition he sign with no other IL club. There must have been rumblings of displeasure before then, however. For example, on June 9, the Daily Leader reported: "We are authorized to state that the report of Fowler's release was entirely without foundation." Seemingly, the forces were in motion which would lead to the banning of blacks in the IL the following month.

The 1887 Season

On April 21 Binghamton began its exhibition schedule with a 10-3 win over Scranton before 800 fans. Already there was "a rumor afloat that Binghamton will not finish the season," which "Cricket" (Sporting Life's Binghamton correspondent) adamantly denied. Fans were reminded that if a game was to be played, a red tag with "Game" on it flew on Court Street, opposite the stores of Clark and McHenry; a blue flag meant no game. The Bingsos went 5-0 in exhibition play, including two wins over Scranton and Reading, and a win over Allentown.

Regular season play began on May 3 and the Bingsos beat Utica 8-2. The following day the Utes were soundly drubbed 26-8, with pitcher Ely allowing just one earned run and going 6 for 6 at the plate. Fowler's second inning single contributed to a seven-run outburst. On May 9, Buffalo's Mickey Walsh was the victim of a seven-hit first inning explosion. Fowler was in the middle of the rally which, reported the Daily Leader, gave Walsh a "dose of nux vomica." Binghamton finished its first homestand 5-5. A trip to Oswego netted three wins in four tries, and the Bingsos scored 47 runs. Fowler was the starting pitcher and loser in Oswego's 12-10 win. He gave up five runs in less than two innings, causing the Daily Leader to remark: "Fowler has hitherto been the packhorse between a lame arm and victory. He didn't get there yesterday." Two days later, Fowler "got there." The Bingsos beat the "Sweegs" 8-3, with Fowler the batting star. In the fourth, "Fowler stepped to the plate, and meeting the second ball pitched fairly in the nozzle, drove it

over the right field fence for a fourbagger."

Binghamton traveled to Newark and lost four games in mosquitoland, the highlight being George Stovey's 9-0, five-hit shutout. It was reported that the Bingsos offered "a bushel of peanuts" for Stovey. Black hurler Renfroe (2-4 record) broke in during the afternoon session of a Memorial Day doubleheader with Utica. After winning the opener 20-13, the Bingsos completed the sweep with a 14-9 victory. Renfroe hurled a complete game in an hour and 40 minutes, striking out nine. The Daily Leader wasn't concerned with Renfroe's color that day. In fact, it seemed most concerned with the absence of the clown, Juice, left home by Utica, which was accused of pennypinching.

When Oswego folded at the end of May, Binghamton's three wins over them were removed from their record. So as June began, the Bingsos were 8-11, nine games behind first-place Newark (17-2). The Bingsos first June contest was a 12-11 win over the Syracuse Stars. Fowler's two-run double in the eighth provided the winning margin. For the day Fowler was 4 for 5, with three doubles, each good for "two Ottomans." On June 2, the Bingsos lost to Syracuse 7-6 in 11 innings. Renfroe, "(who) promises to be a daisy" went the distance allowing no earned runs. The Daily Leader reported that "The 'Bingsos' did not support Renfroe yesterday and many think the shabby work was intentional." In addition, Syracuse players were refusing to support Higgins, a black pitcher. On June 4, Renfroe and the Bingsos lost to Higgins and the Stars 10-4, before 1,500 in Syracuse. Scranton joined the league the following day. On June 25 Renfroe pitched the Bingsos to an 11-7 win over Utica. The Daily Leader reported that the dark-skinned twirler of the Bingsos gave them tricky little geometrical problems full of arcs and tangents ... toward the final stages of the examination, however, he tried them on some of the rudimentary branches, and found them apt and greedy.

The beginning of July saw Newark still atop the IL at 28-11, Buffalo second with 30-15, Rochester third, 21-18 and Toronto fourth, 19-18. Binghamton was ninth with a 15-21 record and 10 1/2 games ahead of last-place Utica. On July 2 it was reported that Mark Twain was scheduled to umpire at Elmira. The 1887 National League champion Detroit Wolverines visited Binghamton on July 6 and won 6-1, behind the pitching of Walter Burke, a "fat cuss" with an excellent "drop curve." Hardy Richardson was 4 for 5 for Detroit and Stump Weidman hit a home run. The Bingsos resumed regular IL play the following day with a 3-2 win over Buffalo. Knight had replaced Henry Ormsbee as manager with the Bingsos' record at 18-22, 11 1/2 games behind first-place Newark.

The "lift" provided by the new manager was short-lived as the Bingsos quickly lost four straight to Syracuse, allowing 45 runs. The previously mentioned league meeting was held July 14 and in addition to the discussion of black players, it was decided that Wilkes-Barre would assume Utica's record. The Daily Leader speculated that this "might lead to a reopening of the Oswego matter (where teams' wins and losses versus Oswego were deleted)." However, the Oswego matter remained closed. In other matters, Jersey City and Newark were censured for playing a Sunday exhibition on July 3, and umpire salaries were raised from \$200 to \$250 a month,

effective immediately.

Mounting Financial Problems

On July 25 a meeting was held on the fate of the Bings. It was decided that a benefit game versus Elmira would be played. One thousand tickets at \$1 each were to be sold and it was hoped that "an enthusiastic response will enable the committee to dispose of the entire number" and "keep the franchise in this city." The Bings lost to Stovey and Newark 4-3 on the 26th. Outfielder Milt West was suspended "without pay by the Binghamton Association for indifferent playing. Justice to this player would seem to demand that he be released." West was released and eventually signed with Columbus.

As the Bingos moved into August play, the financial difficulties were becoming more apparent. Four players were released on the night of Aug. 6 following a 7-3 loss to Buffalo. Among those released were season-long hurler Tony Madigan and team stolen base leader Casey, who was hitting about .330. The Daily Leader commented that "maybe too many players were pruned by the Board of Directors."

"Base Ball Notes" of Aug. 10 spoke to the issue of rowdy fan behavior:

It is scarcely a wonder the club is not successful financially. One would imagine from the conduct of the spectators that only loafers were present. Decent people will feel bound in the interest of self-respect, to stay away. . . if those disgusting exhibitions continue.

By now it was evident that the fans had better start turning out for the games or the team would fold. The fans were admonished daily to "attend the games" and it was hinted that if folks want a warm welcome at the Great White Gate, they should "attend the games this week." When attendance for a 7-4 loss to Rochester on the 16th was still small, the Daily Leader in its best guilt-inspiring tones wrote that the turnout was "not such as becomes enterprising Binghamtonians." The payroll which was causing all of these difficulties was reported to be \$2,400 a month.

On Aug. 20, the Bingos beat Elmira 18-2 for their third exhibition victory in as many tries against their hated rival. As mentioned earlier, the directors met that night and the Bingos folded. After numerous urgings for the fans to turn out, the Daily Leader on Aug. 23 lamented: "We are a Bingless people." The Republican noted that Binghamton was a lively baseball town "for its inches," but had too small a population to support a club.

The demise of the Bingos created a league controversy. Sporting Life reported in its Aug. 1 issue that Binghamton's games against the teams remaining in the league would count only if a replacement for the Bingos were found. This stand, consistent with the IL constitution, drew the ire of Syracuse, which had defeated Binghamton in 10 of 12 meetings. The Stars, previously hurt when Oswego disbanded, threatened to withdraw from the league should their wins

against the Bingos be removed from the standings. A meeting was scheduled for Aug. 30 in Buffalo and as the Sept. 7 Sporting Life headlined: "Syracuse Wins; Binghamton's Games to Count." Rochester, Wilkes-Barre, Newark and Jersey City joined with Syracuse in a 5-4 vote which allowed the games with Binghamton to count, despite the fact that no replacement franchise was found.

The Bingos did re-appear on Sept. 9, with only Ely and pitcher Green remaining from the IL club. The new-look team lost 6-3 to Elmira. In the IL, Toronto won 22 of its last 26 games to capture the pennant. The final standings:

	W-L	PCT.	GB
Toronto	65-36	.653	-
Buffalo	63-40	.612	3
Syracuse	61-40	.604	4
Newark	59-39	.602	4 1/2
Hamilton	58-42	.580	6 1/2
Jersey City	48-49	.495	15
Rochester	49-52	.485	16
Binghamton	27-46	.370	24
Scranton	19-55	.257	32 1/2
Wilkes-Barre (Utica)	26-75	.257	39
Oswego	3-22	.120	38

The Binghamton team stole 179 bases, scored seven runs a game, and ranked ninth with a .304 team average. The Bings also ranked ninth in fielding percentage (.893), committing 343 errors, or about 4.5 per game. Individually, pitcher Green won 14 games and hurled the team's two shutouts.

This look back on the 1887 Binghamton Bingos serves as yet another confirmation of the often frustrating maxim "things never change." Certainly baseball has improved its relationship with black athletes, but perhaps one should be merely grateful for Branch Rickey breaking the half-century old color line and not question his motives. Certainly many former Negro League players today feel that Rickey's main reason for signing Jackie Robinson was to lure black fans into Ebbets Field

But in other areas it seems as if 100 years has changed very little. Milt West, earning a fraction of what today's big-leaguers make, still could be suspended for "indifferent play." Big salaries also were a concern then. Sporting Life used the Peoria Reds for "a sample of the tremendous increase in player salaries" that was occurring in 1887. Fan violence supposedly a malady of today's "permissive society" plagued the '87 Bings. And perhaps most poignantly for present day Binghamton baseball fans this note on the prospects for a team in 1888 in the Oct. 7 1888 Daily Leader: "Binghamton will have a team if somebody can be found to go behind and push the darned thing." That "somebody" was found in 1888 and Binghamton had baseball almost continuously for 80 years. Today out of organized baseball since 1968, Binghamton is once again looking for someone to push the darned thing. Some things never do change.

The Empire State League 1905-1908

by Edward Brooks

One of the more obscure minor leagues in this century has been the Class D Empire State League, which operated for at least three full years in the Finger Lakes region of central New York.

By 1905, many cities and towns of the state, particularly in the central and western zones, were linked by a network of interurban electric trolley lines which carried passengers from place to place at speeds which could reach 90 miles an hour. Towns in the Finger Lakes area between Rochester and Syracuse and north to Lake Ontario were growing prosperous and confident and the booster spirit manifest in such towns across the country dictated that they had to have their own ball clubs.

So in March 1905 a meeting was held in Auburn to form a league. It would be a "trolley league," supported by the wealth and by the natural rivalries of the communities involved. Lending impetus to the organization was the tradition of representation in professional baseball experienced by many of these places reaching back to the 1880s.

The league opened the 1905 season with a compliment consisting of Seneca Falls, Oneida (which dropped out July 25 and was not replaced), Cortland (which dropped out of the league July 18 and was replaced by Canandaigua, which in turn dropped out July 27 and was not replaced by another franchise), Rome, Lyons, Oswego, Palmyra (this franchise dropped out of the league on June 15 and was replaced by Geneva on July 2), and Ilion (which was replaced during the season by Fulton). The final standings showed the outcome of the pennant race:

	W-L	Pct.
Seneca Falls	42-26	.618
Geneva	33-22	.600
Rome	41-30	.577
Lyons	31-35	.470
Oswego	32-44	.421
Ilion-Fulton	20-39	.339

So far, no explanation had been found to account for the great discrepancy in games played in the cases of Geneva and Ilion-Fulton in comparison to the rest of the clubs, but this condition continued to hold true in 1906 when Auburn and Penn Yann (later transferred to Syracuse) replaced Rome and Lyons with the final standing as follows:

	W-L	Pct.
Seneca Falls	48-32	.600
Geneva	47-32	.595
Auburn	37-35	.514

Oswego	40-38	.511
Fulton	30-45	.400
Penn Yann-Syracuse	20-40	.333

In 1907, with Lyons back in the league replacing Syracuse, the domination of Seneca Falls ended with a pennant victory for Oswego:

	W-L	Pct.
Oswego	55-29	.655
Seneca Falls	56-32	.636
Auburn	44-39	.530
Fulton	43-42	.506
Geneva	34-51	.400
Lyons	25-64	.281

In its final year, the ESL, operated as an independent circuit and whether or not it competed a full season is not known. Research by Vern Luse indicates that it opened the season with Auburn, Fulton, Geneva, Lyons, Oneida and Oswego with Geneva and Lyons dropping out July 15, replaced by Watertown and Ogdensburg.

In its short history, the league proved to be an avenue of opportunity for several players who reached the major leagues. The best known of these was Jack Graney, long-time Cleveland outfielder who appeared as a pitcher with Fulton in 1906. Alan Storke, who opened with Auburn in 1906, finished that year with Pittsburgh and proceeded to establish himself as a solid major league infielder before his death in March 1910.

Much investigation remains to be done before the complete history of this league can be written. On site research in the newspapers of league cities is necessary, because microfilm copies through interlibrary loan, where they exist at all, have so far been impossible to obtain. Player averages need to be compiled and reasons for franchise shifts need to be explained. The mysteries of the 1908 season need solution: why was the league then operating independently of organized baseball and did it complete the season? Finally, why did the league give up after 1908?

Short-lived as it may have been, the significance of the ESL lies in its role as part of a baseball tradition strong in the Finger Lakes region for more than 100 years, a tradition which produced professional leagues like the first New York State League in the 1880s, the early Can-Am League in the mid-1930s, the Border League in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and presently, the New York-Penn League. The Empire State League, unrecognized and all but ignored, was an early 20th century bridge over which this tradition passed.

The First to Take it on the Road

by Richard Puff

On June 30, 1860, the Excelsiors, led by pitcher James F. Creighton, who likely was the game's first professional player, left South Brooklyn and headed north for Albany. While there is no way of knowing whether the Excelsiors realized it or not, by making an excursion across the team began a trend that would help the game of baseball grow into America's National Pastime.

Ball clubs in the infancy of the game never strayed far from home. Instead, teams played other nines from their city or surrounding area. Road trips, as we now know them, did not exist. That is until the Brooklyn Excelsiors came to Albany.

The Excelsiors' excursion that would take them across New York state was first announced publicly in the June 28, 1860 edition of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle in a small article which told of the team's planned trip "to Niagara and other cities." The article briefly described the trip to Albany, Troy and Buffalo, however, the itinerary then became uncertain. "From this point movements are rather uncertain, but it is not improbable the trip will be extended to Detroit to which place an invitation has been received by the club."

Making the trip was team captain J.B. Leggett, who served as catcher; James Creighton, pitcher; J. Pearsall, first base; J. Holden, second base; William H. Young, third base; John Whiting, shortstop; Asa Brainard, right field; H. Polhemus, center field; and E. Russell, left field.

The First Road Game

More than 1,000 people gathered on July 2, 1860 in Albany at the Washington Parade Grounds, which is now known simply as Washington Park, to watch what was promised to be a "genuine exhibition of baseball." The Excelsiors — dressed in blue caps, white merino shirts trimmed in blue, white belts, blue pants and white shoes — finished off the Albany club, 24-6, in three hours. The Albany Morning News described the game in its July 3 edition: "As we anticipated with such players against them, the Champions were beaten, their score being very low indeed, but their very fine play in the field prevented the Excelsiors from running up a very large one against them." The Albany Evening Journal added, "At the conclusion of the game there was cheering on both sides and the ball was delivered to the winners. About 5 o'clock the Champions invited their guests to a glorious dinner at the Merchants Hotel where a happy time was had and the greatest good feeling was manifest."

The Excelsiors, "who have pretty well reduced base ball to a science," then took a train across the Hudson River to Troy to continue their "crusade through the province for the pur-

pose of winning laurels, or losing them, with the different clubs," according to the Daily Whig in Troy. The game, played at Weir's Course, "was a splendid game, especially toward the close," the Daily Whig reported in its July 4, 1860 edition. "The match was played under the eyes of quite one thousand spectators — many of them ladies, and much enthusiasm was manifested. The score 13 to 7 is a very fine one, and as in baseball low figures represent good play; this match will be called a first class match. The fielding of the Victorys was fully equal to that of the Excelsiors, but the skillful pitching of the latter club, resulting in the balls flying into the air and being caught, had most telling effect."

As in Albany, festivities continued after the match when both teams enjoyed a fine supper at the Troy House where "speeches were made, songs were sung and the best of feeling prevailed," the Daily Whig reported. "Dr. Hegeman, on behalf of the Victory, presented the Excelsior Club with a ball and also a regulation bat, suitably inscribed."

Off to the Niagara Frontier

The Brooklynites continued by train to the western reaches of the state on July 4. Before a game was played, the host Niagaras took the Excelsiors to Niagara Falls and entertained them at a fine banquet at the Clifton House on the Canadian side of the falls. Unfortunately for the Niagaras, the Excelsiors did not return the hospitality as they beat the home team 50-19. Albert Spalding in his 1911 classic "America's National Game," said the Excelsior's totals were "the highest score that had been ever recorded in a Base Ball match up to that date."

"It is safe to say that no such ball playing was ever before witnessed in Buffalo," wrote the Daily Eagle on July 9, 1860. "The manner in which the Excelsiors handled the ball, the ease with which they caught it, under all circumstances, the precision with which they threw it to the bases, and the tremendous hits they gave it in to the long field made the optics of the Buffalo players glisten with admiration and protrude with amazement. The effect of their playing could not have a favorable effect upon the spirits and energies of the Niagaras, and some of them were, without doubt, a little discouraged. It was remarked by every one that they did not play with their usual skill and coolness."

Each Excelsior player scored at least three runs in the game, with Leggett leading the way with eight tallies. Five other teammates scored five times each.

The Brooklyn Daily Eagle added that "Brooklyn will soon be, if she is not now, able to boast of having the 'first nine' in the Union."

The Excelsiors continued their trek across the state on July 7 by traveling to Rochester, where they encountered the Flour City nine. The Excelsiors won that game also, 21-1. The next day they defeated the Rochester Live Oaks, 27-9. The Daily Eagle reported that the game lasted nearly four hours because it was "much delayed by wind and rain." The Live Oaks were able to put 10 Excelsiors out on the fly while third baseman Frank Whiting of the Excelsiors "made a clean score with six runs."

The club surpassed their total of 50 runs accumulated during the Buffalo contest on July 11 in the excursion's final game, which took place in Newburgh. The final score stood 59-14 as the Excelsiors defeated the Hudson River club to make their trip a perfect 6-0. In the six games, the Excelsiors outscored their opponents 194 to 56.

"The returning excursionists were met at Newburgh by a large delegation from this city," the Daily Eagle reported on July 13, 1860. "The Club has been well received everywhere, and the trip has been in every sense a success. It should be stated that by the particular request of the Excelsior Club no wines or liquors were allowed on the grounds at any of the matches."

Inspiring Other Teams

While it may be significant that the Excelsiors started a trend in teams traveling to other cities to face opponents, more importantly, the tour probably caused the formation of many new teams across the state. Spalding in his book wrote: "Always and everywhere on this great journey of conquest the Excelsiors were the recipients of the most gracious hospitality, a

true sportsmanlike spirit possessing the hosts in every city visited. Moreover, at all points the game received fresh impetus, new clubs were organized, and word came from all over the State that Base Ball matches were being scheduled as never before."

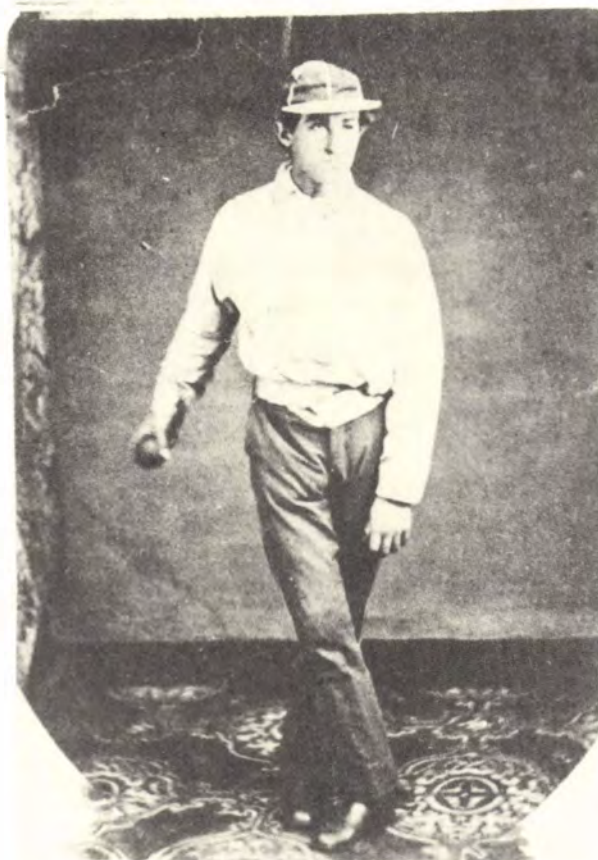
"The contests .. had inspired the young men of those cities to emulate the example of the youth of New York and Brooklyn, and had begotten within them the hope that they might win for their cities a glory akin to that which had been achieved for the city on Long Island. As a result, clubs were organized by the hundreds, the fever spreading to all parts of the country, East, West, North and South, and matches, which developed strong new players, were scheduled everywhere," Spalding continued.

The excursion through upstate New York proved so successful that the Excelsiors next headed south for another trip in late July. On July 22, the team defeated a picked nine from all the clubs from Baltimore, 51-6. On July 24, they beat a picked nine from all the clubs from Philadelphia, 15-4.

"Like the New York tour, this trip had a tremendous influence in promoting interest in the game in a new quarter," wrote Spalding. "Upon their return, the Excelsiors found awaiting them an invitation from Boston, which they were compelled, reluctantly, to decline until a later date."

The Excelsior's trip across New York state was perhaps the first great push to spread the emerging sport of baseball.

In a short time, the Civil War would begin to rage and that too would help spread the game throughout the rest of the United States. Before long, the game was well on its way to becoming America's National Pastime.



JAMES CREIGHTON.

Member of the Excelsior Base Ball Club of Brooklyn.

Offerman Stadium in Buffalo

Hitters Welcome — Pitchers Beware

by Joseph Overfield

In the much praised SABR publication “Minor League Baseball Stars,” mention is made of the relationship between ballparks and hitting records. Nicollet Park in Minneapolis and Sulphur Dell in Nashville were cited, along with the Sacramento Park of more recent vintage.

There are other parks which could have been mentioned. The one I know best and where many International League records were set, was Offerman Stadium (nee Bison Stadium) located at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Ferry Street on Buffalo’s near east side. The original park on this site was built in 1889. It was first called Olympic Park and then became Buffalo Baseball Park. The birth pangs of the original stadium were hardly auspicious. First of all, it was built with second-hand lumber hauled from an earlier Olympic Park in another part of the city. Secondly, the contractor who did the hauling was not happy when his \$800 bill was not paid. On Opening Day of 1889, he planted himself at the gate on Michigan Avenue and made it perfectly clear he was not going to move until he was paid. Few doubted he meant business after seeing the shotgun he held at the ready. This novel method of enforcing payment proved highly effective and the disgruntled contractor was paid in full, permitting the Bisons to open their 1889 season on schedule.

Although the marriage of Buffalo baseball with the Michigan Avenue diamond was a shotgun affair, it developed into a long and fruitful union of 72 seasons. The old structure, rebuilt, patched up and added to many times, was finally torn down between the 1923 and 1924 seasons and replaced with a steel and concrete stadium with 14,000 seats and a new name — Bison Stadium, which it was called until 1935 when it became Offerman Stadium, following the death of the long-time club president, Frank J. Offerman.

The Buffalo park was located in a densely populated part of the city and had no parking facilities whatsoever. Immediately beyond the right field wall on Woodlawn Avenue was a row of two-family houses whose upper porches provided ideal vantage points for watching the games, provided you stayed alert with left-handed pull hitters at the plate. The story is told of one Woodlawn Avenue resident whose attachment to baseball (he had watched it for free for many years) continued to the very end when a long home run off the bat of Buzz Arlett of the Baltimore Orioles crashed through the front window of his house and came to rest a few feet from the casket in which he laid.

The left field fence, 12-feet high at the beginning and increased to 32 feet in later years, was bounded by the backyards and garages of houses that fronted on Masten Avenue to the east. Many of these residents erected bootleg bleach-

ers on the garage roofs attracting those fans who could not afford to pay the full price at the box office. In deep center field, 400 feet from home plate, the scene was dominated by a huge scoreboard that towered 40 feet above the fence and provided a challenging, but elusive target for International League sluggers during the years. There would be only one to conquer it.

Immediately behind the home plate portion of the stands was a church. If you were a Presbyterian, and so inclined, you could attend church on a Sunday morning and watch the Bisons play in the afternoon without even crossing the street. It was in this church in 1911 that Ed Barrow, then president of the International League, came to be married. The church building, which still stands, bears the scars of many foul balls that bounced off its wall during the years.

Offerman Stadium was always known as a hitters’ park. Its foul line dimensions (297 to right and 321 to left) were not nearly so absurd as those at Nashville, Minneapolis, Sacramento or Baltimore, but what made the park a hitters’ paradise, particularly for righthanders, was the short distance to left-center (346 feet) and the prevailing wind (the ballplayers called it the jet stream) which gave wings to any fly ball hit in that direction.

Records, Records and More Records

The individual and team batting feats performed in the Buffalo park were numerous. Ollie Carnegie, 12 years a Bison, holds the International League record for career home runs (258) and runs batted in (1,044). While many of his home runs were, of course, hit on the road, it was at the home field with its friendly left field wall where he was most dangerous. The same applied to Billy Webb, not noted as a slugger, who hit two home runs in one inning against Newark in 1925. George Fisher, a lefty, did the same against Jersey City in 1929. On Aug. 4, 1957, shortstop Mike Baxes of the Bisons hit two home runs with the bases full against the Havana Sugar Kings — a feat accomplished only four times in the long history of the International League.

But it was a Newark Bear, Bob Seeds, who chose the Buffalo park to put on what could be the greatest two-day hitting performance in baseball history. On May 6 and 7, 1938, he hit seven home runs, four of them in successive innings, drove in 17 runs and rolled up an incredible 30 total bases. And in the ninth inning of the May 7 game, with a chance to add even more to an unbelievable record, he was called out on a 3-2 pitch delivered by a Bison rookie pitcher, Don Ferris.

The Longest Shot

Luke Easter who, next to Ollie Carnegie, is Buffalo's best-remembered ballplayer, accomplished on June 14, 1957 what no other player, major or minor, semipro or Negro League, had been able to do. He hit a low outside pitch delivered by Bob Kuzava of the Columbus Jets 500-plus feet over the scoreboard in center field. Later in the season, he did it again, this time off Marty Kutyna of Richmond. While the two scoreboard shots are legendary in Buffalo baseball history, they were not the longest or hardest hit balls of Easter's Buffalo career. That distinction, according to Easter, belongs to a blow he hit off Jerry Lane of the Havana Sugar Kings. On that occasion he flushed a high inside fastball and pulled it directly to right field (Easter was not a pull hitter), across Woodlawn Avenue, over a two and a half story house and into the alley of a house on Emerson Place, the next street south.

The Buffalo park was the scene of four noteworthy team batting exhibitions, all by the Bisons. The first came on July 13, 1929 when the Bisons set an International League record with 11 consecutive hits against the Baltimore Orioles. A single by Clayton Sheedy started the string. Then came singles by Johnny Barnes and Jim Cooney, a home run by Buck Elliott, singles by Ollie Sax and Herb Thomas, a double by George Fisher, singles by Hack Miller, Al Moore and Sheedy, and a triple by Barnes.

On May 30 1932, the Bisons put on a devastating hitting performance in a doubleheader against Toronto, defeating the Maple Leafs 18-1 in the first game and then completing the felony by annihilating them 26-2 in the seven-inning second game. The Bisons failed to score in the first two innings of the first game, but tallied every other time they came to bat in the two games. For the afternoon they were 41 for 81, and hit eight home runs, one triple and eight doubles. Third baseman George Detore was 6 for 6 in the second game, hitting three home runs and missing a fourth by inches.

On May 15, 1934, the Bisons set another league record with five home runs in one inning against the Albany Senators. Heinie Mueller led off the second inning against lefty

John Milligan by drawing a walk. After Butch Meyers had hit a home run, Link Wasem and Johnny Wilson were retired. Greg Mulleavy and Les Mallon then followed with home runs, bringing in right-hander Art Jones to the mound in relief. He was rudely greeted by home runs No. 4 and 5 off the bats of Jack Smith and Bill Regan. Then came a tragic footnote to this record hitting display. Irving (Jake) Plummer, a promising outfielder recently called up from the New York-Pennsylvania League, was the next batter. Plummer had been something of a sensation in the three games he had played for the Bisons, going 6 for 12 with two home runs and nine RBIs. Predictably, Jones' first pitch to Plummer was a bean ball. It caught him flush on the skull and knocked him cold. Plummer tried to come back later in the year, but was never the same and soon drifted out of the game.

Ten home runs in one game! Just another International League record for the Bisons at Offerman Stadium. This time the victims were the Syracuse Chiefs, who were crushed in the first game of a June 20, 1948 Sunday doubleheader by the football score of 28-11 on the wings of home runs by Anse Moore (three), Johnny Groth (two), pitcher Sol Rogovin (two), John Bero, Chet Laabs and Larry Barton. The Bisons then let up somewhat and won the second game by the more modest score of 16-12. Oddly enough, they scored the same number of runs (44), had the same number of hits (41) and went to bat the same number of times (81) as in the Memorial Day massacre of the Toronto Maple Leafs back in 1932.

Sunday, Aug. 4, 1946, was the date of another pitchers' nightmare at the Michigan-Ferry grounds. After three hours and 30 minutes of wood against horsehides, the score stood Buffalo 20, Jersey City 19, with each team garnering exactly the same number of hits as runs.

After the 1960 season, Offerman Stadium fell to the wreckers' ball and a junior high school was built on the site. This was a sad eventuality for the baseball fans of Buffalo and for generations of hitters, past and future. As for members of the pitching fraternity, as far as is known, not a single tear was shed.



Top left: Hornell of Hornellsville, 1878, of the International Association. The stars of the team were Tommy Burns, standing far right; Fred Dunlap, middle row far left; and Jumbo Critchley, seated in middle.
Top right: The Utica Base Ball Club of 1878, also members of the International Association.
Right: The Knickerbocker nine of Albany in 1864.





Johnny Evers: The Find of the 1902 Season

by Frank Keetz

In 1902, a 19-year-old, 110-pound Johnny Evers tried out for his home town professional baseball team. Probably smaller than every player in the league and definitely younger than most of the professional players, Evers was given a tryout along with other hopefuls. He was not on the partial Troy roster printed in *The Sporting News* in February or on a complete roster announced in early April in the area press. However, on April 27, Evers appears in a box score of Troy's first exhibition game — playing right field! The opponent was the touring black Cuban Giants, which defeated the local Trojans, 14-9. "'Jack' Evers, a South Troy boy, covered the right garden for the State League men in a creditable manner. He pulled down several skyscrapers which looked like safe hits and received a rousing reception from the crowd." In subsequent exhibition games, his name fails to appear in some box scores. Then, in a May 7 exhibition game he played shortstop for the first time.

Two days later, on May 9, Troy opened its regular season playing visiting Ilion on the local Laureate grounds. Appearing in the box score as leadoff batter was:

	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
Evers, SS	3	0	0	3	3	0

A local newspaper reported, "Evers did not get a hit, and the crowd was disappointed." Evers' team lost that opening game before a meager crowd of 300 which "braved the chilly atmosphere." Despite the presence of four future major leaguers (Edward Hilley, Alex Hardy, Chick Robertaille and George "Hooks" Wiltse) on the team, Troy would lose many more games, finishing in seventh place.

The youth had been signed to a \$60 per month contract by team owner and manager, Louis Bacon. The \$60 was more than young Evers ever earned in a variety of unskilled jobs. Bacon had a well-deserved reputation of being a low-paying, yet financially successful minor league team owner. Evers was receiving much less money than most other league players. But it was a chance to play professional baseball.

A Ballplaying Family

John Joseph Evers had eight years of education at St. Joseph's Elementary School and no permanent job, but had gained a reputation as a promising player on the many amateur and semiprofessional teams in his home town of Troy. He came from a working class Irish family in south Troy, then a thriving upstate New York city. Some of his brothers, his father and his uncles were all ballplayers. Troy was one

of eight upstate New York teams in the compact New York State League. The Class B league was about to start its sixth consecutive season. It was an established minor league with a remarkable degree of stability for 1902 under the strong leadership of its original president, John H. Farrell. A few of its players had gone directly to the major leagues; others reached the majors after further seasoning in the higher Class A minor leagues.

The skinny infielder hit amazingly well in his first year of organized baseball. A left-handed batter, he took advantage of the shallow right-field wall and actually led the league in home runs with 10 (even though he hit only 12 in 18 major league seasons). He got his first hit as a professional player in his second game, and Troy won its third game 4-3 over Utica when Evers doubled between two other hits during an eighth-inning rally. "The ball struck the top of the fence and bounded back into the diamond, knocking the Trojan out of a home run."

Continuous praiseworthy comments appeared concerning the play of Troy's shortstop. Most of it referred to his defensive ability. During the first week of the season, the *Amsterdam Evening Recorder* said: "Evers, who plays shortstop for Troy, is a beardless youth who is said to be 19 years old. He bids fair to develop into a promising professional. Evers had eight chances yesterday, and he accepted every one of them." A week later, "Evers took everything in a graceful way." And a week after that, *The Sporting News* said, "Jack Evers, who is playing short, is conceded by the baseball writers in every city where he has appeared, to be the find of the season. He has more than made good . . ."

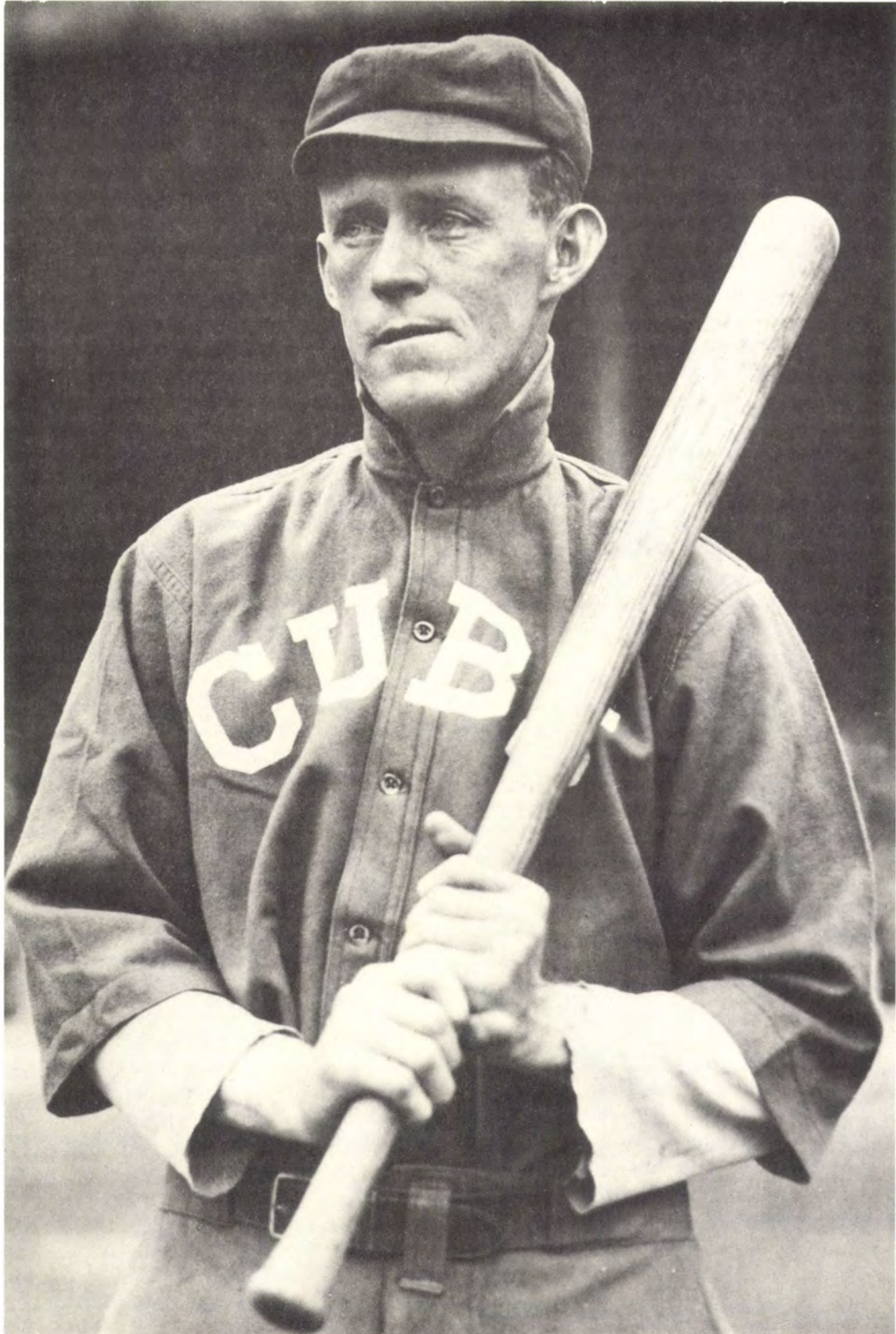
In early June, Troy beat Binghamton 12-6 and "Evers' work at short, accepting 12 chances, was the feature." Accolades continued. "'Little' Evers grabbed up a number of difficult ones and planked them over to first in fine style," wrote the *Schenectady press*. The *Evening Recorder* in mid-June reported that "Young Evers still keeps up his grand work at short for the Troy club, and his brilliant performances are conclusive proof that the kid is a natural ballplayer, and not an 'accident.'" The same paper later said, "For Troy, there is always one player who is always to be found in the game, no matter how the contest is going. Evers. He can hit and field and his appearance calls for a generous reception from the spectators."

Somewhat less complimentary, an Albany writer wrote that "Troy has a youth of rare promise in Evers, but his career in professional baseball covers less than two months, and he has much to learn." The same writer said "the premier

shortstops of this league are Chick Cargo (of Albany), Dutch Jordan (of Binghamton) and Jim Maguire (of Syracuse)." Cargo and Maguire, age 31 and 27, respectively, already had brief major league experience. Jordan, 22 years old, would play two seasons with Brooklyn in the future. Evers would play for almost two decades.

Professional baseball has an exciting glamor to it, but it is

also a very competitive, hard daily grind. Young Evers was tripped by manager Wally Taylor of Utica in the third game of the season. He suffered a "severe wound in the left leg near the knee" when a Syracuse player spiked him in early June, but he continued to play. In late June, he injured his foot, but hit a home run over the right field fence as Troy lost, 8-1. In early July, the struggling team won one game in



15 days when “Little Johnny Evers” hit a home run in the 12th inning to beat Utica 4-3. He erred once in 14 chances that day. Reports of his defensive ability continued. “Scarcely a day passes without Evers getting away with some almost impossible stunt. Evers filled the hole between second and third like a veteran, and his work was certainly the best of any as seen on the local grounds this season. The youngster from the South End got in front of scorching grounders and his throwing to the bases was accurate in every instance.”

He missed playing for five days in late July, but returned with a bang. Evers, who had “been out of the game with illness,” hit a home run against Johnstown in his first game back. On Aug. 16 the local press reported that he made three errors in a 4-2 loss to Binghamton, but it was learned after the game that “his father was near death’s door.” It was the first time all season that he played poorly. He then missed about a week of play after his father died on Aug. 21 in his home at 385 Third St. The funeral, on Aug. 24, was “one of the largest ever witnessed in the city” with nearby St. Joseph’s Church thronged with mourners. Then it was back to work for John Evers, professional baseball player. “Troy won 2-1 in a game replete with sensational fielding. Evers for Troy excelling.”

Good Range, Good Arm

The young infielder made errors (“Troy lost 9-7 in 11 innings to Binghamton. Errors by Evers and Wiltse responsible.”), but he evidently was able to cover much ground. He had range as well as a good arm. The Syracuse correspondent commented in early August how Evers had 478 chances compared to much lower numbers of two other shortstops who had higher fielding percentages and had appeared in a comparable number of games.

There are no recorded references to the youth’s later well-known combative pugnacious personality. Known in his major league playing days as “the brainiest ballplayer in the business,” he was also called an “insolent, snarling, aggressive grouch” by the New York press. With jutting jaw and chin, he was known as “the crab” on the field. Famed umpire Bill Klem said, “Johnny Evers was the toughest and meanest man I ever saw (in 36 years of umpiring) on a ball field. His tongue knew neither fear nor control when he was crossed, and he thought everybody within eye or ear range was crossing him.” Evers said, “My favorite umpire is a dead one.” Shortly after Evers’ death in 1947, long-time respected journalist Fred Lieb described him as a “truculent little gladiator who packed more aggressiveness in his frame than any other player of his size.”

In early September, The Sporting News simply reported, “SS Evers of Troy has been sold to the Chicago N. L. team. Has the goods, all right.” A few days earlier, one of his home town papers had reported that he had “been sold to the Chicago N. L. team.” On Sept. 1, the same paper noted that “John J. Evers, Troy’s shortstop, left last night for Philadelphia, where he will join the Chicago N. L. team.” The youth

left from the same railroad station where, a few years later, thousands of local fans would greet him on his return to Troy after completion of the major league baseball season. A day later, it is recorded that he had played in his first major league game, a 6-1 Chicago victory over Philadelphia. The box score simply recorded:

	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
Evers, SS	5	0	0	0	4	1

The Philadelphia Ledger noted that Evers “played his first game for Salee’s team and put up a fine game. He is very fast on his feet, takes hard hit grounders in great shape and hits the ball hard. He made a good impression on the crowd, and was applauded several times.” Within a week, the Chicago papers praised Evers as “about the coolest man at handling a ball that has ever played on the Smoky City aggregation.” Again, it was his fielding ability that brought special attention, this time from the “big city” reporters in contrast to the reporters in the relatively small upstate New York towns.

Troy manager Bacon knew Chicago manager Frank Salee. When second baseman Bobby Lowe suffered a serious leg injury, Chicago took Evers. Bacon told young Evers to tell Salee that he was being paid \$100 per month with Troy. Bacon told Salee if Evers did not make the grade to send him back. If Evers were to make the team, Salee was to send Bacon a \$200 purchase price. Salee sent \$200.

With Troy that 1902 season, young Evers batted .285 in 84 games. He made 65 errors on the battered minor league diamonds and had a recorded fielding percentage of .880. Yet, erring only once in 97 chances with the Cubs, his fielding percentage jumped to .989 on the major league level. Most of his 25 late season Chicago games were played at second base where the first “Tinker to Evers to Chance” double play occurred on Sept. 15, 1902.

The rest is history. A long fiery, combative career, an integral part of the great Chicago Cubs champion teams, principal participant in the 1908 Merkle affair, most valuable player in the National League while playing for the 1914 “miracle” Boston Braves, a Hall of Fame plaque at Cooperstown, and lasting immortality as the middle man in New York Evening Mail sportswriter Franklin P. Adams’ famous poem (“Baseball’s Sad Lexicon”) describing the New York Giants’ plight when they played the Chicago Cubs.

These are the saddest of possible words:

“Tinker to Evers to Chance.”

Trio of bear Cubs and fleeter than birds,

“Tinker to Evers to Chance.”

Ruthlessly pricking our gonfalon bubble,

Making a Giant hit into a double -

Words that are heavy with nothing but trouble:

“Tinker to Evers to Chance.”

Nicholas E. Young

by David Pietrusza

Very few sites exist where one may actually visit the birthplace of a notable baseball figure. The Babe Ruth home in Baltimore comes readily to mind, but that's about it.

There is another exception — the birthplace and childhood home of the National League's first secretary-treasurer (1876-1902) and its fourth president (1884-1902), Nicholas E. "Uncle Nick" Young, in the village of Fort Johnson, N.Y.

The reason the site is open to the public has nothing to do with Nick Young, however, and in fact there is no mention of him there. Fort Johnson (what the home as well as the village is called) was an outpost in the colonial trading empire of Sir William Johnson. Built in 1743, it was the scene of many conferences with the Iroquois nation as Sir William and his son, Sir John, presided over vast land holdings and served as the King's superintendent of Indian Affairs.

Nick Young was one of 15 children of Almarin Young, a wealthy New York City importer of Swiss watches. The elder Young had purchased Fort Johnson several decades

after the American Revolution and the resultant demise of the Johnson clan. He moved to Fort Johnson for reasons of health, operating a saw mill and grain elevator and owning considerable property in nearby Amsterdam.

In 1857, Almarin Young underwent some financial hard times, but was rescued when Abraham Lincoln appointed him Amsterdam Postmaster, a post he held for 17 years.

Nick Young was born at Fort Johnson in 1840 and it was at Amsterdam, according to an 1880s account, "where his

first experience in ball-playing was gained, and he attained a prominent position as a cricketer."

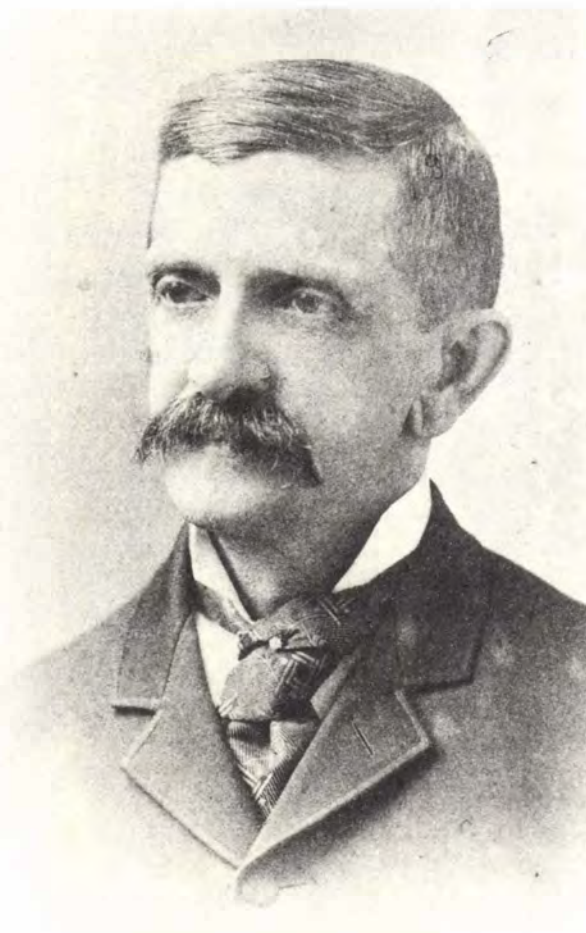
In 1892, a youthful associate wrote: "In those days [cricket] was the popular game, and as playfellows together about the wickets our recollection of Nick are of the pleasantest. Even then his rulings as umpire decided many a boyish wrangle that no doubt would have ended with a battered nose or blackened eye if Nick had not quietly and decidedly pointed out the proper adjustment of the difficulty."

He enlisted early for service in the Civil War, after which he took an accounting post with the Treasury Department in Washington, D.C. In 1867, he helped organize and played right field for that city's Olympic ballclub, and in 1871 he suggested the founding of the National Association and was elected its secretary. He managed the NA's Washington, Baltimore and Boston ballclubs and even umpired for that circuit.

During Young's tenure as National League chief executive, innumerable rule changes occurred, and the National League overcame the twin challenges of the Players' League and the American Association.

Nick Young died on Oct. 31, 1916.

Fort Johnson is maintained by the Montgomery County Historical Society and is open to the public from May through October. It is located three miles west of Amsterdam on New York State Route 5 where that highway meets Route 67.



PO'KEEPSIE B.B. Club.

1886.

JAS. McDONALD.

MANAGER.

T. McDermott.
S.S.

C.L. Zimmer, C.

T. Drummey
3.B.

S. Shaw.
P. T.

M. McDermott.
P.

J. Sutter, R.F.

T. Meara, L.F.

J. McCabe, 2.B.

M. LEHANE, 1st. B.

Photographed by

C.H. Gallup.

po'keepsie, N.Y.



Top: Rochester's 1890 American Association team.

Right: The pitcher of the Eagle Base Ball Club of St. Johnsville in 1868.

Baseball on the Lake

by Steve Myers

That folks in the Rochester, N.Y., area would play eager hosts to aspiring athletes was established once and for all time as early as Nov. 13, 1829. Sam Patch, the vaunted falls-jumper, fresh from a triumphant plunge off Goat Island into the Niagara River, appeared before 8,000 adoring fans on the banks of the Genesee in downtown Rochester, primed for a 125-foot dive into the river beneath the Great Falls. Patch offered a short speech, then flung himself with Reggie Jackson-like panache headlong from his lonely platform, struck the water on that late autumn day ... and reappeared downstream, encased in ice, the following spring.

Bad form. But a great turnout.

Still, the story of Rochester-area sport — baseball in particular — might better be spun out of material which is at first a little less, but finally far more, dramatic. Here is an anecdote: It is early December. A young man — a boy, really — who has grown up playing sunrise-to-sundown baseball in the Rochester city parks and whose loyalties lie with that hell-bent-for-leather gang of gashousers in St. Louis, is picking up some spending money one Sunday morning at his employer's downtown music store. The boss is there with him; so is an 80-year-old co-worker. A radio plays in the background. Almost unnoticed, the music rises and falls, the notes climb and descend again, and finally there comes the Last Note, though at the moment it sounds the three workers have no way of knowing it for the Last Note. Perhaps it is only a brief, precarious eighth-note, but a world in an eighth-note, from which pivotal point that world abruptly spins away, erratic, off-balance. A voice interrupts to announce the attack on the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor.

From the perspective of the 80-year-old, the war to come will not be his war, even as the world in general is no longer his world. Coming of age in the late 19th century, his was the world of Charley "Old Hoss" Radbourn, Rochester's splendid and tireless gift to baseball in the 1880s, he of the 60-victory season in 1884. In the old man's time, Rochester had hosted professional baseball clubs variously called the Brownies (after the turn-of-the-century camera marketed by the local giant of industry, Eastman-Kodak), the Bronchos, the Beau Brummels, and, eventually, the Tribe. Ned Hanlon played here briefly, as did Dan Brouthers and Buck Ewing. Reddy Grey, brother of novelist Zane, blasted 12 home runs for the 1901 Bronchos.

His world was the world of Wally Pipp and George "High-Pockets" Kelly, both of whom played in Rochester around the time of his war, the Great War of 1914-1918, of Ypres and Verdun and Passchendaele. Then the Doughboys came home, several White Sox fixed a World Series, and George

T. Stallings' Rochester teams won an astounding 309 games from 1921 to 1923.

But in 1941, the world and the war fell to the 17-year-old and thousands like him throughout America. Now managing partner of the Rochester accounting firm which bears his name (and which he co-founded in 1970 with SABR member Melvin J. Poplock), Cortland L. Brovitz found himself, not long removed from the position of music store clerk, flying planes over western Europe, remembering in brief airborne flashbacks the glory days of the Rochester Red Wings.

Gateway to St. Louis

In the winter of 1928, the Rochester ball club became the property of the St. Louis Cardinals at a time when young Branch Rickey was pledged to establish a farm system unrivalled by anyone. Billy Southworth managed that first club and, with an extraordinary flair for theatrics, pushed the club to a final day doubleheader sweep of Montreal to clinch the International League pennant over Buffalo by one percentage point.

On May 2, 1929, the Wings played their first game at Red Wing Stadium, 500 Norton St., Rochester, which 60 years later is still their home address. Tex Carleton threw brilliant ball for the club in '29, as did Paul Derringer. Rip Collins supplied the bulk of the power, and for the second successive season, the Wings advanced to the Junior World Series. But for the second year in a row, they lost.

That pattern was broken with the arrival of John Leonard Roosevelt "Pepper" Martin in 1930, as the fledgling Cardinals, led by "The Wild Hoss of the Osage," finally captured the elusive Junior World Series crown over Louisville, and added a second the next year, defeating St. Paul with the help of George Sisler, who capped a Hall of Fame career by hitting .303 for the Wings that season.

In fact, you could lift virtually the entire decade of the '30s out of Red Wings' history and bronze it for posterity. Johnny Mize, Marty Marion, Johnny Hopp, Whitey Kurowski — they left an indelible trail of memories. In 1933, Babe Ruth's Yankees played an exhibition game at Red Wing Stadium. Walter Alston passed through. Slingin' Sammy Baugh, the Washington Redskins' Hall of Fame quarterback, played shortstop there in 1938. And the following year, the decade was brought to a close with fireworks and flourish, courtesy of Estel Crayton Crabtree.

Crabtree (born, incidentally, in Crabtree, Ohio) really had three careers in professional baseball. The first and third, from 1929 to 1932 and from 1941 to 1944, respectively,

were markedly unspectacular major league stints. The middle career, however, won him the undying affection of Rochester fans for his graceful center field play, his steady presence in the Red Wing lineup, and especially for a two-out, bottom-of-the-ninth, three-run homer that tied up a crucial playoff game against the Newark Bears in late September 1939. It was a game, and a playoff, the Red Wings finally won. Nearly 50 years after the fact, a local newspaper poll to name a Red Wings Dream Team still showed Crabtree the people's choice in center field.

Another pennant followed in 1940, and the following summer, appropriate to a year where one could hardly have imagined what the immediate future would hold, Stan Musial hit .326 for the Wings in a brief stopover on the road to Cooperstown.

And these were the memories, the images of giants, that a young, baseball-adoring Rochester boy took off to war with him. Meanwhile, his employer, the owner of the music store, was yet to have his say in Rochester baseball.

Amazingly, the post-war Cardinals equaled and in some ways surpassed the year-in, year-out excellence of their fore-runners, and standout performers such as Harry "The Hat" Walker and Bill Virdon continued to post impressive individual statistics. But by the end of the 1956 season, it appeared the Cardinals, citing financial pressures, were no longer interested in maintaining their Rochester farm club. Enter Morrie Silver, the music store owner who 15 years after Pearl Harbor, became first president of Rochester Community Baseball, Inc., after spearheading the successful local effort to keep the Wings in Rochester. Later, in the mid-'60s, returning to the presidency again with the club struggling financially, he set matters straight once more. These were easily the two most crucial "saves" ever recorded by anyone affiliated with the Red Wings. Consequently, in 1968 Red Wing Stadium was renamed Silver Stadium. If there is a central connecting link in the entire long tradition of Rochester baseball, it is certainly Morrie Silver.

A New Era With the Orioles

By the time the stadium was rechristened, there had been a break in continuity and a new era was well under way; in 1960 the Cardinals and Red Wings had dissolved their affiliation and a new bond had been formed with the Baltimore Orioles. With the St. Louis connection gone, long-time fans like Cortland Brovitz found it hard to maintain enthusiasm for the Cardinals, but equally difficult to generate excitement for anyone else. That being so, Silver Stadium nonetheless remained the stage for minor league heroics. Boog Powell sparked in Rochester on his way to Orioles fame. New manager Earl Weaver won a pennant in 1966. Bobby Grich was Minor League Player of the Year in 1971 with a stellar set of stats: .336 batting average, 32 homers and 83 RBIs; teammate Don Baylor had captured the same award the pre-

vious year. Joe Altobelli, who in 1983 piloted the Orioles to a World Championship, steered the Red Wings to a first-place finish in 1971, and then finished fourth, second, second, second, and first again. Cal Ripkin Jr., only two years away from an American League MVP award, amassed a .288 batting average with 23 home runs and 75 RBIs in 1981. In 1986, engineering the team's return to excellence following a number of sub-par seasons, current Red Wings general manager Bob Goughan was named Minor League Executive of the Year by The Sporting News. The 1988 edition of the Red Wings took the International League pennant before dropping the Junior World Series to Indianapolis.

The Rochester area is home to a number of people either formerly or presently associated with major league baseball. Herb Washington, Charley Finley's designated runner, owns four McDonald's franchises locally. Altobelli, now a coach for the Cubs, also resides here, as does Curt Motton, once a favorite pinch-hitting weapon off the Orioles' bench and now a coach for the Birds. Johnny Antonelli, the marvelous lefthander for the Giants and Braves who attended Rochester's Jefferson High School, is head man at Antonelli's Firestone, and American League umpire Ken Kaiser comes home each winter to host one of the country's most impressive sports celebrity banquets. Former Yankee standout Vic Raschi was an area resident until his death last year.

Continuity certainly is an appropriate word to use when discussing baseball in Rochester. The city of Rochester has had a professional baseball team every year since 1895. The club also has used its Red Wings nickname since 1928. Additionally, the franchise has been affiliated with only one major league club since 1961.

The story of Rochester baseball previously has been chronicled in a pictorial history entitled "The Red Wings — A Love Story" (1969), by John L. Remington, to which this brief summary is much indebted. Remington's book, in turn, cites Billy McCarthy's "Rochester Diamond Echoes" (1949) as a source. Such works, of course, always serve to underline the fact that baseball through its long evolution has become in many ways very different from the game played in the days of Old Hoss Radbourn; alongside its legends and nostalgia are its hard, present-day realities.

But Red Wings general manager Bob Goughan eloquently brings together past and present, in words which speak worlds for the history of Rochester baseball and, for that matter, baseball anywhere:

I think you can be down to earth and pragmatic about it and still not take away one little bit of the glitter. It doesn't lose anything. It's still an unbelievably textured, stylized exercise in this uniquely, almost ornately carved field of play. It's all of that, and it's all of those things that everybody wants it to be.

The Canadian American League

by David Pietrusza

Upstate New York has certainly enjoyed its share of splendid baseball memories, but one of the warmest, enduring and most small-townish has been that of a vanished Class C circuit known as the Canadian-American League.

Formed in 1936 just as the National Association was struggling to get back on its feet, the Can-Am League started as a six-team circuit in the far northern St. Lawrence River valley featuring Ogdensburg, Oswego, and Watertown in New York and Ottawa, Brockville and Perth in Ontario.

Eventually the focus shifted east. After 1940 the only Canadian teams were in Quebec City and Three Rivers. Long-time league members included Amsterdam, Rome, Oneonta, Pittsfield, Schenectady and Johnstown-Gloversville. More transient franchises were found in Auburn, Utica, Smiths Falls and Kingston.

Its president from 1937 to 1944 was certainly a unique

figure: the Rev. Harold J. Martin. Martin held more than one claim to fame; he was not only the sole Roman Catholic prelate heading a circuit, but he was also the only league president serving without salary. Beyond that he was a former Eastern League hurler (ambidextrous, by the way) and a fine semipro pitcher after that, hurling in Ogdensburg under the pseudonym Doc O'Reily. When quizzed by the Bishop about his unusual activity, Martin confessed that he was getting \$100 a game for his chores and was using the money to aid his parish. His superior retorted: "See, if they need a \$50 first baseman."

Many Well-Known Players

Players. Oh, yes. The league developed many fine ball-players: Bob Lemon (an infielder at Oswego), Al Rosen, Vic Raschi, Lew Burdette, Gus Triandos, Tommy Lasorda (who one day struck out 25 Amsterdam batters while pitching for Schenectady and on another day he missed the team bus to Canada, hailed a cab and presented the fuming owner with the bill), Frank Malzone, Dale Long, Bob Grim, Jim Lemon, Dick Littlefield, Johnny Blanchard, Spec Shea and Carl Sawatski.

There also was a fellow named Pete Gray. The Three Rivers Foxes was his first shot at organized ball and despite a rash of injuries he came through with flying colors, hitting .381 in 42 games in 1942.

Not everyone could make the big leagues. Outfielder Arnie Cohen appeared in more than 700 Can-Am contests. Duke Farrington won 13 games in a row for Amsterdam in 1938 before throwing his arm out on a bet. Ogdensburg fly-hawk Tony Gridaitis "called his shot" in the Rome ballpark to win a shiny gold watch. The peripatetic Bill Sisler (who played for more than 40 minor league teams) got shots with three Can-Am franchises — Ogdensburg, Oneonta and Quebec.

The managerial ranks weren't to be sneered at either. Eddie Sawyer and Mayo Smith guided the Amsterdam Rugmakers; George Scherger and Frenchy Bordaragay did stints at Three Rivers; Wally Schang, at age 49 a playing manager at Ottawa; and Frank McCormick and George McQuinn at Quebec.

And, of course, there were the veteran minor leaguers, those pilots for whom the majors were a distant dream. Ogdensburg Colts owner and manager George "Knotty" Lee was one such individual. A co-founder of the circuit, he had chased his horsehide-dream since the 1890s. Always a colorful umpire-baiter, he kept the Colts afloat by player sales and bluff. His low points included bankruptcy after transferring



The Rev. Harold J. Martin

the squad to Auburn and his leaving of the team payroll in a Cornwall, Ont., hotel lobby one day.

Steve Yerkes at Perth-Cornwall had seen the glory decades ago. A one-time American League second baseman, he had scored the winning run for the Boston Red Sox in the fifth game of the 1912 World Series against the Giants. Now he was mired deep in the bushes, but he imparted warmth and baseball wisdom to his charges.

Major League Exhibitions

Some of the league's headier moments came against big league competition. The Pittsburgh Pirates twice fell to Can-Am squads, as the 1936 Gloversville Glovers and the 1939 Rome Colonels both knocked off the Bucs in midseason exhibitions. Each local squad was managed by a drizzled bush leaguer with the unlikely name of Admiral J. "Pepper" Martin. The Rome victory was particularly bizarre. In the ninth inning Pittsburgh flyhawk Gus Suhr chased after a foul fly hit by Colonels shortstop Red Ermisch and then to ridicule Ermisch stayed at that very spot. Ermisch retaliated by banging the ball to Suhr's normal location sparking the winning rally.

The Amsterdam Rugmakers held the World Champion Yankees at bay until extra innings in June 1942, but that was not the big story. Eight days earlier, the Mohawk Mills Park grandstand had been torched and burned to the ground. The whole town pitched in and miraculously a ball park — with increased seating capacity — rose from the ashes. The town declared a holiday and thousands of fans packed the still unpainted bleachers. Even hardboiled Gothamites were moved. Joe McCarthy for one even cheerfully signed autographs. Wrote Jack Smith of the New York Daily News, "For sheer love of baseball, enthusiasm and support (Amsterdam) outstrips major league owners, officials and fans. It reflects the pure, wholesome attachment of American people for the game and contrasts with the blasé 'give us a winner' attitude of the big cities."

The Can-Am League struggled through the late 1930s (it was one of the last unlit circuits) and was

just reaching stability as war broke out. It pitched into the war effort, employed one-armed outfielders, held benefit games, faced immigration problems and (in Quebec and Three Rivers) the deadeast balls this side of the 19th century. The league, however, had to call it quits following the 1942 season.

Like all of baseball, boom times came after V-E Day and the league was resurrected after the conclusion of World War II. Attendance records were set, and set again. The sky seemed the limit. Integration came to the Can-Am League in 1946 as pitchers John Wright and Roy Partlow were sent down from Montreal to Three Rivers. Partlow set the circuit on its ear going 13-1 and hitting up a storm besides.

Television reared its ugly head in 1950 decimating minor league attendance all along the eastern seaboard including the Canadian-American League. The Quebec franchise transferred to the nearby Provincial League while Schenectady advanced to the Eastern league.

The loop struggled on, but the results were pathetic. "They didn't have enough baseballs to finish the game," recalls one Rugmakers fan. "They had to throw the balls back from the stands."

And so in January 1952 the Can-Am League called it quits leaving behind a lot of cherished memories for upstate New York baseball fans.



From left, Bill Dickey, Casey Stengel, Mayo Smith (manager of the Amsterdam Rugmakers), and Jim Turner, during an exhibition game between the Rugmakers and the New York Yankees in 1949.

Why Cooperstown?

by William Guilfoile

Visitors wonder why this small village of 2,300 inhabitants located in central New York state should be the home of Baseball's Exciting Showcase. The answer to this often-asked question involves a commission, a tattered baseball, a philanthropist and a centennial celebration.

The Mills Commission

The Mills Commission was appointed in 1905 to determine the origin of the game of baseball. The committee's formation was urged by Albert G. Spalding, one of the game's pioneers, following an article by Henry Chadwick, a famous early baseball writer, who contended that the sport evolved from the English game of rounders.

Seven prominent men comprised the commission. They were Col. A.G. Mills of New York who played baseball before and during the Civil War and was the third president of the National League (1882-1884); Hon. Morgan G. Bulkeley, former Governor and then U.S. Senator from Connecticut, who served as the National League's first president in 1876; Hon. Arthur P. Gorman, U.S. Senator from

Maryland, a former player and ex-president of the National Baseball Club of Washington, D.C.; Nicholas E. Young of Washington, D.C. (and a native of Amsterdam, N.Y.) a long-time player who was the first secretary and later fourth president of the National League (1884-1902); Alfred J. Reach of Philadelphia and George Wright of Boston, both well-known businessmen and two of the most famous players of their day; and the president of the Amateur Athletic Union, James E. Sullivan of New York.

During its three-year study, the committee was deluged with communications on the subject. The testimony of Abner Graves, a mining engineer from Denver, Colo., in support of Abner Doubleday figured prominently in the committee's inquiry.

Both Graves and Doubleday had attended school together in Cooperstown. Doubleday later was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, graduating in 1842. Subsequently, he served in the Mexican and Civil wars. As a captain, he fired the first gun for the Union at Fort Sumter, S.C.

In his letters to Spalding, Graves claimed to have been



Dedication of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in 1939.

present when Doubleday made changes to the then popular game of "Town Ball," which involved 20 to 50 boys out in a field attempting to catch a ball hit by a "tossler" using a four-inch flat bat. According to Graves, Doubleday used a stick to mark out a diamond-shaped field in the dirt; and his other refinements ostensibly included limiting the number of players, adding bases (hence the name, "baseball") and the concept of a pitcher and catcher.

The committee's final report on Dec. 30, 1907 stated in part that "the first scheme for playing baseball, according to the best evidence obtainable to date, was devised by Abner Doubleday at Cooperstown, N.Y., in 1839."

The Baseball

The discovery of an old baseball in a dust-covered attic trunk 27 years later supported the committee's findings. In a farmhouse in Fly Creek, N.Y., a crossroads village about three miles from Cooperstown, were found the belongings of the aforementioned Graves and among his possessions was a baseball — undersized, misshapen and obviously home-made. The cover had been torn open, revealing stuffing of cloth instead of the wool and cotton yarn which comprise the interior of the modern baseball; but it had a stitched cover. It soon became known as the "Doubleday baseball."

The Philanthropist

Soon after its discovery, the baseball was purchased for \$5 by Stephen C. Clark, a Cooperstown resident and philanthropist, who had amassed considerable wealth through his association with the Singer Sewing Machine Company. Clark conceived the idea of displaying the baseball, along with other baseball objects, in a room in the Village Club, which now houses the Cooperstown village offices. The small one-room exhibition attracted tremendous public interest and with the assistance of Alexander Cleland, who had been associated with Clark in other endeavors, support was sought for the establishment of a National Baseball Museum. Ford Frick, then president of the National League, was especially enthusiastic. He obtained the backing of Kenesaw Mountain Landis, baseball's first commissioner, and William Harridge, president of the American League. Contributions and priceless baseball memorabilia soon poured in from all parts of the country as the word spread.

Baseball's Centennial

Coincidentally, in 1935 plans also were being formulated for an appropriate celebration in Cooperstown to mark baseball's upcoming 100th anniversary four years hence. Frick proposed that a Hall of Fame be established as part of the shrine to honor the game's immortals.

The cooperation of the Baseball Writers Association of America was enlisted to select the playing greats who were to be honored. The first election was conducted in January 1936 and five players were named — Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, Honus Wagner, Christy Mathewson and Walter Johnson.

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum was officially dedicated in colorful ceremonies on June 12, 1939. The game's four ranking executives of the period — Landis, Frick, Harridge and William G. Bramham, president of the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues —

participated in the ribbon-cutting. Of the 25 immortals who had been elected to the Hall of Fame to that point, 11 were still living and all of them journeyed to Cooperstown to attend the centennial celebration. A baseball postage stamp commemorating the occasion was placed on sale that day at the Cooperstown post office, with Postmaster General James A. Farley presiding.

Another Clark associate, Paul S. Kerr, played a major role in the growth and expansion of the baseball shrine. Kerr was elected treasurer in 1943 and served as president from 1960 (the year of Clark's death) until his retirement in 1977. Edward W. Stack, former secretary of the museum, succeeded Kerr as president and, with the help of Howard C. Talbot Jr., Hall of Fame director since 1976, he spearheaded two major expansion/renovation programs, the most recent of which was completed on June 10, 1989.

Between the original dedication in 1939 and the completion of the new annex 50 years later, several significant developments had taken place. New wings were dedicated on July 24, 1960 and on May 10, 1980 and the Hall of Fame Gallery was dedicated on Aug. 4, 1958. The National Baseball Library opened its doors on July 22, 1968.

Annual attendance at the Hall of Fame and Museum regularly exceeds 300,000. The shrine is open year round, and during July and August it is not unusual for the daily turnstile count to exceed Cooperstown's population.

The biggest day of the year, of course, is Hall of Fame Day when the newly elected members are inducted. Ceremonies are held on the library steps facing Cooper Park. The Commissioner of Baseball conducts the installation with many league executives, club officials and previously inducted Hall of Famers participating in the emotion-packed program, witnessed by thousands of baseball fans from all over the United States and Canada.

The next day, two major league teams representing each league, clash in the annual Hall of Fame Game at Doubleday Field. The ball field, just a block from the museum, is located on the former Elihu Phinney cow pasture where baseball is believed to have been first played more than a century ago by Doubleday and his friends. The village Board of Trustees transformed the erstwhile pasture into a ballpark of major league specifications in 1939, and it now seats approximately 10,000 fans.

From time to time over the years, various critics have challenged the speculation on Doubleday, although most of the original documentation was lost in a fire in 1916. Abner Graves' credibility as a reliable witness has been questioned and Doubleday's diaries, surprisingly, made no mention of baseball. Some argue that Doubleday was not away from West Point at all in 1839; and to further complicate the situation, still others claim that there were two Abner Doubledays. Many of these contradictory theories have been well-documented by their proponents. Whatever may or may not be proved in the future concerning baseball's true origin is in many respects irrelevant at this time. If baseball was not actually first played in Cooperstown by Doubleday in 1839, it undoubtedly originated about that time in a similar rural atmosphere. The Hall of Fame is in Cooperstown to stay and at the very least, the village is certainly an acceptable symbolic site.

The Doubledays vs. the Cartwrights

by Ed Brooks

In Cooperstown on July 9, 1939, the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues conducted its celebration of baseball's centennial. A brief announcement in *The Sporting News* of March 2 outlined what was to be the minor league's part in the 100th anniversary year. The program was to consist of the dedication of a research library, the unveiling of several bronze tablets memorializing outstanding minor league personalities, and an All Star game.

The All Star game was to be the centerpiece of the day's activities. The plan for the game was to have each league in the National Association — 41 in all — select one player and from this anticipated "galaxy of stars" two clubs would be organized and meet at Doubleday Field. Mike Kelley and Spencer Abbott, veteran minor league managers, were picked to lead the two clubs, which would be named in honor of Abner Doubleday and Alexander Cartwright.

Alas, in the months that followed, a combination of circumstances turned the game into a symbolic ritual at best and, at worst, a failure not worth repeating. What might have become an annual and exciting event with much ensuing publicity for the minor leagues, instead, became a memory for only a few.

Counting the Stars

There were several reasons for the failure of the "galaxy of stars." The National Association's request for players went unheeded in part because each league president had his own concept of the occasion and there was no way of enforcing the directive. The response of the high minor leagues was particularly poor. The Pacific Coast League was represented by old Dutch Reuther who happened to be in the East on a scouting trip for Los Angeles. Joe Hauser, the American Association choice, was managing a semipro club in Sheboygan that summer. The International League "player" was Benny Bengough, a Newark coach. The Southern Association sent fading veteran Bob Smith, who appeared only briefly with Chattanooga in 1939. Most absurd was the Texas League's contribution: President J. Alvin Gardner sent a uniform, unnecessary because special uniforms were furnished for the game by sporting goods companies. Even the Canadian-American League, which ultimately gave indispensable support to the game, sent as its official representative the Ottawa manager, Wally Schang. In addition to the Texas League, 15 leagues sent no player at all.

In their defense, the league presidents had several legitimate reasons for ignoring National Association president George Trautman's pleas. Small rosters in the lower minors created a problem of either playing shorthanded for at least

a week or signing a free agent to fill the All Star's spot. It would be difficult to persuade a club owner to do the former and, from both a talent and financial viewpoint, would not be feasible to do the latter. Clubs certainly could not be faulted for being unwilling to risk the loss of a star performer in the midst of a pennant race. Nor could league presidents be blamed for not wanting to pay the cost of sending a player to Cooperstown. Perhaps President Gardner of the Texas League spoke for all when he said: "I would like to name a player for the game, but it would mean the man selected to the team would have to lose a week or more of play and I don't think it fair to the team or fans to send away a star for that length of time."

Another pragmatic problem was that the expense of sending a representative had to be borne by each league. The economy of 1939 had not been restored to a level of prosperity and many struggling minor league circuits, especially those far from Cooperstown, might deem such a cost unbearable, at best frivolous.

The planning and coordination of the game also left something to be desired, which contributed to the result. The game date conflicted with several league All Star games scheduled about the same time. In fact, the East Texas League contest was played on the same date. Scheduling the game a month after the Hall of Fame induction ceremonies also may have made the minors' celebration seem anticlimactic. And slating the minors' game close to the major league All Star contest may have diverted attention from, rather than attracting attention to, the former.

Finally, a lack of publicity may have had an effect. After the March announcement, *The Sporting News* made editorial mention of the occasion just once, and it was not until June 22 that the first player designations were announced. This was hardly designed to draw national attention to the event.

New York State to the Rescue

Despite these obstacles, and the fact that when players convened at Cooperstown in July, fully 16 leagues had failed to send representatives, the game took place as planned. That it did take place at all is due in no small measure to the contributions made by three of the four minor leagues existing in New York state, particularly the Canadian-American League. In fact, the Empire State's involvement looms large in the overall success of the day's events.

The Eastern League representative was Albany's good-hitting catcher, Bill Jackson. Jackson, later a minor league manager, caught most of the game before giving way to a semipro player representing the Cotton States League. The

PONY League, in its first year of operation, supplied Art Strott, who finished the year hitting .375. But it was the Can-Am League which came through in a big way to supply the necessary personnel to fill out both squads. As mentioned, Wally Schang, was the official league representative. In addition, managers Eddie Sawyer (who hit .369 that year for Amsterdam), Elmer Yoter and Steve Yerkes played in the game and players Springer and Webb filled in. Furthermore, 11 collegians and semipro from central and western sections of the state stepped in to represent the leagues which did not send players.

Moreover, what information is most readily available about the game and the other activities of the day is due to the effort's of Albany's Richard Conners. Conners, now a popular and respected member of the New York State Assembly, was in 1939 an Albany sportswriter, "the voice of Hawkins Stadium," and Eastern League correspondent for *The Sporting News*. In the latter capacity, he covered the game for baseball's Bible.

Finally, the ceremonial activities had a decidedly New York state flavor. The Rev. Harold Martin of Ogdensburg, Can-Am League president, delivered the invocation. Cooperstown's mayor R. D. Spraker, gave the official welcome, and Cooperstown minister Wilbur Sheriff offered the benediction. Auburn native John Farrell, for many years the head of the New York State League, was honored as one of the two surviving founders of the National Association. Eastern League president Tommy Richardson served as master of ceremonies at the game. The people of Cooperstown and the surrounding area strongly supported the event, hosting, attending the game and furnishing materials for the pre-game parade.

Throughout its history, the Baseball Hall of Fame has given little recognition to the minor leagues. Perhaps the words of J.G. Taylor Spink, which appeared in an editorial in *The Sporting News* of April 27, 1939, are apropos: "So far, the names nominated to the Hall of Fame have a decidedly major league tinge. None whose career had been almost completely bound up with the minors had been proposed. Yet the minors have played as important a part in the propagation of the game as have the majors and should have their niche at Cooperstown."

He continued: "... if the minors are to be given places in the Hall of Fame — and there is no valid reason why they should not — then they could make no better start than by selecting their No. 1 and No. 2 distinguished figures — Mike Sexton and Tim Murnane." The names of Murnane and Sexton were among the seven included on the bronze tablet dedicated on that day, but Spink's larger hope remains unfilled.

In an interview a few years ago, Assemblyman Conners gave his own perspective on the All Star game. While expressing his disappointment at the failure of many leagues to send representatives, he attributed it mainly to the economic

factors which prohibited struggling minor leagues from financing the sending of a player. Still, Conners continues to remember the event as a "gigantic thing, even awesome," considering the number of minor leagues from across the country which did choose to be represented.

In any event, and due to the efforts of organizations and people of upstate New York, the minor leagues do have their place in baseball's centennial celebration and, if July 9, 1939 is not one of the memorable days in baseball history, it should be noted as an occasion when, at least once, acknowledgement was made that professional baseball is also minor league baseball.

The box score from the game follows:

Cartwrights	AB	R	H	Doubledays	AB	R	H
Pierro, Evangeline, 2b	3	1	1	Corona, Kitty, ss	4	1	2
Yerkes, East Texas, 2b	0	0	0	Collett, Ark.-Mo., ss	1	0	0
Yeaker, West. Ass'n, cf	1	1	0	Belanger, E. Shore, 3b	5	1	1
Springer, WT-NM, cf	1	0	0	Jackson, Eastern, c	3	1	1
Denoff, Penn. State, lf	5	1	1	Borsky, Cot. Sts., c	2	0	0
Martuscello, Ga.-Fl. ss	5	1	1	Wilder, Mt. State, c	0	0	0
Coulter, N. Car. St., rf	1	1	1	Hauser, Amer. Ass'n, lb	3	2	2
Rand, Tar Heel, rf	1	0	0	Moran, Western, lb	1	0	1
Sawyer, Northern, rf	2	0	0	Zim'man, NE Ark., lf	4	0	1
Jenkins, Co. Plain, 3b	3	1	1	Strott, Pony, cf	3	1	1
Yoter, Ariz.-Texas, 3b	2	0	0	Huffman, Virginia, cf	1	1	1
Lowe, Pioneer, lb	2	0	0	C. Smth, C. B. Col., 2b	3	0	1
Byrnes, Mid. Atl., lb	2	0	0	Eck, Appalachian, 2b	1	1	1
Bengough, Internl., c	1	0	1	Nevill, Piedmont, rf	2	0	0
Schang, Can.-Am., c	1	0	0	Poliomas, Ohio St., rf	2	0	0
Gabriel, Inter-State, c	1	0	0	Ruether, Pac. Co., p	0	0	0
R. Smith, Southern, p	2	0	0	Knittel, West. Int., p	1	1	0
Canahan, Three-I, p	2	0	1	Hutchings, S. Eastern, p	2	0	1
Perry, South Atl., p	0	0	0	Webb, Texas, p	1	0	1
Totals	35	6	7	Totals	39	9	14

Score by innings:

Cartwrights — 6 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 - 6

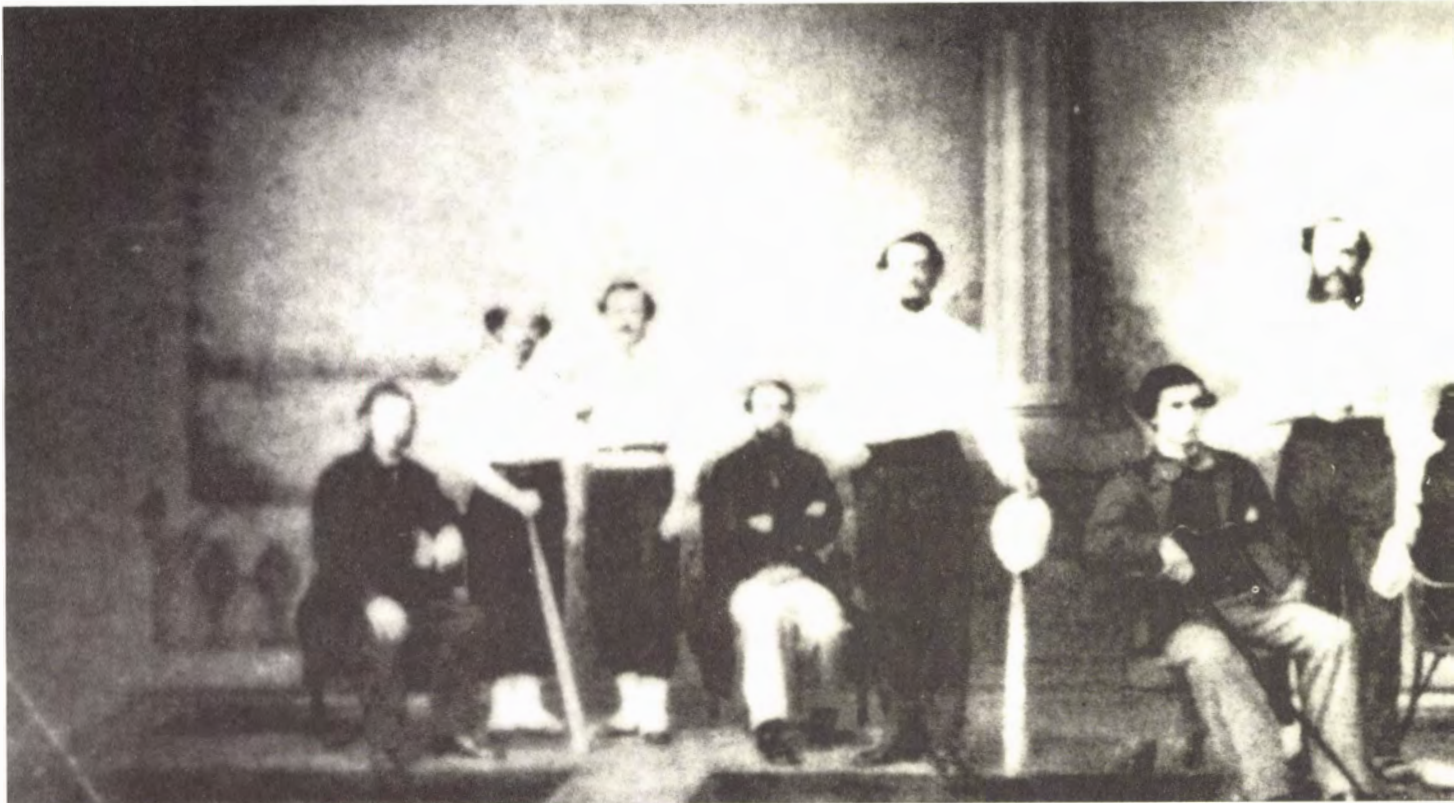
Doubledays — 4 3 0 0 0 0 0 2 * - 9

Errors—Jenkins, Rand, C. Smith, Yoter, Collett. Runs batted in—Denoff, Martuscello, Coulter, Lowe, Bengough, Pierro, Hauser 2, Zimmerman, C. Smith, Jackson 2, Webb 2. Two-base hits—Denoff, Strott, Moran. Home runs—Jackson, Hauser. Stolen bases—Coulter, R. Smith. Sacrifice—Pierro. Double plays—Martuscello, Pierro and Lowe. Left on bases—Cartwrights 10, Doubledays 6. Bases on balls—Off Ruether 1, off Knittel 4, off Webb 2. Struck out—By R. Smith 2, by Knittel 3, by Hutchings 6, by Callahan 3, by Webb 3. Hits—Off Ruether 5 in 0 inning (none out in first), off Knittel 11 in 3 innings, off Hutchings 0 in 3 innings, off Webb 1 in 3 innings, off R. Smith 7 in 3 innings, off Callahan 4 in 4 innings, off Perry 3 in 1 inning. Winning pitcher—Knittel. Losing pitcher—R. Smith. Umpires—Johnson (Southern), Moore (Eastern), Anderson (Western), Carpenter (International). Time—1 :59.



CANAJOHARIE CLIPPERS OF 1876

BANCROFT R. F. ARRIENS L. F. FINNEGAN S. S.
 BLOWERS C. F. - NULTY 1st B. - VAN ALSTYNE MGR. - HENNESSY C. - TAYLOR 3rd B.
 RASBACK P. FINEHOUT 2nd B.



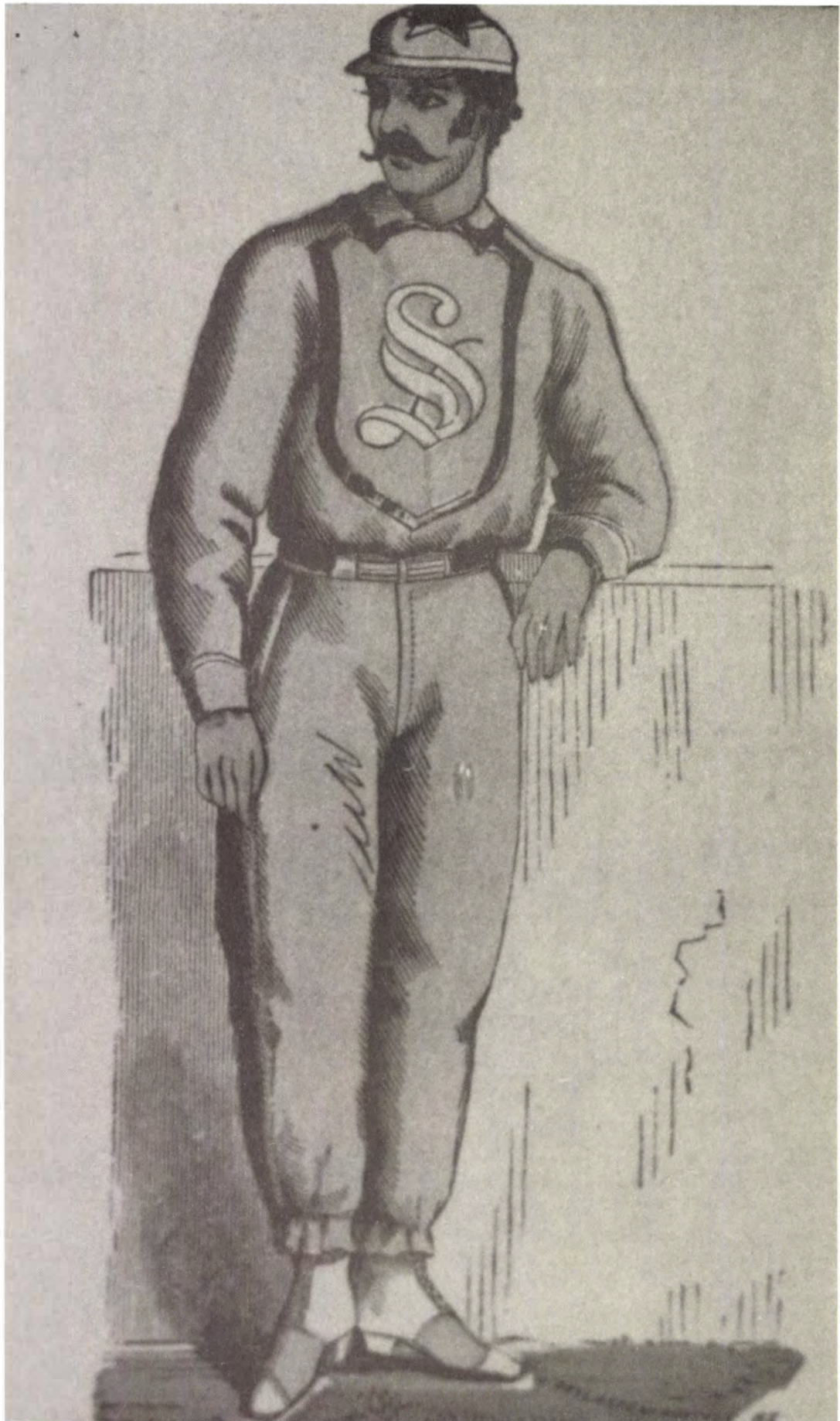


Left: The Canajoharie Clippers of 1876.

Bottom: The only known photo of the famed Hudson River Club of Newburgh, one of the best teams in the state in the mid-1860s.

Right: A young member of the Zouave Base Ball Club of Potsdam, circa 1865.





A woodcut from an 1875 Peck and Snyder (of NYC) baseball goods catalog of a man nattily dressed in a Syracuse Stars uniform.

Silent George Burns: A Star in the Sunfield

By Richard Puff

It might have been just a case of being in the right place at the right time. But whatever it was, it brought Utica's George Joseph Burns to professional baseball and eventually led him to a brilliant career as an outfielder in the National League.

Burns was in the grandstand with his father at the Utica Athletic Field on Oct. 18, 1908, set to watch the Class B Utica Harps play Syracuse in an exhibition game. The contest was held up because the Harps' catcher failed to appear. "Bus" Nicholson, an alderman from Utica, who knew Burns' prowess on the baseball diamond, suggested he be hired to handle the backstop duties for the game.

Burns, who was born in Utica on Nov. 24, 1890, gladly agreed and in no time was suited up for the game. The records of the game are lost, but Burns was congratulated heartily by the fans for a good game. Charley Dooley, the Harps' manager, was especially pleased and offered Burns a contract after the game. Three years later, Burns was sitting next to John McGraw on the Giants' bench learning all he could from one of the game's greatest masters.

But the transition wasn't that easy. Burns was a catcher with Utica in 1909 and 1910 and his talents went unrecognized. It was the 1911 season that proved to be the turning point in his career. Charley Carr had come from the Indianapolis team to take over the helm of the Harps. He brought with him Dan Howley, who took full charge of the catching duties — putting Burns back on the bench.

Moving to the Outfield

One day Ward Bastian, one of the team's outfielders, was hurt and Carr, realizing Burns' speed was being wasted behind the plate, asked him if he would like to play in the outfield. "I don't know," Burns told him, "but I'll try. I can't do much worse than get hit in the head."

Throughout his years playing sandlot and amateur ball, Burns was always a catcher or moundsman. "I never had played in the outfield as a kid always wanting to be a pitcher or a catcher so that I could get as much action as possible," he said in a 1924 interview. He thought he'd give it a try anyway.

The move sent Burns to stardom, but not exactly from the first day. During his first game roaming in the outfield, Burns almost did get hit in the head by a fly ball. He ran in on a line drive, misjudged it and just managed to get his head out of the way as the ball sailed by him.

"For a time I was bothered by line drives, but soon I began to judge them accurately," he remembered years later.

Burns soon excelled in the outfield and his hitting also improved. He was permanently placed in right field and soon

began thrilling Utica fans with spectacular catches. He also was made leadoff man for the squad. He finished the 1911 season batting .289 and stealing 40 bases.

Sometime during the 1911 season, John "Sadie" McMahon, a former pitcher and teammate of McGraw's with the Baltimore club and at the time a scout with the Giants, saw Burns play and noticed his capabilities. McMahon followed Burns around the league without the young player's knowledge. Late in the season, McGraw was convinced of Burns' potential and bought him from the Harps for \$4,000.

Burns quickly traveled to New York to play, but was kept on the bench by McGraw so he could learn as much about the game as possible. Burns managed to get into six games as the Giants wound down the season winning the league championship.

The first of Burns' 2,077 major league hits came during the last game of the Giants' season. Facing Brooklyn's Pat Ragan, he stroked a single. It was his only hit that season in 17 at bats. Burns was not eligible for the World Series that year since he spent so little time with the team. The Giants lost to Connie Mack's Athletics in six games.

Burns returned to New York in 1912 from his home in upstate New York where he worked as a cigar maker in his father's shop. Again, he stayed seated on the bench still learning all McGraw had to teach him. The Giants' regular outfield that year was Josh Devore in left, Snodgrass in center and Red Murray in right. Burns was the last of the subs, having to play behind Beals Becker and Harry "Moose" McCormick.

The speedster appeared in only 29 games in 1912 and batted .294. For the second year in a row, the Giants took the league championship and went into the Series against the Red Sox. And for the second consecutive year they lost, this time in eight games, and Burns did not play.

Things began to click for Burns in 1913. McGraw figured his youngster, who now lived in St. Johnsville, waited long enough and deserved a chance to start in his outfield. McGraw moved Devore to the bench before he traded him to the Cincinnati Reds, and inserted Burns into left field at the Polo Grounds. A short time later, he was moved over to right field, switching with Murray.

During his first year as a regular, he batted .286, stole 40 bases and missed only four games. He ended in third place in the race for total hits with 173, second in doubles with 37 and fourth in stolen bases.

Soon Burns was moved back into left field, which was known as the sunfield in the Polo Grounds because of the blinding sun that shone in that area. The sun never bothered

Burns and he soon became known as the greatest sunfielder in the history of the Polo Grounds.

To help shield his eyes from the sun, Burns used a special cap with an extra long bill with blue sunglasses attached to it. When he came to bat, the special cap would come off in favor of one with a short bill.

Burns was not only known as the best fielder in the Polo Grounds, but also throughout the league. Burns credited his ability to get any ball hit his way with his knowledge of the hitters and listening to the sound the ball made when it jumped off a bat. "If you can tell from the sound just about how far the ball with travel, you can turn your back on it and run, confident that when it comes down you'll be there to meet it."

Leading the Loop

During his years with the Giants, Burns gained great recognition for not only his fielding (the great sportswriter Frederick Lieb said in a column that a Burns muff was so rare that it was talked about for weeks), but also for his base-running and hitting. Five times he led the National League in runs and twice he paced the loop in stolen bases. As a lead-off batter he certainly received his chances at the plate. In 1915 and 1916 he led the league in at bats and in five other seasons he came to bat more than 600 times. His keen eye helped him to pace the pack in bases on balls five seasons.

Burns was one of the steadiest everyday players of his day. While with the Giants, he set a record, which has since been broken, by appearing in 459 consecutive games as an outfielder. The string stretched from the beginning of the 1915 season until just before the Giants took on the Chicago White Sox in the 1917 World Series, when McGraw decided to rest his star outfielder. While he rested, he joined fellow outfielder Benny Kauff and second baseman Buck Herzog in scouting the White Sox for the Series.

One of Burns' greatest series was the 1921 World Series against the cross-town rival Yankees. He batted .333 while leading the team in hits with 11. He belted four hits in the third game against four Yankee hurlers and his two-run double in the fourth game was the margin for a Giant victory.

Using a Buck Herzog style bat 42 inches long and weighing 52 ounces with a very small handle wrapped with about six inches of tape, the 5-foot, 7-inch, 160-pound righty belted out hits at a rate of 169 per season while a regular in the Giants outfield. He also averaged 69 walks per season during his years in New York, four times leading the league.

While Burns was a quiet and reserved man, he still had quite a following in New York. A section of the left-field bleachers became known as "Burnsville" where his loyal fans cheered him. Even the New York police recognized his greatness. Burns' brother, Jack, later recalled a time when their father was driving to a game at the Polo Grounds. A



little behind schedule, elder Burns had to drive a little faster than the speed limit and was ultimately pulled over by one of the city's finest. When he explained he was Burns' father and was hurrying so as not to miss any of that day's game, the officer instantly allowed him to be on his way.

Burns also was tagged with the moniker of "Silent George" by his teammates and New York sportswriters. Well-behaved and soft spoken, Burns was never ejected from a game in his career. He was also recognized as one of the best pool players ever to put on a baseball uniform. Players barred him from games unless he played left-handed. He was declared one of the best boxers in the game, too.

Before the 1918 season got under way, a New York sports writer asked McGraw who was the greatest player after the immortal Christy Mathewson that he managed. Without hesitating, McGraw answered, "George Burns! He is a marvel in every department of play, a superb fielder, a wonderful thrower, a grand batsman and with few peers in baseball history as a run scorer. Best of all, Burns, modest and retiring to an extreme, is the easiest player to handle that ever stepped upon a field."

"That boy has more natural playing strength than any outfielder I've seen in a number of years," McGraw later added. "He may never be a Ty Cobb or a Tris Speaker, but by playing strength I mean he is more proficient in all the things required of an outfielder."

McGraw was not the only baseball notable throwing plaudits at Burns during his day. Eddie Collins called him "the most dangerous and best all around star on McGraw's splendid team." Hughie Jennings said, "He is as good a player as ever drew on a spiked shoe. There's nothing he doesn't or cannot do well on a ballfield."

John B. Sheridan, the well-known sportswriter of the day, praised Burns highly in a 1920 Sporting News article where he rated the top 25 outfielders of all time. Burns placed fourth on the list, being surpassed only by Tris Speaker, Ty Cobb and James Sheppard, in that order. He was rated above such standouts as Willie Keeler, Harry Hooper, Duffy Lewis and Hugh Duffy. "I am one of those who think that Burns has been greatly underrated in New York and elsewhere. He is one of the great outfielders of all time. I have never seen him play a bad game of baseball," Sheridan wrote.

High tribute was paid to Burns after he was shipped off to the Reds on Dec. 6, 1921, with Mike Gonzalez and \$100,000 for third baseman Heinie Groh. The trade at the time was called the biggest deal since the Yankees got Babe Ruth from Boston.

On June 10, 1922, the Giants were scheduled to raise their 1921 World Series championship flag at the Polo Grounds. The day, in which the team was scheduled to play the Reds, was declared "George Burns Day." Fifteen minutes before the game was to begin, Burns was called out to home plate where Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis stood waiting among a group of players from both teams, John Heydler, president of the National League, and several team officials. Landis praised Burns for his years of play while the crowd of 31,000 stood and cheered. Then Landis presented him with a platinum watch encrusted with diamonds, a gift from the Giants. He also was given a silver cigarette case from his admirers, the New York sportswriters. All the while

Burns blushed and dug his spikes into the dirt.

Burns then led the procession of Giants to center field where the championship flag was raised. During the game, Burns let a ball drop in front of him in center field instead of catching it to begin a double play that snuffed out a Giants rally in the seventh inning. The Giants, though, went on to win the game in the ninth.

Burns' trade to the Reds greatly saddened him because he had hoped to finish his career with the Giants. "I surely do hate to leave New York," he said after the trade was announced. "That's baseball; you're here today and gone tomorrow." He played three seasons with the Reds, manning center and right fields. Playing in every Reds game his first two seasons with the team, he continued to hit as he did with the Giants, batting .285 and .274, respectively.

Back to the Minors

On Nov. 12, 1924, after a disappointing season in which he batted .256 and stole only three bases, the Reds gave Burns his unconditional release. Rumors said he would end his playing career and assume a manager's position with a Pacific Coast League team, but Burns had other ideas. "When you've played ball for a long time as I have and when you like baseball as much as I do, it isn't easy to quit," he said.

Offers came in from various minor league clubs to both play and manage, but Burns still wanted to play in the majors. On Feb. 24, 1925, he signed with the Philadelphia Phillies and appeared in 88 games that season batting a respectable .292. One of the high points of the season came early in the year when Burns gathered two hits in one game to put himself over the 2,000 mark in career hits.

Burns requested and was given his release from the Phillies at the end of the 1925 season. In 1926, he played in 163 games with Newark of the Class AA International League. He batted .301, led the league in doubles with 49, and stole 38 bases. The following two seasons he was player-manager with Williamsport of the Class B New York-Pennsylvania League where he hit .295 and .327.

Near the end of the 1928 season he took over the Hanover Club in the Blue Ridge League (Class D). In only 18 games, Burns ripped the ball at a .354 pace. In 1929, he played with Springfield in the Eastern League, hitting .301 in 110 games. He finished his professional career in San Antonio (Class A Texas League) with his lowest yearly average (.197) in 1930.

Burns' last appearance in a major league uniform was as a coach with McGraw's Giants in 1931. After the season, he returned to central New York where he ran his father's pool hall. Later he became a payroll clerk in a tannery in Gloversville. Meanwhile, he kept active in local baseball by playing first base with town teams.

In 1937, Burns was remembered by three sports writers on the ballot for induction into baseball's Hall of Fame. The following year he again received three votes, with one vote given to him in 1939 and also in 1949. Remaining his usual modest self, Burns said he never was bothered by the fact he wasn't selected for inclusion in the Hall of Fame.

Before Burns died in 1966 at the age of 75, he told his brother he realized how lucky he was to have played in the major leagues. "I guess the Lord just made me a ball player."

Good Enough to Dream in Upstate New York

by Dick Beverage

If you were seeking a background for a successful baseball book, you would probably not choose Utica, N.Y.

This once thriving mill town sitting astride the Erie Canal has had a limited association with organized baseball during this century. Yet, in 1985 its baseball fortunes had a brief moment in the sun in distinguished author Roger Kahn's best-selling "Good Enough to Dream." It is the story of the 1983 baseball season in Utica when Kahn was president of the Utica Blue Sox of the New York-Pennsylvania League.

The Early Years

One of the first thrilling baseball seasons in Utica came in 1912. The New York State League pennant fight with Albany went down to the last day with Utica finishing in front by a mere half-game. However, 1913 saw a return to the familiar haunts of sixth place and the club remained an also-ran until 1917. With attendance at an all time low, the league dropped Utica and Harrisburg from its ranks on July 10, 1917. A futile attempt to re-enter professional baseball in 1924 failed in less than half a season when the last place New York-Pennsylvania League aggregation was transferred to Oneonta in early July.

The next baseball venture was much more promising. Ambrose McConnell, a Red Sox and White Sox third baseman during the early part of the century, spearheaded a successful drive to obtain membership in the Canadian-American League. He purchased the Auburn franchise in time for the 1939 season and the Utica Braves enjoyed four very prosperous years in the league. They drew a record league attendance of 105,394 in 1939 despite a last-place team and the Braves continued to draw well through the 1942 season. The city moved up to the Class A Eastern League at the close of 1942 when the Springfield, Mass., franchise was shifted to Utica.

The Young Whiz Kids

The new team was known as the Blue Sox, although Utica fans could not see much improvement from the 1942 Braves. That first Eastern League team finished a dismal last, losing 103 games in the process. Good times were ahead, however, as the club became a farm team of the Philadelphia Phillies for the 1944 season.

The Phillies had long been a moribund member of the National League, but a new regime had taken over with the ownership of Bob Carpenter. His objective was to make the Phillies a competitive ball club, and the method he chose was to build up the farm system. Utica was one of the first clubs to join the Phillies organization. As a Class A club, the Blue

Sox would get the best of the Phillies' young players. One of the first of these fine young prospects was a 17-year-old blond catcher-outfielder from Nebraska, Richie Ashburn. He joined the Blue Sox in time for the 1945 season along with second baseman Ralph Caballero and pitcher Don Grate, a basketball star from Ohio State. This trio paced the Blue Sox to the first Utica pennant in 33 years. Managed by Eddie Sawyer, a former professor of physical education at Ithaca College, Utica waged a three-way fight with Wilkes-Barre and Albany to capture the flag by four games.

The best was yet to come.

The Blue Sox fielded the strongest club in Utica history in 1947, winning the Eastern League pennant by 10 1/2 games, and then enjoyed a victory over Albany to win the Governor's Cup. A streak in June 1947 saw the club win 21 of 24 games to put the Sox into a lead from which they couldn't be dislodged. They finished with 90 wins, an all-time Utica high. In spite of a limited capacity of 6,400 at McConnell Field, the Blue Sox drew a record city attendance of 110,785.

The Blue Sox of 1947 were to provide the foundation for the Phillies Whiz Kids of 1950. Ashburn was the star of the club. After missing the 1946 season for military service, he returned as a full-time outfielder. Hitting .362 and catching everything in sight in center field, Whitey would go to the National League in 1948 with no further minor league service. The doubleplay combination of shortstop Gran Hamner and second baseman Caballero would do the same. Catcher Stan Lopata, a .325 hitter with 88 RBIs would also make a strong contribution to the Phillies champions. Pitcher Lou Possehl, a 15-game winner in 1947, was the fifth member of the Blue Sox to join the Whiz Kids. And skipper Sawyer was able to take his Eastern League success to the majors.

It was all downhill for Utica after that great season. By 1949, attendance had fallen to 72,689 as the club skid to last place. And when a further decline to 57,137 took place in 1950, the Phillies moved the franchise to Schenectady. Baseball would not return to Utica until 1977.

A New Twist

American League expansion led to the formation of another Utica ball club, this one to be called the Blue Jays, after the parent Toronto expansion team, and a member of the Class A New York-Pennsylvania League. Class A was no longer the quality of the Eastern League of the 1940s. These Blue Jays were youngsters in their first or second year of professional baseball. Toronto provided Utica with interesting teams, but the preponderance of Latin American players on the club was not popular. Attendance dropped to 19,962

in 1980 and Toronto turned the franchise back to the league. It was the same old Utica story, but this one had a little different twist.

Miles Wolff rescued the Blue Jays from oblivion, revived that good old Utica name, the Blue Sox, and stocked the club with not-quites and maybes and managed to compete in 1981 and 1982. But there was a need for management and finances, both of which would be supplied by author Kahn and agent Jay Acton. Kahn invested \$15,000, became the president of what resembled Captain Ahab's PEQUOD more than a ball club, and in the process obtained the idea for a very good book. The Utica Blue Sox of 1983 won the New York-Penn League championship and their escapades are chronicled in expert fashion by Kahn. He made a lot of money on his book, and in the process stabilized the Utica situation. By 1985, the Blue Sox had a working agreement with — who else — the Phillies. Could the Whiz Kids of the '90s be on their way?

The Outcasts

In 1983, the Blue Sox were not Whiz Kids. Far from it. The players that they acquired were a little older and more experienced than the prospects on the major league-affiliated clubs. Prospects was the magic word; the conventional wisdom of the '80s is that you want to develop prospects for the majors. If you win at Little Falls, Oneonta or wherever, that is a bonus. This is a developmental league.

The Blue Sox had all been tried and found wanting by other organizations. Yet there were some every good athletes on the club. Don Jacoby, who served some as the designated hitter and attempted to play third base, hit a powerful .386 with a league leading 22 home runs. He was followed closely by sturdy outfielder Rock Coyle at .381, outfielder Barry Moss at .359 and first baseman Ed Wolfe at .338. Utica had a league high average of .313 and hit 96 homers in a 74-game season. Admittedly, the hitters were helped by a friendly right field fence at Murnane, but there were short fences in most of the parks, and no other club came close to these numbers.

The pitching staff had equally impressive records. Starters Mike Zamba and John Seitz were 12 game winners — convert that to 24 wins in a regular length schedule. They had both been cut by other organizations as had relief ace Roy Moretti. Moretti was the best pitcher in the league with a 7-2 mark and 2.18 ERA. His problem was that he was 27 years old, positively ancient in the New York-Penn League.

With experience on their side, the Blue Sox raced to an early seven-game lead by winning 26 of their first 32 games. Jacoby was hitting .463 while Seitz and Zamba each won his first five decisions. But then came the inevitable decline, and Utica gradually dropped back to the level of the rest of the league, finally falling out of first place on Aug. 21. There were only 12 days left to go and when the Little Falls Mets beat the Blue Sox, 7-5, to go up by a game and a half on Aug. 23, Utica looked to be in trouble. Rainouts created two straight doubleheaders at Oneonta and with six games in four days the Utica pitching staff would take a severe beating.

But the Sox rallied. They split two doubleheaders with Oneonta to move back into a first-place tie with the Mets, then took half a game lead with five games to go. The club had snapped out of its slump when Jacoby was moved to second base, his natural position, and Larry Lee went over to third. It looked good for Utica. The Blue Sox opponent for these last games was last-place Watertown. The first game was a breeze, 5-1, as Seitz and Moretti combined for the win. But then the two clubs battled to a 5-5 tie in a game stopped by rain. The suspended game was to be resumed the next night before Utica's final home game.

Once again, the elements took over. After a three-hour wait, the umpires called the game costing the Blue Sox a big gate. Worse yet, league president Vince McNamara ruled that the two games must be made up the next day at Watertown — in effect a tripleheader! The club made a valiant stand winning two of the three games. But Little Falls was winning its game to move into first place by one half game with one to go.

This was a major league finale to a fine pennant race. The Blue Sox took an early 2-0 lead and Moretti carried it into the ninth. Meanwhile, Little Falls was losing at Oneonta. The Blue Sox survived one terrifying moment when Moretti threw a home run ball with two out, but he got the final out on a grounder. At Oneonta, the Mets' rally fell short and Utica was the division champion. They soon became league champs by defeating Newark in the playoffs. Losing their only game at Murnane Field, the Blue Sox took two games at Newark winning the finale 7-0 behind James Wright.

It would be nice to end this tale and say "they lived happily ever after." Ever after would be life in the majors for the Blue Sox players. But sad to say, not one had reached that level through the 1988 season. No matter, they had their magic season that summer of 1983 in Utica.

A Playoff to Remember: Schenectady versus Amsterdam in 1947

by Frank Keetz

Schenectady has fielded a professional baseball team in three different minor leagues between 1895 and 1957. The Electrics played in the Class B New York State League in 1895 and from 1899 to mid-season 1904. The Blue Jays, a Philadelphia Phillies affiliate, played five seasons in the Class C Canadian-American League from 1946 through 1950 before moving up to the Class A Eastern League from 1951 to 1957. The Schenectady team won the league championship three times, once in each league — 1903 in the New York State League, 1947 in the Canadian-American League and in 1956 in the Eastern League.

During the teams' 19 full or part-time seasons, there were many thrills and despondent moments. There were no-hitters, triple plays, ninth-inning rallies, wonderous outfield catches and throws, umpire baiting, errors, smooth infield play, and even pennant races decided on the final day of the season. But nothing can match the 1947 team's seven-game playoff success against the Amsterdam Rugmakers for pure tension and exhilaration for both players and local fans.

Schenectady had been starved for professional baseball with its last team in 1904. A new franchise, however, opened the 1946 season finishing in seventh place. It was post-World War II America. The boys were coming back home. The war was over. America wanted to relax and enjoy itself and there was no better way to do so than "go out to the ballgame."

The 1947 Blue Jays easily won the pennant by a 13-game margin over second-place Gloversville. Amsterdam and the Oneonta Red Sox finished in third and fourth place, respectively. Schenectady romped through the league playing near .700 ball through May, June and July. The team then coasted to the league title winning only 22 of the final 45 games. Part of the letdown could be attributed to the normal runaway easing up, part to injuries to the pitching staff and center fielder Pinky Watson, and part to bad luck after a long period of good luck.

With a first-place team in 1947, the turnstiles really clicked at McNearney Stadium when 146,132 spectators paid to see the Blue Jays. Such a turnout in the factory town set a new Can-Am League record. In fact, the attendance figures surpassed the old league record by 40 percent. It was an average well above 2,000 per game, a remarkable number for a Class C baseball team at that time.

Playoff Time

The first four teams would play for the Can-Am League title in the September playoffs. Gloversville versus Oneonta and Schenectady vs. Amsterdam in the best-of-seven semi-

finals. Amsterdam, a Yankees farm team, was the only team that gave manager Lee Riley's Schenectady men trouble during the regular season. Amsterdam, managed by Mayo Smith, and Schenectady split the 20 scheduled games during the season. One newspaper reported that the Rugmakers "may be a tough nut to crack for the weakened Jays." The first game was scheduled at night in Schenectady on Tuesday, Sept. 9.

Hundreds of fans were lined up before the gates opened at 5 p.m. A record 5,339 spectators paid their way into the stadium. There was a full house in attendance to enjoy all the pre-game practices during which pitchers Joe Milians and Steve Ridzik even helped to sell team yearbooks. The Jays' Charlie Baker (17-5) opposed season-long nemesis and future great Lew Burdette. The Jays started fast and KOed Burdette in the second inning. The enthusiastic crowd cheered almost every pitch, but Amsterdam scored seven runs in a sixth inning rally and won the game 8-4. Only one Amsterdam run would have scored in the fateful sixth had not McConvery been jarred at the plate when receiving a long throw from center fielder Lorenz. McConvery dropped the ball in the collusion.

The second game turned out to be a thrill-packed 14-inning Amsterdam victory before 3,549 fans. Steve Ridzik pitched nine good innings for Schenectady, but trailed 3-1 when he retired the last Amsterdam batter in the ninth. Manager Riley reached base in the bottom of the ninth inning when hit by a pitch and Pandemonium broke loose when Charlie Dykes hit a Merriwell home run to tie the game. Dykes received \$125 in spontaneous gestures of fan appreciation. Burdette then entered the game in relief for the visitors and dueled reliever Walt Graham until the 14th inning, when Amsterdam scored twice for a 5-3 victory.

The third game started at 8 p.m. in the Mohawk Mills Park in Amsterdam (seating capacity of 3,000). A huge crowd of 3,530 saw the home team break away to a 6-2 lead as Blue Jays' pitchers Joe Milians and Sam Mayton were hit hard. But the visitors fought back and trailed only 7-6 entering the ninth inning. Ben Gregg blooped a hit to right, took second on Mike Genevrino's sacrifice and scored the tying run on Lee Riley's single. Catcher Bob Perry, who had been ejected from the previous game by the plate umpire, unloaded a 330-foot blast off the left field fence to win the game 8-7.

After a Friday night rainout, Schenectady won 3-2 on Saturday before 3,680 fans in Amsterdam to even the series. The Jays had to sweat out a bottom of the ninth inning rally by the Rugmakers, which was described as "perhaps the most nerve racking inning of the entire Schenectady season."

Amsterdam loaded the bases with only one out, but Schenectady's Baker escaped with the 3-2 victory.

The teams returned to Schenectady for Sunday's fifth game. Despite rain, a Can-Am League record 6,209 fans filled McNearney Stadium to witness the wildest game in Blue Jays history.

The Amsterdam batters knocked both Ridzik and Milians out of the game early. By the eighth inning, the Jays were hopelessly behind 13-5 and many in the crowd had started to leave.

But then it happened.

Riley started the home eighth with a single to center for Schenectady. Perry doubled to left, Speranza was safe on the shortstop's error. The attack continued and before long it was 13-11. There were wild whoops on every pitch. The bases were loaded again for Twarkins, batting for the second time in the inning. His sharp grounder hit first base and rolled into right field. Two runs scored and Schenectady had a 14-13 lead. Walt Graham held Amsterdam in the ninth and Schenectady led the series three games to two.

The sixth game moved back to Amsterdam (13 miles west along the Mohawk River). A capacity 3,117 fans were on hand with Schenectadians almost outnumbering Amsterdam's rooters. Big Ben Gregg had a wisdom tooth pulled that morning, but still pitched, although to no avail as Lew Burdette beat the Jays 2-1. For local upstate New York, this was a World Series. The league showed their agreement by assigning four umpires for each game.

Schenectady had the home field advantage for the seventh and deciding game. Another massive Class C crowd of 5,238 filled the stadium. The two evenly matched teams moved into the ninth inning tied 2-2. Baker, who pitched a six-hitter for Schenectady, led off the home ninth with a double

down the left field line. Fred Speranza laid down a perfect bunt to move Baker to third, but Amsterdam first baseman Art Pollock missed third baseman Paul Hazle's throw and the ball sailed into the right field bullpen as Baker raced home to win the game and the series. It was Baker's third playoff victory.

The Anticlimactic Finals

Gloversville, a St. Louis Browns affiliate and second-place team during the regular season, was Schenectady's opponent in the final playoff series. Led by Stanley "Packy" Rogers, the Glovers had defeated Oneonta easily in the semifinal series. The final series was anticlimactic after the wild Schenectady-Amsterdam series. Gloversville was a good team, but no match for the Blue Jays as Schenectady won the series and the title in five games.

A season-ending gala victory banquet was held for the team the night after the playoff victory. Like 1903, there also was a victory parade through the city after the regular season. Manager Riley was given a special gift of \$1,000 and the McNearney brothers, who owned the team, gave the players \$4,000 to split among themselves. The players also split \$2,019.60 as their playoff reward and another \$2,000 for the team's first-place finish. Each player, therefore, received approximately \$500, which was a tidy sum for Class C players in 1947, who were lucky to earn \$200 a month during the season.

For a few weeks Schenectadians thrilled to the accomplishments of their local team — accomplishments which, to them, equaled the heroics of the 1947 seven-game World Series between the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Yankees.



The 1947 Blue Jays go wild in their locker room after the seven-game playoff victory over Amsterdam.



Top: A game in progress at the Rochester House of Refuge, circa 1874. This is the earliest known photograph of black ballplayers in action. Here, the black team is at bat with a white team in the field at this Monroe County orphanage.

Top Right: The Unions of Morrisania Base Ball Club in 1866. From a section of the Bronx, this team was led by such stars as George Wright, standing fourth from right, and Charlie Pabor, far right.

Bottom Right: Town team from Ithaca, circa 1875.



UNION of MORRISANIA.
1866



Upstate New York's Ballparks

by David Pietrusza

Upstate New York has always thrived as a hotbed of baseball interest and activity from the game's earliest innings. And as such it has had more than its share of ballparks, fairly dripping with history and baseball lore. It would take more pages than this program holds to present their full story, but what follows is a thumbnail sketch of some of the notable ballparks past and present.

Albany

The Excelsior Club of South Brooklyn defeated the Albany Champion Club at the Washington Parade Grounds (now Washington Park) on July 2, 1860, 24-6, but notable for the fact that it was the first "road" game ever played.

From the 1860s to the turn of the century, Albany teams played at Riverside Park on Broadway and Quay. It had a large wooden grandstand and the Troy Haymakers played five games there between 1880 and 1882. In 1901, Albany held some of its home games, at another Riverside Park. This was in the middle of the Hudson River on privately owned Bonaker's Island. It was across from Albany's State Street and had no grandstands.

Albany's team in the New York State League and the Eastern League played at Chadwick Park in Menands. In 1928, Hawkins Stadium, named for team owner Michael J. Hawkins, was built at the same site for \$240,000. The last

game was played there on Sept. 6, 1958 and the park was torn down in November 1960. The site is now called Mid-City Plaza.

When the Eastern League returned to the Empire State's Capital City in 1983, games were first played at old Bleecker Stadium, but on Aug. 12 of that year, Heritage Park in Colonie opened. It cost \$1.2 million.

Amsterdam

Mohawk Mills (originally Crescent Park) opened for business as part of an amusement park in 1914. From 1938 through 1951 it hosted the Rugmakers of the Class C Canadian-American League. It still stands and is now called Shuttleworth Park. In 1942, its grandstand burned to the ground, but it was rebuilt in eight days — just in time to host a game against the New York Yankees.

Auburn

Classic wooden grandstand Falcon Park, built by the Polish Falcons organization, has served the Canadian-American League (1938 and 1940), the Class C Border League (1946-1951) and the New York Penn League (1958-1980 and 1982 to present).

Batavia

Built in 1939 with W.P.A. funds, wooden Wyer Stadium



Mohawk Mills Park, Amsterdam (1940s).

has been home to New York-Penn League baseball from 1939 until 1987

Binghamton

The Eastern League's Johnson Field, near the Endicott-Johnson shoe factory, was demolished in the late 1960s to make way for Route 17. A new stadium and a return to the Eastern League is being planned.

Buffalo

Early Buffalo baseball had several homes — Riverside Park (1878-1882), Olympic Park (1883-1898) and a newer Olympic Park on Michigan and Ferry streets (1899-1923). Besides serving minor league ball, the latter version of Olympic Park also housed the Buffalo 1890 Player's League team.

Buffalo's Federal League team operated at Federal League Park on Northland Avenue at Lonsdale Road.

Concrete and steel Offerman Stadium was built in 1924 and, until 1935, was called Bison Stadium.

War Memorial Stadium was built in 1938 as a Depression-era jobs creation project at a cost of \$3 million. Never really suited for baseball, the massive "Rockpile" served the Bisons from 1961 to 1987 and was the scene of Robert Redford's epic baseball film, "The Natural."

Pilot Field opened in 1988 and is one of the finest minor league facilities. With 19,500 seats (expandable to more than 40,000), the green-roofed facility cost \$54 million and features 38 luxury skyboxes.

Cooperstown

Doubleday Field, the reputed site of the first game ever at old Elihu Phinney's cow pasture, has since 1940 been the scene of the annual Hall of Fame Game played on Induction Weekend. It is still unlit.

Elmira

Dunn Field housed franchises in the Eastern League (1962-1972) and the New York-Penn League (1957-1961 and 1973-1986).

Geneva

McDonough Park has hosted New York-Penn League franchises from 1958-1973 and from 1977 to present.

Glens Falls

East Field hosted White Sox and Detroit farm teams in the Eastern League from 1980 until 1988. It was hastily thrown together when a plan to locate a franchise in Schenectady fell through at the last minute and the club moved to Glens Falls.

Gloversville

From 1904 to 1907, the Gloversville entry in the New York State League played at JAG Park, later called Parkhurst Field. Johnstown, Amsterdam and Gloversville shared a franchise, hence JAGs. The Pirates and Red Sox

played there before World War I and the Reds played exhibitions there circa 1922.

Built before the turn of the century and originally a fairgrounds, Glovers Park saw services in the Can-Am League from 1937 to 1951. It is now the site of Nichols Shopping Plaza on the east side of Route 30A.

Kingston

Built as a WPA project in the 1930s, Dietz Field (named after a local Medal of Honor winner) hosted franchises in the North Atlantic, (1947) Colonial (1948-1950) and Can-Am (1951) leagues. It is still used for high school football and baseball.

Little Falls

Veterans Memorial Stadium housed the Mets of the New York-Penn League from 1977 through 1988. For some years tiny Little Falls (population 6,000) was the smallest city in professional baseball.

Massena

Alco Field was in professional ball for only one week in 1936 when the Watertown Can-Am franchise moved temporarily to Massena.

Newark

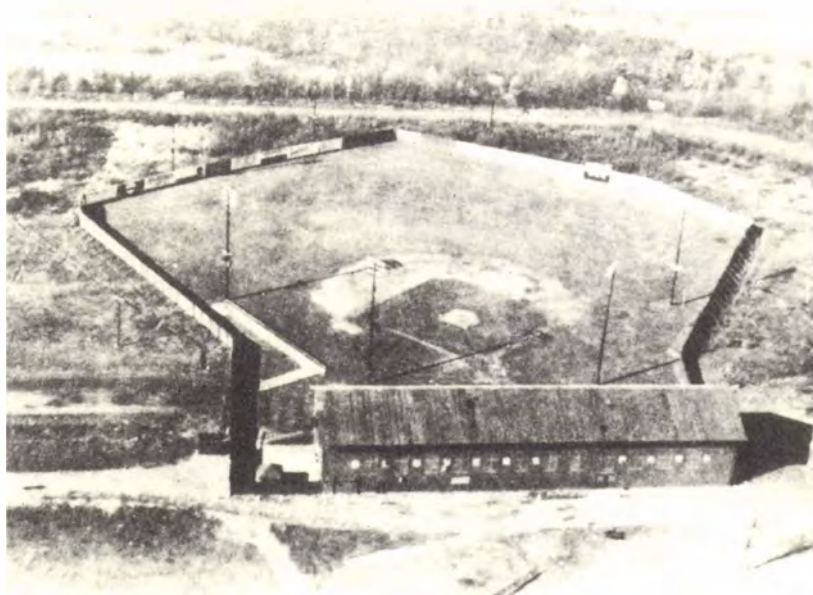
Tiny Colburn Park housed New York-Penn League franchises from 1968 to 1979 and from 1983 to 1987.

Ogdensburg

Winter Park was originally an ice skating rink in the 1930s. It evolved into a ballpark serving the Can-Am League (1936-1940) and Border leagues (1946-1951). Since stripped of lights and grandstands, it is now called Father Martin Park.

Oneonta

Damashke Field (formerly Morris Park and Neahwa Park)



Gloves Field, Gloversville (1940s).

was donated to the city of Oneonta in 1908. It has served the Eastern League (1921), the Canadian-American League (1940-1951) and the New York-Penn League (1924 and 1966 to present).

Oswego

Richardson Field was the site of an Empire State League team (the Starchmakers) from 1905 to 1908.

Otis Field, a park of huge dimensions, sheltered the Netherlands of the Can-Am loop in 1936 to 1940. It was torn down in the mid-1950s and is now the site of Leighton Elementary School.

Poughkeepsie

Forty-five hundred-seat Riverview Park, near Vassar College, hosted the Chiefs of the Post-World War II Class B Colonial League.

Rochester

The American Association Hopbitters played their 1890 season at Culver Field, now the site of New York Central Conrail tracks, although their Sunday games were held at Windsor Beach in nearby Irondequoit.

Silver Stadium, called Red Wing Stadium until 1968, was built in 1929 by the St. Louis Cardinals and underwent an impressive \$4.5 million renovation prior to the 1987 season.

Rome

League Park, formerly known as Murray's Park, served the Can-Am League in 1937. It had formerly been used for industrial league teams.

Colonels Park on Black River Boulevard was built for \$15,000 in 1938 and housed the Can-Am League Colonels until 1951. Known as a hitter's park, it was demolished in 1952 to make way for a housing project.

Schenectady

The 1895 Schenectady New York State League team, which folded in mid-season, played at the County Fairgrounds, often called Racing Park. The team constructed a grandstand and bleachers there. The same field was used when the New York State League returned in 1899. It was located in the Hamilton Hill area, near downtown. It was used until the team moved to Island Park in 1901.

Island Park was on Van Slyke Island in the Mohawk River, although it is now part of the "mainland." In fact, it is the Schenectady County Community College parking lot. It was reached by a bridge and was used for the New York State League and later for the Mohawk Giants, a black team, which left in 1916 for a diamond on Broadway in Schenectady. After World War I, it was known as Columbus Park, as it had been taken over by the Knights of Columbus. The Brooklyn Robins (Dodgers) played the Knights there in 1921. The park was used sporadically until the late 1920s. In its early days it had no outfield fence.

When professional ball returned to Schenectady in 1946, the Can-Am League Blue Jays first used the Class A Diamond in Central Park, but in mid-season switched to new McNearney Stadium on Jackson Avenue.

Syracuse

Syracuse played its 1878 season in the International Association at Lakeside Park, then moved to the National League and Newell Park in 1879.

Baseball took a hiatus in the Salt City until 1885 and the advent of the New York State League and New Star Park. In 1886, Syracuse moved to the International League and in 1890 to the American Association.

In 1891, the game reappeared at Crescent Park with a new Eastern Association squad. In 1906, the Stars moved to Hallock Park on Onondaga Lake. It was renamed Star Park and lasted until the pros once again departed in 1929.

The Stars became the Chiefs when the International League returned in 1934 when 8,500-seat Municipal Stadium was built in only 48 days for an estimated \$300,000.

The park was renamed MacArthur Stadium in 1942 and was destroyed by fire in May 1969, but was quickly rebuilt. Major refurbishing of the park occurred in 1987 and 1988.

Troy

The Troy Haymakers of the National Association in 1871 and 1872 and the Trojans of the 1880 and 1881 National League played most of their contests at the Haymakers Grounds on Center Island on the Hudson River near its convergence with the Mohawk River. It was the site of the smallest big league crowd ever when only 12 fans attended a game versus Chicago in 1885. The area now is covered with fuel tanks.

In 1879, the Trojans held court at Putnam Grounds at Peoples Avenue and 15th Street. In 1882 the team moved to the Troy Ball Club Grounds across the Hudson in what is now Watervliet.

Utica

The Utica Athletic Field, located at the fairgrounds on Bleecker Street, was home to the city's old New York State League squads. Braves Field (renamed McConnell Field after former big leaguer Amby McConnell) was the home of the Canadian-American League (1939-1942) and Eastern league (1943-1950) franchises. Located near the Mohawk River and often plagued by fog, it was demolished in the early 1950s to make way for a New York State Thruway entrance ramp.

Murnane Field has been the site of New York-Penn League contests since 1977 and has seen steady improvements since some very primitive beginnings.

Watertown

Watertown's ballpark started as a County Fairground in 1928. Its grandstand dated back to 1851 and baseball has been played there since 1871. The Can-Am League played there in 1936 and the Border League from 1946 to 1951. The 1851 grandstand was destroyed by fire following a playoff contest in September 1947. The New York-Penn League has had a franchise there since 1983. At present a new stadium is being planned.



Two Adirondack sluggers posed in LaFargeville, circa 1888.

Photo Credits

L. Robert Davids: p. 5.

John Kashmanian: pp. 46-47 (bottom).

Frank Keetz: p. 55.

National Baseball Library: pp. 4, 13, 18, 20, 30, 31 (bottom), 31, 33, 36, 42, 46 (top), 47 (top), 51, 57.

Dave Pietrusza: pp. 40, 41, 58, 59.

Margaret B. Rainey Memorial Library, St. Johnsville, N.Y.: p. 37 (bottom).

Mark Rucker: pp. cover, inside front cover, 6,7,12, 15, 27, 31 (top), 37, 48, 56, inside back cover.

**NORTHEASTERN
NEW YORK**



SABR
convention '89

\$7.50