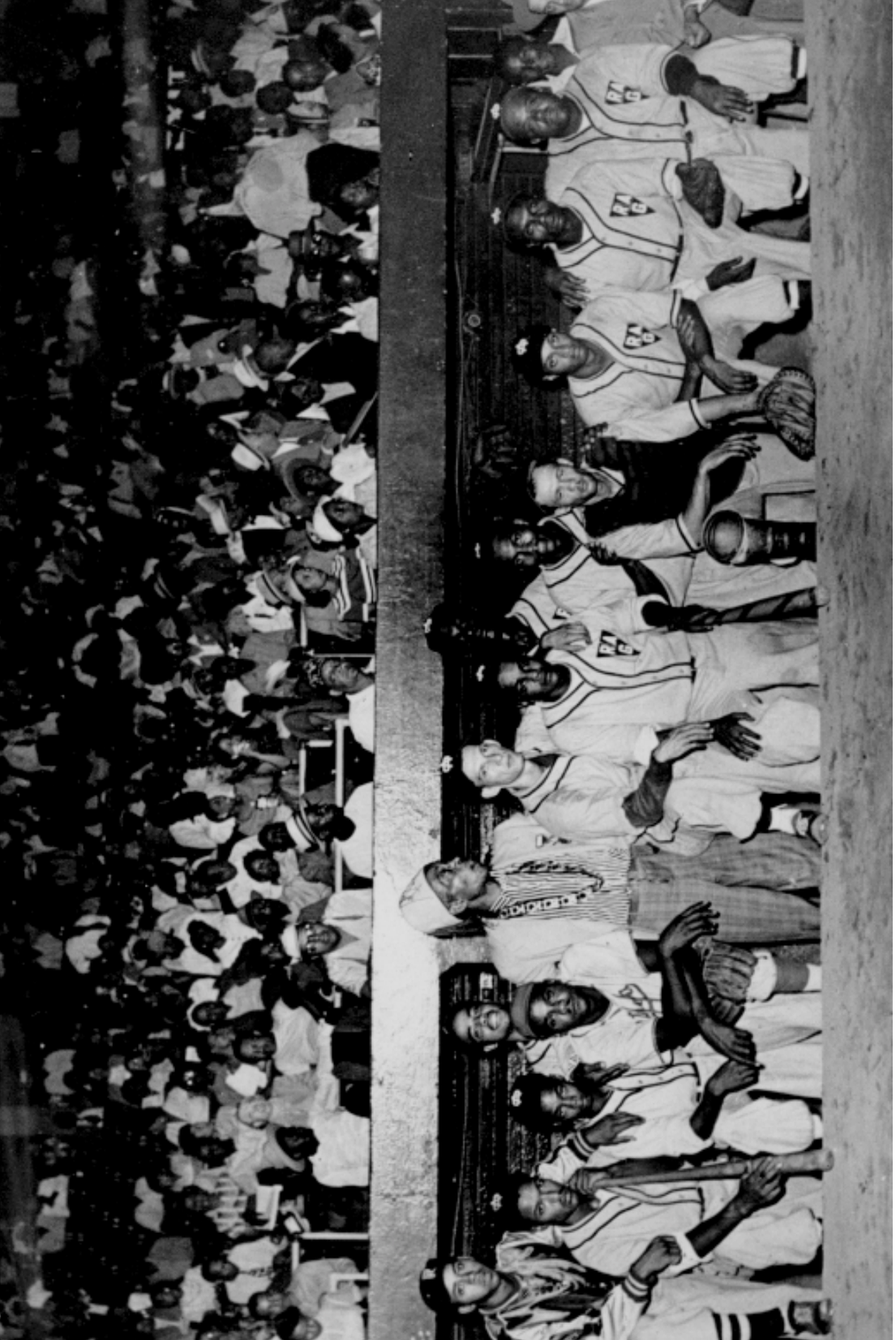

ROCHESTER HISTORY

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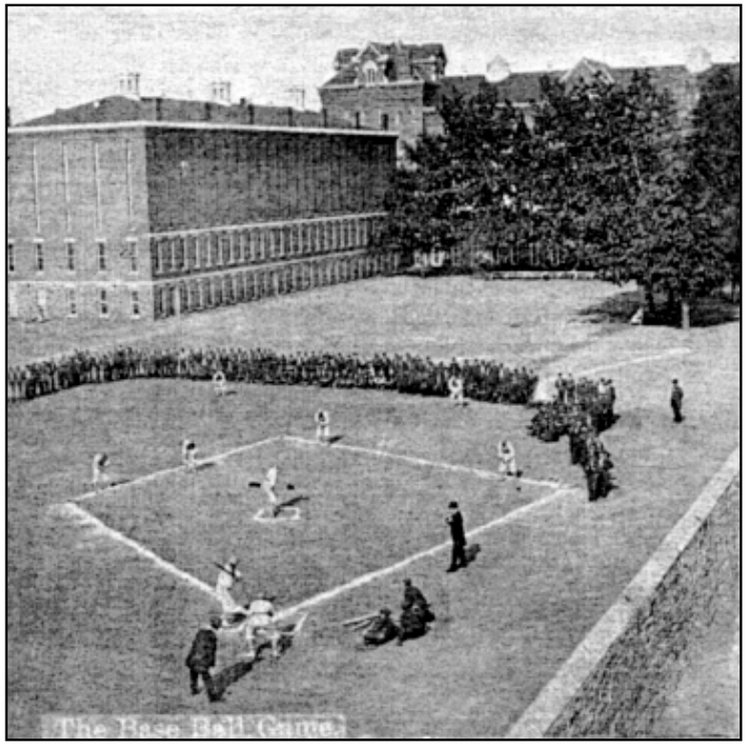
Rochester's Last Two Seasons of Amateur Baseball
Baseball in the 19th Century, Part Four

by Priscilla Astifan



The Rochester Driving Park race track, which opened in the spring of 1875, doubled as a baseball park in 1875 and 1876. The grassy field in the center of the track made a level diamond, and the tiered grand stand seats were similar to those constructed at early ball parks. The state-of-the-art facilities at the Rochester Driving Park, which included luxury boxes, restaurants, wine rooms, and a hotel, were prophetic of those at modern stadiums. Small structures, such as the band stand and judges' stand were used for members of the press and city policemen.

Cover photo: The 1875 and 1876 Rochesters played the majority of their games at the Driving Park race track, but they also used the baseball field at the Western House of Refuge, a boys and girls reformatory and educational institution, which was located south of the Driving Park.

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The crowd at Rochester's Driving Park shown at this race between a horse and a bicycle must have been quite similar to crowds at base ball games. While many spectators occupied grand stand seats, others got closer to the action by watching the game from the track and inside railing.

On May 26, 1875, all Rochester ball players were invited to a meeting of the Excelsior Base Ball Club. It was held for the purpose of finding the best team possible to represent the city against regional and national competition. Those who met that evening included several veterans from the Excelsiors and other clubs that had flourished in earlier years, as well as the previous year's Rochesters and other modern players.

The new club was organized in the traditional manner of amateurism.[1] All active members would pay monthly membership dues of two dollars and honorary or supportive members would pay three dollars. Initial plans called for keeping the Excelsior name, perhaps in remembrance of the team's post-Civil War glory year in 1866 and the comparative innocence of baseball before the changes brought by the beginning of acknowledged professionalism in 1869. On July 1, however, the *Rochester Evening Express* approved the

suggestion to use the name Rochesters, as the new organization would represent the city's collective baseball talent.[2] Hope for a successful season intensified when arrangements were made to use the recently opened Driving Park race track for a ball park. The center of the track would make a smooth diamond, and the tiered seats in the grand stand would provide ideal viewing. Best of all, the grounds were easily accessible by the Lake Avenue street car line.

The Rochesters' 1875 season began with a 21-6 defeat at a practice game with the University of Rochester club at the college grounds on June 18, and a 36-14 win from the Silver Stars at a July 1 Dominion Day game at Port Hope, Ontario, Canada. The inaugural game at the newly prepared Driving Park diamond was played on July 3. There was no outside opponent, however. Instead club members and other city ball players demonstrated their skills in a contest between two chosen sides. The selected nine would play the first home outside game against the Chicago White Stockings on July 8, when they stopped in Rochester on their eastern tour.

The Athletics of Philadelphia, 1875: When the National Association Athletics of Philadelphia opposed the Rochesters here on September 27, player Ezra Sutton, formerly a Rochester player, was known as the best third base man in professional baseball. He later played for the National League Boston team from 1877-1888.

The 14-3 loss to "the Chicagos," who were favored to win the National Association pennant, seemed rather commendable for a team that had played together for the first time. However, five of the selected nine had finished the season with the 1874 Rochesters, and they had also played at the Port Hope game. Other contests at the Driving Park that gave the Rochesters a chance to test their "mettle" against the nation's prominent professionals that season included games with the Elm City club of New Haven on July 13 and August 28, the Athletics of Philadelphia on September 27, and the White Stockings again on October 12. On September 13 they opposed one of the nation's best amateur clubs, the Live Oaks of Lynn, Massachusetts. The most exciting contests for the Rochesters and their fans, however, were those with "evenly matched" regional teams.

"Base ball fever has run as high in this city as in the palmy days of the Excelsiors some years ago," the *Express* declared after the Rochesters whipped the Stars 19-4 in Syracuse on July 19 and the undefeated Livingstons of Geneseo 16-5, at the Driving Park on July 20. The victory over Geneseo was especially remarkable as the Livingston team was reported to be reinforced with several professionals.[3] The Crickets of Binghamton, hailed by *The New York Clipper* as "one of the best amateur teams in the state," were defeated 6 to 2 at the Driving Park on August 18.[4] Other regional games that season involved clubs from Penn Yan, Brockport, Bergen, and Avon. On August 25, the Silver Stars of Port Hope, who played a return game here, were defeated 41-19.

Large crowds at home games included many distant fans who were accommodated by special excursion trains. On September 24 the *Express* guessed that as many as 10,000 had watched the previous day's contest between the Rochesters and Brockports, which was one of the attractions of the Western New York fair.[5] The Rochesters' directors were commended for their success in pleasing those who came to the Driving Park ball games. With the help of city policemen, they attempted to keep fans from crowding around the playing field. Special amenities included score

cards printed with players' names and positions, which enabled each individual to keep score, and a bulletin board that displayed the result of each inning from the judges' stand. The presence of ladies was still considered a sign of civility and respectability, and promoters encouraged them with free admission, box grand stand seats, and perfumed score cards. Also, as the local papers increasingly carried accounts of player bribery and game throwing among the leading professional teams, they attempted to control gambling. Pool sellers, who offered the club a portion of their commissions for selling group bets were barred from the grounds. Wagering continued, however, as individuals patronized outside pool sellers.

In spite of the attempts to regain the past glories of amateurism, baseball was increasingly forced to become a business. Over $400 in gate receipts were collected at the inaugural game on July 9. However, after $200 was paid to the Chicago club in compliance with the 50% of the gate fees agreement and 20% as a usage fee to the Driving Park Association, the Rochesters were left with $100 to cover other expenses. These included $200 for sodding and the "tasty and attractive" uniforms manufactured by Sibley, Lindsay, and Curr Co.[6]

Individual admission fees that season ranged from 15 cents during games with other city teams to 25 cents for noteworthy amateur or semipro teams, and 35 cents for National League professionals. The need for good gate receipts encouraged more emphasis on perfection. The Rochesters were admonished by the press when they grew overconfident and lazy while contesting a team that was obviously inferior, or despondent and lethargic when they played a superior club. Better a close, well contested loss than a loosely played wide win.

Amateurs were now expected to perform like professionals. On August 20, the *Express* announced that the Rochesters would receive training in batting and base running that afternoon, and all the pitchers in town were invited to pitch against them. The number of base hits each player made would be noted, and a stop watch would

determine the amount of time it took him to reach first base.[7]

Those who weren't already familiar with the concept of scientific batting were introduced to it when an *Express* article described a clinic given at a Boston/Philadelphia game in Boston. George Wright, the brother of Harry Wright, then the acclaimed manager of the Boston club showed how a batter could change his position to control where he sent the ball and thereby take advantage of his opponents' fielding weaknesses.[8] Baseball continued to grow more scientific in general, with shorter and more closely contested games and more highly developed defensive skills in fielding and pitching. However, players still had to cope with a variety of fields, which were still primitive according to today's standards. Often they were poorly laid out and prepared and/or didn't meet National Association regulations. Unlike today when four trained and salaried umpires rule major league games and three govern the games of triple A teams like the Rochester Red Wings, there was still only one umpire. He was unpaid and was often uninformed of the latest Association rule changes. Worse yet, he might be a member of the opposing club, and therefore tempted to rule in his team's favor when they were losing.

After a game in Penn Yan on July 22, the Rochesters described a rough and uneven field with loose bases estimated to be 100-110 feet apart instead of the accustomed 90 feet. They claimed there was no mark to distinguish the pitcher's position, and that an inept umpire needlessly prolonged the game by refusing to call strikes, causing them to quit after seven innings in order to catch the boat that had already been held up for them.[9] With no padded gloves or protective equipment of any kind, injuries such as broken or sprained fingers continued to encourage a large number of errors. Bases on balls and wild pitches were also charged as errors to the team in the field.

As baseball throughout the nation recovered from the slump it had endured from 1871-1874, games among serious, but less prominent city clubs that played regularly

BASE BALL

The famous St. Louis Browns versus the Rochesters, at the Refuge grounds, this afternoon at 3 o'clock. ADMISSION TWENTY FIVE CENTS, LADIES FREE. It will be a splendid game.

BASE BALL

—The St. Louis Browns play the Rochesters today.

—At Elmira, yesterday, the Bostons defeated the Ithacas 19 to 10.

—The Syracuse Stars yesterday defeated the St. Louis (league) by the fine score of 7 to 0.

—The Rochesters will play the St. Louis Reds upon the Refuge grounds tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock.

—Yesterday, on the Pinnacle Avenue grounds, the Vanity Fair club, from Kimball's factory, defeated the Actives by a score of 56 to 14.

—The game yesterday between the Chicago White Stockings and the Rochesters drew out an immense crowd, as the great reputation of the visiting club gave promise of a splendid exhibition of scientific and skillful playing. There was some remarkably fine playing done on both sides, as can easily be imagined by a glance at the figures given in the score appended below. There was considerable complaint on the part of Rochesters over the ruling of the umpire. The following is the full

SCORE.

Rochesters.

	T	R	1st.b.	P.O.	A.	E.
McKelvey, s.s.	4	0	0	2	5	3
Wright, l.f.	4	0	0	2	0	0
Kimball, c.f.	4	0	1	0	0	0
Calder, 3d.b.	4	0	1	1	1	2
Hayes, r.f.	4	0	1	0	1	1
Pond, 1st. b.	3	0	0	16	0	2
Heath, c.	3	0	0	3	0	3
Sabin, 2b.	3	0	0	3	3	0
Wilbur, p.	3	0	1	0	4	3
Total	32	0	4	27	14	14

Chicagos.

	T	R	1st.b.	P.O.	A.	E.
Barnes, 2d.b	5	2	2	2	2	0
Anson, 3d.b.	5	1	2	1	1	0
McVey, 1st.b.	5	1	0	11	0	0
Peters, s.s.	5	0	0	1	3	1
White, c.	5	1	1	4	0	1
Hines, c.f.	5	1	2	2	0	0
Spalding, p.	5	1	2	1	4	0
Glenn, l.f.	5	1	1	2	0	0
Addy, r.f.	5	0	0	3	0	1
Total	45	8	10	27	10	3

SYNOPSIS

Innings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Rochesters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chicagos	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	2	0	8

-First base on errors-Rochesters 1, Chicagos 8
-Left after clean hits-Rochesters 4, Chicagos 5
-Total bases-Rochesters 4, Chicagos 13
-Runs earned-Chicagos 2
-Strikes called-Wilbur 35, Spalding 13
-Balls called-Wilbur 16, Spalding 4
-Struck out-Chicagos 2
-Double plays-Rochesters, McKelvey and Sabin
Chicagos, Barries and McVey
-Time, one hour and fifty minutes
-Umpire-Charles Watson

BASE BALL

The famous St. Louis Browns versus the Rochesters, at the Refuge grounds, this afternoon at 3 o'clock. ADMISSION TWENTY FIVE CENTS, LADIES FREE. It will be a splendid game.

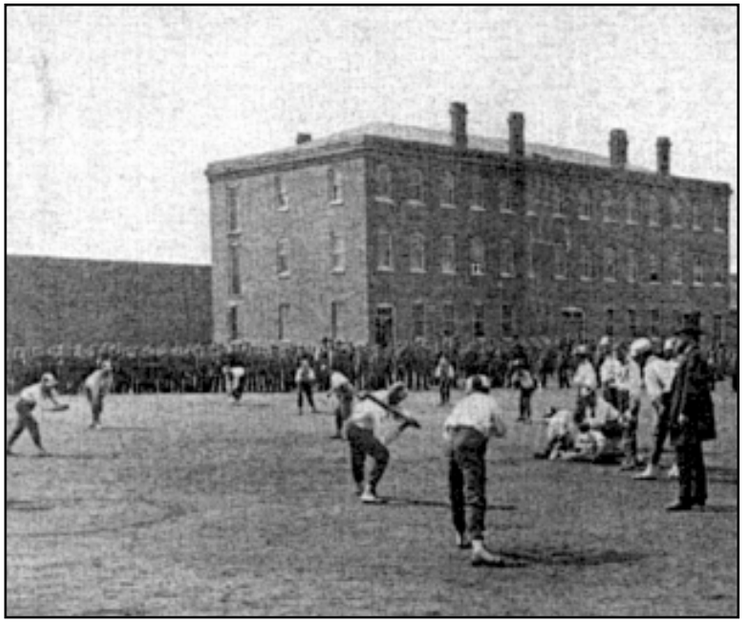
Rochester Democrat and Chronicle Baseball News and Box Score, Chicago/ Rochester Game, Sept. 1, 1876: Newspaper reporting of baseball continued to expand and box scores grew more detailed. On May 26, 1876, the Rochester Evening Express printed the concerns of a father who claimed that elaborate accounts of the game were encouraging his son's "foolish infatuation" with baseball, which was rendering him "scarcely fit for anything else."

increased significantly. At least five African American Rochester clubs included the Hartfords, the Sumner Base Ball Club, the Fast Flyers, and the Slow Goers. The Unexpecteds, who had organized in 1866, also continued to play.[10] Local newspapers continued to advertise regional tournaments which offered cash prizes in a number of upstate New York communities. But no indications were found that any Rochester clubs attended them.

Numerous recreational games were played among an amazing variety of civil service, industrial and commercial teams, and various social and religious groups. Nearly every trade and profession imaginable was represented. The (Western) House of Refuge, a boys' reformatory and learning institution, continued to field several good junior teams, with at least one which was good enough to compete with senior city clubs and out of town teams.

"Now here's a chance for the Rochester girls," the *Express* announced on September 7 after they mentioned two female ball clubs, the Diamond Garters and Lace Top Stockings, who played a game in Springfield, Illinois.[11] On September 17 they described a pair of other women's novelty teams, known as the *Blondes* and *Brunettes*, who were traveling through that state.[12] Although the Rochesters' directors were pleased with the significant number of women who attend their games, there were still no obvious newspaper reports of adult women ballplayers here.

The final games of the 1875 season included discouraging defeats from the Live Oaks of Lynn, Massachusetts on September 13, and the Athletics of Philadelphia, on September 27. On September 28, the Rochesters suffered their worst defeat when they were "outbatted and outfielded," in Avon by a team that included players from the Livingstons of Geneseo and a Lima team.[13] A 5-2 loss to Syracuse followed on October 2. The return game with the Chicago White Stockings on October 12, which ended in a 23-3 loss, was declared "an uninteresting, muffing, one sided affair."[14] September games scheduled in Waterloo and Auburn were rained out.



A ball game in action at the Western House of Refuge. Several excellent clubs, composed of the male inmates, included a team of African American boys who called themselves the Crows. Captain Fulton, who served as superintendent, believed the old saw that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Separate but adjacent facilities for delinquent girls, known as the Female Reformatory, opened in the fall of 1876. A description of daily activities gives no indication that the girls participated in baseball or other outdoor sports.

"Now let the season be closed as far as the Rochesters are concerned, the *Express* declared on October 13. "The weather is too unfavorable and the nine is too badly demoralized to make their play of any further interest." Next year's team should be selected immediately, they suggested, so each man could prepare himself during the winter months, probably in one of the gymnasiums that had begun to advertise for their business.[15]

Young Ladies' Baseball Club Number 1 of 1890-1891: According to Gai Ingham Berlage, author of ***Women in Baseball, The Forgotten History****, novelty teams like the Diamond Garters and Lace Top Stockings of 1875 no longer captivated the public. They wanted to see serious games with close scores. Although women's teams still dressed in the kind of feminine attire shown, they had to be skilled enough to compete against men's teams. National Baseball Library, Cooperstown, N.Y.*

Rochester's Last Season of Amateur Baseball: 1876

One of the most important events in the development of baseball influenced the 1876 season. When the National League of Professional Base Ball Players was organized on February 2, it replaced the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players and became the first alliance to allow club administrators rather than players to dominate the game. It aimed to make organized baseball a profitable business that would attract investors by restricting competition to improve the quality. Only eight carefully selected clubs were privileged to join the kind of monopoly that would regulate professional baseball well into the next century.[16] But everywhere, the game was influenced toward

BASE BALL

FLOWERS vs. SALT.

THE WELL KNOWN

Syracuse Stars vs. The Rochesters

AT THE DRIVING PARK

SATURDAY, October 2d.

☞Game called at 2:30 p.m.

☞Admission 25 cents. Ladies free.

V.B. PARSONS, President

J.W. CARUTHERS, Sec'y.

greater scientific and commercial development, and more professionalism.

On March 13, the *Express* announced that the professional clubs in the country that had been excluded from the National League planned to organize and "recruit their own ranks by drawing in many of the amateurs."[17] But amateurs also decided to reorganize, and on April 11, the Rochester Base Ball Club sent player Eugene Kimball and secretary William H. Hanna as delegates to Syracuse, where the Central, Western and Southern New York Association of Amateur base ball players was formed.

Mr. Hanna was chosen to serve as secretary of the organization, which also included one club representative each from Syracuse, Auburn, Ithaca, and Binghamton. In a manner similar to the National Association of Amateur Base Ball Players of 1876, and also the National League, this regional association sought to govern territorial competition and to regulate their season, which would extend from April 20 to October 31. They also established an official championship contest, but while the National League champions would be awarded an official pennant, the state association winners would receive an official championship emblem. Like the National League, they established a judiciary committee to settle any disputes and to prosecute any violations.[18]

The state association adopted the rules of the National Association of Amateur Base Ball Players with one significant exception: players in this regional alliance were officially allowed financial compensation through a variety of means that included shared gate receipts and regular salaries. This decision may help to explain the ambiguous "professional-amateur" term used often by local newspapers that season; although the term was also used, apparently, to

describe non-league professionals. It also represents the mixed state of the game at the time. Once players signed with a club and dutifully registered with the association secretary, they were prohibited from leaving without a proper release, except when a club disbanded. Otherwise, they were free agents who moved about as clubs continued to disband and reorganize throughout this highly inconsistent season.

When the association's organizational committee voted not to recognize season tickets, however, the Rochesters, who were counting on these to meet their expenses, apparently withdrew. According to the *Express* they reconsidered in May, after their proposal that each club be allowed to issue a certain number of these was accepted.[19] A season pass to Rochesters' games could be purchased for five dollars. Otherwise, admission fees for state association games and other non-league outside competition was 25 cents. Fifty cent fees were tried for games involving league clubs, but were dropped back to 25 cents – a league decision, apparently. Ladies were still invited to grace ball games with their presence, free of charge. Team expenses included paying a $50 minimum fee or 40% of the gate receipts to visiting state association clubs. In spite of a usage fee, which was apparently 20% of the gate receipts, the Rochesters continued to play the majority of their significant matches at the Driving Park. They also used the House of Refuge grounds and those of the newly constructed Female Reformatory.

The 1876 season began when the newly reorganized Rochesters played practice games with two strong city nines, the Ontarios on May 11 and the Unknowns on May 12.

This June 7, 1876 advertisement in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle illustrates that a regulation baseball was the same circumference and weight as today. It also indicates that those who regulated the game were already experimenting with the contents of baseball in order to control hitting as in "No Rubber" "Double Cover."

Adrian Constantine ("Cap") Anson, who was considered by many to be the greatest all-time first baseman, played this position and served as manager of the Chicago White Stockings until 1897. He was among the original inductees to the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown in 1939.

John Glenn, who played left field for the National League Chicago White Stockings, was a former Rochester player whose success began with the Rochester Alerts of 1869. He remained with the White Stockings through 1877.

Al Spalding, a prominent 19th century pitcher and sporting goods magnate, played with the Chicago White Stockings in 1876. Prior to that he played for Boston.

New players included John McKelvey, who had played as a professional with the 1875 New Haven, Connecticut nine, catcher Larry Hays, and Charley Wilbur, a promising "curve pitcher" from the previous year's Brockport club. The Rochesters won both games, but the *Express* felt the team needed more skill and consistency if they wished to compete successfully with state association teams.[20]

On May 23 the Rochesters won their first state association game, 25-11 with the Franklins of Auburn, at the Driving Park. On May 30, however, they lost the second association championship game to the Ithacas, 12-6. Wilbur had allowed three fewer hits than the opposing pitcher, and the loss was blamed on "wild throwing, foolish and hazardous base running, and half a dozen men acting as captain at the same time.[21] A crushing, 15-1 defeat from the more experienced and formidable Stars, who walloped the Rochesters 15-1 in Syracuse on June 6, followed.

Hope returned after a second, 27-5 victory with the Franklins, in Auburn the following day. But a second home

On August 11, 1875 a Rochester newspaper expressed regret that arrangements could not be made to have these four-time national champions play here on their return from a western tour. Race week prevented a ball game, but these Boston Red Stockings managed to stop and spend a day. They attended a horse race and complimented the baseball diamond and the fine facilities of the Rochester Driving Park. The newspaper said they would have attracted a large crowd and that "a more gentlemanly set of men than Harry Wright and his team of ballists will rarely be found in sporting circles." Left to right: Al Spalding, Andy Leonard, Cal McVey, Ross Barnes, Deacon White, Harry Schafer, Tommy Beals, Jim O'Rourke, Jack Manning and George Wright.

loss to Syracuse on June 11, and another "severe whipping," 17-6 from the Crickets of Binghamton here on June 21, caused more criticism. The press speculated on why such promising individual players were failing as a team. The major reasons, they concluded, were too little or no practice and lack of system, which led to careless and ineffective play. The Rochesters' average of 15-20 errors per game would have to be cut in half, at least, if they wanted the public to continue to patronize them, the *Express* admonished.[22]

On June 22, the *Democrat* announced that the team had been taken in hand by Captain Sullivan, a city policeman and "splendid disciplinarian," who immediately ordered mandatory Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday practice sessions. All other interested clubs in the city were invited to participate.[23] Favorable results were evident immediately during an encouraging one-run defeat from the Stars of Syracuse on June 23. On July 8 and 10, they won two consecutive, well-played victories with the visiting Etnas of Detroit, Michigan. Two wins with the Golden State club of

San Francisco followed on July 20 and 21, although the California players were somewhat "jaded" from their continuous 3,000 miles of railroad travel which included 20 victories in 25 games.[24]

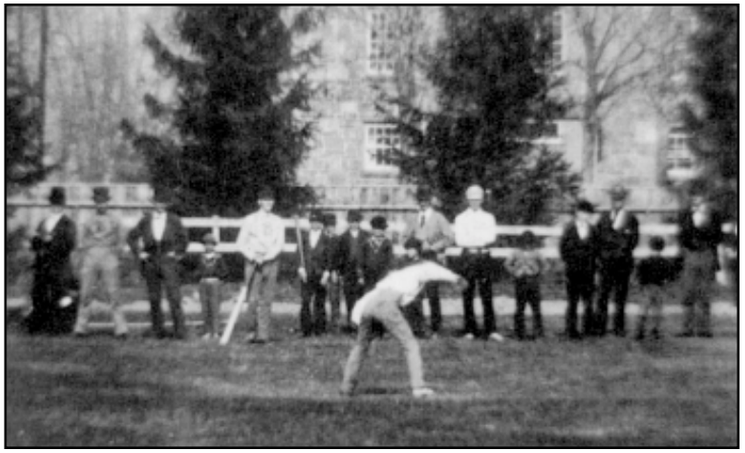
On July 22, the Rochesters beat the renowned Carbondale team visiting from Pennsylvania. Charley Wilbur's "brainwork," which now included "more tricks and dodges to deceive his batters" and "a more thorough command of the ball," was evident to all as he pitched an 11-0 "whitewash" against one of the best teams in the nation. And Hayes catching would "do honor to the Chicago White Stockings."[25] On July 26, the Rochesters won another exciting victory with the visiting Olympics of Patterson, New Jersey, another accomplished non-league professional nine. They were also treated to an example of excellent umpiring. Although umpire Flynn was a member of the visiting club, he impressed Rochester reporters by working as hard at the game as the players. The *Union and Advertiser* observed that he actually followed runners down the base lines, and the *Express* and the *Democrat* agreed that his fair rulings gave satisfaction to all.

Nicknames of 1876 Rochesters players:

Every man on the Rochester nine has a nickname, which is nearly always used instead of his right name, The *Rochester Evening Express* mentioned on July 21, 1876. Hayes is "Irish;" Wilbur, "Buckey;" Pond, "McGuckin;" McKelvey, "Mac;" Wamsley, "Snacks;" Calder, "Jack;" Lester, "Tilly" or "Mary Jane;" Kimball, "Knotty;" Flannagan, "Holey;" Seitz, "Boney" or "Dutch."

Although they were defeated by the Buckeyes from Columbus, Ohio on July 31, 1876, an excited crowd watched an impressive pitching duel between Charley Wilbur and the nationally renowned Ed "The Only" Nolan, recently acknowledged as one of the fastest pitchers of his day."[26]

The following day the Rochesters suffered a humiliating 11-8 defeat with the visiting Ithacas, which caused



A rare image of an early pitcher in action was captured at a game on the campus of Wesleyan University in 1874. According to William Curran, author of ***Strikeout, A Celebration of the Art of Pitching****, the pitcher appears to be releasing the ball according to the National Association rules – below the belt – but he is actually disregarding the mandate that the "arm swing perpendicular at the side of the body." The obvious evolution of pitching, from largely offensive to defensive began as early as 1860 when innovative pitchers like Rochester's John Stebbins and Richard Willis and others throughout the baseball fraternity found ways to bend the rules. It was not only lazy or uninformed pitchers who ignored them, but also those who realized this was necessary to the development of the game. Transcendental Graphics*

the Rochester press to reexamine the futility of amateurism. Although the Rochesters are "the best amateurs in this part of the country," the *Democrat* proclaimed on August 2, they simply don't have the kind or incentive professionals have to practice and develop perfection. Amateurs are also disadvantaged by a captain who can't exercise the same degree of authority a captain of professionals can. Furthermore, they reminded their readers, professional ball playing is a business, while amateur playing is merely a matter of honor.

"Honor will do very well for a time, but the enthusiasm which it engenders soon exhausts itself and the whole matter falls back on the bread and butter questions." Money, they concluded, is a valuable incentive for spending an optimum amount of time, energy and effort on baseball. The "best Rochester players" have declared they will play no

The Chicago White Stockings, who won the first National League championship in 1876, played in Rochester on August 31 on the grounds of the new Female Reformatory at the Western House of Refuge.

longer as amateurs against professionals, they added.[27]

On August 12, however, the *Democrat* announced the Rochesters were reorganizing as amateurs. New players included catcher - Heath (no first name found) from the Lima club and 2nd baseman Elroy Sabin, a veteran from the pre and post-Civil War Excelsiors. On August 31, after several practice games with other city clubs, they met the challenge of the returned Chicago White Stockings. The game was played before a large crowd on the grounds of the recently opened Female Reformatory, which adjoined the House of Refuge. According to the *Union and Advertiser*, the field enclosed by high walls and buildings, detracted from the freedom normally associated with field sports.[28] Although the Rochesters had hoped to avoid a "Chicago" from the club that had brought about this new term for a shutout, they lost 8-0. Still, the contest was judged as "well worth seeing" and "a credit to the new nine." [29]

Adrian Constantine Anson (later known as "Capt." or "Cap"), one of the best hitters in the 19th century and a Hall of Fame inductee in the 20th, awed the crowd with a tremendous hit "clear to the furthest wall."[30] The impressive Chicago roster also included Al Spalding, a prominent 19th century pitcher and future sporting goods magnate. Former Rochester player, John Glenn, played left field on the team that won the first National League pennant.

On September 2, the Rochesters entertained the public at what became a comical exhibition with the visiting National League St. Louis Brown Stockings, who placed third in the 1876 pennant race. When rain threatened to end the game at the top of the second inning, the St. Louis first baseman hoisted an umbrella over his head. Other players joined him with styles of play that caused the crowd to roar with laughter. The game ended with soaking wet players and an agreeable 1-1 tie after five innings.

A close 6-5, defeat against the Columbus Buckeyes on September 9 was blamed on the unjust rulings of an umpire who was a member of the Buckeye club. Other examples of

In this 1874 team portrait, Boston manager, Harry Wright, is seated at the center while pitcher, A.G. Spalding, stands at center left holding the ball.

dishonesty threw "floods of light upon the various tricks practiced by professionals to win a game after it has been fairly lost."[31] After the Rochesters received their second defeat from the Auburns on September 7, the push for professionalism intensified.

"One thing should be learned from this game," the *Express* declared the following day, "If Rochester is to have a ball club next season, it will have to be organized on the professional basis." Ithaca, Syracuse, Binghamton and Ilion are all smaller communities than Rochester, they emphasized, yet each manages to support a professional club.[32]

Local newspaper accounts offer no information regarding the state association pennant race or its outcome. On August 7, however, an article in the *Democrat* copied from the *Utica Observer*, mentioned that Central New York was rapidly developing a reputation for skilled nines, especially the Stars of Syracuse. It added that although the "crack amateur clubs" of both East and West envisioned easy victories when they entered Central New York, they often found themselves overmatched."[33] Another reprinted comment in the *Democrat*, on September 11, referred to the fact that the National League nines had also found some unbeatable foes in the Syracuse Stars and other "outside" professionals. [34]

On September 13, the *Express* announced that a well known gentleman with impressive organizational and managerial skills, and numerous baseball acquaintances, had agreed to come to Rochester and organize "a first class superior nine," (professional). Two local gentlemen had promised to raise $2,000 worth of stock for the new club.

"We shall not have a league club but shall put upon the diamond one to make league clubs look well to their business," the *Democrat* declared on September 23.[35]

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Editor's Note: This issue is the fourth in a series which chronicle early Rochester baseball from 1858 through 1877. Part Five will feature the first year of professionalism in 1877. The information in these issues will be expanded upon in a book which will be published by the author.

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Endnotes

1. The heading of a July 7, 1875 *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* article begins with the words "Rochester's Professional Nine…" However, it is apparent in other newspaper references, including those in the *Democrat*, that the team was an amateur organization.
2. *Rochester Evening Express*, July 1, 1875; also, *Ibid*, May 27, 1875
3. *Ibid.*, July 21, 1875.
4. *Ibid.*, Aug. 16, 1875, reprinted from *The New York Clipper.*
5. *Ibid.*, Sept. 24, 1875.
6. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, July 9, 1875. *Rochester Daily Union and Advertiser*, July 9, 1875, *Rochester Evening Express*, July 9, 1875.
7. *Rochester Evening Express*, Aug. 20, 1875.
8. *Ibid.*, Aug. 25, 1875.
9. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, July 23, 1875.
10. *Rochester History*, Vol. LXII, Spring 2001, No. 2, p. 7, Astifan, Priscilla, Baseball in the 19th Century, Part Two.
11. *Rochester Evening Express*, Sept. 13, 1875.
12. *Ibid.*, Sept. 17, 1875.
13. *Ibid.*, Sept. 29, 1875.
14. *Ibid.*, Oct. 13, 1875.
15. *Ibid.*, Oct. 13, 1875.
16. Harold Seymour, *Baseball the Early Years*, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1960, p. 80-85. These included the Chicago White Stockings, the Hartford Dark Blues, the St. Louis Brown Stockings, the Boston Red Caps, the Louisville Grays, the New York Mutuals, the Philadelphia Athletics, and the Cincinnati Red Stockings.
17. *Rochester Evening Express*, March 13, 1876.
18. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, April 12, 1876.
19. *Rochester Evening Express*, May 17, 1876.
20. *Rochester Evening Express*, May 12 and May 13, 1876.
21. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, May 31, 1876.
22. *Rochester Evening Express*, June 17, 1876.

23. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, June 22, 1876.
24. *Ibid.*, July 21, 1876.
25. *Rochester Evening Express*, July 24, 1876.
26. *Baseball's First Stars*, The Society for American Baseball Research, 1996, EBSCO Media, Birmingham, Alabama, p. 121. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, August 1, 1876.
27. *Ibid.*, Aug. 2, 1876.
28. *Union and Advertiser*, Sept. 1, 1876.
29. *Rochester Evening Express*, Sept. 1, 1876.
30. *Ibid.* Sept. 1, 1876.
31. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, Sept. 11, 1876.
32. *Rochester Evening Express*, Sept. 8, 1876.
33. *Democrat and Chronicle*, Aug. 7, 1876, reprinted from the *Utica Observer.*
34. *Ibid.*, September 11, 1876, reprinted from a publication referred to as *The Forest and Stream*. No date.
35. *Ibid.*, Sept. 23, 1876.

Back cover: The Rochester American Giants at the Buffalo Bison's home park, circa 1940s. Players from left to right in the bottom row include Lemuel Jeffries, Nate Harris, Walter Williams, unidentified, unidentified, unidentified, Victor Wright, John Bruce, Gilbert Taylor, Gordon Terrell, unidentified, team manager, Rocky Simmons and business manager Mr. A. Vallot . The two players in the back row are Roy Phillips and Charles Cleveland.