

Warren N. Wilbert



OPENING PITCH

Professional Baseball's
Inaugural Season,

1871

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To C. Paul Rogers, III



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Warren N. Wilbert



Prologue

Reconstruction: ordinarily a word with positive connotations. But not in 1870. Into the Spring of that year the good people of New Orleans were still struggling mightily under the privations and aftermath of the Great Rebellion, trying to restore the beauty of their fair city's parks, squares, and plazas, as well as the necessary services, facilities, and living quarters, among them the stately Pontalba Apartments in the French Quarter that helped mark this city as one of the Southland's gems. They toiled under the restrictions of scant supplies and the heavy hand of garrisoned Federal troops, scratching along as best they could, trying to refurbish their city in the years following the ravages and realities of their disastrous warfare. It was all still fresh in their minds, burning deeply in the very marrow of their beings.

Reconstruction? That was, for many, a bitter pill to swallow.

But despite deprivation and inconvenience, life in the Southland, which was in its better moments gracious, refined, and courtly, refused to stand completely still. Social events and many of the accustomed leisure-time activities found their way back into the homes, gathering places, and parks—quite possibly *because* of the very trying circumstances they endured. Youngsters and older folk alike once again pursued the growing national craze, playing ball games. Just a few years before the war began, the game of baseball debuted at the old Delachaise estate on a field that had been cleared, somewhat leveled, and marked off according to the latest National Association of Base Ball Players' specifications¹. Members of the local gentry, joined together in the Louisiana Base Ball Club, had met for the first time in 1859 to play the game. A lively start had been made.

By 1870, the game of baseball had swept throughout much of the land, having received huge impetus from its popularity among soldiers in both

Confederate and Yankee camps who, after the war, spread its “gospel” among cities and hinterland from east to west and north to south. New Orleans was among the many metropolitan centers that rekindled its initial love affair with this popular game of ball.

Out St. Charles Avenue beyond the city’s outer reaches, a rather elaborate ball park with seating capacity in the thousands hosted New Orleans teams under the aegis of the Louisiana State Base Ball Association. In April of 1870, the nation’s most famous nine visited them, working out their winter kinks in a spring training trip that booked games with six different Louisiana teams before heading up the Mississippi to Memphis. That famous visiting nine was none other than the renowned Cincinnati Red Stockings, who were riding the crest of some 59 straight wins, all racked up in an unblemished 1869 campaign. Louisiana’s finest were no match for the Ohioans, who, as most know by now, became the first team to pay *each* of its players for playing, thus becoming the nation’s truly first professional team. 1870 would start out no differently than 1869 and the famed Red Stockings continued on their winning ways, humbling the Eagles, the Pelicans, the Lone Stars, the Southernns, the Atlantics, and, in the unkindest cut of all, the Robert E. Lees by a lop-sided 24 to 4 count. Having drubbed the Lees, New Orleans was, in a manner of speaking, taken—once again—after which Harry Wright’s Northerners headed upstream to Memphis.

There was undoubtedly no cause and effect at work in those six April losses, but it might well have been a temporary beginning-of-the-end for baseball at that time, because a scant two seasons later, the game faded into nothingness in the busy port city of New Orleans. The state’s baseball association dissolved and the *Daily Picayune*, New Orleans’ newspaper, declared the game dead.

That was not the case in other parts of the land. Up the Big Muddy in Memphis, baseball was played on empty corner lots, in the parks, in back yards, and even in the streets. The city’s finest were ultimately banded together under the name of the Orientals, and they were a pretty fair country ball club. So they negotiated with Harry Wright and his Cincinnati to visit Memphis on May 4, 1870.

One year later to the day, on May 4, 1871, what we recognize today as organized baseball began its first professional season with a game featuring two “western” teams, the Cleveland Forest Citys and the Fort Wayne Kekiongas. Another game in baseball’s first professional league had been scheduled for May 4, an inaugural affair between the Washington and Philadelphia clubs, its “eastern” venue probably more appropriate for a beginning as auspi-

cious as this one, at least as far as eastern sensibilities were measured. But the weatherman turned thumbs down on that one. Rain dictated the schedule for the day, and while the Washington and Philadelphia teams stood by, the Fort Waynes and Clevelands went about initiating the land to professional baseball in its first league of teams.

What of Cincinnati? Circumstances, negotiations, losing ball games, and money (or its absence) combined to render the Cincinnati impotent—that, too, within an astonishingly short period of time—to render Mr. Wright’s fine aggregation defunct. After posting no less than 67 wins in 74 tries during the 1870 season, disgruntled fans, or cranks as they began to be called, and the town’s Big Money turned on their erstwhile heroes and the club temporarily folded. It appears that even then, losing ball games, even one, was seemingly unacceptable. Though modern fans are no doubt more charitable, it seems that “winning it all” remains the only acceptable outcome to a season of play. The more things change the more they remain the same, as the wise old sage once said!

Harry Wright was not one to sit idly by. Cincinnati’s *major domo* had already made arrangements with Boston’s professionally minded to move there, having, like Daniel, seen the handwriting on the wall. But he would not make the move alone. Harry’s brother George and two other key Red Stockings would accompany him, donning the red hose in a different city for 1871’s season. Nor did Harry Wright stop there. From Rockford’s Forest City club of 1870, he engaged two who would be among the new professional league’s brightest stars, Al Spalding and Ross Barnes. Mr. Wright the elder, formerly a cricketer extraordinaire, would now become baseball’s leader, manager, and spokesman extraordinaire, and to such an extent that he was among the first inductees into baseball’s shrine of immortality, the Hall of Fame.

And what of New Orleans and Memphis and hundreds of other cities and hamlets from sea to shining sea? Today, the number participating in our national pastime is legion, and these cities, like so many others, support baseball in youth leagues, amateur, semi-professional, and professional associations that engage huge numbers of their more youthful population. And that is not all. Throughout this land and others, professional baseball as we know it bids fair to become a worldwide sport, alive and well, despite some of the almost inevitable evils that attach to monied athletic endeavors. The birth of professional baseball in the boom and bustle of the late 1860s and ’70s, an era of expanding leisure and entrepreneurial derring-do, was inevitable. It was not without trial and error and its story is not really idyllic. Its progress

was marred with greed, mismanagement, and fearsome battles for control. But there is another side, equally forceful and not a little romantic: professional baseball's first year, 1871, was also a time of growth and often sheer delight, a time of discovery that captured the imagination and hearts of players and aficionados who used what few spare monies they possessed to pay their way into ball parks to see their favorites play a game on the greensward.

However sudden or even improbable the organization of a professional baseball league might have seemed to those who had been involved in its inner circle of management and administration, the movement of the game toward professionalism was well nigh irresistible. That the best the game had to offer would compete against one another regularly was both a predictable and logical outgrowth of the game's development. Those who followed the games, the players, and the newspaper accounts of the newly born National Association of Professional Base Ball Players, which came to life in the well-documented meeting at Collier's Cafe on Broadway and 13th in New York, took the professional game to heart seriously, demanding skilled play and winning teams. Fierce civic pride and outright idolization of local heroes had driven their support of what had become The National Game years before. And truth be told, paid professionals were part of the so-called amateur scene years before Cincinnati's first all-pro team took the field in 1869.

Neither New Orleans nor Memphis nor even Cincinnati were a part of baseball's first professional league. Those who met in New York on that raw, late winter day in 1871 to form the new association came from places steeped in the history, development, and popularity of the national pastime, places like Brooklyn, Philadelphia, and Washington. But there were others, more or less Johnny-Come-Latelys to the baseball scenario. For example, there were those who came from what would have been considered a far northwestern outpost at the time. These would be representatives from tiny Rockford, Illinois. Then too, there were representatives from Fort Wayne, Indiana, located at the juncture of three rivers and just growing into townhood with a population of less than 20,000 in 1871. Fort Wayne sent the Kekionga Club's officials to represent the Summit City. Up the Hudson River in Troy, just across from Albany, New York state's capital, where baseball was a growing obsession, the good burghers felt that a team from their town ought to be represented in the new league. So their officials were on hand at Collier's. The representatives of these three cities anted up the \$10 (yes, that's right, a paltry \$10) registration fee and their franchises were welcomed into the freshly minted National Association along with the Washington Olympians, Philadelphia's Athletics, the New York Mutuals, Harry Wright's Boston Red

Stockings, The Cleveland Forest Citys, and the well-heeled Chicago White Stockings. The Washington Nationals club also sent officials to this meeting but they declined to join the new association. And finally, the Eckfords, one of the nation's better baseball clubs dating back to the 1850s attended that meeting, as well, but balked at the \$10 franchise fee, though they would be designated as Fort Wayne's replacement later in the summer of 1871 when the Kekiongas folded.

So they set sail, did those nine intrepid teams, arranging to meet one another during the course of the 1871 season. Indeed, way back there in 1871 there was something new on the face of the planet: a fully professional league of teams that endeavored to carry the national game into the metropolitan centers, smaller towns, and countryside of the great American expanse.

In the chapters ahead, the story of America's first venture into professional athletics unfolds through the teams, games, and events that played such a vital part, both on and off the field of play, in its birth and infancy. That it would one day have grown to gargantuan proportions—virtually a sports industry based on “pay for play”—would simply have been beyond the realm of imagination back in 1871. But that year was the “Genesis” of it all. That interesting slice of Americana awaits your attention. . . .

Note

1. Notice that the word *baseball* is divided in the title National Association of Base Ball Players. The word commonly used today is spelled *baseball*, as one word. Until early in the 20th century (as was the case during the timeframe of this book), the word was spelled *base ball*. Throughout this book, *baseball* is spelled as one word, except for such titles as National Association of Base Ball Players.

CHAPTER ONE



The Eckfords: Link to the Past

Today, Brooklyn is a part of New York City, adding some two and a half million to the Big Apple's population. Annexed in 1898 and dubbed "The Great Mistake" by writer Peter Hamill, the borough was, at one time, not only a home for thousands of Irish and German immigrants, but it was one of America's great commercial metropolises. The "City of Churches," as it came to be known, was also recognized already during the 1850s and '60s as a hotbed for the new game that was catching on up and down the Eastern Seaboard.

That game was, of course, baseball, and the hard working residents of the Flatbush, Williamsburg, and Bedford areas of the city played it with a verve that made it a spawning ground for great ball players during the game's early years. Brooklyn's ball players played at a championship level, whether against New Yorkers, Philadelphians, or any other city's top club. Ball parks sprung up throughout the city and some of them were among the best the country had to offer. The better ones, like the Union Grounds and the Capotiline Grounds, were often filled to overflowing with fans who took every possible opportunity to see their heroes in action. Baseball was indeed big in Brooklyn. By the mid 1860s, several of its clubs were declared champions among teams that had joined together in forming the National Association of Base Ball Players. Representing fraternal and other organizations, these teams were formed from among the membership of the club to which they belonged, hence the name "ball club," used to this very day.

By the late 1860s, many of these clubs had begun to pay key players to play in order to ensure continuing success. The Pandora's box had been opened and play for pay became a part of the game. Those with the resources to stay ahead of the game simply opened their pocketbooks and hired, in one

way or another, the best players available. By 1869, Cincinnati's team made no pretense about its professional intentions. Led by Harry and George Wright, two of baseball's premier pioneers, the Red Stockings put a professional player at every position on the diamond, thus fielding baseball's first fully professional team. Part amateur and part professional, the National Association of Base Ball Players struggled through another season of play in 1870 before seething discontent on the part of both amateurs *and* pros turned to outright abandonment on the part of enough clubs from the old National Association to make the formation of a new and totally professional association, or league, thinkable, if not inevitable. And that in fact happened on March 14, 1871.

Now it just so happens that there was no entry from Brooklyn in the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players (referred to hereafter in abbreviated form as either National Association or simply NA), as previously explained. Though Brooklyn's Eckfords were professionalized, their uncertainty about the viability of a new and entirely professional league caused them to pass on the opportunity to join the other nine entries. Further, an entry fee, though miniscule even then, seemed to displease them. In any case, the Eckfords would be heard from before the 1871 season was history, and they would continue to play against professional teams that summer, and play acceptably against them.

The Eckfords, thus, represent a strong link between those bygone days of pristine amateurism, with its competition among gentlemen who were minded to play the game for sheer enjoyment without too much regard for winning or losing, and the burgeoning professionalism that changed the entire scheme of things. By 1871, the Elysian Field days were fading into a distant past and a new era had debuted, however disquieting that might have been to the Cartwrights and Chadwicks¹ of those pioneering years in the history of the game.

But there was no turning back. Amateur baseball and professional baseball had parted ways and both would go on, but the clubs, organizations, and various federations of teams would now give way to a new order of things.

Brooklyn's Eckford Club, successful, prestigious in matters baseball, and a national champion in years past, with respect to 1871 and its trail-blazing events, merits a longer look, standing as it did at the threshold of professional baseball's first season. Forthwith, a look, then, at this team as the first among the members of baseball's first all-pro league, even though it did not play a single game in that league, followed by a review of the teams in the league that did.

During the 1850s, a group of mechanics and shipwrights who worked on the docks in Brooklyn formed a baseball club and called it the Eckfords in honor of Henry Eckford, a Brooklyn shipbuilder. Blue-collar types, the young men whose baseball ardor prompted them to band together, were of a different sort than many of their predecessors and rivals. They sensed from the outset that their command of the game might not be up to the sophistication of the gentried clubs who had more time to practice and who had been playing together for some time. So they made their moments together count, and on Tuesday afternoons, a time they set aside during their workweek, they met at convenient places in the parks to get themselves into the kind of shape that would enable them to engage other clubs for an afternoon and evening of competition and camaraderie.

Their first order of business, and for them a most pleasant business, was to play the game among their own Eckford membership. They brought what little equipment they had, chose sides from among those on hand, and “had at it.”

This is what an inning or two might have been like as they played, 1850s’ style, a time during which they gradually refined their baseball skills and made quite a reputation for themselves, soon ranking among the elite baseball clubs of the era. (Note in the fictional account that follows some of the terms and phrases, with modern equivalents in parenthesis.)

The match (game) commenced with nine of the Eckford membership arrayed in the various positions afield, basemen standing astride or near bases positioned approximately 90 feet apart, anchored by pegs, and with scouts (outfielders) stationed at each of the three outfield positions. The behind (catcher) took up a spot about 20 feet behind the striker (batter) and the hurler was positioned some 15 yards away from the striker. A diamond was etched into the grass where baselines were worn thin by constant use to provide the semblance of a line between an embedded home plate and the first base, 90 feet away. A hurler’s box was marked off, drawn at right angles from the home plate (a square of partially buried metal or stone) to the second base. One of the Eckfords was usually assigned to reserve such a diamond available at one of the parks for practice sessions.

On this particular practice day in early Spring we might suppose that 15 or 16 hands (players) were able to make it. The Eckford club members would simply shift around to man the defensive positions to keep the game moving, the strikers numbering as many left over, and with one of their number designated as the umpire for an inning at a time.

There would have been the usual number of safe hits, but let’s also suppose that on this occasion the club members turned in a number of peaches (outstanding

plays), holding down the aces (runs scored), with all hands pretty well pleased that their game was coming along nicely. That would also encourage them to take on teams like the Atlantics, the Mutuels, the Unions of Morrisania which was also in nearby New York, Philadelphia's Keystones, or the Newark club, among others, all of whom would be stiff competition for whip flag (championship) honors.

After four or five innings of practice play, hurlers were changed and a few more innings might have been played before heading to a nearby pub for an ale or a tankard of beer and good natured exchanges about the afternoon's workout.

By autumn of 1865, when hostilities had finally ceased between South and North, strong nines, without fear of interruption because of conscriptions or warfare, played through a successful summer, their matches attended by thousands of cranks (fans) and other bystanders. One of the teams, the Atlantics, had vanquished 13 adversaries (other teams) consecutively. The Eckfords would surely have taken note of that.

So a match was actually arranged between the Eckfords and Atlantics on September 21, and it was a good one, the Atlantics emerging with their 14th consecutive win en route to an undefeated 1865 season and a national championship that was paced by well-known national stars like Joe Start, Johnny Chapman, Dicky Pearce, and Charles Smith, a mighty foursome during vintage baseball's glory days.

And the Eckfords? During 1865, they played 14 games, winning eight. With a slightly less-able cast of players behind him, George Zettlein, the Eckfords' star hurler who was also known as "The Charmer," was not as effective as he would be in the new National Association of Professional Base Ball Players a few years later. Charlie Mills, one of the great catchers during those years and scout (outfielder) Marty Swandell were also star players. Swandell, who enjoyed a long career, was with the second of the Eckfords' two consecutive national championship teams in 1862 and '63, as well as playing the 1872 season with them when the Eckfords finally joined the National Association.

Between 1866 and 1870 the Eckfords posted these records:

1866	won 9, lost 8
1867	won 6, lost 16, tied 1
1868	won 23, lost 12
1869	won 47, lost 8
1870	won 13, lost 16, tied 1

Prior to the late 1860s, the NAPBBP, beginning in 1857, included the Eckfords among its original 16 members. That year, the Eckfords' record was but two wins against five losses, but during 1858, they won five out of six. The 1859 record was 11 and 3, and they started the 1860s with a 15 and 2 log, winning their first 14 games. Brooklyn's Eckfords had become one of baseball's elite clubs and seriously considered joining the NA for the 1871 season. They didn't, but they did play 25 games against professional teams that summer, winning 11. Two of those 11 conquests came at the expense of the Chicago White Stockings, a strong contender for the first NA crown, losing the championship to a combination of things, including the Great Chicago Fire, which literally burned them out, and a fine Philadelphian aggregation, the Athletics, which beat them 4 to 1 at Brooklyn's Union Grounds, the same field of play used so many times in the past by the Eckfords.

The Eckfords, thus, would have made a strong entry in baseball's first professional league. And when prohibitive financial losses and player defections forced the game but undermanned Fort Wayne Kekiongas to call it a day late in August, the Eckfords were summoned to fill out the season, though they were warned beforehand that their games would not count in championship play. That unattractive offer was declined, but 1872 would be a different story. In the NA's second season, the Eckfords did join but finished the season at a disheartening 3 and 26, a distant third from the bottom. It was apparent that their days of glory as one of the game's elite clubs were about over. Turning pro, after all, took some considerable doing, and the Eckfords, like many another club with lesser means and reputation during those early years of the professional game found the waters choppy enough to forewarn of outright disaster in the face of insurmountable demands for baseball park construction and upkeep and the requisite financial support that was far beyond the means most of them had at their disposal. Consequently, the Eckfords, as did teams from smaller towns and many of the clubs of the 1850s eventually settled in at a level of play best suited to their inclinations and resources. The exceptional few would move on to the professional level, there to duel with other "Big League Giants" as long as money and talent held out. And even for the behemoths among them, it would be, and remain, a risky business.

1871 was the starting point. Baseball, Brooklyn, and those many enthusiasts who were playing the game all over the country just as the Eckfords were,

began to sort themselves out, however awkwardly or crudely at first. But a start had been made.

Note

1. Alexander Cartwright, lionized by the Baseball Hall of Fame as the “Father of Modern Baseball,” by 1871, had left his earlier pioneering of the national pastime in the New York City area far behind him, championing baseball wherever he went. He organized teams and popularized the game from coast to coast and beyond. One of the first to register dismay over professionalism and the evils that soon beset the enormously popular sport, he remained true to the spirit of genteel sportsmanship and recreational play—even though he also remained active in nurturing the professional game until his death. Henry Chadwick, like Cartwright, one of baseball’s pioneering innovators whose contributions to scoring the game and reporting it in the press place him at the forefront of the game’s popularization, was more outspoken than Cartwright about his distrust and disapproval of the game’s professionalization.

CHAPTER TWO



Boss Tweed's Mutes

Biggest. Best. Most. Hub. The place where “it,” whatever that might be, and however defined, all began. Like Picadilly Circus, known to Londoners (and all the other Brits) as the Crossroads of the Empire, New York was, as its number one-minded citizens would have you know, and still is the center of everything—including the planet; Los Angeles, Boston, or Washington notwithstanding. Indeed, New York does lay a well-founded claim to enough firsts, or bests, or both, to sustain the bragging rights its folk claim. Whether it’s commerce, the arts, buildings, population, or entertainment—among the endless varieties of just about everything the Big Apple has to offer, you name it and they’ve either *had* or *have* it or in fact *are* it.

That includes baseball. It was the “New York Game,” as differentiated from the Boston or Philadelphia Game, that was the better game, and it became *the* game—its rules and style prevailing above all others. Dan Adams and Jay Carwright were the first to codify the rules for the first truly *baseball club*, the Knickerbockers. That happened in New York, where the city’s *Mercury* was the first to report a game at the St. George Cricket Club in 1853. First all-star game? What were then known as “Picked Nines,” taken from Brooklyn and New York clubs, played at the Fashion Race Course Park in 1858 (in the neighborhood of the present-day Shea Stadium) engaging in a series of games that drew upwards of 2,000 enthusiasts who paid to see the stars play—another first.

By 1862, during some of the darker days of the Civil War, the newly constructed Union Grounds diamond, seating 1,500 in the stands with a huge capacity for thousands more willing to stand around the enclosed confine’s perimeters, played host to a number of teams from the greater New York area. The enclosed park was another first. So noteworthy was this new facility,

with its horseshoe-shaped, single-decked grandstand, that the *New York Clipper* featured a drawing of the place in its September 12, 1862 edition. That the game was actually played in Brooklyn mattered little. Let's not be picky here. It was all New York, and, by the turn of the century, Flatbush, the New York name that identified Brooklynites, would be a part of The City anyway.

In this context of firsts and leading the way, one cannot help but add the Collier's Inn meeting on March 17, 1871, where the National Association was organized, giving birth to America's first professional baseball league. New York base ball and the city were recognized as a pivot point where "big things" happened and were done.

Thus it was that the ten representative clubs met in New York. Five years later, when the NA had outlived its usefulness and was mercifully consigned to history, New York was again the place where moguls and chieftans met to hammer out the new agreements and arrangements that ushered in the next era of professional ball, banding together eight cities in a National League, the same circuit that today features 14 cities spread across the expanse of the contiguous 48.

In 1871, New York, with its Mutuals baseball team and a host of other ball clubs that were also wholly professional, wholly amateur, or still others partially comprised of both, was a metropolis exploding in population (bordering on one million people), throbbing with commercial, cultural, recreational, and entertainment endeavors. Its streets were abristle with carriages, varied transportation systems, and tangled traffic that was sometimes chaotic and, at other times, downright life-threatening. The various ghettos of immigrants, striving to maintain a semblance of "old country," were well established, a ployplot of nationalities. It took a strong city government to hold all of that together and, beyond that, to provide the wherewithal to enable people to get to where they wanted to go or to spend what few leisure hours they had in places of entertainment or in the parks.

Just as America's Gilded Age was beginning to crest, New York (and baseball) came roaring to the foreground, commanding national, as well as international notoriety, rivaling the European capitals. In the 1860s and into the '70s, New York was under the control of bossman William Marcy Tweed, celebrated as The King among city bosses. He held the dubious distinction of being the most perverse and wicked among them all when it came to matters of finances, patronage, payoffs, and tight-fisted control of political and city machinery. But despite widespread graft and Tweed's mafia-like grip on the city's fortunes, New York was already in the vanguard of leading world cen-

ters, a mecca for everything from artists and artisans to inventors, architects, entertainers, and places of entertainment, such as theaters, amusement parks, art galleries, and a growing number of baseball establishments, complete with most of the basic facilities fans would today expect to see at the ball park.

The story of the Mutuals¹ (Mutes, as they were popularly known among their followers) goes back to 1858 when they played their first of an even dozen games against the New York Monuments, drubbing them by a 70 to 13 score. That was the first of 11 straight victories during the summer before finally dropping their last game to the New York Empires 37-22 in mid-October. The loss to the Empires, one of the five New York-based teams on their schedule, came after they had squeezed an 18-17 thriller out of their previous match with the Empires. Their inaugural season was, all things considered, a huge success, as they fashioned the best win-loss percentage among active teams in the NA's first season of play.

By 1870, the Mutes had posted the seasonal records shown on p. 10.

By 1870, professionalism within the ranks of the baseball-minded was commonplace and Boss Tweed's Mutuals were one of the more prominent clubs, having arranged a schedule that included the best of the pro teams East and West (*West*, at the time, meaning bounded in the west by the Mississippi), along with the elite of the non-professional or partly professional clubs remaining in the country. As the 1870s unfolded, it was already necessary to visit Philadelphia to Baltimore or Boston, and, above all, New York, if a club wanted to compete with the best. Ah yes, there were indeed teams that were making it their business to play on an even footing with the Eastern clubs, principally those on the Western horizon, like St. Louis and Chicago, and, for the New Yorkers, that was something to keep an eye on. Then, too, there were those pesky little places like Rockford, Illinois, and Fort Wayne, Indiana, along with the Clevelands and Pittsburghs and Cincinnati's of the nation's interior. All of these places and many more sported clubs and town teams that had been formed in growing numbers beyond the Mississippi River, as well, and were proof positive of the grip the game had on America. Indeed, by 1870, it was America's Game, a national pastime.

That might have been well and good, but in New York the Tweed forces had been hard at work for some years already, providing payment for the Mutuals' players in the offices of the city coroner and in the street-cleaning department to see to it that it was the best team money could buy, that is to say the city's money, would be found in New York. A \$30,000 investment during Tweed's tenure, or one should say before he was roused from office

	Won	Lost	Tied
1859	3	5	0
1860	1	8	2
1861	8	2	0
1862	8	5	0
1863	10	4	0
1864	20	3*	0
1865	12	4	0
1866	10	2	0
1867	23	6	1**
1868	31	10	0+
1869	36	16	0+ +

* Two of the Mutuals' losses were to Brooklyn's Atlantics in 1864 and the Mutes bowed to the Atlantics twice more during each of the next two seasons.

** The 30-match schedule included Philadelphia, Washington, and other teams outside the New York metropolitan area. The Mutuals once again lost their two matches with the Atlantics.

+ The Atlantics beat the Mutes for the seventh straight time on August 17 by the narrow margin of 12-11, but on October 12 the string was broken with a close 25-22 victory. In the rubber match for the season the Mutuals were victorious 28-17.

+ + In games against professional teams the Mutuals won 11 and lost 15. The 1869 schedule featured games against Boston, Lansingburgh, New York (Albany area), and Cincinnati, to whom they lost on June 15, 4 to 2, to give the Red Stockings their most competitive game during their legendary all-victorious season.

on charges of embezzlement, misappropriation of city funds, and other illegalities, stood behind those New Yorkers clad in their high-collared uniforms, pillbox caps, and green stockings.

Unfortunately, Boss Tweed and his minions weren't the only problem bedeviling the newly organized National Association. Baseball lost no time, nor did its fandom, in seizing on the opportunities offered by the competition between top-drawer teams or others of lesser caliber, for that matter. Gambling rivaled the popularity of the games themselves, both players and fans placing bets on outcomes as well as the "play within the play." It was a widespread occurrence that drew the sustained and diligent attention of a far different class of people than the high-collared, more-sophisticated citizens who had originally sought the amusement and companionship of like-minded enthusiasts. A baser, more earthy element appeared on the scene, quite willing to take over the whole operation while often setting up shop in

places that were actually set aside in grandstands or other convenient places inside ball parks, not only in the bigger cities, but throughout the land, wherever the game was played. Nor did the sale of liquor within the confines of the ball park as well as across the street from the park itself, help. By the 1870s, pious mothers were convinced that the name of the game was boozing and rowdyism, not baseball. Many of them identified the national pastime as the former and absolutely forbade their sons (and especially their daughters) to become involved with the game in any way. And that sentiment echoed down through the years into the 20th century without letup.

As the player pool began to shift out of the more refined atmosphere of the prestigious residential areas of the big cities, finding its way into the core of the city, the makeup and mindset of the players changed with it. In time, most had become tough-minded, highly competitive, coarser, and hardly committed to the social graces. And they took on their adversaries with a vengeance. That kind of playing mentality, combined with the betting that so often accompanied the games, and the carousing and rowdyism of the players, often turned games into a blood-letting struggle that swept players, umpires, and fans into its fury. The ball park was no ballroom.

There were notable exceptions among the players. The Wright brothers Harry and George, Captain Jimmy Wood of the Chicago team, the Mutes' outfielder Dave Egler, Deacon White, Al Spalding, the star shortstop Davey Force, and Ezra Sutton were among those who stood out as exemplary role models. But the game that had become the national pastime launched its first professional league amid circumstances and playing personnel that could only bode for a rocky, problematic future. That plague darkened its doorstep from the outset.

And how did the New York Mutuals make their way through their initial exposure to professional baseball's vagaries and its first season? It is, of course, not possible to know who among the Mutes was associated in some way with the more unsavory element of either the Tweed Ring, the gambling cartels, or even associated with Boss Tweed himself. It is more than plausible to assume that Dave Egler, Dicky Pearce, "Old Reliable" Joe Start, or "Old Fergy" Bob Ferguson, his bombastic and explosive temper notwithstanding, were among the Mutuals who kept their minds on the game and played around or through the heavy gambling traffic swirling around them.

The supposition that gambling directly affected the outcome of games the Mutes played, especially those that were billed as whip flag contests, seems, on the other hand, well founded inasmuch as a disastrous streak of midseason losses cost the club its leadership in the race. And the bothersome question

remains: how many and who among the New York ball club could actually be identified culpable of throwing games? Were first baseman Start, center fielder Egger, shortstop Pearce, or third baseman Ferguson blameless on all counts? Each of them, manning important positions, could easily have made a miscue purposely in situations difficult to detect had it been their intention. Neither charges nor the slightest scrap of evidence ever surfaced.

But for those of you who just might be indifferent to such proceedings or have shrugged your shoulders, recognizing that the element of chance and “cast lots” has been around long enough for all of us to realize that it will be ever thus, here is a little twist from the pen of the eminent baseball historian John Thorn:

I'd like to put in a few words for corruption. Corruption is a great, great force in baseball . . . and a positive force. If we hadn't had gambling in baseball, we never would have had professionalism in baseball. We never would have had an ascent of skill within the 20 years that it took from a boy's game that can be played as a spectator sport, that made it worthy of the attention of adults.²

Throughout the history of the game, the players have captured the interest and adoration of the public. Behind-the-scenes individuals, as well as media personnel and city officials, all come in for their share of attention from time to time. But in the day-to-day whirligig of seasonal play, it's the players whose exploits and surpassing skills rivet our attention on the game. 1871 was not that different. And the Mutuels were in the eye of New Yorkers, some of whom regularly made the trip to the Union Grounds in Brooklyn to see them play. They groused over the price of admission, which steadily rose from one thin dime to fifty cents a ticket for the important series matches, as was the case in other cities, but they came in numbers, between 2,000 and 6,000 on paid head counts, sitting in the grandstands, on planking, or standing wherever they could—on and off the field of play.

The Mutuels, just like most other clubs, made it through the NA schedule with 11 hardy young men. That number was deemed sufficient to carry a club through the season because substitutions were rare. Injuries that prevented a player from finishing a game were about the only cause for inserting a different player into the lineup. At that, one of the Mutuels played in only one game during the 1871 season, the game that closed out New York's National Association season in mid-October, making the Mutes essentially a ten-player squad. Frank Fleet was that Mutes one-gamer, filling in for Rynie

Wolters, who had pitched every other NA game on the New York slate that year. Fleet was the pitcher of record in a 21 to 7 loss at the hands of the Philadelphia Athletics, who had beaten the Mutuels in their season match play, three games out of five, and were on their way to the big championship match with Chicago's White Stockings two weeks later.

The Mutes, who, for the 1871 season, had changed from their customary green stockings to black, wound up the NA's first campaign eight games behind Philadelphia's champions with a 16-17 record, good for a fourth-place finish in the standings. There are those now who have since taken a longer look at all the available information, and there were those back then who didn't think it should have ended that way. This was a first-place team that stormed to an early lead, winning eight of its first nine ball games in championship play. En route, they snuffed out seven of the other eight teams in the league before succumbing, surprisingly, to Fort Wayne's Kekiongas at the Union Grounds by a 5 to 3 count, a defeat they avenged two days later on the strength of Rynie Wolters' 13 to 0 shutout over the diminutive young Kekionga hurler, Bobby Mathews.

The Mutuels followed up their opening surge with a disastrous run of but two victories in the next 11 games. After losing to the Athletics on June 29, they played seven of the next 10 on the road, winning but one of them. That stretch broke the back of whatever championship hopes they might have been harboring. The complete record follows.

On May 25, the Mutuels opened their 1871 NA season at Union Grounds with a match against the Troy Haymakers, a club they had disposed of rather handily just a week before at Troy. Not so on this day. They took a 25-10 humbling at the hands of the hard-striking Haymakers, evening their record at 1-1. During the next four tilts, they polished off Rockford's Forest Citys twice, the Chicago White Stockings, and then the Boston Red Stockings at the South End Grounds in Beantown in convincing 9 to 3 fashion. After their first six encounters, their record on June 18 was at 5 and 1 and they were in first place. Behind the Mutuels, Chicago's Whites, as they were often called, had won 7 of their first 10 games, and then came four clubs with sub-.500 records. Cleveland, at 4 and 6, Rockford, 4 and 8, and then Troy with a 3 and 6 record were all under the break-even mark at this early point in the season. Rockford would eventually lose four of their victories, including two against Philadelphia, and one each against Washington and Fort Wayne, when the NA's special committee investigating Scott Hastings, Rockford's captain, declared him an ineligible player. Four of Rockford's wins were

Figure 2.1

Date	Against	W/L/Score	Record	NY Pitcher	Opp. Pitcher
May 18	at Troy	W 14-3	1-0	Wolters	McMullin
May 25	vs. Troy	L 25-10	1-1	Wolters	McMullin
June 1	vs. Rockford	W 7-3	2-1	Wolters	Fisher
June 5	vs. Chicago	W 8-5	3-1	Wolters	Zettlein
June 14	vs. Rockford	W 12-4	4-1	Wolters	Fisher
June 17	at Boston	W 9-3	5-1	Wolters	Spalding
June 19	vs. Cleveland	W 10-6	6-1	Wolters	Pratt
June 20	at Philadelphia	W 8-6	7-1	Wolters	McBride
June 22	vs. Washington	W 12-4	8-1	Wolters	Brainard
June 26	vs. Ft. Wayne	L 5-3	8-2	Wolters	Mathews
June 28	vs. Ft. Wayne	W 13-0	9-2	Wolters	Mathews
June 29	vs. Philadelphia	L 5-4	9-3	Wolters	McBride
July 3	at Troy	L 37-16	9-4	Wolters	McMullin
July 6*	vs. Cleveland	L 6-5	9-5	Wolters	Pratt
July 10	at Washington	L 16-13	9-6	Wolters	Brainard
July 13	vs. Troy	L 9-7	9-7	Wolters	McMullin
July 17	vs. Washington	W 16-9	10-7	Wolters	Brainard
July 26	at Ft. Wayne	W 12-9	11-7	Wolters	Mathews
July 28	at Chicago	L 17-6	11-8	Wolters	Zettlein
July 31	at Rockford	L 18-5	11-9	Wolters	Fisher
August 1	at Chicago	L 15-4	11-10	Wolters	Zettlein
August 3	at Cleveland	L 10-5	11-11	Wolters	Pratt
August 21	vs. Rockford	W 6-5	12-11	Wolters	Fisher
August 22	vs. Boston	W 15-11	13-11	Wolters	Spalding
August 28	vs. Chicago	L 6-4	13-12	Wolters	Zettlein
September 2	at Philadelphia	L 9-8	13-13	Wolters	Bechtel
September 4	vs. Philadelphia	W 18-7	14-13	Wolters	Bechtel
September 6	vs. Cleveland	W 11-8	15-13	Wolters	Pratt
September 13	vs. Cleveland	L 6-5	15-14	Wolters	Pratt
September 16	at Boston	L 9-7	15-15	Wolters	Spalding
September 22	vs. Washington	W 12-2	16-15	Wolters	Brainard
October 4	at Boston	L 13-10	16-16	Wolters	Spalding
October 18	at Philadelphia	L 21-7	16-17	Fleet	McBride

* On July 8, 1871, *The New York Times* published an expose of the Tweed Ring during a five-game losing streak. The *Times'* revelations cracked open Tweed's record of corruption in the conduct of the city's affairs, including his majority control of the New York club and the team's unlikely losses to Troy, Cleveland, and Washington.

declared forfeits and resulted in victories for the three teams involved. Philadelphia (beaten twice by Rockford) was the most fortunate benefactor when the committee handed down its decision later in the year, the additional two victories putting them in command of the NA race.

As spring turned to summer, the Mutuels hosted Cleveland at Brooklyn's Union Grounds, drawing better than 3,000 to see their game on June 19.

The ball park had been the scene of vintage baseball's most historic engagements, and a word or two about that famous diamond may well be in order.

Ranked as one of the very best in baseball venues, the Union Grounds was the home of the Mutes throughout their National Association years. Located in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn at the corners of what today are Macy, Lee, and Ruedge Avenues, the park was enclosed, seating at least 3,000 fans. Improvements in 1871 were made by New York's enterprising Bill Cammeyer, who had been the ball park's owner and chief administrator since the 1860s. The enclosure provided what seemed like acres of room for balls to find their way to far-flung reaches of more than 500 feet in the outfield, though down the foul lines it was possible for a solid hitter like Joe Start to put one out of sight over the 350-foot right-field fencing. The Mutuals managed only one home run all season in its NA games and although it was hit by Start, known as "Old Reliable," it wasn't hit out of the spacious Union Grounds. What swelled attendance figures was the mass of fans that stood along foul lines and along the outfield fencing. As if that weren't enough, improvised seating, extending above the height of the fences that enclosed the park, was erected outside of it, providing seating for those who were content to look on from the outside. That was the case in the first Chicago–Mutuals meeting of the season.

On June 19, New Yorkers turned out in huge numbers to see the Mutuals take on the Forest Citys of Cleveland, then on its first eastern swing of the season. They were led by "Uncle Al" Pratt, aka "The Five Inning Wonder;" Deacon White, their catcher, and one of the best fielders in the NA; and a swift outfielding unit of Art Allison, Charley Pabor, and Elmer White. All of them, including their hard-hitting third baseman, Ezra Sutton, were experienced pros. *The New York Times* edition of June 20, 1871, commented:

Fully 3,000 people were gathered on the Union Grounds yesterday to witness the first game of the championship series between the Forest City nine of Cleveland and the champion Mutuals of this City, the fine weather and the prospect of a skillful display on the field attracting the largest crowd present at a match this season. The charge of admission up to the time of commencing play was half a dollar, and at that price nearly every seat was occupied. After the game had progressed some three or four innings, spectators were admitted at half-price at "the lower gate of the grounds. The auctioneer sold the pools on the game before the announcement, the bids being \$25 for the Mutuals and \$14 for the Cleveland. But most of the betting was on the result of each innings³ of the game as played, the sports not investing largely on the result.

The match (game) between Cleveland and New York was the first of a best three of five series, called a championship series, each team in the NA agreed to play against the other teams in the league. These championship series games were the ones that counted in the standings even though the others, called exhibitions, might also be played against semi-pro, amateur, or other professional teams during the course of the season. In March of 1871 at the NA's organizational meeting, it was agreed by all present that this arrangement would allow for sufficient exposure by each team against others in the league, assuring each of them at least 40 games that would count toward the championship whip flag honors for the season.

In the June 19 encounter, the Mutuels, having chosen to hit first, stepped off to a 3 to 0 lead, added a pair of aces (runs) in the fifth frame and three more in the seventh to establish an 8-2 lead. There was but a single earned run in the game (no gloves were worn and the playing field was often uneven and pebbly, causing many errors), that by the Forest City club. But the Clevelanders committed 12 miscues and it cost them the game. The Mutuels' Dick Higham and Bob Ferguson, and Charley Pabor of Cleveland each had a pair of safe blows, the Mutes garnering 10 in all. One other *New York Times* comment on the game: "The game was impartially but leniently umpired. [The umpire was Marty Swandell, a veteran ball player who chose not to play in the NA in 1871 but joined Brooklyn's Eckfords for the 1872 season], and it was played in a friendly spirit." It was customary to report on the umpiring, commenting on the judgment and control of the game by the official chosen by the visiting team from a list of five submitted by the home team.

Figure 2.2 shows *The New York Times* box score kept by Henry Chadwick.

The Mutes' winning ways weren't yet done. After downing Cleveland, they invaded Philadelphia, winning 8 to 6, and then completed their early season run with a 12 to 4 conquest of the Washington Olympics at Union Grounds on June 22. That upped their record to 8 and 1 and they found themselves perched atop the standings. The two-game series with Fort Wayne wound up in a split and that was the end of the joy ride. After their magnificent 9 and 2 start, they foundered, finishing the season with but another seven wins against 15 losses to wind up at 16 and 17, far off the flag pace and the awards they might have achieved for winning the championship. Whatever else they might have won at the betting tables will just have to remain a dark mystery.

Rynie Wolters was the winning pitcher in their last 1871 victory, evening his and the Mutes' record that point at 16 and 16. The final accounting of

Figure 2.2

Mutual	R	1B	PO	A	Cleveland	R	1B	PO	A
Pearce, s.s.	2	1	0	6	J. White, c.	0	0	9	0
Higham, 2d.b	2	2	1	0	Allison, c.f.	0	2	0	2
Start, 1st.b	2	1	9	0	Pabor, l.f.	1	2	0	0
Hatfield, l.f.	2	1	2	0	Carleton, 1st.b	1	1	9	0
Ferguson, 3d.b	1	2	4	3	Kimball, 2nd.b	1	1	3	2
Mills, c.	0	1	4	0	Pratt, p.	1	1	0	1
Egglar, c.f.	0	1	5	0	Sutton, 3d.b	0	0	2	4
Wolters, p.	0	0	0	1	E. White, r.f.	1	1	3	0
Patterson, r.f.	1	1	2	0	Bass, s.s.	1	0	1	2
Total	10	10	27	10	Total	6	8*	27	11

*The actual total of 1B (hits) listed by the *New York Times* was 3, corrected here for accuracy.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Mutual	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	2	—10
Cleveland	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	—6
Umpire:	Mr. Swandell, of the Eckford Club									
Time of Game:	2:05									
First base by Errors:	Mutual 7, Cleveland 4 times									
Runs Earned:	Mutual 0, Cleveland 1									
Total Fielding Errors:	Mutual 9, Cleveland 12									

the season showed just how invaluable he was to the New Yorkers. He led the NA in games pitched, games started, and complete games, and limited opposing hitters to a league-low .263 batting average. Wolters also tied for the league lead in shutouts with his “Chicagoing”⁴ of the Fort Wayne Kekiongas on June 28.

Further, Wolters led the NA in runs batted in with 44 and hit .370 on the season’s play, sixth high in the league. He was, far and away, New York’s most productive player.

New York’s fourth-place finish in 1871 was followed by a 34 and 20 record with two ties in 1872 in a strong National Association. As the league grew stronger, dropping and adding teams each season, the Mutuals posted a fourth-place finish in 1873 and then threatened the strongest team in the short, five-season history of the NA, the Boston Red Stockings, with a 42 and 23 record for a runner-up spot in 1874. In the NA’s last season, 1875, they finished sixth behind the dominant Boston club in a league that totaled some 13 teams before the season ended.

But the Mutes would be back at it in 1876. This time, a newly formed National League would debut with New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadel-

phia, and Cincinnati, all veteran hands at this business of leagues and professional baseball, adding Louisville, St. Louis, and Hartford to the mix, rounding out the eight charter members of the venerable old league that carried forward the national pastime under professional auspices. From the original eight, New York's Mets, a shirttail descendant of the old Mutuals, Troy's Haymakers are the "grandparents" of today's San Francisco Giants (formerly the New York Giants), Chicago's Cubs (stemming from the old White Stockings), the Philadelphia Phillies, and the Atlanta Braves (successors to the Milwaukee Braves, who had moved into Suds City from their original Boston Braves location). The Cincinnati and St. Louis franchises, associated with the professional game from its earliest beginnings, continue to field teams into baseball's third century.

It has been a long and sometimes meandering road for New York's professional ball clubs, but once they found the right combination of sound financial underpinning, astute management, and the marketing gold mine that is the Big Apple, they became a center of gravity for the Eastern Seaboard's big-league ball clubs. And the Knickerbockers, with their claim as originators of everything associated with baseball teams notwithstanding, it was the Mutuals, right out of Tammany Hall, that got it all started in 1871.

Notes

1. The name Mutuals derived from New York's Mutual Hook and Ladder Company of the city's fire department.
2. From an interview with John Thorn taken from *Baseball: An Illustrated History*, by Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1994, p. 26.
3. Innings (plural) referred to one side's time at bat, the phrasing used in this manner: The team was retired after three putouts, and they *had their innings*. It was not until the 1880s that each side's three outs were referred to more consistently as an inning (singular) for the team. "Innings" subsequently meant more than one inning of play.
4. The Mutuals had a hand in bringing the term "Chicagoed" into the 19th-century's baseball vocabulary. On July 23, 1870, they visited Chicago, playing the White Stockings at Dexter Park. That day, Wolters shut them down on three hits in a 9 to 0 blanking, much to the consternation of Chicagoans. After that humiliation, at least through the 19th century and into the Deadball Era, when a ball club scored no runs (sometimes the term was even used for individual innings), it was "Chicagoed."

CHAPTER THREE



Base Ball in the Hinterlands: The Kekiongas

During the 17th century, much of America was hotly contested territory by empire-seeking European powers like Spain, Britain, and France. Expeditionary forces poked about the broad expanse of the American continent, claiming whatever territory they could. They skirmished with Indian nations that were well established and held territorial rights to thousands of square miles sought by these same explorers, conquistadors, and army forces that had been transported to the New World.

Robert de LaSalle was an explorer of a different sort, plying the territory of the lower Great Lakes region in the 1670s. He tried to convince the Miami nation to regain its homeland from its invaders, including forces from Europe. By 1712, the Miamis had reestablished themselves throughout the Wabash Valley. Their main village, Kekionga, a sort of headquarters community for the Miamis and a fairly well-established settlement, was at the headwaters of the Maumee River in what is now the Lakeside area of Fort Wayne, Indiana. A century and a half later, Kekionga was known as Fort Wayne, a thriving little city of more than 15,000 people in the state of Indiana, which was carved out of the Northwest Territory. It was located at the juncture of three rivers, the St. Mary's and the St. Joseph, both of which flow together to form the Maumee at a cresting summit 800 feet above sea level. Hence, the city's nickname, the Summit City. During post-Civil War times, two names, Kekionga and St. Mary's, would figure prominently in the tiny community's brief baseball history.

By the early 1860s, baseball was firmly entrenched as one of the most popular recreational pastimes in Fort Wayne and in 1866 the newly formed Kekionga Club (the name was a natural for what was, at the time, an outpost

community), which also featured singing and debating during the winter months, sent its representative to the Indiana State Base Ball convention at Indianapolis, having, by then, become one of the better clubs in the tri-state area of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. Moving steadily forward, the Kekiongas ultimately took on Cincinnati's powerhouse, the Red Stockings, and though twice pounded unmercifully during the 1869 season, they were undaunted, satisfied to win their own state's championship in 1870. It was during the summer of that year that several players from the disbanded Baltimore Marylands visited Fort Wayne and were persuaded to sign contracts to play with the Kekiongas. The signing of outfielder Bill Kelly, first baseman Jim Foran, second baseman Tom Carey, and especially one of the young pitching sensations of his day, Bobby Mathews, boosted the baseball stock of the town to such an extent that the locals could hardly wait for the 1871 season to begin. Though one of the two smallest cities in the league (Rockford, at 11,049, was an even greater exception to the usual requisite of big populations needed to sustain a drawing base for professional baseball, especially then), with a population of 17,718, and though not one of the players was a local citizen, Summit City sports enthusiasts eagerly got behind their team as it readied for professional baseball's first season.

So it was that Mr. George Mayer, the secretary of the Kekionga Club, was dispatched to New York for the Collier's Inn meeting on March 17, the National Association's red-letter day. No one had told Fort Wayners that they weren't welcome, so Mr. Mayer simply made his way to the meeting, bouncing along America's fast-spreading railway network to meet up with other representatives from places unknown to Fort Wayners, like Troy, New York, along with team officials from the more populous cities. Strangely, only two other clubs beyond the nine original signees were represented at the historic meeting—the Brooklyn Eckfords, as noted previously, and a second club from Washington, the Nationals. That was an indication that, despite the many fully professional teams readying to play ball in 1871, there was no overwhelming desire, or mindset, so it seemed, that would prompt more of them to think about casting their lot with an association or league of professional teams.

Having paid the \$10 entry fee, Mayer made his way back to Fort Wayne, membership in the NA in hand, and ready to do what had to be done to get the team and a ball park ready for the season ahead. Like an Alice in baseball's new professional wonderland, he had succeeded in writing an opening chapter to one of the more unlikely stories in baseball annals, no doubt only dimly aware that the New Yorks and Bostons, et al., would be playing for

keeps and that the city was pretty much in over its head. But then too, the plucky Mayer and his followers might just have been thinking that there was a new world out there to gain and very little to lose. It mattered little what “The East” was thinking, and what was directly ahead at least at the outset must have seemed altogether enchanting, a bracing tonic for the town’s fans.

At the western edges of the city astride a loop in the St. Mary’s River was the Grand Duchess, a grandstand erected in the sylvan setting of what was formerly Camp Allen, a mustering and training ground for Indiana’s soldiers during the Civil War. After the war, when baseball took the city by storm, the Grand Duchess was erected, a magnificent, beautifully ornamented piece of vintage baseball architecture located on the grounds of Hamilton Field. A seating capacity of over 1,500, outrageously huge for the number of people one could rightfully expect to be seated considering the attendance base of the city, made it one of the larger grandstands of its day. And it would have to be nearly filled up each time the Kekiongas played in order for the Summit City franchise to keep pace with other teams in the NA. That would prove to be a tough order.

No review or story about the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players is complete without accounting for its inaugural game played in Fort Wayne on May 4, 1871. The game was just as amazing and unlikely an athletic contest, considering the year and state of baseball’s art at that time, as well as the ball park’s attractive setting near the banks of the St. Mary’s in the old fort town once called Kekionga. On that famous day in Fort Wayne’s history, a day that was typically heavy-skied and threatening of downpour at any moment, the National Association’s first game was attended by about 200 people who braved the darkened skies to journey via carriage, phaeton, on foot, or on horseback out to Hamilton Field to watch their Kekiongas. Their team was scheduled to do battle with the visiting Cleveland Forest Citys, who had quartered at the Aveline House. Pitchers for the day were to be the visitors’ Al Pratt, a veteran of several amateur and professional seasons, and the youngster from Baltimore, 19-year-old Bobby Mathews, whose famous dropping ball made him a highly effective hurler. But more on both the ball used in the NA’s 1871 games and Mathews’ pitches later. That the game wound up as it did was more than pleasantly surprising—and not only to Fort Wayners. The Kekiongas’ victory was greeted with high praise in the May 5, 1871, *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette*, especially lavish in its praise of both the visitors and the town’s underdog ball club:

We cannot praise too highly the good natured, and in every way gentlemanly conduct of our visitors. To the very last, they maintained that gentlemanly and courteous demeanor which has helped to gain for them so envious a reputation.

The umpire, Mr. Boake, gave all his decisions with promptness, and gave the greatest satisfaction to both sides, which is seldom the case with one having so difficult a duty to perform.

Our citizens had been of the opinion that our boys would be badly beaten, and when the Forest Citys were white-washed the first time, a rousing cheer was raised. The many fine plays on both sides were loudly applauded. The score was so close throughout that the excitement was intense all the time. As white-wash after white-wash resulted for the visiting club, the Fort Wayne heart grew fuller and fuller, and as the last out came it almost burst with joy. Within ten minutes after the game was finished, the good news had gone through the city like wildfire and everyone was congratulating his neighbor. Then down came the rain. The sun came out of the clouds, and a magnificent double rainbow appeared, in two perfect, brilliant arches, promising a bright and victorious future for both of the contestants on this hard fought field.

The article was followed by an inning-by-inning account and an accompanying box score. It is interesting to note that the Fort Wayne lineup presented by the *Daily Gazette* differed from that of later reports, for example, the box score presented in David Nemeč's *Great Encyclopedia of 19th-Century Major League Baseball* (Donald I. Fine Books, 1997, p. 13).

Here are the lineups:

<i>Fort Wayne Daily Gazette</i>	<i>Great Encyclopedia</i>
Williams, 3b	Selman, rf
Mathews, p	Mathews, p
Foran, 1b	Foran, 3b
Goldsmith, ss	Goldsmith, 2b
Lennon, c	Lennon, c
Carey, 2b	Carey, ss
Mincher, lf	Mincher, lf
McDermot, cf	McDermott, cf
Kelley, rf	Kelley, 1b

Fort Wayne's scorer, Mr. Wright Rockhill, seems to have been at variance with other, and possibly more accurate lineups after more research had been done. Yet, Rockhill, who was there when the game took place, reported a lineup in agreement with the *Daily Gazette's* inning-by-inning account.

In any case, the Kekiongas got off to a great start in this well-played game in which there were few errors, several fine running catches and professional baseball's first double play. The game took only two hours to play and that was fortunate because the heavens parted and the rains came no sooner had the game been completed.

The first inning put two firsts into the history book. They were the first hit, which was also the first double, by the game's leadoff hitter, Deacon White. Moments later, the first double play followed, which was also the first unassisted double play, fashioned by second baseman Tom Carey, who collared a Gene Kimball blow and then beat White, who was on his way to third base, back to second for the putout that doubled up White. It was an extraordinary start in an auspicious debut for the Keke's.

Would that the Fort Wayne story, with its full-blown potential for a Cinderella tale, could have continued apace. Not every game could have been played so well, of course, as the young men representing the city of three rivers soon found out when the White Stockings of Chicago came to town and took their measure 14 to 5. By the month of July, the grim realities of limited resources, small crowds, and losing ball games to more experienced pros began to take its toll. But during the early going of the season, the young ball club held its own surprisingly well. After their first eight NA games, the record stood at 5 and 3, though forfeit games with Rockford, a loss that was converted to a Fort Wayne victory, and Troy, which resulted in a furiously protested forfeit, were a part of that early season record. The full season log is shown in Fig. 3.1.

Though the Kekiongas had the satisfaction of winning the last two games of their shortened season, the last of which came as late as August 29, it was evident already early in July that the club's cash flow was just not up to lengthy road trips, and the smaller numbers attracted to their home games, their beautiful Grand Duchess notwithstanding, meant limited income to offset their expenses. In professional baseball's first season, it was already evident that what later became known as small-market teams would find it next to impossible to stay afloat in the world of pro sporting ventures. Fort Wayne, like so many other communities across the land, would have to content itself with cameo appearances by the "Big Leaguers" and with membership in minor leagues, be it baseball, or, in these later days, hockey or arena football.

After their early season run, the Keke's, as they were called by the home folk, hit the skids, losing nine straight National Association games between June 28 and August 11. But there were two noteworthy victories, one over the Mutuals in June, which was the last they would enjoy until their mid-

Figure 3.1

Date	Against	W/L/Score	Record	FTW Pitcher	Opp. Pitcher
May 4	vs. Cleveland	W 2-0	1-0	Mathews	Pratt
May 13	vs. Chicago	L 15-4	1-1	Mathews	Zettlein
May 15	vs. Washington	W 12-6	2-1	Mathews	Brainard
May 23	vs. Rockford	W* 17-13	3-1	Mathews	Fisher
May 26	at Cleveland	W 16-7	4-1	Mathews	Pratt
June 19	at Troy	L** 6-3	4-2	Mathews	McMullin
June 21	at Boston	L 21-0	4-3	Mathews	Spalding
June 26	at New York	W 5-3	5-3	Mathews	Wolters
June 28	at New York	L 13-0	5-4	Mathews	Wolters
July 1	at Philadelphia	L 20-3	5-5	Mathews	McBride
July 7	at Washington	L 32-12	5-6	Mathews	Brainard
July 8	at Washington	L 15-7	5-7	Mathews	Brainard
July 12	vs. Boston	L 30-9	5-8	Mathews	Spalding
July 20	vs. Philadelphia	L 26-7	5-9	Mathews	McBride
July 26	vs. New York	L 12-9	5-10	Mathews	Wolters
August 3	at Rockford	L 4-0	5-11	Mathews	Fisher
August 5	at Chicago	L 13-1	5-12	Mathews	Zettlein
August 11	vs. Cleveland	W 15-3	6-12	Mathews	Pratt
August 29	vs. Troy	W 6-4	7-12	Mathews	McMullin

*Forfeit victory to Fort Wayne

**Forfeit victory to Troy

August conquest of Cleveland. And finally, their last taste of victory came in a 6 to 4 triumph over Troy's Haymakers. The New York contest, played at the Union Grounds, was covered by the Chicago press, one imagines rather gleefully because the Mutes suffered humiliation at the hands of the Fort Wayners.

Chicago, as usual, was ready to exercise what leverage it could out of New York misfortune. Part of the *Chicago Times'* June 27 report:

The Mutuals, after defeating the Chicagos, Bostons, Athletics and Olympics, were in turn defeated by the gallant Kekionga nine of Fort Wayne, Ind, by a score of 5 to 3. That the Mutes made any runs at all is entirely due to a wild throw in the eighth innings from which they made the only runs scored by them in the game. The pitching of Mathews was simply immense, while the catching of Lennon was wonderful, not a ball or point of the game escaping either of them, and but for the error of Carey in the eighth innings the game would have "resulted in a nest egg of goose eggs for the Mutuals, on whom the betting was \$100 to \$5 with no takers before the game. The only way the Mutuals' friends could get any money out was by betting that the Mutuals would make more runs in one inning than the Kekiongas did. How they got stuck, the score of the game tells.

There are two points of interest here: a) the mention of the battery work of catcher Bill Lennon and pitcher Bobby Mathews; and b) the remarks about the odds on the game and the betting involved. Mathews and Lennon, the team's playing manager, were among the three or four best athletes in the Kekionga fold. The others, aside from hard-hitting first baseman Jim Foran and a truly gifted fielder, Wally Goldsmith, who also played every position on the diamond, were somewhat less-than-average players in professional competition. As for the odds and betting, one has to wonder why the press, universally opposed to the rampant wagering that accompanied the games, would constantly hold gambling before the public eye as if to tempt Joe Fan yet more. And if they might have reasoned that this was a way to discourage or somehow assist in eliminating what had become a commonplace at the ball parks, it certainly didn't work.

On June 19, Fort Wayne played Troy at what was known as the Bull's Head Tavern Grounds. Ahead after six innings of play by a 6 to 3 margin, the umpire (it is unclear whether his name was George Lery or Ed Tighe) called a halt to play because the ball in use was ripped and a bit ragged, having been in play since the game's first pitch. Troy's captain, Bill Craver, offered several balls, from which he invited Lennon to choose. Lennon declined on every one and when it became apparent that Fort Wayne would not make a selection, thus refusing to resume play, the umpire ruled the game a forfeit to Troy. And so the ruling remained even after an appeal to a judiciary committee of the league was lodged. The umpire was given permission by the rules governing play to make a ruling according to his own best judgment. Subsequently, the Kekiongas went on to Boston, where, still out of sorts over their Troy experience, and staring the mighty Bostons in the face, they went down to one of the four white-washings in which they were involved by an embarrassing 21 to nothing thrashing. Curiously, those four shutouts were the NA's only ones during the 1871 season.

Both players and members of Fort Wayne's Board of Directors were fairly certain by the first of August that the end of their NA season was imminent. That the end would actually come after their game on August 29 at Hamilton Field with Troy was probably unknown to the players, but Mathews, Goldsmith, and Foran did have their bags packed, having not been paid for some time prior to the Troy game. But because the Haymaker's game would no doubt bring back memories of their earlier forfeiture, they pulled on their uniforms to do battle and settle a score or two. Bill Lennon was already gone, having given way to Harry Deane, who was also named the new field manager. Other new names in the lineup included Hank Kohler, Jim Hallinan,

and catcher Joe Quinn, having replaced the likes of Sam Armstrong, Frank Selman, and Eddie Mincher.

The last hurrah was well played and Mathews pitched “remark(ably) in every respect, being swift, accurate and very difficult to master,” according to the *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette’s* account on August 30, 1871. He also led the Kekionga’s attack with three hits, driving home two in the sixth frame that put his team back in the lead 5 to 4. Adding another run in the eighth, they upped the final tally to 6 to 4, a most satisfying conclusion for them to *Le Affair Troy*. The *Gazette’s* box of the game is shown in Fig. 3.2.

With the 6 to 4 win, professional baseball’s first failed franchise wound up

Figure 3.2

	Fort Wayne Kekiongas					Troy Haymakers					
	R	1B	TB	PO	A	R	1B	TB	PO	A	
Hallinan	1	1	1	2	2	McGeary	0	0	0	3	2
Carey	0	0	0	1	0	York	0	0	0	2	1
Goldsmith	0	2	2	3	1	Flowers	1	3	4	1	3
Kohler	0	1	2	6	0	Flynn	0	0	0	11	2
Foran	1	1	2	2	0	King	1	1	1	1	0
Quinn	3	0	0	3	3	McMullen	1	1	1	2	2
Mathews	1	3	4	1	3	Pike	1	0	0	2	0
Armstrong	0	1	2	4	0	Bellan	0	0	0	1	1
Kelley	0	0	0	5	0	Craver	0	1	2	3	2
Total	6	9	13	27	9	Total	4	6	8	27	13

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Troy Haymakers	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	—4
Fort Wayne Kekiongas	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	—6

Bases On Errors	Kekiongas 3, Haymakers 3
Total Fielding Errors	Haymakers 6, Kekiongas 5
Left On Bases	Kekiongas: Goldsmith, Kohler, Total 2 Haymakers: Flowers, Total 1
Called Balls	McMullen 11, Mathews 3
Passed Balls	McGerry 1, Quinn 0
Time of Game	2 hours
Flies Caught	Kekiongas: Hallinan, Goldsmith 2, Foran 2, Quinn, Armstrong 4, Kelly 5, Total 15 Haymakers: York 2, Flowers, Flynn 2, King, McMullen, Pike, Bellan, Total 9
Flies Missed	Kekiongas: Hallinan, Kohler, Armstrong, Total, 3 Haymakers: Craver, Flynn, Total, 2
Umpire	Harry Deane of the Kekiongas
Scorers	W. Wright, Kekiongas; John W. Schofield, Haymakers

its season—and history—with a 7 and 12 record. The NA's final standings listed the Kekiongas in seventh place, trailed by the two Forest City teams, Cleveland and Rockford. All things considered, that finish was still nothing to be ashamed about. Many a ball club has gone through a season with less than the Fort Wayners' .368 winning percentage in 1871. But the franchise, doomed from the outset, found its outstanding bills too much of an obstacle to overcome. Because the name of the professional game is financing the franchise, that is the reality that governed then, and still governs everything.

In an uncertain world of professional competition, franchise officials and governing boards had to make their way in 1871 as best they could, forming the “rules of the game” as they went. This made for a good deal of inconsistency, compounded by mischief on the part of those who saw fit to exploit the situation for all it was worth. As the National Association moved through its first season, it soon discovered that many of the rules governing the signing of players just didn't work. Truth told, the NA was something akin to a worker's paradise. Players moved from one team to another, a procedure called revolving, often signing more than one contract and appearing for one team or another as it suited individual and immediate advantage. It was a situation that made for chaos in one city after another. When it came time to reorder the world of organized baseball, the “new and improved” rules of the game for the new National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs, our present-day National League, which began play in 1876, specified team and owner control of franchises, controlling their players through the Reserve Clause. Though it made veritable chattels of players, or employees (as the owners preferred to see it), it did put some administrative order into the conduct of the game. The control of schedules and the necessary organizational framework of the league (with emphasis on teams and the league) was now in the hands of the administrative echelon of the league, rather than the players who had hitherto had things pretty much their own way. Sooner or later, the Reserve Clause would come under heavy fire, and did, but no professional league advertising its product for public consumption could long endure the way 1871's season tottered along.

Fort Wayne made its way through the 1871 maze of championship matches and other games with teams of lesser status, much like the New Yorks and Rockfords of the league, but with irksome difficulty that caused its undermanned band of players and its poor attendance to bring about its downfall. Players were fired, left the team, and otherwise made it difficult to put a decent product on the field of play. The absolute end came when Bobby Mathews and Tom Carey left shortly after their August 29 victory over Troy,

returning to Baltimore to complete the season with the Pastimes, a semi-pro outfit. Interestingly, the Kekiongas record books showed that they were fired for breaking their contractual agreements, though it was also known that Mathews, like some others before him, had not been paid.

Fort Wayne's team completed its 1871 season with games against amateur and semi-pro competition, their lineup dotted with new names from nearby towns and the Summit City. And, though the *Press Gazette* kept an eye on the National Association's September and October proceedings, the city settled back to its former and more accustomed baseball routines featuring local teams playing one another and occasionally teams from Michigan and Ohio. Before another year had come and gone, the ball park had been parceled into residential lots, the Grand Duchess torn down and new diamonds had been laid out in some of the parks to nurture the enthusiasm of the younger generation. The Kekionga's brush with national baseball notoriety was a thing of the past. Almost.

Fort Wayne's Capehart-Farnsworth appliance industry resurrected that magic Kekionga name many years later. In 1950, they sponsored a semi-pro team that won national honors at Wichita, Kansas, and added a worldwide semi-pro championship that fall with a tournament victory over international competition in Japan. It might have taken better than three quarters of a century, but the Keke's had won their championship, after all. This time, they were not only national, but international champions.

OPENING PITCHES I

BASE BALL 1871

In 1871, the game of baseball was played under vastly different circumstances than the game we know as baseball today. Understanding those differences gives us a sense of the game's flow and style, and provides insight into the governance and conventions of that bygone era. Some of those particulars and conditions follow.

Before rounding the bases on the field of play, a look into the grandstands, where Joe Fan rooted for his favorites, might just be the place to start. Noted previously as cranks, baseball's followers were rather formally dressed, a sartorial given that lasted well into the 20th century. Fedoras, high stovepipe hats, stiff cadys, and straw hats topped off the vested suit attire of the predominantly male crowd of the 19th century. Ladies who did attend were dressed in full-flowing, more formal dresses with parasols in hand to shield them from either sun or rain. Where stands were available, as was the case in each of the ball parks of the National Association, the crowds filled them to overflowing for the important contests and some, by preference, crowded closer to the field of play along the foul lines and around the perimeters of the fences and outfield. Horse-drawn carriages were often pulled to close proximity of the park's foul territory as both cartoons and photos of those early days show. There was seemingly little or no concern for the safety of those in attendance, resulting in injuries caused by batted balls, wild throws, nervous horses, or flying bats. For those who were so inclined, proximity to the playing field was a hazard one simply risked.

By comparison, the dimensions of the playing field were far more spacious than today's ball parks, often exceeding 500 feet from home plate to deep center field. Though the pitcher was a scant 45 feet from the batter, it was still 90 feet from base to base, or 360 around the bases for a home run. And

about those home runs: there were only 47 in toto during the 231 games played by National Association teams during its initial season.

The playing field itself was not as meticulously manicured as those we today are used to seeing. Uneven grading and sometimes lumpy surfaces, with grounds that became concrete-like during periods of little or no rain, as was the case in 1871, made for fielding adventures on many hit balls. There was no re-sodding or regular watering and there was very little grass trimming. Mother Nature provided what she was wont to do and those who scheduled, played, and attended games adjusted as best they could. Even at that, the five-inning rule with regard to completed games was rarely put into effect because teams simply played on through hail or high water. If they could play the game on skates during the cold of winter, they could certainly manage through anything the spring or summer might bring, except a driving rain-storm—so went the conventional baseball wisdom of the day.

In 1871, the catcher stood as far away as he dared, the distance governed by his own judgment, the status of his hands, often bruised and battered to a pulp, and the situation on the field of play. He wore no protective equipment at all. There were no gloves, neither for the catcher nor any of his teammates. If there was an upside to the catcher's injury-prone position, it was that he was rarely bothered by the immediate presence of the umpire, who stationed himself off to the side between home plate and the player's bench located not too far from the foul lines. It was inevitable that catchers during the early days of the game were often injured, and severely, because of a lack of equipment.

A single umpire selected from a list of five presented to the home team captain by the visitors, frequently a player from a different team, presided over every play. He was the decision maker with regard to declaring when games were to be called, players ejected, suspensions levied, and all other matters affecting the game. Attired formally, often wearing a suit coat and high hat, he was the judge and jury on the playing field, players' and fans' objections, catcalls, and rioting notwithstanding.

There were no bat racks and those heavy sticks of lumber were often strewn in all directions near home plate and the bases. The bats were crafted on lathes and topped out at the legal limit of 52 inches in length. Not every player used a 52-incher, of course, but the specifications for bat models were not nearly as restricted as they are today. The length and weight of the bat explains to a certain extent why so many hitters used a split-hand grip on the bat, spreading their hands as much as six inches apart on the handle to command more control of the bat.

To get the game going, the captains came together for a coin flip to determine which team would bat first. Teams winning that flip often decided to bat first while the ball was still firm and more conducive to extra bases on well-hit balls. The ball was kept in play until it was either torn badly at the seams, lopsided beyond use, lost (or stolen), or otherwise damaged to the extent that it was no longer playable.

It was the responsibility of the visiting team to provide one new ball if the ball provided by the home team would be lost or declared unfit. That was a sticky point. Balls were not uniformly, or exactly alike. Some were wound more tightly than others though each was at or very near 5.5 ounces in weight and was sewn around its circumference with stitches at right angles to the two seams. There were untold numbers of arguments over balls in play; in one instance during the 1871 NA season, the ball was the cause of an all-out war between the contesting Troy Haymakers and Fort Wayne. Imagine, if you will, what might have happened when a ball disappeared into a grove of trees or under the stands, and the frantic efforts of all involved to find that errant sphere so that play could be resumed!

All of this is well to keep in mind as we imagine these games unfolding in our mind's eye. Mr. Edison came along just a little too late for us to see all of this in action, but it would certainly be as much of a treat as those early movies of Babe Ruth, Walter Johnson, or World Series play during the 1920s in action.

CHAPTER FOUR



Base Ball on the Shores of Lake Erie

Among the members of the newly organized National Association, the Cleveland Forest Citys returned more players to their 1871 ball club from the 1870 lineup than any other franchise. Manned at every position by a returnee except in left field, where Charlie Pabor replaced George Heubel who had moved on to the Philadelphia Athletics, the team looked forward to the season's challenges with expectations of winning a pennant. That turned out to be a bit unrealistic, given a lineup of rather average players, as compared to Philadelphia's Athletics or the Chicago White Stockings—even though the battery of Deacon White and Al Pratt, Ezra Sutton, and outfielder Art Allison, all of whom were capable veterans, made the Clevelanders dangerous foes. During the course of the season, this club lost at least six ball games it might well have won, and had those losses been turned into victories, their record would have been 16 and 13 rather than the 10 and 19 that went into the record book.

As the NA began play, Cleveland was a thriving Lake Erie port community with a population pressing 100,000. Founded in 1796 by General Moses Cleaveland, after whom the city was named (the "a" was dropped from the name in order to fit the new spelling into the masthead of the city's *Plain Dealer* newspaper), it became not only a busy transportation center but a recreational mecca as well. And among the many recreational activities available on land and on the water, it was baseball that captured the hearts of so many of Cleveland's younger set. The Forest City moniker was initiated by the *New York Times* in a reference to the growing commercial and industrial center on the shores of Lake Erie. And it stuck. Cleveland's first professional team availed itself of the name and became the Forest Citys, one of two so named by some odd coincidence, in the NA's first season.

Cleveland's Forest City team began play in 1866. By 1869, the team had gone professional and played a schedule of 25 games, winning 19 of them. Pitcher–outfielder Al Pratt, catcher Deacon White, and outfielder Art Allison, the core of the club, in '69, stayed on to help Cleveland break into America's first professional league in 1871. There was, however, another Ohio club that was making all the big noise in baseball in 1869 and '70, and that was the Cincinnati Red Stockings, who victimized the Forest Citys twice during its miracle season of 1869 and again in 1870 before 3,000 fans in Cleveland, the largest crowd to see a ball game in the Forest City to that point.

By the time the 1871 season approached, the word had gotten around. The Cleveland club was not about to let an opportunity to get into the thick of the professional game go by, and when it became known that the New York Mutuals were hosting an organizational meeting for an association of professional teams, the Forest Citys, headed by president Peter Rose, secretary Frank Mason, and the club's treasurer, William Rose, saw to it that they were represented at the Collier's Inn meeting. There, they anted up the required \$10 franchise fee. High in the pecking order of the organizational framework of the NA, however sketchy it might have been, was the Forest City's J. S. Evans, elected as the National Association's vice president. There was no doubt that Cleveland's "front office" was not only in good hands, but that the team's officers were determined to do whatever it might take to get this thing rolling and to make a success of it.

With a set lineup and adequate financial banking, they approached the season with yet another ace up their sleeve, and that was a strongly disciplined approach to the task at hand, further evidence of the club's steely determination to play on an even field with the prestigious clubs in Chicago and along the Eastern Seaboard. Bill Ryczek comments:

Cleveland went beyond empty talk. The Board of Directors laid down a stiff set of rules for their athletes. All players were required to practice on off-days (Sundays excepted), with any absentees reported to the president. The only excuses accepted were for medical reasons, with a written note from Dr. M. B. Prentice (a director of the club) required under such circumstances . . . alcohol and late hours were verboten The acceptance of bribes was also, naturally, proscribed. . . . As a more concrete contribution toward clean living, the players "were required to launder their own uniforms."¹

Partially because of the makeup of the team, led by Jim "Deacon" White, as straight an arrow as could be found among professional players, and the sup-

port, as well as surveillance of the team throughout the season, the Forest Citys acquired a reputation as the least pugnacious, best mannered, and least rowdy ball club in the NA. Though that didn't bring a championship trophy to the shores of Lake Erie, the team did command respect wherever it went. The team's 1871 season log in the National Association is shown in Fig. 4-1.

The Cleveland version of the Forest Citys was part of three National Association openers, Fort Wayne's, Chicago's and their own in a game that returned the favor of Chicago's inaugural attended by better than 5,000 at the White Stockings' new Lake Park stadium. The profusely documented

Figure 4.1

Date	Against	W/L/Score	Record	Clv. Pitcher	Opp. Pitcher
May 4	at Fort Wayne	L 2-0	0-1	Pratt	Mathews
May 6	at Rockford	W 12-5	1-1	Pratt	Fisher
May 8	at Chicago	L 14-12	1-2	Pratt	Zettlein
May 11	vs. Chicago	L 18-10*	1-3	Pratt	Zettlein
May 13	vs. Washington	L 12-8	1-4	Pratt	Brainard
May 20	vs. Washington	L 13-9	1-5	Pratt	Brainard
May 24	vs. Rockford	W 11-10	2-5	Pratt	Fisher
May 26	vs. Fort Wayne	L 16-7	2-6	Pratt	Mathews
June 12	at Troy	W 20-11	3-6	Pratt	McMullin
June 14	at Boston	W 8-7	4-6	Pratt	Spalding
June 19	at New York	L 10-6	4-7	Pratt	Wolters
June 26	at Washington	L 16-3	4-8	Pratt	Stearns
July 4	at Philadelphia	L 22-9	4-9	Pratt	McBride
July 6	at New York	W 6-5	5-9	Pratt	Wolters
July 13	vs. Boston	L 12-8	5-10	Pratt	Spalding
July 22	vs. Philadelphia	L 18-10	5-11	Pratt	McBride
July 24	vs. Philadelphia	L 13-8	5-12	Pabor	McBride
Aug. 3	vs. New York	W 10-5	6-12	Pratt	Wolters
Aug. 8	at Rockford	L 7-5	6-13	Pratt	Fisher
Aug. 10	at Chicago	W 12-10	7-13	Pratt	Zettlein
Aug. 11	at Fort Wayne	L 15-3	7-14	Pratt	Mathews
Aug. 25	at Troy	L 11-3	7-15	Pratt	McMullin
Aug. 30	at Troy	L 17-12	7-16	Pratt	McMullin
Sep. 2	at Boston	L 31-10	7-17	Pratt	Spalding
Sep. 4	at Troy	W 4-2	8-17	Pratt	McMullin
Sep. 6	at New York	L 11-8	8-18	Pratt	Wolters
Sep. 13	at New York	W 7-5	9-18	Pratt	Wolters
Sep. 15	vs. Rockford	W 16-8	10-18	Pratt	Fisher
Sep. 27	vs. Boston	L 9-7	10-19	Pratt	Spalding

*Game forfeited to Chicago.

Fort Wayne game got the attention of Clevelanders, some of whom were chagrined, others embarrassed, others who adopted a wait-and-see attitude, and still others, like the Cleveland newspapers, humiliated. *The Cleveland Plain Dealer's* sports correspondent stated in the May 5, 1871, edition:

The Forest City nine played Thursday, in Fort Wayne, with the Kekiongas.

The game was stopped by rain² during the progress of the ninth inning and called at the close of the eighth—score 2 to 0, the Clevelanders having earned the cipher. That is all there is about it. All sorts of excuses may be made—we may be told that it is the most remarkable game on record, that the Forest City lads made no “error,” that they prevented their opponents from securing more than two tallies, but the humiliating fact cannot be wiped out that our nine players, about whom so much has been nastily said and written, were Chicagoed. It was long after the news arrived before it could be credited here that the Forest Citys, prominent among the clubs aspiring for the championship of the United States, were unable to secure a single tally. And the “most unkindest cut of all” is the absolute refusal of the Keki-skunkers to play a second game.

Only victory could calm nerves frayed to the extent of the *Plain Dealer* column's correspondent. But realistically, when a team plays 19 of its 29 league games away from home, including a season opener charged with hometown fervor, victories might be expected to be few and far between. The 2 to 0 whitewashing on May 4 in the National Association's first game, causing the dejection of Clevelanders over the loss to the Kekiongas, was the first of 19 similar disappointments during the season.

Nonetheless, there was a ray of sunshine that brought back hopes and good humor—even in the Cleveland press—when just two days later Cleveland's first win of the season, a crisp 12 to 4 conquest that ruined Rockford's Fairgrounds Park opener in front of more than a thousand partisans, brought this praise from the *Cleveland Leader* in its May 8, 1871, edition.

It needed but a glance at the street in front of the National Bank building on Saturday afternoon, to convince the most skeptical person that the old time interest in the Forest City club is still felt. There was the same anxious crowd round the windows and in the main office watching and reading over for the twentieth time the figures on the score card, as if repeated reading and hard wishing could add another whitewash to the Rockford score or another tally to that of Cleveland. It was, moreover, apparent from the faces of the crowd that all was going well. Even the noble army of grumblers could not resist the influences of such an occasion, and fairly ceased to predict that the Forest Citys “would not win a first-class game this season.” The score of the last inning finally came, and with the cheering total

of 12 to 4 in mind, the happy gathering went home to tea. The score was sufficient indication that the game had been an excellent one, and this is fully borne out by our telephone report.

Oh, the soothing balm of victory. The Cleveland club pounded out 12 hits, led by Ezra Sutton and pitcher Al Pratt with three each, and scored six times their first at bat to stake the Clevelanders to a lead Rockford hitting could not overcome. This is the line score and resume as reported by the *Chicago Tribune* on May 8, 1871.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cleveland	6	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	3—12
Rockford	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	0—4

Flys caught:	Cleveland 11, Rockford 11
Flys muffed:	Cleveland 1, Rockford 2
Umpire:	J. H. Manny of the Rockford Forest City Club
Time:	2:28
Scorers:	Messrs. Burdell, Johnson, Cutler

After losing twice to Chicago and twice more to the Washington Olympics, the Forest Citys recovered to take three out of their next four, the last of which was a surprising 8 to 7 win over the team many had picked to win it all in 1871, the Boston Red Stockings. The tilt was staged at Boston's South End Grounds and attended by 5,000 plus fans. Scoring three times in the first stanza off Boston's rising star, Al Spalding, Cleveland surged to a lead they never relinquished though Harry Wright's ball club staged a three-run rally in the bottom of the eighth to pull within a run at 7 to 6. Moments later, Al Pratt scored on Ezra Sutton's fourth hit of the day and after the teams had traded singletons in the ninth, the final score read 8 to 7 in Cleveland's favor. In retrospect, the June 14 decision could very well have been the high point of Cleveland's season, even a bit more momentous than the 6 to 5 squeaker they took from New York's Mutuals on July 6, as they concluded their first Eastern trip. The box score of the Boston victory is shown in Fig. 4.2.

In action against the rest of the National Association teams in the East, Cleveland lost three times to Philadelphia, split four games with Troy, won three of five from the Mutuals to win their series with the New Yorkers, and lost three straight to Washington's Olympians. A 3-3 finish in their September games wound up with a 9 to 7 heartbreaker against Boston in Cleveland

Figure 4.2

Cleveland Forest Citys	PO	R	H	Boston Red Stockings	PO	R	H
J. White, c	3	1	3	Jackson, 2b	4	0	0
Allison, cf	2	1	3	Barnes, ss	5	1	0
Pabor, lf	4	0	1	McVey, c	2	3	3
Carlton, 1b	3	1	3	H. Wright, cf	3	1	2
Kimball, 2b	4	1	0	Gould, 1b	3	0	1
Pratt, p	2	2	0	Schafer, 3b	2	2	2
Sutton, 3b	1	1	4	Cone, lf	0	0	2
E. White, rf	4	0	0	Spalding, p	4	0	0
Bass, ss	4	1	0	Barrows, rf	4	0	0
Totals	27	8	14	Totals	27	7	10

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Forest Citys	3	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	1—8
Red Stockings	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	1—7

Two-Base Hit	McVey
Left On Base	J. White, Allison twice, Pabor, Carlton, Pratt, Sutton three times, E. White, H. Wright, Gould, Cone, four times
Earned Runs	Cleveland 3, Boston 5
Called Balls	Spalding 16, Pratt 1
Passed Balls	J. White 4
Wild Pitches	Pratt, 2
Umpire	Mr. A. Bush, Harvard University BBC
Time of Game	2:15

on September 27, their last NA game, running their series record with the Red Stockings to 1-3. In the season finale, Cleveland roared to a 7 to 0 lead after five innings of play only to have Boston erupt with a four-spot in the sixth, finally adding three in the ninth to pull out their 9 to 7 win. In many respects, the game was a microcosm of Cleveland's season. They had difficulty holding leads and scored well below the league average per game. Figure 4.3 puts them in the rear guard of the league's run-scoring standard for 1871.

The Forest Citys finished out their National Association season before September was over, played a few games against regional teams and packed their equipment away for another year. But a few lessons had been learned. Looking forward to 1872, the club's management and Board of Directors were forced by circumstances that brought leverage on upscaled salaries and a virtually new order of business with its own special demands, to deal with the new realities shaping the professional game. They weren't alone. These new forces were making themselves felt throughout the league.

Figure 4.3

Team	GP	Runs	R/G	Opp. R	Opp. R/G	R. Differential
1. Philadelphia	28	376	13.4	266	9.5	+ 3.9
2. Boston	31	401	12.9	303	9.8	+ 3.1
3. Chicago	28	302	10.8	241	8.6	+ 2.2
4. Washington	32	310	9.7	303	9.5	+ 0.2
5. New York	33	302	9.2	313	9.5	- 0.3
6. Troy	29	351	12.1	362	12.5	- 0.4
7. Rockford	25	226	9.2	287	11.5	- 2.3
8. Cleveland	29	249	8.6	336	11.6	- 3.0
9. Fort Wayne	19	137	7.2	243	12.8	- 5.6

From November of 1871 through the next March, the chain of command from bottom to top busied itself with getting players signed. Where previously players could be signed for salaries under \$1,000 for a season's play, a catcher with the skills and reputation of a Deacon White, who almost weekly received offers from teams in bigger cities, would now command between \$3,000 and \$4,000. White was finally signed for \$3,500 for the 1872 campaign. Al Pratt also signed a lucrative contract. Ezra Sutton, immensely popular in Cleveland, signed for less than he could have received elsewhere because he liked playing in the Forest City. Players like Scott Hastings, Rockford's playing manager, brought in to play second base for Cleveland, Jimmy Holdsworth, who had played for the Brooklyn Eckfords in 1871, and Rynie Wolters, among others, were also signed at higher salaries as the Forest City sought to beef up their lineup for 1872. The National Association Grounds, Cleveland's ball park located today at the corner of 55th and Central, would also need a good deal of work. The "to do" list was long and every item on it would cost a pretty penny.

But once having committed to the professional game, Cleveland seemed determined to do what was necessary to make a go of it in the National Association's 1872 season. Clevelanders looked forward to the challenge.

Notes

1. William J. Ryczek, *Blackguards and Red Stockings: A History of Baseball's National Association, 1871-1875*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1992, p. 39.

2. This column was no doubt written after the very first report of the Fort Wayne game was received. Later reports verified the completion of nine full innings of play, immediately after which a cloudburst fell upon Hamilton Park.

CHAPTER FIVE



Chicago's White Stockings

Lew Meacham was a *Chicago Tribune* news reporter who turned his passion for athletics and games, and among these, baseball first and foremost, into a pioneering sports reporting position. His talent and his passion for the game of baseball coincided with Chicago's determined efforts to field a professional baseball club second to none. The year was 1869 and the consuming desire to put together a team that could mix it up with the Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and New Yorks of the day caught Meacham's attention, as it did the sports-minded folk of the Windy City. To them, it seemed preposterous that there was no Chicago behemoth to throw its weight around among the baseball powers of the day. Chicago always seemed to have had this top-drawer, first place, blue-ribbon obsession in everything from architecture to philharmonic orchestras to zoos, recognizing no peers and challenging all comers—especially those from New York. That mindset was no less applicable to baseball.

In Lew Meacham, the city and the *Tribune* had the scribe who could incite Chicagoans and whet their appetites with daily reporting about the new national pastime in the “World's Greatest Newspaper,” as it championed itself. Given his ambition, singular gifts, and a position that put him in touch with movers and shakers in board rooms and on the field of play, it was predictable that the founding fathers of what was soon to become the Chicago Base Ball Club would ultimately call on him to be part of a committee that would bring the pro game to the shores of Lake Michigan. Those founding fathers, most of whom were among Chicago's monied “400,” were ready to get this professional team moving.

The committee had but one other member, Thomas J. Foley, a slick, smooth-talking billiards player who counted among his close acquaintances

people like Potter Palmer, General Phil Sheridan, George Pullman, J. M. Richards, president of the Chicago Board of Trade, and others of similar notoriety and power. The newly formed baseball club's board of directors numbered them among its membership, and when Lew Meacham and Tom Foley found out what kind of financial fire power was being rallied behind the enterprise their eyes sparkled and their ambition soared. They set to work and by October 12, 1869, when the Chicago Base Ball Club was officially franchised at the Briggs Hotel, the fast-moving committee of two was already well underway in pursuit of top-notch professional players. The White Stockings had arrived on paper, and the business of putting a team together began in dead earnest.

1870 was to be the year, then, that the new club would take the field, taking on the best that the professionals had to offer. To think, at that time, that only one year later, in 1871, the whole venture would turn over yet another new page in a kind of association featuring a steady diet of competition against America's finest might have been considered a bit delusional at the time. But not to Foley and Meacham—or the club's board of directors. And certainly not to Chicagoans.

The Foley–Meacham division of labor called for Meacham to keep Chicago's sports fans informed and enthused about the new ball club, while Joe Foley's job was to hire ball players, wherever that might take him. Foley turned to the East to hunt down ball players. He did so because there weren't that many in the immediate Chicago area who could play in the kind of competition the club had in mind and was already beginning to schedule.

The first into the fold was “Captain Jimmy,” the first Cub, for all of that, inasmuch as the White Stockings ultimately became the Chicago Cubs. Wood, a fine second baseman and a natural team leader with a number of years experience with professional clubs, was named captain of the 1870 team. Tom Foley scouted him up in the East and signed the former Brooklyn Eckford star for the princely sum of \$2,000 for the season. That didn't escape the notice of Philadelphians or New Yorkers who were somewhat miffed because the Midwesterners were raiding “their” players. They ranted and did some raving among themselves and for the press, but Tom Foley knew full well that a signature on a contract was solid oak and so he kept right on smooth talking and flashing his pool hall skills—and Chicago's money—in front of the ball players he sought to bring to Chicago.

By the beginning of March 1870, less than five months since Tom Foley had begun his search for team members, he had just about completed putting all the pieces together, that in itself a rather remarkable feat. The ball club's

governing board was more than pleased. Even more remarkable was the caliber of talent he persuaded to come to Chicago. No less than six of that 1870 aggregation stayed on for the NA's first season, including first baseman Bub McAttee; Captain Jimmy; Ed Pinkham, who moved from his 1870 pitching position to play a left-handed third base in 1871; shortstop Ed Duffy; outfielder Fred Treacey; and catcher Charlie Hodes. It remained to be seen if the aggregate sum would be capable of being knit into a formidable unit.

So off to the 1870 diamond wars they went, doing battle with a mixed schedule of amateur, semi-pro, and professional teams during the last season of the old National Association of Base Ball Players, then in its final throes of national baseball supremacy as a guiding force in the game. And the White Stockings fared well, winning 65 of their 73 scheduled ball games, including a 22 and 7 mark against professional teams. And were Chicagoans satisfied? Of course not. Seven of those losses suffered by the Whites were against the very teams they wanted most desperately to beat. An especially bitter pill was dealt by Rynie Wolters and his New York partners on July 23, when the Mutuals tore into the White Stockings with an embarrassing 9 to 0 thrashing, causing the *New York Herald* to chortle gleefully that the Midwesterners had been Chicagoed, meaning whitewashed, as in zeroed.

Against the top teams, the Whites, after piling up 31 straight wins to start the season, finally foundered at the hands of the Brooklyn Atlantics and then to the Mutuals only days later for their first two losses of the campaign, both against elite nines. Philadelphia's Athletics beat them twice, 17 to 11 and 18 to 11, and the Unions of Lansingburgh beat them 16 to 11. Their last defeat of the season was at the hands of "the farm boys" some 90 miles up the tracks from Chicago, playing for the Rockford Forest Citys, whom they had beaten earlier in the season, and, once again, in a tight 10 to 6 skirmish in October. All of this was grist for the 1871 mill. Chicago wasn't in the least humbled, but it had been warned that the better professional ball clubs had a way of evening the record, something to remember for the season ahead.

There was also the matter of a ball park. The new order of things would call for a baseball facility that was better located than Dexter Park, located about five miles southwest of downtown Chicago. Its huge capacity notwithstanding, no matter how a baseball diamond might be positioned within its confines, it was still a racetrack. The remedy: a municipally owned stadium sited within walking distance of what was later to become known as "The Loop." With fences about 350 feet away from home plate down the foul lines and a seating capacity of better than 7,000, Chicago had a spacious new ball diamond, taking its name from its location on the shores of Lake Michigan.

It was appropriately named Lake Park and hosted its first game on May 8, 1871, between the Whites and the Cleveland Forest Citys. On that day, White Stocking fans went home happy as their heroes edged the Cleveland nine by a 14 to 12 margin in a game that had just about everything including fair skies on a moderate spring day in Chicago.

Chicago's season opener was a winner and it seemed as though everything was falling nicely into place. A revamped lineup with outstanding players in several positions, big money in the bank, a new ball park, and for the real diehards among the Windy City's fans, season tickets at \$15 a throw. There was one thing, however, no one could control and that was the weather. After a pleasantly moderate few weeks of springtime, the sun settled in with searing rays to heat up Chicago and the entire "grain bin" of the country. Spring turned into summer with relentless heat and bone-dry air that burned into the very innards of the earth and mankind along with it. In fact, Chicago dailies ran special features on the arid climate and the many fires that had sprung up here and there across the land from Texas clear up into Canada. That would have its own serious, nay tragic, consequences later in the year, not only for the ball club but for the entire city.

But the season moved on, and, during its course, NA teams and individual players contributed huge numbers of firsts for the record books during the 1871 season. A few of them would stand for the ages. The White Stockings, for example, made a Southern jaunt in March for the express purpose of training and drills as they prepared for the schedule ahead. Games were a part of their routine and other teams from northern climes had gone South to play games in February and March before, but the Whites were the first to go South with training and drills an important part of their regimen. Joe Foley, by this time a general manager of sorts for the club, herded the 11 contracted players together in Chicago and put them under the supervision of Captain Jim Wood, accompanied by a traveling manager, Fred Erbe by name, sending them off to New Orleans.

The Chicago nine must have done something right down in the Old South because when they came back to take up their National Association schedule, they ripped through their first six games without a loss, victorious in their first five home games and then adding a 16 to 14 win at Boston on June 2. Then came New York, where they were waylaid by the Mutuals, who were busily engaged in putting together an eight for nine streak to open their season. That brought a halt to an unblemished 19 and 0 record up to that point, including games against all comers, and lowered their NA record to 5 and 1. They would have to find a way to deal with the Gothamites, particu-

larly if they kept on winning behind Reinder (“Rynie”) Wolters. Chicago had a strong ball club, but were they better than the three powers in the East, Boston, Philadelphia, and New York?

Apparently—indeed, no—they weren’t. Not if one were to judge by their first encounters against New York, which resulted in an 8 to 5 setback before a packed house at Union Grounds, and then successive losses to Philadelphia and Washington on their first Eastern swing of the season. The Athletics pounded George Zettlein for 15 runs and the Olympics, on their own grounds in the Capital City, really put the brakes on Chicago’s attack with a 13 to 3 victory that reduced the Whites’ early season mark from 7 and 0 to 7 and 3 in a hurry. Figure 5.1 shows how Chicago fared during its 28-game season.

National Association teams arranged their own schedules, selecting dates for home and away appearances as homestands and trips, east and west, were slated to meet the requirements laid down in the March Collier’s Inn meeting, to wit: teams would meet at least five times during the season. That would assure a best three out of five series of matches to provide a series “champion” in each instance. The “match series” concept, clearly a hold-over from National Association of Base Ball Players days, was a telltale indication that *professional* ball would be evolving out of the older traditions of the game.

In the case of the Washington Olympics–White Stockings series, the game in Washington that Chicago lost on June 13 was the third played between the two and put the series count at two games for Chicago and one for Washington. When the Olympics visited Chicago later that season in August, the Whites won a tight 12 to 11 struggle that gave them the necessary three-game advantage to win that particular series. Consequently, a fifth game between the two was not necessary. Curiously, however, the standings for the NA’s championship were not based on individual series results, but on the best won-lost percentage in the National Association. That made for confusion, even for the astute Harry Wright.

During the course of 1871’s summer play, Washington and Chicago played each other in Chicago three times, netting the visiting Olympics a tidy \$4,500 in gate-sharing receipts. And that raises a crucial point or two with regard to the unique nature of Chicago’s membership in the newly formed NA. As much as they were derided for their “piracy” of Eastern players and their nigh unbearable obsession with winning over the Eastern Seaboard teams that caused the Eastern press to fulminate regularly (especially the New York and Philadelphia press), all of them had to acknowledge, no doubt

Figure 5.1

Date	Against	W/L/Score	Record	Chi. Pitcher	Opp. Pitcher
May 8	vs. Cleveland	W 14-12	1-0	Zettlein	Pratt
May 11	at Cleveland	W 18-10*	2-0	Zettlein	Pratt
May 13	at Ft. Wayne	W 14-5	3-0	Zettlein	Mathews
May 16	vs. Washington	W 14-4	4-0	Zettlein	Brainard
May 19	vs. Washington	W 9-7	5-0	Zettlein	Brainard
May 22	vs. Rockford	W 15-6	6-0	Zettlein	Fisher
June 2	at Boston	W 16-14	7-0	Zettlein	Spalding
June 5	at New York	L 8-5	7-1	Zettlein	Wolters
June 8	at Philadelphia	L 15-11	7-2	Zettlein	McBride
June 13	at Washington	L 13-3	7-3	Zettlein	Brainard
June 26	vs. Rockford	W 18-8	8-3	Zettlein	Fisher
June 30	vs. Washington	L 13-8	8-4	Zettlein	Stearns
July 4	vs. Rockford	W 17-13	9-4	Zettlein	Fisher
July 7	vs. Boston	W 7-1	10-4	Zettlein	Spalding
July 14	vs. Philadelphia	W 11-9	11-4	Zettlein	McBride
July 28	vs. New York	W 17-6	12-4	Zettlein	Wolters
Aug. 1	vs. New York	W 15-4	13-4	Zettlein	Wolters
Aug. 5	vs. Ft. Wayne	W 13-10	14-4	Zettlein	Mathews
Aug. 10	vs. Cleveland	L 12-10	14-5	Zettlein	Pratt
Aug. 16	vs. Washington	W 12-11	15-5	Zettlein	Brainard
Aug. 28	at New York	W 6-4	16-5	Zettlein	Wolters
Aug. 30	at Philadelphia	W 6-3	17-5	Zettlein	McBride
Sep. 5	at Boston	L 6-3	17-6	Zettlein	Spalding
Sep. 18	vs. Philadelphia	L 11-6	17-7	Zettlein	McBride
Sep. 29	vs. Boston	W 10-6	18-7	Zettlein	Spalding
Oct. 21	vs. Troy	W 11-5	19-7	Zettlein	McMullin
Oct. 23	vs. Troy	L 19-12	19-8	Zettlein	McMullin
	October 30				
				at Union Grounds, Brooklyn, for National Association Championship: Philadelphia 4, Chicago 1 Winning Pitcher, McBride Losing Pitcher, Zettlein (Note: See Appendix C for the <i>New York Clipper</i> account of this game.)	

* Game forfeited to Chicago.

through gritted teeth, that the Windy City was a very profitable stop along the way. That was not only a compelling argument per se about a professional league's utter dependence on the financial resources of a big gate, but about Chicago's pivotal position in their midst, as well. 15 of the 29 games Chicago played were at Lake Park in front of almost 70,000, the largest home atten-

dance in the league. That's upwards of 5,000 per game. When the White Stockings came back into the National Association in 1874 after the disastrous Great Fire of October 1871, the familiar cries of their "shameless chicanery" were once again raised, but not so loudly as to keep them out of the NA. Wiser heads knew better, realizing that the new realities at work in professional baseball were such that Midwestern teams, particularly those in St. Louis and Chicago, with Ohio and Michigan teams coming on strong, were going to be a permanent part of the makeup of any play-for-pay league.

In any given year, one of the biggest "payday dates" is the nation's birthday celebration. The 1871 holiday saw the White Stockings engaged with the Rockford nine in a slugfest that finally went to Chicago, 17 to 13. It was the third game in their series, all of them played at Lake Park, and the start of a 10-game stretch during which the Chicagoans won nine, eight of them at home. Their National Association record as of August 30, which also included victories at New York and Philadelphia, stood at 17 and 5. It was an impressive show of strength that boosted their pennant hopes and perched them atop the league standings.

The July 4 celebration at Lake Park was all Chicago's going into the ninth inning in a game they led by as much as 16 to 5 at one point. But in the top of the ninth, Rockford staged a furious rally with eight runs. As per rules of the game in 1871, Chicago chose to bat in the bottom of the ninth though ahead, scoring an additional tally and raised their victory count to 17 to 13. The *Chicago Tribune* reported Rockford's ninth inning rally in its July 5 edition:

. . . Rockford must now do something or the Fourth of July would forever be a bitter memory and a stench in the nostrils along the line of the Galena Road [the route to Galena, Illinois, ran through Rockford]. Rockford got its back up—Addy threw off his hat desperately and Cherokee [Fisher, the Rockford pitcher] rose in his wrath like Tecumseh. Addy went out on first by Wood, Stires woke up and sent a ball over the fence which landed somewhere on State Street, and made a home run. Ham was caught out by Treacey. Fullmer went to third on a ball which got mixed up in the crowd . . . It was now the turn of the heavy hitters of the club. Anson [the same "Cap" who later in his career thrilled Chicago fans for so many years] went to second on a magnificent hit, and brought in Mack. Cherokee hit a rattler, went to second and brought in Anson. Hastings went to first, Addy went to second and brought in Fisher and Hastings. Stires got to first, and Addy came in. Ham hit well, but Treacey made a splendid throw from the left field to King at the home plate, who put out Stires and the side was out with eight runs. It was a magnificent attempt and came very near bringing them to victory . . . The game lasted about two hours and twenty minutes and at the expiration of that time the vast crowd separated to attend to its pyrotechnic duties connected with the Fourth of July, 1871.

(The account and remarks were signed by the fictitious Peregrine Pickle.)

You won't fail to notice the reporting of a bygone era, rich in description and savored by the *Tribune's* readers. You no doubt also noticed the shot over the fence at Lake Park by Garrett "Gat" Stires, which must have been a monster clout of one of George Zettlein's fastballs. It was one of Stires' two home runs during the 1871 season. The box score is shown in Fig. 5.2.

Following the Forest Citys conquest, Boston came to town for a July 7 game. A month earlier, the Red Stockings took it on the chin at home and were determined to even out the match series at a game apiece. But they ran into George Zettlein's best-pitched game of the season and took a 7 to 1 drubbing. Chicago was on its way and, after humbling the New York Mutuals twice in three days, it was apparent that the club had hit its stride. Jimmy Wood had them playing well, the Lake Park stands filled up with huge throngs of supporters, and it began to appear as though the Whites might be able to claim a championship.

Figure 5.2

Chicago	AB	R	H	PO	Rockford	AB	R	H	PO				
Duffy, 3b	6	3	4	1	Mack, 1b	5	3	2	16				
Wood, 2b	6	4	5	6	Anson, 3b	6	2	3	1				
Treacey, lf	6	3	1	1	Fisher, p	5	2	1	1				
Simmons, cf	5	1	1	0	Hastings, c	5	2	4	2				
King, c	5	1	2	5	Addy, 2b	5	1	2	3				
McAtee, 1b	6	2	3	11	Stires, rf	5	1	1	2				
Pinkham, rf-p	5	0	0	0	Ham, lf	5	0	1	0				
Hodes, ss	5	2	2	3	Fulmer, ss	4	1	3	1				
Zettlein, p-rf	5	1	2	0	Bird, cf	5	1	2	1				
Totals	49	17	20	27	Totals	45	13	19	27				
				1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9									
				Rockford	3	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	8—13
				Chicago	3	4	1	0	0	2	2	4	1—17
				Umpire	J. H. Haynie								
				Scorers	Atwater and Ball								
				Passed Balls	King none, Hastings 2								
				Wild Pitches	Zettlein, Pinkham, Fisher								
				Home Run	Stires								
				Double Plays	Wood unassisted, Zettlein, McAtee, and Hodes								
				Bases On Errors	Duffy, Treacey 2, Simmons, King, McAtee 2, Pinkham, Zettlein; Chicago total 9								
				Earned Runs	Mack 2, Anson 2, Fisher, Stires, Bird; Rockf'd total 7								
				Errors	Rockford 8, Chicago 5								
					Chicago 9, Rockford 11								

The 9-1 surge took them to the end of August, at which point they won a pair of tussles on the road, one against the Mutuals and the other against the Athletics. The latter was a most satisfying victory inasmuch as it gave the Chicagoans a two-to-one edge in the season series. The 6-3 win came in a well-played ball game at Philadelphia's Athletic Park on August 30. Then came September, a fallow month for the Whites from the standpoint of their NA schedule. Only three games were played, a home and away series with Boston, which was split, and a disappointing 11 to 6 loss to Philadelphia at home that evened the match series at two games each. That would ultimately prove to have significant implications for the league championship.

The final outcome of the pennant race, with all its probabilities, however, was so tame as to be insignificant in comparison with what was soon to transpire in Chicago, a place often referred to as the Garden City. On October 8, the Rockford club was on its way to Chicago for their game at Lake Park. Fully 30 miles west of the city, it was possible to see columns of smoke and darkened skies above it from the train as it moved toward its destination. All eyes aboard the Chicago-bound train strained eastward to see the incredible spectacle unfolding before their eyes.

The train never got to Chicago. Telegraphers warned that Chicago was ablaze, ravaged by a fire that had raged out of control, so enormous that it had consumed more than 2,600 acres, a few of which constituted the Lake Park stadium. The long, dry, hot summer had turned into fall with no relief. Chicago, which had already undergone fires that were fortunately brought under control earlier in the summer, this time found itself in the grip of a savage monster, unable to do much more than to watch its buildings and properties vanish into smoke and ashes. The Great Chicago Fire had struck and much of the Garden City had become a memory.

There would be no games for a while. In fact, the ultimate outcome of the disaster, which burned up everything the Chicago Base Ball Club possessed, from money in the bank to the ball park, clear on down to the last stitch of baseball clothing and equipment, was that Chicago would not be returning to professional baseball until 1874. If there was to be any more baseball for the Whites in 1871 there was but one way to finish out the season, and that was to book games away from home with the only team it had not yet played, the Troy Haymakers, and from Troy to move on to Philadelphia to play the decisive fifth game of their series with the Athletics. At least that would provide a way to complete a schedule of games that involved every team in the National Association, as well as holding out the possibility of salvaging as much as possible from an otherwise successful season with the strong hope

of capturing a championship flag. And indeed, Joe Foley made those arrangements, borrowing bits and pieces of uniforms from other teams in the league and whatever kind of equipment he could round up, and sent the team to Troy for games there on October 21 and 23.

So the Whites finished out their Troy commitment with a victory in the first of the two-game set, but ran afoul of an aroused Haymaker nine in the second game, suffering a 19 to 12 loss to the hard-hitting Troy nine. Having won but one of the two Troy games meant that the game with Philadelphia, scheduled for October 30 at Brooklyn's Union Grounds, would be the game that would determine the league champion. The famed New York weekly, *The Clipper*, in its November 4 edition, introduced the results of that game with this opening paragraph:

The deciding game of the series between the Athletic and Chicago nines was played on Oct. 30, in the presence of about five hundred people, for though it was cold and clear (barely acceptable for playing baseball), neither rain nor snow would prevent the assemblage of a good-sized crowd. New Yorkers were instead more interested in local elections. That and other considerations led to a disappointing, if not miniscule, attendance. The Athletics, minus the services of Sensy (John Sensenderfer, Philadelphia outfielder), Pratt (Tom) and Reach (Al), the veteran amateur Berkenstock playing in the nine. The Chicago nine included all their players except Pinkham, Brannock playing in his place, and as he played in a match in Chicago, Sept. 19th, that fact alone would have given the game to the Athletics had they not won."

The article's final sentence before presenting the box score said it all despite the fact that the championship committee had not yet met to sort out the championship situation. The telltale sentence: "The result of this contest leaves the Athletics champions and gives them the right to fly the pennant until November, 1872."

While that declaration might have been premature on October 31, the final outcome of the committee's deliberations was the same, however hotly it was questioned and discussed afterward. The National Association of Professional Base Ball Players had crowned its first champion, the Philadelphia Athletics, who had conquered the Chicago White Stockings 4 to 1 in a game that saw A's pitcher Dick McBride outpitch the Whites' George Zettlein.

Back in Chicago, there was, quite naturally, remorse as well as some indignation over the results of the Philadelphia encounter and the league's committee meeting that followed. That was fully covered in the early November editions of Chicago's *Inter Ocean*, the *Tribune*, and other papers that had, by

that time returned to full-scale reporting and news coverage. But that was really a secondary consideration. Indeed, it was a far lesser priority than the demanding and back-breaking effort it took to bring a city out its ashes and back into its more accustomed daily routines. Trains had been arriving in numbers that taxed the limits of Chicago's rail facilities, and beyond, with donations, supplies, and equipment to help the city get back on its feet. New buildings began to rise and new city planning began to take effect as everyone began to put the devastating disaster behind them. *That* was the order of the day, not baseball. Baseball people would have to take care of their own concerns as best they could when there was time and it would have to be done on their own.

One heartening baseball event had taken place just two weeks after the Great Fire, and it was arranged out of pure sympathy. That event was the first in a series of benefit games played by various teams, the proceeds of which were forwarded to Chicago. In that first benefit played on October 19, a New York team, manned mostly by Mutuals who played under the name of the Atlantics, edged a Philadelphia team 12 to 11. In a second game a day later, George Zettlein of the White Stockings was brought back to New York to pitch for some of his former teammates in a contest won handily by the Mutuals "pickups" over the Philadelphia Athletics, 17 to 3.

Benefit games during the next two seasons continued on behalf of Chicago's baseball teams. All the hard-edged and contentious relationships of the East and its testy Midwestern rivals, the White Stockings, aside, the benefit games transcended the baser and more confrontational instincts of sportsmen caught up in the fervor of professional baseball. And through its newspapers, city officials, and the people themselves, Chicago let it be known just how much this outpouring of concern and support was appreciated in a time of great need.

Disregarding the NA's final decision on their request to play makeup games after the season had been declared over, the Whites played two games at the Union Grounds anyway. That was to no avail; the games did not count and that brought a conclusive end to professional baseball in Chicago for the rest of 1871, as well as on into the 1872 and '73 seasons. It remained for a new board, franchise reorganization, and new strategies to cope with the challenges of the years ahead. By 1874, the White Stockings would be ready to resume play in the National Association.

SORTING OUT THE LEADERS

The results, standings, and statistics of the 1871 National Association of Professional Base Ball Players that appear in a baseball encyclopedia, especially one that is as exhaustive and authoritative as the *Baseball Encyclopedia*¹, tell a story, but the story is far from complete. When you see those standings, so final looking, so crisply arranged from top to bottom, it's almost impossible to appreciate or even imagine all the negotiating, maneuvering, and outright politicking or agonizing it took to declare a champion for that first trial-and-error-and-more-trial during the first all-pro baseball league's first season.

A number of significant variables played into the final decision made by the NA's specially appointed championship committee, including the effect of the league's viewpoint on exhibition games, forfeits that were deemed necessary during the course of the season, and the number of games played by each team against other NA members, particularly within the framework of a best-three-of-five series. A lack of substantive and binding agreements in all of these matters made the league look like it was getting through the season on the seat of its pants. Indeed, it was. And it all came a cropper when the Great Fire hit Chicago. Its aftereffect caused immediate and altered planning, coming as late in the season as it did, and specifically, because it so directly affected the standings and the positions of the three top contenders, Philadelphia's Athletics, Boston's Red Stockings, and the Chicago White Stockings.

The standings were a mottled mess most of the summer. Depending on which newspaper one read, there were different league leaders and other teams positioned differently in the standings from city to city. It didn't help one bit that standings showed both series won and the number of games won and lost. In *Blackguards and Red Stockings: A History of Baseball's National*

Association, 1871–1875, Bill Ryczek takes the problem head on, presenting standings on the basis of games won and lost *and* series won and lost, finally stating, one presumes, with some frustration, that:

The Championship Committee appeared as baffled as the casual reader. Even as astute an observer as Harry Wright carried the impression that the champion would be the team winning the most series.²

Perhaps a word about those variables would be in order.

1. *Forfeits*. Games were ruled forfeits for two basic reasons: a) because a team used an ineligible player; or b) because a team failed to meet one of the regulations that governed play (and consequently, the outcome of the game), for example, walking off the field of play over a dispute of one kind or another, such as the condition of the ball to be put into play, a situation that caused a forfeit in the Troy–Fort Wayne game.

The Scott Hastings case brought other forfeits into play during the 1871 season. Because Hastings, the Rockford captain, had previously been under contract with a New Orleans team and had also signed a Rockford contract, one game with Washington, one with Fort Wayne and two with Philadelphia were ruled forfeits at the Championship Committee's November 3 meeting that had been called to work through all the problems and more importantly to declare a champion. Each of the four games was awarded to Rockford opponents, thus changing two previous Philadelphia losses to victories and in effect awarding the championship to the Athletics on the basis of its games won and lost, giving the Athletics the best win-lose percentage in the league.

2. *Exhibition Games*. NA teams scheduled games against non-member teams and called them exhibition games. It was understood that these games would not count in the league's standings. They could also declare games played with NA teams as exhibitions.. Those games would not count in the league standings, either. This was done from time to time because of the potential revenue involved in playing a noteworthy rival beyond or aside from the five-game series requirement. One would understand, even if there is but a tiny conniving strand in the human makeup, that declaring NA games or games against non-NA members as exhibitions might just be a matter of convenience depending on who won or lost, and might even be done after the fact. Once baseball games became a crucial matter in winning the whop flag, and big money became a dominant factor in scheduling considerations, the days of the old National Association of Base Ball Players' gentlemanly decor regarding gamesmanship and friendly relationships were forever

set aside. The “new game in town” made no bones about its ultimate aims, and those aims were pointed directly at winning flags and piling up big bucks.

3. *Who Won?* Here is baseball historian David Nemec’s answer: . . . “it was perhaps inevitable that the committee, after waffling all season, resolved enough of the contested issues in the Athletics’ favor to crown them the first major league champions.” The most “crucial decision was the committee’s vote to revoke the Rockford club’s four wins prior to June 16 in which Hastings had taken part.”³

The muddle over the games that were part of an NA series, exhibition games, or still other factors notwithstanding, the committee’s decision on the Rockford games was what cut through the gordian knot so that a winner might be declared.

As time went on, these problems were solved, gradually paving the way for a more stabilized system of scheduling, but it wasn’t until the NA gave way to its league-centered successor in 1876 that the many kinks and individualisms so characteristic of the NA were done away with. The many twists and turns of the 1871 season had shown how little removed from the days of purely amateur ball the professional pioneers were, their thinking and much of their mindset about competitive athletics steeped as it was in the days of the old NAPBBP.

The decision to declare Philadelphia the 1871 winner met, predictably, with varied opinions. Neither Boston, where the Wrightmen felt that they might have had a right to the pennant, nor Chicago, preoccupied with its own plight, but still wondering if the Philadelphia series was actually complete, greeted the final decision with approval. Here, for example, is one of the more bitter reactions from the Chicago end of the line.⁴

A few clever writers have blamed Mrs. O’Leary’s cow for the White Stockings blowing the 1871 pennant. It made good copy but Ol’ Bossy didn’t do it. The pennant was stolen from them by Henry Chadwick and the eastern clubs at the fall meeting. They just couldn’t stand seeing a western team win a national title for a third straight year, so they rigged the rules to fit their purpose. Chicago was cheated out of a second straight national championship,⁵ then some writers and historians who were enamored with Chadwick made Mrs. O’Leary’s cow the goat for it.

Notes

1. Pete Palmer and Gary Gillete, Editors, *The Baseball Encyclopedia*, Barnes and Noble Books, New York, 2006 edition. (Note: *The Baseball Encyclopedia* was the primary reference resource for statistics for this book.)

2. William J. Ryczek, *Blackguards and Red Stockings: A History of Baseball's National Association, 1871–1875*. Jefferson, NC; McFarland, 1992, pp. 55–60.

3. *ibid*: p.12.

4. Larry D. Names, *Bury My Heart at Wrigley Field: The History of the Chicago Cubs*. Neshkoro, WI: Sportsbooks Publishing, 1988, p. 89.

5. The National Championship here referred to was the furiously debated 1870 championship of the NAPBBP, claimed by as many as four different baseball clubs, including Chicago's. Larry Names apparently decided, with Chicagoans of the day, that the 1871 championship belonged to the White Stockings.

CHAPTER SIX



Base Ball at the Agricultural Society Fairgrounds

“Rockford wasn’t the end of the earth, but if you climbed to the top of the tallest building you could see it from there.”¹

Imagine an 1867 scenario that features the Washington Nationals’ club officials discussing their precedent-setting trip across the Appalachians to western ports of call. An important part of that discussion is certainly about where the train will take them and how long it will take to get there. Then someone brings up “that Rockford club” out west. “Well,” comes the reply, “we won’t worry about that—and by the way, was that Rockford you mentioned? That isn’t even on my map! Must be some farmboy club.”

Someone else speaks up: “No, I’ve heard from somebody in Philadelphia that there is a team there called the Forest Citys that has a good 16-year-old hurler and some pretty strong strikers who know what they’re doing.” Comes the reply: “What have you been drinking! Going to Chicago is far enough as it is and I don’t even know exactly what we will find there, to say nothing about a baseball club sitting on some riverbank in the far northwest. Does the train really go that far? Let’s wait to see what happens. A game to be played in Chicago against the farmboys can always be arranged later.”

They soon found out. After tearing through six straight opponents without a loss on their trip West, they did play a game against the Rockfords on a spare day in Chicago, an exhibition that was to provide a good workout if nothing else. The exhibition match had been arranged after the Washingtons found out that twice before that summer these same Forest Citys had beaten Chicago’s Excelsiors. The news did raise an eyebrow or two.

The big day, at least for Rockford, came on July 25. The end result was that “them fellers from out in the forest whupped the big boys.” Coming within 10 runs of the mighty Nationals would have been a moral victory. But beating them—and at Chicago’s Dexter Park in full view of thousands? Well. *Rockford’s Gazette* got right on the story, reporting the stunning 29 to 23 victory in blazing, page one superlatives that lauded the skills and pluck of the very young hurler, Al Spalding, a whirlwind infielder named Ross Barnes, and their canny defensive whiz, Bob Addy.

Who in the world were these fellows anyway! And what is to be made of an 1867 baseball club that comes from a little town of slightly more than 10,000 friendly neighbors? If you thought that Fort Wayne was ridiculously small at 18,000 and said to yourself that those Fort Wayners would never make it through the season, what about this little town sitting on the Rock River and its chances of surviving even a game or two!

The answers to these questions—beyond any realm of plausibility even for post-Civil War baseball enthusiasts—provide us with one of the most incredible stories in the history of the National Association. The Forest Citys saga actually began at the Rockford Agricultural Society’s Fairgrounds Park in 1866, a year before the Washington trip eastward to spread the baseball story and its own fame. That summer, the town’s enterprising Dr. Norman organized and promoted a baseball tournament, inviting teams from Pecatonica, a stop in the road a few miles west of Rockford; Chicago; Milwaukee; Detroit; Freeport, also a little town in Illinois; and a few other communities. All of them, save Pecatonica, which arrived by buckboard and carriage, made their way via the rails to Rockford, played their games, and, much to their pleasant surprise, found that the town had provided them with a few days of baseball, great hospitality, and even awarded a huge championship trophy, won by the Chicago Excelsiors. From that point forward, Rockford was on the baseball map.

The pace quickened in 1867 and the Rockford nine found themselves propelled to national baseball notoriety by their defeat of the touring Washington Nationals. By 1869, Rockford had become a baseball power to be reckoned with. The lineup was another of those improbabilities, studded with names that would make their way into major league box scores. Already in 1868, the Rockford roster included Spalding, Barnes, Addy, and Gat Stires. Scott Hastings, Fred Cone, and Tom Foley (not to be confused with Chicago’s general manager) were added in 1869 and Joe Simmons was added in 1870. Each of these worthies came to Rockford and stayed, all of them

donning Forest City uniforms for the town's and the NA's maiden season in a professional league.

The Forest City's Base Ball Club's president and primary force since its inception was Mr. Hiram Waldo, better known to one and all as Hi. This gentleman, undaunted by Eastern powers or their political clout, made his way to the Collier's Inn meeting of March 1871, and deposited his ten spot to purchase a membership for his "franchise" in the National Association. Although Hi Waldo didn't have a full nine in hand at the time, that didn't seem to phase him in the least. By the time May arrived, he would have someone at every position and some of the "someones" would be better than many another of the NA's players—in his mind, at any rate. And he was very close to right. Not even the loss of Al Spalding and Ross Barnes to the Boston club (Harry Wright, always on the alert, saw to it that Spalding and Barnes would get his very special attention and pried them both loose from their Rockford moorings) dimmed his enthusiasm or anticipation of a great season, and he thrilled at the thought of being part of baseball's first all-professional association. Part of his optimistic anticipation stemmed from his third baseman, a big, sturdy lad who would some day wind up in baseball's Hall of Fame, none other than the young strapper from Marshalltown, Iowa, 19-year-old Adrian Anson.

The signing of a number of players proceeded in a fairly straightforward manner. The teams of the National Association paid their players in one of two ways: some paid by salary, as in the case of the White Stockings or Philadelphia Athletics; others, in what became known as the co-op system, paid on the basis of gate receipts. If the club's payroll scheme was the latter, a player's salary might vary from month to month, depending on the receipts from the games played on the home grounds. Some clubs also shared receipts with visiting teams, adding to the gross income of the club. Rockford and Fort Wayne were among those who paid their players on the basis of gate receipts. It took persuasive, positive people like Hi Waldo to get players to sign contracts under those circumstances.

There were some players who, like Scott Hastings, played professionally as much as they could, not only because they enjoyed the game so much, but further, because it provided income beyond the regular summer/fall baseball season. The Hastings case was especially interesting because it was the *causus belli*² that stood in the middle of the championship deliberations at Philadelphia in November at the conclusion of the NA's first season. Rockford's position on that issue comes up a little later in these pages.

The Forest City's played their home games at what is known as Fairgrounds

Park, bounded by the same streets today, Acorn, Mulberry, Jefferson, and Kilburn, as it was in 1871. The Rock River flows gently by and one gets the same pastoral feeling just standing there that many a person did strolling through the park in the 1800s. Putting a baseball diamond into the confines of an oval-shaped piece of acreage meant primarily for outings and fairs did, nonetheless, put a strain on the Fairgrounds as a venue for a game of baseball. David Schultz, presently the sports editor for the *Rockford Register Star*, wrote in the Sunday, June 16, 2002, edition about the old Fairgrounds ball park, helping his readers envision the park as a baseball setting:

. . . The stadium was built on the grounds of the Agricultural Society, site of the Winnebago County Fair until 1904. The Fairgrounds had a race course that the diamond may have been built within, but the exact location, orientation and dimensions of the playing field are unknown. Newspaper accounts never mention the old ball park. . . . One article from the Aug. 16, 1939, *Rockford Register* has become the sole local source of information on the characteristics of Fairgrounds. In this piece, John Clifford writes about his experiences at Rockford's only major league park:

The games were played on the fair grounds and a poorer baseball field, to my mind, has never been known. Trees in every direction. There was a cluster of five around third base. The catcher was hemmed in by trees with the exception of a space about 30 by 50 feet. An umpire could not see a foul unless it hit back of the plate or a few feet on either side of the base lines. Between the plate and second base the terrain was fairly level, but approaching third base there was a noticeable rise and from third to the plate there was a depression and the base runner had to dig in for life.

At the edge of the outfield was a deep gutter to take care of water from the quarter-mile race track, and why more fielders did not break legs in this trap was because Providence protected them.

The bleachers were situated along first base and the plate and would accommodate about 300 to 500. They were made of bridge planking. In later years of the club's existence a grandstand was built, primarily to protect the scorers. The grandstand would seat about 30 to 40 persons.

Try to imagine a pop fly into the trees around third base sending fielders scurrying to catch up with it before it hit the ground, or a base runner running all out and rounding third heading for home—downhill. These were the “baseball” realities the great stars from the East, players such as Joe Start of New York, Al Reach of Philadelphia, Cleveland's third baseman Ezra Sut-

ton, or Washington's famed pitcher, Asa Brainard, faced when they played in tiny Rockford at the Agricultural Society's Fair Grounds Park. Interesting!

Trees at the edge of the outfield's perimeter and that deep gutter must have presented a daunting challenge for outfielders in pursuit of extra base hits. All in all, it seems that any ball player on the Fairgrounds field would be earning every last cent for playing on such a diamond. The Forest Citys of Rockford got used to it, no doubt, made the best of it, and before too long had assembled enough talent to overcome those home field idiosyncrasies. In fact, they managed to win the championship of the Northwest and became one of the nation's acknowledged elite between 1867 and 1870. Clearly, they belonged. So they arranged to join the National Association and went about the business of scheduling NA teams for the 1871 season. The final results didn't turn out quite the way they might have wanted them to, but Fig. 6.1 shows how Rockford's first and last major league season went.

Something about the Forest Citys' schedule is striking: only seven of its 25 NA games were played at the home diamond. Home fields in 1871 being what they were, each with its own oddities and unique challenges, provided an enormous advantage for the home team. Winning on the road is difficult at best without encountering special configurations or obstacles known only to the home team. Rockford's manpower might have had a great deal to do with it, but their record of 1 and 19 (that includes the forfeit losses that were originally wins on away diamonds) on the road sends a message about playing away. Their one road win was a 5 to 4 "hair-breadth Harry" victory at Troy, 5 to 4. Just how Hi Waldo was worked into such a scheduling corner isn't known, but it does at least hint that the rest of the league had vowed to stay away from Fairgrounds Park if at all possible—and fairly well succeeded.

In National Association games, Rockford was engaged in five, one-run clashes and another nine within a four-run margin, 14 in toto. Although it's generally true that good teams find a way to win close games and that poor teams find a way to lose close games, it is also true that ball clubs mired deep in the recesses of the standings frequently give the front-runners fits with tight and often exciting ball games. That was a big part of the Rockford story in 1871. Their loss to Boston on May 30 was typical of those "lost encounters of a disheartening kind." Playing at Boston's South End Grounds, the Forest Citys ran up against former Rockford stalwarts Spalding and Barnes and bowed to them when the Red Stockings scored the winning tally in the top of the ninth on a walk to Birdsall and hits by McVey and Gould, the latter scoring Birdsall with what proved to be the victory margin. In the last of the ninth, Rockford went down in one-two-three order, all credit to Spalding

Figure 6.1

Date	Against	W/L/Score	Record	Rck. Pitcher	Opp. Pitcher
May 6	vs. Cleveland	L 12-4	0-1	Fisher	Pratt
May 17	vs. Washington	L 15-12*	0-2	Fisher	Brainard
May 22	at Chicago	L 15-6	0-3	Fisher	Zettlein
May 23	at Fort Wayne	L 17-13*	0-4	Fisher	Mathews
May 24	at Cleveland	L 11-10	0-5	Fisher	Pratt
May 26	at Troy	L 20-15	0-6	Fisher	McMullin
May 29	at Boston	L 11-25	0-7	Fisher	Spalding
May 30	at Boston	L 11-10	0-8	Mack	Spalding
June 1	at New York	L 7-3	0-9	Fisher	Wolters
June 5	at Philadelphia	L 11-10*	0-10	Fisher	McBride
June 14	at New York	L 12-4	0-11	Fisher	Wolters
June 15	at Philadelphia	L 10-7*	0-12	Fisher	McBride
June 26	at Chicago	L 18-8	0-13	Fisher	Zettlein
July 4	at Chicago	L 17-13	0-14	Fisher	Zettlein
July 10	vs. Boston	L 21-12	0-15	Fisher	Spalding
July 17	vs. Philadelphia	L 11-7	0-16	Fisher	McBride
July 31	vs. New York	W 18-5	1-16	Fisher	Wolters
Aug. 3	vs. Fort Wayne	W 4-0	2-16	Fisher	Mathews
Aug. 8	vs. Cleveland	W 7-5	3-16	Fisher	Pratt
Aug. 21	at New York	L 6-5	3-17	Fisher	Wolters
Aug. 25	at Washington	L 5-2	3-18	Fisher	Brainard
Aug. 26	at Washington	L 7-18	3-19	Fisher	Brainard
Sep. 5	at Troy	W 15-5	4-19	Fisher	McMullin
Sep. 6	at Troy	L 5-4	4-20	Fisher	McMullin
Sep. 15	at Cleveland	L 16-8	4-21	Fisher	Pratt

*Games forfeited. The scores for these games before forfeiture as stated above, each originally a Rockford victory, would have changed its season record to 8 and 17, had forfeits over catcher Scott Hastings's status not been declared.

and his teammates—and that was the ball game. Later in the season, Ross Barnes and Al Spalding returned to Rockford for their only appearance there before a huge turnout. They celebrated accordingly by helping Boston run up a 21 to 12 score over the locals. The box score of the May 30 game at Boston is shown in Fig. 6.2.

Rockford played this game with a juggled lineup. First baseman Mack pitched, second baseman Addy played shortstop, Scott Hastings was at second base, Ham and Sager moved out of their customary positions, and Cherokee Fisher took a turn at first base. The powerful young rookie, Adrian Anson, had been moved by Capt. Hastings from behind the plate to third base, where, during his first full season, he was, truth told, a liability. But there was no removing him from the lineup. He just hit too well, racking up

Figure 6.2

Rockford	R	H	Boston	R	H
Mack, p*	1	0	Jackson, 2b	3	0
Addy, ss	1	0	Barnes, ss	3	3
Fisher, 1b	1	0	Birdsall, rf	1	0
Hastings, 2b	1	1	McVey, c	0	3
Stires, rf	1	1	H. Wright, cf	0	1
Ham, 3b	1	2	Gould, 1b	2	2
Anson, c	3	2	Schafer, 3b	1	1
Sager, lf	1	2	Barrows, lf	0	0
Bird, cf	0	0	Spalding, p	1	0
Totals	10	8	Totals	11	10

*This was the only NA game Cherokee Fisher did not pitch in the 1871 season. Note that Adrian "Cap" Anson was the catcher for this game, giving Scott Hastings a rest behind the plate.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Boston	2	5	1	0	0	0	2	0	1—11
Rockford	5	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0—10
2bh:	Stires								
Runs Earned:	Bostons 2, Forest Citys 6								
Umpire:	Mr. Lovett of the Boston Lowells								
Time:	2:55								

a solid .325 while leading the league in doubles with 11. Anson, usually called Anse, moved on to Philadelphia for the 1872 season, played third base there for a time, and, by 1873, was stationed at first base, where he remained during the rest of his 27-year major league career.

On their first swing through the East, the Forest Citys played at Philadelphia twice, winning both games by 11 to 10 and 10 to 7 scores. Or so they thought. Their considerable achievement brought a pair of victories into the win column until the NA's Championship Committee famously ruled otherwise at its November 3 meeting. But in June, the season was still young and the Rockfords drew rave reviews in the Philadelphia press. *The Rockford Register's* Saturday, June 24 edition reported:

We clip this report from the *Philadelphia "City Item"* speaking of the first Rockford-Athletic game:

The playing of the Forest City was on a par with the Athletics; Mack, formerly of the Experts of this city, doing wonders at first base; Addy at second base was really playing beautifully up to the eighth inning. In the ninth

he made two muffs, and by doing so he allowed the Athletics to score six runs; but allowing these errors, he is without doubt one of the finest second basemen in the country—his sure manner of stopping low hit balls and throwing them to bases is a pleasure to witness; Fulmer made his first appearance with them and played very finely, contrary to expectation, his sharp plays reflecting much credit on him; Anson and Mack led at the bat; Fisher pitched with more precision and swiftness than we have ever seen him do before. The Forest City have a very strong team that should prove tough customers to some of our crack clubs to handle when upon their tour West, and we have no doubt but that there will be several balls left with them³ by visiting clubs before the end of the season.

The second of the two Philadelphia games was played on June 15 at the Athletics' park, between 25th and 29th, and Jefferson and Masters Streets. Also known as the Jefferson Street Grounds, this famous baseball venue would become the site of the first National League game played on April 22, 1876, between Boston and Philadelphia. On June 15, 1871, however, Rockford's one-year wonders were in town and with a three-run rally in the sixth frame pulled ahead of the Athletics, finally winning it 10 to 7. That brought their record to 4 and 8 (again, one must be reminded that the 4 and 8 stood until that November 3 meeting), and things began to look up for the Forest Citys, having knocked off one of the premier Eastern ball clubs. The results of that game are shown in Fig. 6.3.

As July moved on into August, the Rockford club, playing at spacious Fairgrounds Park, finally put a few things together, winning three straight with victories over the New York Mutuals in their biggest win of the season, an 18 to 5 rout; a beautiful shutout over Fort Wayne, 4 to 0; and a 7 to 5 win over the other Forest City team, Cleveland. Unfortunately, they had to hit the road again and promptly lost three straight before posting their last win of the season at Troy, 5 to 4.

The Forest Citys of Rockford were probably a better ball club than their 4 and 21 log indicates. But the loss of Freddy Cone, Ross Barnes, and Al Spalding to Boston punched huge holes into the Rockford lineup that would have rocked any ball club during those formative major league years. When Harry Wright, the pioneering manager of the Red Stockings came calling, pocket-book and pen in hand, Boston's glitter, and the prospect of playing with the famous Wright duo, proved too much for young men like Barnes and Spalding to resist, intent as they were on making a real go of it in their chosen profession.

Unable to keep pace with the "big boys" of this new professional venture,

Figure 6.3

Philadelphia	R	H	PO	A	Rockford	R	H	PO	A
Cuthbert, lf	0	0	5	0	Mack, 1b	0	0	5	0
McBride, p	0	0	4	1	Anson, 3b	2	2	3	2
Radcliff, ss	2	2	2	2	Fisher, p	0	1	5	1
Malone, c	0	0	4	2	Hastings, c	2	0	3	0
Fisler, 1b	2	2	3	0	Addy, 2b	3	1	0	3
Reach, 2b	2	1	1	1	Stires, rf	2	2	2	0
Sensenderfer, cf	1	2	1	0	Ham, lf	0	1	3	0
Meyerle, 3b	0	1	3	2	Fulmer, ss	0	2	3	1
Heubel, rf	0	0	4	0	Bird, cf	1	1	3	0
Totals	7	8	27	8	Totals	10	10	27	7

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Rockford		0	2	0	2	0	3	1	0	2—10
Philadelphia		1	0	0	1	0	2	3	0	0—7

Bases on called balls:	Malone
Umpire:	Mr. Theodore Homelaler
Catches on Strike:	Hastings
Time of Game:	2:10

Hi Waldo and his Rockford associates soon realized that 1871 would be Rockford's one and only shot at national baseball recognition. No one had to tell them that it was soon going to be all over. But it was a great run while it lasted for the small-town ball players!

There was, however, a bothersome thing left behind. That was the Scott Hastings issue. That one would stick in the throat for some time to come. In David Nemeč's *The Great Encyclopedia of 19th Century Major League Baseball*, a special inset (p. 10) deals with the Hastings ruling. Nemeč's explanation:

Born in 1848 during the Mexican War, Scott Hastings was named after its most heroic figure, (Gen.) Winfield Scott. In 1870 Hastings played with Al Spalding and Ross Barnes on a strong Rockford team but then went south that winter to earn extra money playing for the Lone Star club in New Orleans. His next appearance came with Rockford on May 6 in its opening loss to Cleveland.

Hastings' presence on the Rockfords was protested by every rival club because of a rule the NA devised to prevent its teams from raiding one another during the season by offering a coveted player more money. Fearing that players would otherwise jump teams or "revolve" at will, the NA stipulated that no player under contract could play with another club for a period of 60 days from his last game with his old club. Since Hastings had been under contract to the Lone Stars and last

played with them on April 16, he was not eligible to play for Rockford until June 16. Upon a motion made by F. H. Mason of Cleveland at the league meeting (the championship committee reported to this meeting, you will recall) on November 3, 1871, the four games Rockford won before June 16 were erased and given instead to their opponents. One should suppose that Philadelphia, which stood to gain two of those disputed games, prodded Mason more than gently to put up his hand.⁴

But there is another way to look at the Hastings case. John Molyneaux of Rockford has that viewpoint, indicated in correspondence dated June 27, 2005, with permission. In the excerpt following, he responds to Bill Ryczek's account of the ineligibility issue as stated in *Blackguards and Red Stockings*. The Molyneaux response:

I hadn't seen the account of the Hastings case in *Blackguards and Red Stockings*, but I have seen the account in the *Great Encyclopedia*. I think the statement (see above) in the encyclopedia is fairly stated; the other account I find a little disagreeable in its interpretation. There are some factors which are either ignored or not known to both accounts, which I'll try to explain.

First, it is clear that there is no generally accepted interpretation of the "anti-revolving" rule. Everyone agreed that it should apply to games involving members of the National Association; there was no general agreement that it should apply to a situation involving an NA member and a non-NA member. That is the basic reason why the Forest City club continued to play Hastings, and that is the reason the Judiciary Committee "was called upon to resolve the situation." The more you think about it, the less reasonable the Judiciary Committee's ruling appears. The suggestion made in their account in the encyclopedia, that the Athletics probably put on pressure to arrive at the decision is more than likely, since the Athletics were, in fact, the only team that had much to gain by such a decision. In the *Blackguards* piece the writer says the Forest City club claimed that the games of the Lone Stars in which Hastings participated should be forfeited—and comments "This was of little concern to the committee, since the New Orleans club was not a member of the NA." (Ibid. p. 46)

Well, yes—nice to be able to interpret the rule one way, then turn right around and interpret it in favor of the Athletics. It has always annoyed me that few point out that the committee was having it both ways here, and the only benefactor was the Athletic club.

Second, there is merit in Hi Waldo's position that Hastings was indeed a member of the Forest Citys and not the Lone Stars. Hastings had played for the Forest City team in 1869 and 1870—he had been the leading hitter in 1870, in fact. He had played for the Bloomington, IL, baseball club in 1866–68, then came to Rockford. He was, in fact, a professional baseball player and his move south in 1870–71 was solely to earn his living. . . .

Third, the characterization of Hi Waldo as the “Rockford manager” isn’t accurate, at least as far as the Forest City club had traditionally operated. Hastings was the field manager in 1871 and was responsible for drawing up the lineup . . .

Well, there you are—my take on the forfeit situation is basically that the rule was unclear at first, then willfully bent to the advantage of the Athletics—there really wasn’t any concern with the Forest City club, because it had already disbanded before the meeting was held.⁵

Whatever the ruling and however interpreted, the Scott Hastings case stood as a pivotal point in the determination of the final standings of the NA’s inaugural season. And the final decision put both Boston and Chicago, whose clubs thought their position was just as strong and just as correct in their interpretation about games and series victories as the committee’s, beyond the hope of a championship. That was awarded, in effect, by Rockford, the tiniest dot on the NA map, to Philadelphia via the Scott Hastings case and the forfeit route—and there it stands for the ages.

Notes

1. John Molyneaux, Rockford’s most knowledgeable baseball historian, especially with respect to 19th-century baseball, often opens up his evening as a guest lecturer on the subject of Rockford baseball with this attention-getting remark.

2. The *causus belli*, or primary cause of warfare, was over the status of four Rockford games, two of which, as pointed out previously, resulted in forfeits of Rockford victories over the Athletics.

3. A long-standing tradition, dating back to early amateur baseball days, was to award the last ball in play to the winning team. These balls were kept and finally mounted in glass cases in the club houses of the various baseball or fraternal organizations of those earlier times.

4. David Nemeč. *The Great Encyclopedia of 19th Century Major League Baseball*. New York: Donald I. Fine, 1997, p. 10.

5. William J. Ryczek, *Blackguards and Red Stockings: A History of Baseball’s National Association, 1871–1875*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1992, p. 45–46.

CHAPTER SEVEN



Troy's Haymakers

Down the Hudson River in New York and Brooklyn, the Unions from upstate Troy were called a bunch of haymakers. That wasn't necessarily meant to be complimentary. But the ball players in Troy didn't let that bother them. In fact, their team picture sported fellows on either end of their portrait with pitchforks in their hands instead of bats. The Unions, originally from nearby Lansingburgh, took it in stride and assumed Haymakers as their team's name the first time someone spotted the moniker in New York's papers. Although the first Troy ball club was organized in 1860, it wasn't until after the Civil War that the town, located across the Hudson from Albany and its "suburb" of Lansingburgh, joined in area games that were a part of baseball's coming of age during the late 1860s.

In 1866, Brooklyn's Atlantics had handed the Unions a pretty severe whipping, 46 to 11, to open up the Lansingburgh–New York-area rivalry. The next year, the Atlantics beat them again, this time by "only" 20 runs. The Mutes of New York also beat them in 1867 by a 19 to 6 count and, though they also lost to Morrisania of New York City, 51 to 23, they finally managed to break their New York losing streak by beating the Morrisanias 26 to 21 in a later engagement. Already in that 1867 season, their lineup showcased the likes of veteran professionals Bub McAtee, Clipper Flynn, Bill Craver, and the King brothers, all of whom would be heard from in the years ahead—Haymakers all. With a population nearing 50,000, Troy, New York, was a major player in the industrial development of the state during the 1860s and '70s. It was a rail hub, serving as the hardworking, that is to say blue-collar, counterpart to the state's governmental headquarters in Albany. The three communities (Lansingburgh, the third, located just north of Troy, was made a part of that city in 1900) were as much into the baseball craze

of post-Civil War years as the bigger cities along the East Coast and in the South.

By 1869, the Unions of Lansingburgh were into the thick of professional competition, playing 21 of their 35 games against such teams as the Washington Nationals, New York's pro teams, and Philadelphia's play-for-pay teams. That summer, they contracted with the Cincinnati Red Stockings for games in June and August. On May 31, they opened their schedule of professional games with the Brooklyn Atlantics, tying them at 19. A week later, they played against Harry Wright's famed club and lost 37 to 31. The team had added Cuban Steve Bellan, Charley Bearman, and Cherokee Fisher to their roster by this time, and would win far more than it lost in '69. But Cincinnati was something quite apart at that juncture. Their game in August would be a high point of the season, especially because the Red Stocking winning streak had grown to a mammoth 39 games before their August 26th meeting. The game played on that date featured a play by catcher Bill Craver, the crusty Lansingburgh captain, during which he caught a ball after it had hit the ground. The rules governing play at that time specified that a ball caught after its first bounce and before the second bounce was considered an out. Craver claimed that Cincinnati's Cal McVey, who had fouled off one of pitcher Charlie Bearman's pitches, was out because he had caught the ball after its first bounce. Umpire Brockway didn't see it that way, ruling that Craver had caught the ball after its third hop. The heated argument that followed resulted in Craver's pulling his Lansingburgh team off the field, which, in turn, prompted umpire Brockway to declare the game a forfeit, ending it after six innings of play at a 17-17 tie, thus giving Cincinnati a 9-0 victory.

Aside from the tie, a favored decision for many baseball historians, or forfeit, and the fact that it kept Cincinnati's unprecedented winning streak intact, there were overtones of wagers on the game, which played into Capt. Craver's decision (aided and abetted by the club's president, John McKeon) to pull his club from the field of play, enabling bettors to cover their bets on the game.¹ It was a rather messy afternoon of baseball in Cincinnati, causing cancellation of a follow-up game, which was to have been played the next day.

One of the consequences of that 1869 season and the Cincinnati game in August was that when Troy officials² showed up at the NA's organizational meeting in 1871, there were no raised eyebrows and no questions asked about the club's stature among professional teams. The club had put together a strong lineup capable of holding its own among the play-for-pay boys. There

had, in fact, been close connections between Troy and New York. New York congressman, John Morrissey, tainted with gaming and racetrack scandals, was the owner of the Haymakers (cfr. Guschov, *ibid.* p. 76). But it was Troy's John W. Schofield, head of the Troy delegation, who opened the Collier's Inn meeting and was later elected secretary of the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players. Haymakers they were called, but hayshakers or country bumpkins, they were not.

That said, the Troy franchise was not without problems, not least of which was its unsavory ties to New York's "fast buck" interests. Its playing facilities were less than adequate and it drew from a small and rather isolated population base. There were also problems with the ball they put into play, put together in Troy, that caused constant haggling and consternation on the part of other teams in the league. That latter, as detailed previously in the Fort Wayne game on June 19, caused a full-scale brouhaha.

Concerning that most essential piece of baseball equipment, the ball, it will be helpful to provide some insight as to its status in 1871. Although accounts of the day indicated at least a dozen different game balls of the same *approximate* size and weight in use, the ball put in play by the Troy club was clearly different, varying in particular from the specified NA regulations of five, to not more than five and one quarter ounces and no less than nine inches, but *no more* than nine and one quarter inches in circumference. The ball used by the Haymakers was at or close to those specifications but its composition was not. The rulebook of the day required a ball composed of woolen yarn, containing no more than an ounce of vulcanized rubber. How tightly the ball's yarn was wound and the actual substance of the core varied somewhat from manufacturer to manufacturer. It wasn't until 1873 that the NA legislated the use of a ball produced by the Ryan Manufacturers so that all the teams would be using a single, standardized ball. And even then the ruling wasn't strictly enforced because, by some odd quirk of circumstance, it didn't wind up in the rulebook.

The ball used by the Haymaker crew was reputedly the liveliest ball in use among NA teams. And it caused no end of controversy. Complaints and arguments were commonplace. For example, on July 3, the mighty Mutuals came to town looking to improve on their 9 and 3 record only to be pulverized by the Haymakers' most outrageous orgy of the summer as they bombed the Mutes with 37 markers.

Even before the slaughter started, Ole Fergy, Mutes captain Bob Ferguson, had asked the familiar question, "What's wrong with this Troy picture?" He answered for himself, "The ball." Accordingly, he opted for one of the balls

the Mutuals brought along as the preferred game ball. In response would captain Bill Craver tell the umpire that since the visiting team was authorized to select a game ball, he would agree to Ferguson's selection? Of course not! Craver proposed, instead, that his ball and Ferguson's should be dropped from shoulder height to determine which was livelier. Then the umpire could make the choice. That was done over Ferguson's objection. As luck would have it, on that particular day both balls bounced from the ground around home plate to just about the same height, not so much as an eighth of an inch separating them. The nod went to Craver's Haymakers and the lively Troy ball was put into play. 37 to 16 was the result in a game that had the New Yorkers chasing all over the lot after hot Troy smashes.

Earlier in the season, Fort Wayne ran afoul the Troy ball in a game at one of Troy's home fields, the Bull's Head Tavern Grounds. In this one, the ball came partially apart at the seams by the sixth inning. A new ball offered by Craver was totally unacceptable to Kekiongas captain Lennon (see chapter 3). Rather than risk their 6 to 3 lead that day, Lennon and his teammates walked off the field. That occasioned a forfeiture and Fort Wayne came home empty handed. But, as usual in games the Troy nine played, the ball was the object of primary concern.

Boston's talented and enterprising pitcher, Al Spalding, who, by his 27th birthday, was well into the baseball equipment manufacturing business, no doubt took note of all these irregularities and when the time came, cashed in handsomely by offering and securing exclusive rights to the new National League's ball. Its seams had been designed by a young shoemaker's son named Elias Drake, and the ball itself, more tightly wound and much more uniform in every respect, was a huge improvement, stabilizing the play of the game and taking the "home advantage" out of privately manufactured baseballs.

Fans today will understand what kind of problems those balls raised. Watching juiced balls disappear into the cheap seats these days is, well, *de rigueur*. To many, it's disappointing to go to a 1 to 0 or 2 to 1 game featuring "small ball" victories. Those power-happy folks wouldn't have missed a Troy game! A look at their season rundown illustrates the point. But note, too, that the wildest game of the summer was played between Troy and Philadelphia—at Troy (Fig. 7.1).

The Troy ball club didn't lack for punch. Haymaker hitters scored on an average of 12 runs per game, knocked out 13 hits, and wound up the season as one of three teams in the NA with a team batting average over .300. The trouble was that their opponents joined right in on knocking the ball around,

Figure 7.1

Date	Against	W/L/Score	Record	Troy Pitcher	Opp. Pitcher
May 9	vs. Boston	L 9-5	0-1	McMullin	Spalding
May 16	at Boston	W 29-14	1-1	McMullin	Spalding
May 18	vs. New York	L 14-3	1-2	McMullin	Wolters
May 22	vs. Washington	L 14-5	1-3	McMullin	Brainard
May 25	at New York	W 25-10	2-3	McMullin	Wolters
May 26	vs. Rockford	W 20-15	3-3	McMullin	Fisher
June 2	at Washington	L 11-8	3-4	McMullin	Brainard
June 3	at Philadelphia	L 11-5	3-5	McMullin	McBride
June 12	vs. Cleveland	L 20-11	3-6	McMullin	Pratt
June 19	vs. Fort Wayne	W 6-3*	4-6	McMullin	Mathews
June 28	vs. Philadelphia	L 49-33	4-7	McMullin	McBride
July 3	vs. New York	W 37-16	5-7	McMullin	Wolters
July 13	at New York	W 9-7	6-7	McMullin	Wolters
July 27	vs. Washington	T 3-3	6-7-1	McMullin	Brainard
July 28	at Washington	W 10-6	7-7-1	McMullin	Brainard
Aug. 3	vs. Boston	W 13-12	8-7-1	McMullin	Spalding
Aug. 25	vs. Cleveland	W 11-3	9-7-1	McMullin	Pratt
Aug. 29	at Fort Wayne	L 6-4	9-8-1	McMullin	Mathews
Aug. 30	vs. Cleveland	W 17-12	10-8-1	McMullin	Pratt
Sep. 4	vs. Cleveland	L 9-4	10-9-1	McMullin	Pratt
Sep. 5	vs. Rockford	L 15-5	10-10-1	McMullin	Fisher
Sep. 6	vs. Rockford	W 5-4	11-10-1	McMullin	Fisher
Sep. 13	at Boston	L 20-17	11-11-1	McMullin	Spalding
Sep. 27	vs. Washington	W 16-7	12-11-1	McMullin	Brainard
Sep. 29	vs. Washington	L 15-13	12-12-1	McMullin	Brainard
Oct. 7	at Boston	L 12-3	12-13-1	McMullin	Spalding
Oct. 9	at Philadelphia	L 15-13	12-14-1	McMullin	McBride
Oct. 21	vs. Chicago	L 11-5	12-15-1	McMullin	Zettlein
Oct. 23	vs. Chicago	W 5-4	13-15-1	McMullin	Zettlein

*This game was ruled a forfeit to Troy, 9 to 0, by the Championship Committee.

running up 431 hits against pitcher John McMullin (15/game) while averaging a lusty .342, which was highest in the league and 37 percentage points worse than Fort Wayne's second from the bottom at .305. Much like two heavyweights standing toe to toe at the center of the ring and trading KO punches until one of them finally dropped, the New York upstaters and their opponents ran up big scores in the most time-consuming games of the season.

In the game at Troy against Philadelphia, both teams piled it on, though even by Troy standards, that one was beyond extraordinary. Chasing home 33 runs would have been enough to win at least three games by 1871 standards, but the Haymakers couldn't even win this one! The Philadelphia Ath-

letics must have enjoyed the slugfest much more than their hosts, pounding the ball silly while clattering 49 tallies across the plate to win the highest-scoring tilt in the history of the National Association—or any other major league for that matter. Because this game was played at Troy, what is one to make of the game ball(s) in use during this game! The visiting Athletics were required to furnish the game ball, so it is quite probable (there is no story about the choice of balls, as was the case in the New York–Troy game) that Troy's ball wasn't the one that was smashed to smithereens. Each club scored at least one run in every one of the nine tortuous innings played. Here is the improbable line score:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Philadelphia	2	4	3	7	9	8	3	5	8	49
Troy	1	2	3	10	4	4	2	4	3	33

In this game, the two teams poled 67 base hits, and on this all-hitters day (incredibly, the two pitchers, Dick McBride and the homestanding Troy hurler, John McMullin went the route), three Haymakers and two of the Athletics had five hits apiece. The box score is shown in Fig. 7.2.

The *New York Clipper*, in its July 8 edition, carried the story of the game, adding these notes below the box score:

It was reported to the New York press that both McBride and Meyerle (Philadelphia players) indulged in profanity on the occasion but this they both deny. It is a little singular that there should be so much trouble up in Troy about umpiring. The ball played with was very elastic and not a dead one, as stated (previously), it being one of the last year's make, so the ball maker says, whose name was on it.

Figure 7.2

Philadelphia	R	H	TB	PO	Troy	R	H	TB	PO
Cuthbert	6	4	8	4	McGeary	4	5	5	0
McBride	7	4	5	1	York	5	2	6	2
Radcliffe	7	5	7	1	Flowers	5	3	7	1
Malone	3	5	5	4	Flynn	4	3	3	12
Fisler	6	4	6	8	King	3	3	4	4
Reach	6	4	10	3	McMullin	3	3	5	0
Sensenderfer	5	4	4	1	Pike	3	5	7	2
Meyerle	6	4	4	3	Bellan	3	2	5	2
Heubel	3	2	2	2	Craver	3	5	6	4
Totals	49	36	51	27	Totals	33	31	48	27

This Philadelphia game was part of a ten-game stretch during which the Haymakers won seven, tied one, and improved their record from 3 and 6 to 10-8-1. That left another eight games on their schedule (two more were added with Chicago after the Great Fire), and during those final games they won only three. Their last game of the season was played in biting cold on October 23 at Troy against the White Stockings, who were trying to keep their championship hopes alive despite the tragic conflagration of October 8. Troy won that game 19 to 12 to post a 13-15-1 NA season record. It was no more than a fair to middling ball club that could finish no higher than sixth in the nine-team league—even though it had some outstanding stars, notably Clipper Flynn, Steve King, catcher Mike McGeary, and sweet-swinging Lip Pike who hit at a strong .377 clip in NA games.

Bombast was not always the order of the day during Troy's NA season. Six of their 29 games, excluding the 3-3 tie with the Washington Olympics resulted in victory or loss margins of three runs or less: at New York, a 9 to 7 win; at Troy, a 13 to 12 loss to Boston; a 6 to 4 loss at Fort Wayne; a taut 5 to 4 win over Rockford at Troy; a 20 to 17 loss to Boston in a hitter's contest; and a 15 to 13 loss to the Olympics at Troy. Among these close contests, none of which compare in kind to the high 20s and 30s games that the Haymakers were quite often involved in, a game against Rockford stands out.

Troy's 5 to 4 victory over the Rockford Citys followed a 15 to 5 loss to the Forest Citys only 24 hours earlier. On September 5, the Haymakers booted the ball all over the Bull's Head Tavern Grounds in a miserable defensive exhibition won by Rockford. As happens to this very day, one would not have recognized the same ball club a day later, as they fielded brilliantly, got one of pitcher John McMullin's best efforts of the summer and posted their 11th win of the season. One line in the *Clipper* review tells the story:

Not a run was earned on either side, the game being won by superior fielding, as the score of first base by errors shows.³

One might wonder what the ball had to do with this or other close games the Haymakers played. Because this 5 to 4 game was played at Troy, a ball from the Rockford ball bag was most likely used. In two days, Troy "only" scored 10 runs. Other low-scoring games included the two Fort Wayne matches, one of which was a six-inning affair, and both of which featured balls furnished by Troy; the 3 to 3 tie with Washington, which was played at Troy; and the Rockford 5 to 4 game. Is there a key to the mystery of the game ball here? Probably. But very iffy. Pitching and good defensive play are

variables that factor into the final story, juiced ball or not. Ultimately, this seeming anomaly is left to conjecture. Notwithstanding, the Rockford–Troy game box score is shown in Fig. 7.3.

Troy, from among the three clubs representing small communities that helped pioneer professional baseball, left a lasting imprint on organized baseball through its direct line ancestry with today's San Francisco Giants. The Giants' family tree traces back to the small community up the Hudson River, where, in 1881 and 1882 as a National League member, it was the forefather of New York's Giants (1883–1957), one of the elite N. L. franchises, before it moved to San Francisco for the 1958 season.

Long before Christy Mathewson, King Carl Hubbell, Willie Mays, and Barry Bonds, there were "Giants" in Haymaker country. 11 of them were on the original 1871 club that ushered in the first professional baseball league.

The Troy Haymakers passed into the annals of the National Association midway through the 1872 season. And they did it in style. Playing at Middletown, Connecticut, they blanked the Mansfields behind George Zettlein, who had signed with them for the '72 season, 7 to 0 on July 23. That's a great way to say good-bye! But the end had come.

As many were to experience in the years to come, the financial toll

Figure 7.3

Rockford	R	H	PO	A	Troy	R	H	PO	A
Mack, 1b	1	0	11	0	McGeary, c	2	1	5	1
Anson, 3b	1	1	0	5	York, cf	0	1	0	0
Fisher, p	1	1	1	1	Connors, 1b	1	1	12	0
Hastings, c	0	1	1	1	Flynn, 1b	1	0	2	4
Addy, 2b	0	2	3	4	King, lf	1	1	2	0
Stires, rf	0	0	3	1	McMullin, p	0	3	0	2
Ham, lf	0	1	3	0	Pike, rf	0	1	3	0
Fulmer, ss	1	0	2	3	Bellan, ss	0	0	1	4
Bird, cf	0	0	3	0	Craver, 2b	0	1	2	4
Totals	4	6	27	15	Totals	5	9	27	15

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Rockford	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0
Troy	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0

Total bases earned:	Rockford 6, Troy 9
First base by errors:	Rockford 7, Troy 4
Umpire:	Mr. Daubney of the Union Base Ball Club
Time of Game:	2:15

(impossibilities would be more accurate) was just too great. Middletown, too, along with Rockford and Fort Wayne, which had preceded them in 1871; New Haven and Hartford, both Connecticut teams; Elizabeth, New Jersey; and Keokuk, a “far western” Iowa outpost, all bit the dust during those first formative years, marked as they were by baseball’s first venture into an organized system of competition that had as its chief characteristic play for pay.

Note that these teams each had a telling problem in common: a small population base. Despite their enthusiasm and some great players, and often intelligent, even canny leadership, they were ultimately victimized by smaller attendance numbers and the limited resources that provided. Alas, the Haymakers were no exception to that stony fact of professional baseball life.

Notes

1. The entire Lansingburgh–Cincinnati affair rates a separate chapter in Stephen Guschov’s *The Red Stockings of Cincinnati: Base Ball’s First Professional Team*, published by McFarland, Jefferson, NC, 1998. See chapter 15, p. 76, ff.

2. Between 1869 and 1871, professional baseball in the Albany, New York, area had shifted from the community of Lansingburgh to its neighbor directly south, Troy. The Unions had ceased to exist and became, originally the Troy Unions. Soon after, the Haymakers nickname appeared in New York papers, and the Troy nine would become known as the Troy Haymakers.

3. *The New York Daily Clipper*, September 16, 1871.

THE BROTHERS WRIGHT

The right brothers came along at the right time. Named Wright, they came out of cricket-playing stock, converted early in life to the new American 19th-century craze, baseball, and with uncommonly good sense, tempered by a strong Puritan-like ethic, led the move from strictly amateur play to the play-for-pay ranks. Their names were Harry and George. They were sired by an athlete and were themselves gifted athletes, but that is almost incidental to the leadership they provided in playing, organizing, managing, and spreading the game among younger generations of Americans who played this game called baseball at every opportunity.

No baseball history is complete without reference to the Wrights. Nor would the story of the National Association and its first year, 1871, be. Many people contributed mightily to the birth and nurturing of baseball's first professional league, but the brothers Wright were indispensable to day-by-day organization and play, providing recognized, star-quality names to the enterprise that was so essential to its success, popularity, and above all, survival. There were very few "star" names at first. That would soon come. But baseball followers knew players like Joe Start, Al Reach, Davy Force, John "The Count" Sensenderfer, Dickie Pearce, Charlie Gould, Asa Brainard, Jimmy Wood—and the Wrights, Harry and George. Especially those latter two, Harry and brother George. The Al Spaldings, Ross Barnes and Cap Ansons would follow on later as big names in the pro game's early development.

The older of the two, Harry, was baseball's first manager, recognized by one and all as a man of extraordinary organizational ability, putting everything in order from lineups to hotel accommodations. He was not only a strategist but an innovator as well. Under his direction, the flow and style of play became a thing of artistic beauty. And he stood for something whole-

some and right at a time when the game, already in its first years of professional play, was rife with gambling, alcoholism, game-fixing, and still other evils. Those kind of things would not happen under Harry Wright's nose. Further, he insisted on a hard day's work. No slacking. Those who paid to see his team play would get their money's worth. And beyond all that, he was one of the better players of his day, performing ably as an outfielder and pitcher. All of that wrapped up in one individual is hard to believe, but that was the essence of Harry Wright, who was deservedly, though somewhat tardily, elected to baseball's Hall of Fame in 1953.

Two years before his death in 1895, the *1893 Reach Official Base Ball Guide* had this to say about Harry Wright's leadership:

(Wright) as a controller of men has no peer, and in controlling base ball players successfully he shows unwonted powers, because, as a rule, professional ball players are a rather untractable set. It is Mr. Wright's system to never find fault after a defeat. It is when the team wins that he takes occasion to criticize the player's work, because they will then be in a frame of mind to take criticism kindly. If Mr. Wright, as a manager, has a fault, it lies in an over kindness and a lack of severe methods in dealing with the men.

Urbane, courteous, a man of flawless character, Harry Wright was just the kind of man Ivers Whitney Adams, president of the Boston baseball club that would seek entry into the National Association, was looking for. Adams contacted George Wright, seeking his advice in naming a manager for the Bostons, actually hoping that George, himself, would consent. George Wright's immediate reply was, "Brother Harry is your man." Adams complied and Boston soon had baseball's pioneer and truly first manager, Harry Wright.

George Wright, 12 years younger than brother Harry, was professional baseball's first superstar, a player of enormous athletic talent and among the first to be elected to the Hall of Fame (1937). Although the elder Wright's election to the Hall of Fame was primarily due to his managerial duties and varied contributions to the game, the younger Wright got there on his playing ability. As a mere stripling of 15, he began astounding people on the Elysian Fields (the name stems from Greek mythology, which named the abode of the dead in paradise as Elysian Fields) as a cricket player. In that romantically famous place, located across from New York City in the Hoboken, New Jersey, sports venue, baseball diamonds were laid out next to the cricket fields. Young George took advantage of the lay of the land and soon had folks eyeing him as one of the best baseball prospects they had seen.

By 1867, still only 20, he was the star of the famed Washington Nationals that toured westward in baseball's hinterlands. And by the time the 1869 season was history, George, with older brother Harry as manager, had powered the famed Red Stockings to an undefeated season, hitting prodigious blasts to far-off fields, fielding adroitly, and, to put it simply, wowing everyone in sight with his magnificence as a ball player.

As good as his hitting was, his fielding was even better. During the late 1860s and early '70s the debate raged on: whose short-stopping was superior, Dickie Pearce's or Wright's? The nod, when offered, usually went to George Wright. Far-ranging, with a rifle of an arm hanging from his shoulder, the sure-handed Wright made some eye-popping plays that Pearce himself admired. And he was just as much an innovator, both at the bat and in the field as his older brother was in strategizing news ways to win games. The difference between the two was that the elder took the game on as an event writ large, while the younger more or less confined his talent to the play of the game in front of him. Both were remarkably superb at what they did.

Harry Wright was present at the Collier's Inn meeting that signaled the new professional era. The meeting would have been less than successful without him. He took matters in hand when it came to relationships between member teams, scheduling games, and concerning himself with those smaller, yet essential details that needed attention. And he did so without ulterior motive. Consequently, Wright was on hand from the outset as one whose considered opinion was sought and usually followed.

During the NA's first year, the Wrights led the Boston nine to a strong contending position, standing atop the league's standings at times. But the Bostons were not destined to take home the Association's first pennant, not with star George Wright sidelined by a leg injury that prevented him from playing in half of Boston's NA engagements. But the Wrights were not to be denied. Their work in the company of a superior cast that decimated the rest of the league, would net Boston's Red Stockings four straight championships. Though they didn't win it all in 1871, the Wright brothers had laid the groundwork not only for the Boston powerhouse, but were instrumental in more ways than one, in laying the foundation pieces for a workable association of professional teams.

That considerable achievement is reason enough for their enshrinement in the Hall of Fame. Boston's baseball buffs share that heritage—with gratitude.

CHAPTER EIGHT



Red Stockings in Boston

Long before the first professional association of teams got started there was a version of baseball called the Philadelphia game. There was also the New York game. And there was a Massachusetts game, very popular among Bostonians and “Down Easterners.” Each of these versions of the game differed somewhat, featuring its own set of rules and conventions. The Massachusetts game, for example, was laid out on a square, not a diamond. One out ended an inning and that out could be made by hitting a base runner with a thrown ball. As time moved on, baseball teams in New England gradually took on the rulebook and style of the New York game. By the mid-1800s, the New York game, which featured the style of play we would recognize today, had gained near-universal acceptance.

In 1858, a game in Boston between Portland, Maine, and the Tri Mountains Club, resulting in a 49 to 42 victory for the Tri Mountains of Boston, was the first to be played in New England according to the New York rules. By 1867, riding a crest of post-Civil War popularity, the New England Association of Base Ball had sponsored a tournament that was played according to the New York rulebook. The Tri Mountains, Brooklines, Lowells, and Winthrops, all Boston clubs, and many others from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine were active in games against both amateurs and professional or semi-professional teams. And, after the 1870 season, the organizations that would soon be putting together professional teams in anticipation of a league of teams like the National Association, all seemed to be on the same page, ready to play according to a somewhat (universally accepted standards were yet to come) standardized set of rules.

By March of 1871, 11 of these teams were ready to meet in New York. Nine of them banded together, as we have seen, forming the National Asso-

ciation. Harry Wright and the Boston delegation were at the very center of things during that epoch-making gathering of professional pioneers.

When the Boston Red Stockings were founded on January 20, 1871, just a matter of weeks before the NA's organizational meeting, there was no Nostradamus around to predict that the club would become the only professional organization to field a team continuously through every season right on down to the present day. By 1871, baseball in Boston had come a long way from its early days when the game was played on the oldest commons in America. And its 1871 pivot point in baseball history is certainly a year to mark. The franchise's first president, Ives Charles, started a professional baseball tradition that progressed from the Red Stockings' May 5, 1871, NA debut, to the National League in 1876, and on through several cities including Milwaukee and Atlanta, to get to the 21st century. The unbroken continuity is in itself an amazing achievement, all things considered, to say nothing of the exploits and achievements many players and franchise officials have contributed to the Braves' (nee Red Stockings) unique history.

But 1871 was the watershed year for Boston baseball, a year that was marked by its coming of age as a major player among the baseball giants of the 19th century. Harry Wright's coming to town at the behest of Ives Charles would alone have marked its singularity. But there was more: 1871, coincidentally, was the year when professionals sorted themselves out into clearly distinguishable and different groups of ball players. The pros would play just about every day of the week during the summer months and into the fall, if not against an exclusively professional schedule, then at least against other teams, or in practice sessions. And if a professional player had signed on with a Harry Wright team, he knew there would be practice, practice, a Wright trademark.

The erstwhile leader of the Cincinnati Red Stockings made his presence felt immediately. He wasted no time in gathering the kind of players that he felt he could mold into a team capable of holding its own among the best in the land. Exactly when or what Wright and Charles knew in advance about the possibility of forming a professional association of teams is left to conjecture, but there can be little doubt that Wright's intention from the very beginning was to field a team capable of taking on the Mutuals, White Stockings, Athletics, or any of the rest of the country's professional teams.

Harry Wright started his assemblage with known products. From the 1870 Cincinnati club he managed, he brought brother George, Cal McVey, and Charlie Gould. The fourth Red Stocking player would be Wright himself. Having seen the Rockford nine in 1868 and '69, he knew there were two or

three of them he wanted. Having been staked to a \$15,000 bankroll by the club's directors, Wright also went after others, including outfielder Fred Cone, plus two other stalwarts from Rockford's Forest Citys, infielder Roscoe "Ross" Barnes and the youthful pitching sensation, Al Spalding. That maneuver jolted Rockford's hopes while at the same time bringing to Boston two young men who would be among the National Association's greatest stars.

Rounding out his starting nine with Dave Birdsall of the 1870 Morrisania of New York and Harry "Silk Stocking" Schafer of the '70 Philadelphia club, Wright put together a team that would finish the season hitting .310, stealing a league-leading 73 bases (two-plus per game) and leading in double plays with 24 (almost one per game). It was a typical Wright ball club, emphasizing a balanced attack, speed, good defense, and heads-up play. They made it through their first NA season with an 11-man squad despite having to play without shortstop George Wright in half its NA games. The star midfielder had been severely injured in an early season game with the Troy Haymakers.

The two players who rounded out the roster included one Bostonian, a former Tri Mountain star, Frank Barrows, and Sam Jackson, a utility player who helped patch holes in the lineup during George Wright's absence.

Harry Wright's Red Stockings, this time appearing under the Boston banner, played its National Association schedule with the results shown in Fig. 8.1.

Prior to September of their inaugural season in the NA, the Red Stockings never seemed to get things together enough to put any distance between themselves and the other top contenders. They missed George Wright during that time, but Ross Barnes moved into Wright's shortstop slot and played the position quite well. During this pre-September stretch, it was not only Wright's absence that made a difference in Boston's record. Al Spalding's pitching also factored into the play of the red-hosed Bostons. Still a youngster, Spalding was finding his way, and, during the course of the season, he began to develop a variety of deliveries that kept hitters off balance—even though they knew his only pitch was a high, hard one. But before he did, Boston could muster only a 13-9-1 record, not nearly good enough to match winning percentages with Chicago or Philadelphia.

Then came September. Still within striking distance of a champion's whip flag, Boston was a different team. George Wright was back, Al Spalding was more in command of his growing pitching repertoire, and the club promptly tacked together a six-game winning skein. Through their last nine games they logged an eight and one record, losing only to the White Stockings in

Figure 8.1

Date	Against	W/L/Score	Record	Bos. Pitcher	Opp. Pitcher
May 5	at Washington	W 20-18	1-0	Spalding	Brainard
May 9	at Troy	W 9-5	2-0	Spalding	McMullin
May 16	vs. Troy	L 29-14	2-1	Spalding	McMullin
May 20	vs. Philadelphia	W 11-8	3-1	Spalding	McBride
May 24	vs. Washington	T 4-4	3-1-1	Spalding	Brainard
May 27	vs. Washington	L 6-5	3-2-1	Spalding	Brainard
May 29	vs. Rockford	W 25-11	4-2-1	Spalding	Fisher
May 30	vs. Rockford	W 11-10	5-2-1	Spalding	Mack
June 2	vs. Chicago	L 16-14	5-3-1	Spalding	Zettlein
June 14	vs. Cleveland	L 8-7	5-4-1	Spalding	Pratt
June 17	vs. New York	L 9-3	5-5-1	Spalding	Wolters
June 21	vs. Fort Wayne	W 21-0	6-5-1	Spalding	Mathews
June 26	at Philadelphia	L 20-8	6-6-1	Spalding	McBride
July 4	at Washington	W 7-3	7-6-1	Spalding	Brainard
July 7	at Chicago	L 7-1	7-7-1	Spalding	Zettlein
July 10	at Rockford	W 21-10	8-7-1	Spalding	Fisher
July 12	at Fort Wayne	W 30-9	9-7-1	Spalding	Mathews
July 13	at Cleveland	W 12-8	10-7-1	Spalding	Pratt
Aug. 3	at Troy	L 13-12	10-8-1	Spalding	McMullin
Aug. 7	at Philadelphia	W 23-7	11-8-1	Spalding	McBride
Aug. 8	at Washington	W 7-4	12-8-1	Spalding	Brainard
Aug. 22	at New York	L 15-11	12-9-1	Spalding	Wolters
Sep. 2	vs. Cleveland	W 31-10	13-9-1	Spalding	Pratt
Sep. 5	vs. Chicago	W 6-3	14-9-1	Spalding	Zettlein
Sep. 9	vs. Philadelphia	W 17-14	15-9-1	Spalding	Bechtel
Sep. 13	vs. Troy	W 20-17	16-9-1	Spalding	McMullin
Sep. 16	vs. New York	W 9-7	17-9-1	Spalding	Wolters
Sep. 27	at Cleveland	W 9-7	18-9-1	Spalding	Pratt
Sep. 29	at Chicago	L 10-8	18-10-1	Spalding	Zettlein
Oct. 4	vs. New York	W 13-10	19-10-1	Spalding	Wolters
Oct. 7	vs. Troy	W 12-3	20-10-1	Spalding	McMullin

Chicago, 10 to 8. By the end of September, there was a virtual deadlock atop the NA standings. Philadelphia, Chicago, and Boston had assumed a troika command of the pennant chase.

The Wrightmen closed out their 1871 NA season with two games at Boston's South End Grounds, winning both of them. The two games were played in October, one against the Mutuals, a 13 to 10 victory, and the other against Troy's Haymakers, 12 to 3. It was the fifth, or rubber, game of the Boston-Troy series and it was sweet revenge for Al Spalding, who had been victimized by Troy hitters for 64 runs (an average of 16/game) in the previous four matches of the series.

In this final game of the season, the muffled Troy attack registered only six safe blows. Clipper Flynn had the only extra-base hit, a run-scoring double in the first inning, and no Troy hitter had more than one hit. The *New York Clipper's* October 21st edition carried this opening paragraph in its review:

. . . The weather was very unfavorable and the visiting club endeavored to induce their opponents to agree to a postponement but without success. Finding that the Bostonians were resolved to play, the Haymakers then tried to gain their consent to making the game an exhibition one, but in this they were alike unsuccessful, the Reds being resolved upon ending the series then and there. Some one thousand spectators gathered upon the ground despite the unpleasant weather, and they were repaid for so doing by witnessing their favorite club achieve a signal triumph, brilliantly closing the series in their favor . . .

Several points are worth noting with respect to this game: Troy's attempt to arrange a more favorable date, although they were willing to play the game as an exhibition; and Harry Wright's insistence that the final series match be played as a game counting in championship play. Harry Wright, you will remember, was, above all other NA managers and officials, one who had advocated the importance of winning the best-of-five series between the clubs as a measure of superiority. That was tantamount to winning the whip flag in Wright's mind. Further, it is well to remember the Wright work ethic in regard to playing this particular match. A thousand people had come to the South End Grounds to see a game, and if they were willing to brave the cold of this raw, early fall day, then Wright would see to it that they would have their game. As the *New York Clipper* noted, the Boston fans got their game and both Wright and the Boston club's followers were repaid for their efforts. The game's box score is shown in Fig. 8.2.

Because the series results loomed large in Harry Wright's mind, a tabulation of the contenders' performance during the season might help to inform, from the Wright vantage point, how the championship might conceivably be awarded.

As the Fig. 8.3 shows, Boston won the Philadelphia series, tied the New York series (a fifth game was played against the Mutes although it was played as an exhibition by mutual agreement), and lost the Chicago series. The other top two contenders, Chicago and eventual champion Philadelphia, posted these season series records:

Chicago	Won 6 season series, tied one and lost one
Philadelphia	Won 7 season series, lost two ¹

Figure 8.2

Troy	PO	R	H	TB	Boston	PO	R	H	TB
McGeary, c	3	0	1	1	G. Wright, ss	1	3	3	3
York, cf	3	1	0	0	Barnes, 2b	1	3	3	5
Flowers, ss	2	1	1	1	Birdsall, rf	2	2	0	0
Flynn, 1b	2	1	1	2	McVey, c	1	3	3	3
King, lf	1	0	1	1	Spalding, p	1	1	3	4
McMullin, p	2	0	1	1	Gould, 1b	4	0	0	0
Pike, rf	2	0	0	0	Schafer, 3b	4	0	0	0
Bellan, 3b	3	0	1	1	Barrows, lf	4	0	1	1
Craver, 3b	3	0	0	0	H. Wright, cf	3	0	0	0
Totals	21	3	6	7	Totals	21	12	13	16

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Troy	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	—3
Boston	3	0	2	0	2	0	5	—12

Runs Earned:	Boston 6, Haymakers 0
First Base on Errors	Boston 2, Haymakers 3
Umpire:	Mr. Ferguson of the Mutuals
Time of Game:	2:13

In mid-October, the *New York Clipper* declared that the NA's champion would be decided on the basis of the most series won and then listed the Association's standings on that very basis. That review quite understandably muddled the waters. The series issue, in company with championship games, won and loss records, exhibition games, player ineligibility, and forfeitures, *in toto*, necessitated a meeting of minds. Complicating this impasse was the Great Chicago Fire, which had rendered the White Stockings incapable, at least for two weeks, of playing any games, anywhere. Thus, the Championship Committee, chaired by Washington's Nick Young, met in Philadelphia

Figure 8.3

Boston vs.	Philadelphia	Chicago	New York	Washington			
W	11-8	L	14-16	W	20-18		
L	8-20	L	1-7	L	11-15	T	4-4
W	23-7	W	6-3	W	9-7	L	5-6
W	17-14	L	8-10	W	13-10	W	7-3
						W	7-4
	W: 3; L: 1	W: 1; L: 3	W: 2; L: 2	W: 3; L: 1; T: 1			

on November 3, just a few days after the Chicago–Philadelphia game was played at Brooklyn’s Union Grounds.

One might reasonably conjecture that going into the committee’s meeting Harry Wright had good reason to believe that the team winning the most series during the season would be declared the National Association champion and entitled to fly the whip flag emblematic of the championship. Further, having beaten Philadelphia three times out of four, and consequently a series victor, he no doubt felt he had grounds to claim a piece of the championship pie. That opinion was documented in the Chadwick Scrapbooks collection (Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, New York). It helps explain to a certain extent his chagrin over the championship having been awarded to Philadelphia on the sole basis of the October 30 victory of the Athletics over the White Stockings. Wright’s thinking and his conclusion were nevertheless overruled—and with some justification. Boston, incidentally, had also lost its season series with Chicago, nor was its overall season series record any better than the other two contenders.

The consequences of the committee’s meeting were that: a) Philadelphia’s won-loss record, which included the two forfeit victories, was superior to Chicago’s and Boston’s; and b) the committee’s decision to award the championship to the team with the best won-loss record set a still-standing criterion governing major league baseball to this very day. On that basis, Philadelphia emerged the clear-cut winner. Accordingly, modern baseball history books are prone to list the final standings for 1871 as shown in Fig. 8-4.

As the season wore on, the Red Stockings, like other teams, sustained injuries to key players. George Wright went down in an early season Troy game, followed at various times by injuries to outfielder Dave Birdsall, catcher

Figure 8.4

	Won	Lost	Tied	Percentage
Philadelphia	21	7	0	.750
Chicago	19	9	0	.679
Boston	20	10	1	.667
Washington	15	15	2	.500
New York	16	17	0	.485
Troy	13	15	1	.464
Fort Wayne	7	12	0	.368
Cleveland	10	19	0	.345
Rockford	4	21	0	.160

Cal McVey, and outfielder Fred Cone. Nonetheless, this particular Wright club improved as the season progressed. Some of the players, Ross Barnes and Cal McVey among them, grumbled about practice and “outmoded styles of play,” but the Wright strategy proved itself. With Barnes at second and George Wright at short, backed up by the captain himself in centerfield, the defense was strong up the middle. And the team did hit, pounding out more hits and scoring more runs than any other team in the circuit.

Boston did, however, have a thing or two to regret. Keeping in mind that a win or two here or there might have made enough difference to capture a flag, the early-season two-game set with Washington stands out in the what-might-have-been category. In the first of these two at Boston’s home grounds in May, the Wrightmen played to a 4-4 tie in game that both clubs agreed to end after nine innings had been played. That agreement was made despite the fact that there was enough daylight left to get in at least another inning or two. Two days later, the Olympics came out on top of a 6-5 squeaker. A win in either, or especially both, would have put Boston beyond the Philadelphia 21-victory mark—and an NA championship.

On a brighter note, professional baseball’s first one-hitter was fashioned on June 21 when the Fort Wayne Kekiongas visited Boston. Al Spalding that day was in command of a 21 to 0 thrashing and his pitching was nearly perfect. Later, during the September surge, Boston took on the Athletics, beating them with a pair of late-inning, six-run outbursts that overcame an earlier 11 to 5 lead. The victory came during the part of the season that featured a race to the wire between Chicago, Philadelphia, and the Beantowners. The three were clustered at the top. And it might be well to remember that if Chicago had beaten the A’s in the game that was billed for the championship on October 30, Boston might still have been declared the NA’s first champion. That would not have been an improbable sequence prior to the committee’s meeting on November 3. That, finally, was not to be. Harry Wright’s men would have to wait for the ultimate spoils of victory.

When restitution came, it came in torrents. Boston went on to four straight championships, playing with such utter domination that the National Association could not bear up under it. Its dissolution was the prelude to a newer and, to every intent and purpose, better association of pro ball clubs. Without losing a year in the sequence of the game, a new league debuted in 1876, hard on the heels of the old league’s demise. Its name would be the National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs and Boston would be a vibrant part of its original eight-team makeup.

Note

1. The two series losses were against Rockford and, significantly, Boston. In the Rockford series, however, the two Philadelphia losses in that series were declared forfeit victories and awarded to the Athletics, giving them a 3 to 0 margin in games—and the series.

CHAPTER NINE



The Capital's Olympians

In 1789, a young French engineer, Revolutionary War veteran Major Pierre L'Enfant, was appointed by the nation's first president to design a Federal City, suitable as a national showcase and for use as a governmental center for the fledging nation. By 1800, L'Enfant's master plan began to take shape and more than 120 government clerks had moved to the new capital sited along the Potomac River.

Some 70 years later, what was once a scraggly little town had become a metropolitan center, home to more than 100,000 people. During that 70-year span, the nation's Federal City had taken on the name of its first president, Washington, in the specially named District of Columbia. It had witnessed two wars, with some of the battles having been fought within its corporate limits, it had sprouted numerous buildings both governmental and commercial, and had actualized parts of L'Enfant's original plan, including the many squares, parks, and plazas he had envisioned. The steam engine and railway lines throughout America had revolutionized travel, industry, communication, and transportation links. In the process, American life had also been revolutionized and leisure pursuits had become standard fare among most of the land's growing population. Washingtonians pursued those leisure-time activities with the same vigor other Americans did, and one of the more popular pursuits among governmental, as well as other residential citizens, was baseball.

Among the baseball devotees, none was more enthusiastic than Nick Young. 1870 was the last year the 30-year-old ball player played the game competitively for the team he helped organize in 1867, the Washington Olympians. He was the team's captain and right fielder. He had been exposed to the game during the Civil War, when he watched members of his New

York regiment and others play the game. Nick Young liked what he saw and was soon a part of the pickup games that were played by Union soldiers. He had also been a cricket player, and a good one (Young was one of the “All Americans” chosen to play in an international match in 1868). His heart was with baseball, however, and he soon took on the task of organizing the team in Washington that would rival the city’s Nationals.

During the post-Civil War years, he came to know, and struck up strong friendships with Harry and George Wright that lasted throughout their lives. All three were present at the organizational meeting of the National Association, called together at Young’s suggestion that the secretaries of the various professional clubs meet together for the purpose of scheduling games for the 1871 season. The meeting turned out to be more than a gathering of secretaries. Before that little conference came to a close a new baseball association, the NA, had been crafted and Nick Young had been elected the NA’s first secretary. In the company of his friend Harry Wright and other club officials, he helped bring the new league into existence.

Nick Young served in several capacities simultaneously during his many years in professional baseball. He was the manager and secretary of the 1871 Washington Olympians, moved on to other clubs as time passed, and served in several positions as a league official, including the president of the National League, 1885 to 1902. He also umpired and headed up a school for umpires during his varied baseball career.

Often described as modest and unassuming, Young had many friends both in federal governmental circles and in baseball. Still active into the 20th century, he was named to the Mills Commission in 1905, that controversial committee charged with the responsibility of determining the origins of the game. This prestigious group included Young’s friend George Wright and dignitaries Art Gorman, the Washington Nationals club’s president in 1867; former Connecticut Governor Morgan Bulkeley, who served as the National League’s first president in 1876; and Al Reach, the famed Philadelphia ball player; among still others. “Uncle Nick,” as Young was known, was a friend of them all, one of baseball’s better ambassadors.

In 1867, the first year the Olympians engaged other clubs in competition, one of the teams on the schedule was the crosstown Nationals. They played twice that summer, the Nationals winning both. In 1868, the Olympics took two more beatings before finally breaking even with the Nationals in the 1869 and ’70 series, winning two and losing two each season.

After the 1870 season, Nick Young turned to getting the Olympics ready for their next season of professional competition. It was not until March of

1871, however, that he, with other of the new National Association teams, realized that the next season of baseball would mark the start of a different course of action. So the urgency of forging a worthy lineup struck with full force. His formula for putting a team together might be stated in terms of simple addition: Young plus Cincinnati. Holdovers from the '70 Olies, as they soon came to be called, persuaded by Young himself to sign on for the NA's first season included shortstop Davey Force, outfielders John Glenn and Henry Burroughs, and utility player Pete Norton. From Harry Wright's 1870 Red Stockings Young picked up second baseman Andy Leonard, third sacker Fred Waterman, catcher Doug Allison, Charlie Sweasy, who substituted for Andy Leonard at second base when the need arose, and Asa Brainard, the veteran pitcher. That equation of Young's people plus Cincinnati left holes at only two spots in the lineup which were filled by signing first baseman Everett Mills, an 1870 New York Mutuals player, and George Hall, who came to Washington from the Brooklyn Atlantics.

The Olympics' schedule, with overall results, for 1871 is shown in Fig. 9.1.

However good this ball club might have appeared on paper, its break-even season record underscored its mediocrity. Asa Brainard, the ace of Harry Wright's peerless Cincinnati during his palmier days was cuffed around rather regularly and the team's defense, except for an exceptional mid-fielder in Davey Force, was less than adequate. The Olympics' hitting as a team was right in the middle of the pack, just where their 15-15-2 log had them sitting. Further 50-50 evidence is found in two short but telling streaks. The first occurred early in the season, netting them five straight wins without a loss sandwiched around a tie with Boston. The second came later on when they matched the five wins with five straight in the losing column. Strangely, this streak also contained a tie (3 to 3 with Troy). It seems that about everything Nick Young's charges tried wound up straight down the middle.

The Olies opened their 1871 campaign against the Boston Red Stockings on May 5, a day after having been rained out in what had been scheduled as the big NA lidlifter. The rainmaker stepped in, but subsequently relented. The next day, the Bostons and Washingtons opened at Olympic Grounds, located at 16th and South Streets in the northwest quadrant of the Capital. A good-sized crowd of more than 4,000 squeezed itself into the park for the first pitch at 3:30 p.m.; by 4:00 p.m., the old stadium was overflowing with avid fans. More than a score of reporters were on hand for a glimpse at the pros plying their trade in the new National Association. The *New York Clipper's* May 13 report of the contest, a tight one that wound up with the Red Stockings prevailing 20 to 18, seemed out of sorts with a seesaw battle that

Figure 9.1

Date	Against	W/L/Score	Record	Wash. Pitcher	Opp. Pitcher	
May 5	vs. Boston	L	20-18	0-1	Brainard	Spalding
May 13	at Cleveland	W	12-8*	1-1	Brainard	Pratt
May 15	at Fort Wayne	L	12-6	1-2	Brainard	Mathews
May 16	at Chicago	L	14-4	1-3	Brainard	Zettlein
May 17	at Rockford	W	15-12**	2-3	Brainard	Fisher
May 19	at Chicago	L	9-7	2-4	Brainard	Zettlein
May 20	at Cleveland	W	13-9	3-4	Brainard	Pratt
May 22	at Troy	W	14-5	4-4	Brainard	McMullin
May 24	at Boston	T	4-4	4-4-1	Brainard	Spalding
May 27	at Boston	W	6-5	5-4-1	Brainard	Spalding
June 2	vs. Troy	W	11-8	6-4-1	Brainard	McMullin
June 13	vs. Chicago	W	13-3	7-4-1	Brainard	Zettlein
June 17	vs. Philadelphia	L	11-4	7-5-1	Brainard	McBride
June 21	at Philadelphia	L	10-2	7-6-1	Brainard	McBride
June 22	at New York	L	12-4	7-7-1	Brainard	Wolters
June 26	vs. Cleveland	W	16-3	8-7-1	Stearns	Pratt
June 30	at Chicago	W	13-8	9-7-1	Stearns	Zettlein
July 4	vs. Boston	L	7-3#	9-8-1	Brainard	Spalding
July 7	vs. Fort Wayne	W	32-12	10-8-1	Brainard	Mathews
July 8	vs. Fort Wayne	W	15-7	11-8-1	Brainard	Mathews
July 10	vs. New York	W	16-13	12-8-1	Brainard	Wolters
July 17	at New York	L	16-9	12-9-1	Brainard	Wolters
July 27	at Troy	T	3-3	12-9-2	Brainard	McMullin
July 28	vs. Troy	L	10-6	12-10-2	Brainard	McMullin
Aug. 4	vs. Philadelphia	L	10-5	12-11-2	Brainard	McBride
Aug. 8	vs. Boston	L	7-4	12-12-2	Brainard	Spalding
Aug. 16	at Chicago	L	12-11	12-13-2	Brainard	Zettlein
Aug. 25	vs. Rockford	W	5-2	13-13-2	Brainard	Fisher
Aug. 26	vs. Rockford	W	18-7	14-13-2	Brainard	Fisher
Sep. 22	at New York	L	12-2	14-14-2	Brainard	Wolters
Sep. 27	at Troy	L	16-7	14-15-2	Brainard	McMullin
Sep. 29	at Troy	W	15-13	15-15-2	Brainard	McMullin

* This Cleveland home game was played at Lincoln Park Grounds.

** The final score, Rockford 15 and Washington 13 was nullified when the Championship Committee awarded a victory to Washington by forfeit because of the ineligibility of Scott Hastings, Rockford's manager.

Washington hosted Boston at Cincinnati's Lincoln Park Grounds.

had a little bit of everything going for it, summarizing it this way: "The game was so uninteresting that it is not necessary to give a detailed report of it, the appended score in full being all sufficient." It did, however, commend veteran outfielder Harry Berthrong, one of the finer all-around ball players in the NA, and "Tom Thumb" Force, aka "Wee Davey," for their brilliant defensive play. Now when a game goes down to its last inning and the visitors

stage a determined rally to push across five tallies, go ahead by two, hold on, and win, one must wonder just what it takes to make an interesting game. The *Clipper* reporter didn't say, but their man on the scene witnessed a 20-18 Boston win, and sent in the box score shown in Fig. 9.2.

By the time the sixth inning was history, the Olympians had almost doubled the score on Boston, taking what should have been a commanding 15 to 8 lead. Now it just so happened that Harry Wright knew something about the temperamental Asa Brainard from his years with him as a Cincinnati hurler, and ordered his hitters to wait out Brainard, suggesting that sooner or later Brainard would begin to grouse about Boston's hitters. The box score shows that Boston hitters must have followed orders to a "T" inasmuch as 18 of them reached base via free passes. The Red Stockings woke up to the attack and proceeded to chase home four, three, and three more tallies in the last three innings, pulling out the victory.

Washington played an exciting series with Boston in 1871. The two old friends, Nick Young and Harry Wright, saw their ball clubs play five close games, Boston coming out on top three times, losing one in a tight, 6 to 5

Figure 9.2

Boston	AB	R	H	PO	A	Washington	AB	R	H	PO	A
G. Wright, ss	7	4	1	4	6	Waterman, 3b	7	1	1	0	1
Barnes, 2b	7	3	1	6	5	Force, ss	7	3	1	0	7
Birdsall, rf	7	2	2	0	0	Mills, 1b	6	3	1	11	0
McVey, c	7	1	1	2	0	Allison, c	6	2	3	4	4
H. Wright, cf	7	2	1	1	0	Hall, lf	6	3	3	0	0
Gould, 1b	6	2	2	7	0	Leonard, 3b	6	3	1	6	4
Schafer, 3b	6	3	2	2	4	Brainard, p	6	1	1	0	1
Cone, lf	5	1	1	5	0	Burroughs, rf	6	1	2	2	1
Spalding, p	6	2	1	0	0	Berthrong, cf	6	1	1	4	1
Totals	58	20	12	27	15	Totals	56	18	14	27	19

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Washington	6	4	0	1	1	3	0	3	0—18
Boston	1	0	7	0	0	0	4	3	5—20

Bases on called balls:	Boston 18, Washington 12
Wild Pitches:	Spalding 2
Passed Balls:	McVey 2, Allison 2
Double Plays:	Force, Leonard, and Mills; G. Wright and Gould; Barnes and Gould
Umpire:	Mr. H. A. Dobson
Time of Game:	2:25

game, and tying the other. This was one of Washington's better showings against top-drawer clubs. One other series of note, with Chicago, another five-game set, was tied at two games apiece until the Whites broke it open with a sticky 12 to 11 victory at Chicago's Lakeside Park on August 16.

This contest, with 5,000 on hand, went into the seventh frame tied. Washington scored a run in the top of the seventh only to have the White Stockings storm back with three of their own to take a 10 to 8 lead. As the game was played in the 1870s, however, that wasn't much of a lead. Given the many errors cropping up as frequently as they did, merely putting the ball in play raised hope of runs in bunches. But in this one, miscues aside, the final score was always in doubt. Chicago finally took a paper-thin 12 to 10 lead going into the top of the ninth, and the Olympics scored a run to nudge within one at 12 to 11. That's the way it ended although it came down to the last out with Fred Waterman in scoring position and Asa Brainard, a fairly good hitting pitcher, up. Brainard lashed one toward the left side, but Charlie Hodes, Chicago's hot corner guardian, came up with the sizzling chopper, threw across the diamond to Bub McAtee, and Windy City fans went home happy. The box score is shown in Fig. 9.3.

Figure 9.3

Chicago	AB	R	H	PO	Washington	AB	R	H	PO
Duffy, ss	5	2	2	3	Force, ss	6	3	2	3
Wood, 2b	5	2	3	2	Leonard, 2b	6	2	3	3
Treacey, lf	5	1	2	4	Waterman, 3b	6	1	1	2
King, c	5	0	2	2	Brainard, p	6	2	1	2
McAtee, 1b	5	0	1	4	E. Mills, 1b	5	0	0	6
Foley, cf	5	1	0	4	D. Allison, c	5	0	3	3
Pinkham, rf	5	2	1	2	Hall, cf	5	0	2	3
Hodes, 3b	3	3	2	2	Glenn, rf	5	2	1	2
Zettlein, p	4	1	1	3	Beals, lf	5	2	3	3
Totals	42	12	14	27	Totals	49	12	16	27

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Washington	3	3	0	1	0	0	1	2	1
Chicago	2	0	1	0	4	3	1	1	0

Called balls:	Zettlein 7, Brainard 14
Bases on balls:	Pinkham
Wild Pitches:	Zettlein 3, Brainard 1
Double Plays:	Glenn and Allison, Force and E. Mills
Umpire:	Mr. Thomas Pratt, Philadelphia Athletics
Time of Game:	2:15

Nick Young's Olympics played 13 NA games in Washington and one home team engagement against Boston at Cincinnati, where both teams celebrated the nation's birthdate in the cradle of professional baseball. The blue-stockinged Olies lost nine of their road games and both tie games were away from home. The remaining six games away from home were victories. Among NA clubs, Washington's home attendance figures ranked fifth. That was right in the middle of the league mix. The approximate¹ home attendance figures for 1871 are:

Chicago	69 to 70,000	Troy	17 to 18,000
Philadelphia	51,000	Cleveland	16,000
New York	40 to 41,000	Rockford	6 to 7,000
Boston	36,500	Fort Wayne	3 to 4,000
Washington	26 to 27,000		

On July 10, the Olympics moved their NA record up to 12 and 8 with a 16 to 13 triumph over the New York Mutuals at their Olympic Grounds ball park. The victory was their fourth in five NA games and included a 32 to 12 thumping of Fort Wayne's Kekiongas and a 16 to 3 pounding of the Cleveland Forest Citys. But just when it appeared that the Olies were about to become a factor in the championship chase, they lost five and tied Troy in the next six games and that was the end of their pennant dreams.

After the 1871 season, Nick Young agreed to lead the Baltimore club, assembled a good team and, at times, the Baltimorians pressed ascendant Boston for the league's leadership, finally finishing in second place. Significantly, his old club, the Olympics, didn't make it through the 1872 season. "Uncle Nick" came back to Washington in 1873 to lead the Nationals, the old Olympics' prime competitor for the number one spot in the hearts of Washingtonians. By 1873, the Olympics were history. For all practical purposes, so were the Nationals. Their entries in the 1874 and '75 NA were abysmal failures. But at least it can be said that the '71 Olympics under Nick Young were Washington's best NA team—even though they were only a .500 ball club.

Note

1. These estimations are generally used in various listings inasmuch as exact attendance figures are simply not available. Fans who attended were often not admitted through turnstiles, thus making exact counts impossible. Further, attendance estimations included those in attendance outside baseball parks on temporary seating and those who often stood three to four deep around the playing field. This list does not include neutral site figures.

CHAPTER TEN



A Whip Flag for the City of Brotherly Love

James Kerns, president of the Philadelphia Athletics Base Ball Club, was there when it all began, and he was there when his team was officially declared champions of the National Association for 1871, thus qualifying the Athletics to fly the championship whip flag from November 3, the date of the Championship Committee's meeting, to November 1, 1872. The City of Brotherly Love had a champion. Their 4 to 1 victory over the Chicago White Stockings on October 30 at Brooklyn's Union Grounds brought with it a victorious conclusion to the NA's *and* major league baseball's first season of play.

Kerns, elected president of the NA at the Collier's Inn meeting that brought the Association into existence, was one among several who had been guiding professional teams for a number of seasons. With J. W. Schofield of Troy, Alex Davidson, chairman of the Championship Committee, and Harry Wright, Kern was among those who felt that the time had come to disengage from the National Association of Base Ball Players. They were galvanized by a letter signed by officials of several New York-area amateur clubs that appeared in the *New York Clipper*, bemoaning the "professionalism" making significant inroads into the conduct of the national pastime. Those kinds of complaints had been registered for some time and those involved with professional teams had had their fill of it. The Collier's Inn gathering reacted decisively with "a league of their own" and set about the task of orchestrating the dissenters' decision, charting a new course of action. The newly formed National Association was their answer to the bickering and back-biting in baseball's corner of the world. The die had been cast. Amateur

and professional baseball parted ways once and for all. Of the 11 ball clubs represented at that historic meeting, nine made their way into professional baseball's first season. By November 3, 1871, they had officially declared their first champion to be Philadelphia's Athletics.

There were, of course, baseball teams and inter/intracity rivalries long before the formation of the NA. In 1837, the Philadelphia Olympics became the first baseball club to play under terms of its own constitution and rules governing play. The City of Brotherly Love was nearing the 100,000-population mark by that time and its industrial plants were turning out locomotives for America's growing railway system that was beginning to span the miles of the Eastern Seaboard. The shipping industry, as well as countless numbers of smaller enterprises, made it a target for increasing numbers of immigrants. Ben Franklin's city, which, in 1790, was the nation's capital, and, among other notable things, the site of the nation's first public subscription library, was also a city of parks and playgrounds that were spawning grounds for cricket and baseball players. Club rivalries spiced play among local devotees and athletic clubs thrived.

One of the many baseball clubs, named simply the Athletic, was founded in 1860 with James Kerns as its head. By the time the post-war boom in baseball had blossomed, and with the advent of wholesale professionalism, Kerns' Athletic club was a legitimate contender for national honors. Their celebrated rivalry with New York teams, particularly the Brooklyn Atlantics and the Mutuels, sharpened all of them to the point where they drew national attention. The post-war record of those famous nines is shown in Fig. 10.1.

The pre-NA record of these three clubs is overpowering. During the span of five seasons between 1866 and 1871, Philadelphia logged a 224 and 27 record with one tie against all comers, winning at a rate of .893. Brooklyn's Atlantics, 128 and 36 with six ties over that period of time, won at a .780 clip, and the New York Mutuels, with 168 wins, 58 losses, and six ties, had a .767 win-loss percentage. These seasoned professionals regularly pummeled semi-pro and amateur teams. As 1870 turned to 1871, a strong core of at least 20 professional teams stood atop American baseball. Small wonder they opted to play against one another exclusively. And if American fandom was willing to pay to see them play, so much the better. Because the fans were indeed ready and willing to buy their way into a ballpark at least some of the risk of staging major league baseball was minimized as those stouthearted pioneers gathered at Collier's Inn.

Figure 10.1

	Phl. Record	NY Mutuals Record	Phl. vs. NY	Brk. Atlantics Record	Phl. vs. Brk.
1866	23-2	10-2	did not play	17-3	21-17, Brk* 31-12, Phl
1867	44-3	23-6-1	23-21, NY 18-17, Phl	19-5-1	28-16, Brk 18-8, Phl
1868	47-3	31-10	51-24, Phl 25-15, NY	47-7	18-9, Phl 37-13, Phl
1869	45-8	36-16	45-28, Phl 24-22, Phl	40-6-2	20-11, Brk 37-17, Brk 36-21, Phl
1870	65-11-1	68-17-3	24-15, Phl 21-8, NY 11-7, Phl 12-12, tie 17-12, Phl 23-19, Phl	41-17	18-13, Phl 19-3, Phl 11-7, Phl 15-3, Phl 14-12, Brk

* In 1863, the Atlantics defeated the Athletics 23 to 13. In 1864, they once again beat the Athletics, 43 to 16. In 1864, the teams played a two-game set, Brooklyn once again beating Philadelphia both times, 21 to 15 and 43 to 16. The Athletics and New York Mutuals did not play each other until the 1867 season.

The ball club Philadelphia brought into the National Association had been in the making for several seasons. The elder statesman of the NA's debut season was the A's Nathan Berkenstock, born in 1831. He had been an Athletic already in 1863 as a first baseman and outfielder. By 1871, he was considered too old to cut it with the youngsters of pro ball, and wasn't signed for Philadelphia's 1871 season. Wasn't, that is, until a serious knee injury shelved John Sensitivefer, preventing him from playing in the October 30 championship clash with the Chicago White Stockings. So Berkenstock was signed up at the last minute, put in the outfield, and he became a footnote to baseball history as a one-gamer, contributing, incidentally, a fine catch in that championship tilt. In 1865, Al Reach came to town. The name that became synonymous with Philadelphia baseball and the manufacturing of baseball goods was the name of one of vintage baseball's most popular and worthy competitors. Among the first of baseball's pay-for-play players, he was a New Yorker who was born in London and found a home in Philadelphia.

Reach played at an all-star level. His left-handed keystone play and line-drive hitting helped the Athletics run up those outstanding win-loss records during the seasons prior to the NA's formation.

Others who played in Philadelphia before the 1871 season included some of the most respected and popular players in baseball, pitcher Dick McBride, first baseman Wes Fisler, outfielders Sensenderfer and George Bechtel, catcher Fergy Malone, and John Radcliff. To this strong nucleus, president Kern added two players: third baseman Levi Meyerle and outfielder Ned Cuthbert, both of whom came from Chicago's 1870 team. One of the keys to Philadelphia's pennant-winning season was its experience. Kerns kept them all together and the older players (the Athletics were the oldest team in the NA, averaging 26 years of age) guided the club through its tight spots with the composure of a veteran team.

Four New York-area clubs dominated most of the 1860s: in Brooklyn, the Eckfords and Atlantics; in New York, the Mutuels and Morrisania Unions. Philadelphia, still another Eastern team, and two Midwestern clubs, represented by Cincinnati and Chicago, came on as late '60s powers to challenge, successfully, the grip on supremacy held by the New York-area teams. That, plus the Harry Wright move to Boston and the potent club Wright assembled in 1871 set the stage for the hotly contested pennant in the NA's first year. Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston would spar throughout the summer for first-place honors. The outcome would remain unsettled until the last game of the season. When things were finally sorted out, it was the Athletics who emerged as the first champion in major league baseball. The results of Philadelphia's championship season are shown in Fig. 10.2.

The Philadelphia Athletics played out the 1871 NA season by one of the regulations in "the book" that baseball people live by: pennants are won by winning series against a team's closest competitors and beating up on the tailenders. In 1871, the A's won three of five against New York, lost their Boston series, and went into the championship game with Chicago tied at two games apiece with the White Stockings. The losses to these three teams were the only ones they suffered in National Association play. Their 14 and 0 record against all other teams, albeit two of them coming via the disputed forfeit route, clearly set them apart from Boston, New York, and Chicago's Whites—even though Harry Wright's club took the measure of the A's three times out of four. The Athletics also won nine out of 13 road games before the final game, also played away at Union Grounds in Brooklyn for the championship. That met another of the age-old truisms for winning pennants: win more than you lose on the road.

Figure 10.2

Date	Against	W/L/Score	Record	Phl. Pitcher	Opp. Pitcher
May 20	at Boston	L 11-8	0-1	McBride	Spalding
June 3	vs. Troy	W 15-5	1-1	McBride	McMullin
June 5	vs. Rockford*	W 11-10	2-1	McBride	Fisher
June 8	vs. Chicago	W 15-11	3-1	McBride	Zettlein
June 15	vs. Rockford*	W 10-7	4-1	McBride	Fisher
June 17	at Washington	W 11-4	5-1	McBride	Brainard
June 20	vs. New York	L 8-6	5-2	McBride	Wolters
June 21	vs. Washington	W 10-2	6-2	McBride	Brainard
June 26	vs. Boston	W 20-8	7-2	McBride	Spalding
June 28	at Troy	W 49-33	8-2	McBride	McMullin
June 29	at New York	W 5-4	9-2	McBride	Wolters
July 1	vs. Fort Wayne	W 20-3	10-2	McBride	Mathews
July 4	vs. Cleveland	W 22-9	11-2	McBride	Pratt
July 14	at Chicago	L 11-9	11-3	McBride	Zettlein
July 17	at Rockford	W 11-7	12-3	McBride	Fisher
July 20	at Fort Wayne	W 26-7	13-3	McBride	Mathews
July 22	at Cleveland**	W 18-10	14-3	McBride	Pratt
July 24	at Cleveland	W 13-8	15-3	McBride	Pabor
Aug. 4	at Washington	W 10-5	16-3	McBride	Brainard
Aug. 7	vs. Boston	L 23-7	16-4	McBride	Spalding
Aug. 30	vs. Chicago	L 6-3	16-5	McBride	Zettlein
Sep. 2	vs. New York	W 9-8	17-5	Bechtel	Wolters
Sep. 4	at New York	L 18-7	17-6	Bechtel	Wolters
Sep. 9	at Boston	L 17-14	17-7	Bechtel	Spalding
Sep. 18	at Chicago	W 11-6	18-7	McBride	Zettlein
Oct. 9	vs. Troy	W 15-13	19-7	McBride	McMullin
Oct. 18	vs. New York	W 21-7	20-7	McBride	Wolters
Oct. 30	vs. Chicago#	W 4-1	21-7	McBride	Zettlein

* The June 5 and June 15 games were awarded to Philadelphia by forfeiture.

** This game was played at Lincoln Park Grounds, Cincinnati.

The championship game was played at Union Grounds, Brooklyn.

By the end of July, the Athletics had proven their mettle. After winning 11 of 12 between June 21 and August 4, they stood at 16 and 3, well on their way to making a shambles of the race for the whip flag. But then a stretch of five games with Boston, Chicago, and New York brought them back to earth. They managed to salvage but one game from that set, beating the Mutuals 9 to 8 at the Jefferson Street Grounds on September 2. Team captain McBride gave himself a few days off starting with the Mutuals game and put versatile George Bechtel out there at the pitching points. Bechtel squeaked by with a one-run heartthrobber.

A pair of losses followed that victory and McBride came back for the Sep-

tember 18 game at Chicago, winning it over George Zettlein, 11 to 6. For Philadelphia, that one was the pivotal game of the season as far as competition for first place was concerned. McBride's triumph over Zettlein in a rather well-played game meant that the Chicago–Philadelphia series was knotted up at two games each. It is well to remember that at that point in time, series victories as well as won-loss records were considered by some to be of equal value in determining a championship. That was one of the things that made the final game on October 30 as important as it was. As it turned out, however, the Championship Committee ruled that the October 30 game was the uniquely determining factor because, when Philadelphia's two forfeit wins were added to their final 4 to 1 victory, the Athletics were beyond reach in both the win-loss *and* series columns. Had Chicago beaten the A's on September 18, it would have called for more than mental gymnastics on the part of the committee. Harry Wright would surely have been fearful of finding out more from the committee than he already knew!

On a cloudless late summer day, described by the *Chicago Tribune* in its September 19 edition as a “day (that) was as fine as could have been wished for,” better than 7,000 enthusiasts turned out to see the Athletics do battle with their White Stockings. Philadelphia's veteran captain, Dick McBride, had taken several days off after an injury, vowing to be ready for the Chicago contest. According to the *Tribune* report, McBride was hardly in shape to play. The report claimed “that McBride, the Athletic pitcher, was partially disabled and could not play, or, if he did, he would not come up to his usual standard of effectiveness. But McBride had, in reality, been laying off for this very game. He had sworn that he would pitch on yesterday, though he had to be carried on and off the field, and kept his word with a vengeance. He was never in better play, nor more effective in his life. . . .” Aside from being carried on and off the field, that was a rather sensational comment considering what it takes to be an active player, especially a pitcher. It seems, in the final analysis, that Dick McBride knew when the chips were down and responded accordingly, the *Tribune*'s histrionics notwithstanding.

Blanking the Whites through the first four frames, McBride's Athletics built up a 5 to 0 advantage and were never surpassed. They answered a two-run Chicago fifth with a three-run salvo of their own and went on to win by their first five-run margin, 11 to 6. The final verdict of the *Tribune* was: “The Whites were fairly beaten and there is no reason to suppose that they would have succeeded in winning had the umpire been impartialThe game, if the truth must be told, was lost behind the bat, Hodes passing balls after the

strikers had earned first base . . . It seemed to be one of Hodes' bad days although it was evident that he was doing his very best to hold the scorchers that Zettlein sent in."

The Philadelphia win left the two teams tied at a pair of victories apiece. The Chicago club announced after the game that the necessary fifth and rubber game of the series would not be played in Chicago, but in Cincinnati or Brooklyn or on some neutral ground at a date to be determined later. That date turned out to be October 30, a fateful date for Chicagoans, coming as it did some three weeks after the disastrous calamity of the Great Fire. The Athletics would be off for the next three weeks, as well. Their next game against Troy was a triumph as was their final New York matchup, a 21 to 7 romp over the Mutes on October 18. They would wait out the next fortnight before taking on Chicago at Brooklyn. The box score of the September 18 game in Chicago is shown in Fig. 10.3.

Another late-season game against Troy was crucial for the Athletics. It was played in clear and warm early fall weather at Philadelphia on October 9. In that one, the Athletics bested the Haymakers, always a difficult and hard-hitting unit, by a 15 to 13 score. The game pitted two of the best hitters

Figure 10.3

Philadelphia	R	H	PO	Chicago	R	H	PO
Cuthbert, lf	1	1	3	McAtee, 1b	1	1	4
McBride, p	0	0	4	Wood, 2b	1	2	2
Radcliff, ss	0	1	4	Treacey, lf	2	1	2
Malone, c	0	0	5	Duffy, ss	1	1	3
Fisler, 1b	3	1	2	Simmons, rf	0	1	4
Reach, 2b	3	3	2	Foley, cf	0	1	2
Sensenderfer, cf	2	2	2	Pinkham, 3b	0	1	4
Meyerle, 3b	1	3	2	Hodes, c	0	1	1
Bechtel, rf	1	2	3	Zettlein, p	1	0	3
Totals	11	13	27	Totals	6	9	27

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Chicago	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	—6
Philadelphia	0	2	0	3	3	1	2	0	0	—11
Bases on errors:	Chicago 9, Philadelphia 3									
Bases on called balls:	Chicago 3, Philadelphia 1									
Fielding errors:	Chicago 5, Philadelphia 14									
Passed balls:	Hodes 6									
Umpire:	Mr. Samuel Holley, Niagara Base Ball Club									
Time of game:	2:25									

in the league against one another, Troy's Lip Pike and the Athletics' Levi Meyerle. Both finished the season above the .400 mark and Meyerle's .492 was so otherworldly that it became the highest batting average ever to win a batting crown. The two clubs hadn't met since their unbelievable slugfest back in June when the A's clubbed the Haymakers at Troy 49 to 33. In that game, Pike, with five hits, and Meyerle, with four, led a constant barrage of base hits that led to a 25 to 20 game by the time five innings had been played. The October game, however, was of a different sort both in the score and in its implications.

Ahead after eight innings by a 12 to 9 count, the Haymakers scored four times in the ninth to pull ahead 13 to 12. In the bottom of the ninth, Philadelphia pulled it out, as Meyerle's run, coming after his only hit of the day, put the A's ahead 14 to 13. One last tally upped the winning margin to 15 to 13. Had the Athletics lost this game, they would have been a game behind the White Stockings going into the final playoff game. Because they won, they had only to beat Chicago in the October 30 game to win it all, and they did. Little Troy, with its late-season games against both Chicago and Philadelphia, was consequently involved directly in the outcome of the pennant chase.

The 1871 Philadelphia Athletics were an accomplished ball club. They fielded a team of seasoned professionals and a few of them were far above the league norm. The A's were also the best-hitting team in the circuit, paced by angular Levi Meyerle's astounding year at the plate. The team led in batting average, on-base percentage, and slugging average. Further, the Athletics committed fewer errors than any other NA team. Dick McBride led the league's hurlers in winning percentage with his 18 and 5 mark (.783) and Levi Meyerle led in seven offensive categories. The sum total of all that was domination. And when it came down to the championship game on a cold day in Brooklyn, they mastered the weather and the White Stockings, putting the brakes on a game but distressed Chicago ball club, as McBride gave up but one run in their decisive victory.

There were no bands, no parades, not even any special trimmings for the championship game at Union Grounds. New Yorkers and Brooklynites just didn't make much of the game and the headcount didn't reach much more than 500. The weather didn't help, of course, nor did an election day that brought out the multitudes tending to their civic responsibilities. Consequently, the first championship clash in the history of major league baseball went quietly into the night.

One *Chicago Tribune* summary paragraph, respectfully worded, brought

news of the contest and the newly crowned champion to those who hadn't seen an account of the game before in the pages of its Friday, November 3 edition:

The Athletics never played a prettier or more brilliant game, their batting against the very difficult pitching of Zettlein being of the first order of merit. They had not so much to do in the field as they sometimes have, but what they had to do they did well. Fislser played second base and filled the position (Al Reach was out of the lineup due to an injury) with the coolness and precision which have always distinguished him as a first baseman. Radcliff, Heubel, at first base, and Malone played splendidly. The catching of the latter gentleman it was impossible to excel. McBride pitched with remarkable precision and with wonderful speed. The Philadelphians have struggled hard for some years to win the championship pennant and are to be congratulated on having done so at last, although it will not be practically decided until the Judiciary Committee have met and decided some minor points which only require their formal approval. This is the first pennant which has been won under the new *regime* and it will require a strong team to take it from Philadelphia next year.

Dick McBride's lineup for the game reflected the loss of outfielder Sensenderfer and second baseman Al Reach. Accordingly, he slotted Heubel at first base, Fislser at second, Bechtel in center field, and the ancient mariner Nate Berkenstock in right field. The box score of the game, as reported in the *New York Clipper*, November 4, 1871, is shown in Fig. 10.4.

Thus it was that professional baseball's first pennant, symbolized by the celebrated whip flag, came to the City of Brotherly Love. The pennant flag, once in the Athletics' hands, was later installed in one of Philadelphia's pubs. When Harry Wright found out about it, he made it his business to get in touch with Al Reach. The Boston pillar of rectitude then informed his friend and through him, the other club members, that a local saloon was no place for the National Association's prestigious championship flag to be put on display. Rather, its proper place would be atop a flag pole at the Jefferson Street Grounds or some other prominent public place.

It didn't happen. Philadelphia was not (and is not) Boston. Wright's lecture was probably due to a little picque over having been bested for laurels. His Red Stockings had, after all, been denied a championship. But that stiffened Wright's resolve. Philadelphia might have its winner this time around, but there would be another year and Wright & Co. would be ready.

And they were. In fact, the next four seasons under the flag of the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players, the championship

Figure 10.4

Athletics	R	H	PO	A	White Stockings	R	H	PO	A
Cuthbert, lf	1	1	3	0	McAtee, 1b	0	0	9	0
McBride, p	0	1	0	1	Wood, 2b	0	0	6	3
Radcliff, ss	0	1	1	3	Treacey, lf	0	1	5	0
Malone, c	0	0	6	1	Duffy, ss	0	0	1	3
Fisler, 2b	2	2	4	1	Simmons, rf	0	0	1	0
Berkenst'k, rf	0	0	3	0	Foley, cf	0	0	0	0
Heubel, 1b	0	2	6	0	Brannock, 3b*	0	1	3	0
Meyerle, 3b	1	3	3	2	Hodes, c	0	0	2	0
Bechtel, cf	0	1	1	0	Zettlein, p	1	2	0	0
Totals	4	11	27	8	Totals	1	4	27	6

*Brannock replaced the injured Ed Pinkham at 3b.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Philadelphia	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	—4
Chicago	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	—1

pennant became the property of Wright's Boston Red Stockings. They tore the league apart—literally—winning four straight whip flags and so manhandled the many entries that came and went through the NA's revolving door that by the time the 1876 season came to a close, all had had enough. It was time to move on, and to move on with the lessons learned by the five-year Association experience fresh in their minds.

With the coming of 1876, there was indeed something new on the horizon. That "something new" was the National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs. And it came to stay. The year 2006 would mark its 130th continuous season of play in a league that, barring unforeseen or totally calamitous circumstances, would endure as long as professional baseball would be played. 130 years later, one is constrained to marvel at what those humble 1871 beginnings brought about.

A P P E N D I X A



1871: The Ball Players' Who's Who

During the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players' inaugural season of 1871, professional baseball's first attempt at playing under the auspices of a governing board and constitution that bound each team in the Association to play a schedule of games against one another for championship laurels, 116 players donned the uniforms of the nine charter members and appeared in at least one game. Of that number, 50 position players and nine pitchers, 59 of its best players, are presented in the following alphabetical listing of cameos along with their 1871 statistic line.

The Legend for the Position Players' statistical line:

GP/POS	Games Played/Primary Position		
OBP	On-base Percentage		
SA	Slugging Average		
OPS	The sum of on-base average and slugging average		
FA	Fielding average		
TM	Designates the player's team in 1871		
Bos	Boston	Phl	Philadelphia
Chi	Chicago	Rck	Rockford
Clv	Cleveland	Troy	Troy
FtW	Fort Wayne	Was	Washington
NY	New York		

BR/TR Bats Right/Throws Right (or BL/TL); information not given if unknown.

The Position Players

Addy, Robert Edward “Bob,” “The Magnet” (1845–1910) BL/TL

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Rck	25/2b	118/30/32	.271	.295	.322	13	8	617	.768

Left-handed infielders and catchers were not uncommon in 19th-century baseball. Bob Addy was one of them. A shrewd, thinking-man’s ball player, he had keen baseball instincts. He covered bases, helped his manager Scott Hastings direct defensive play, and, above all else, was usually a step or two ahead of everyone else on the diamond.

Cap Anson, who played with the popular Addy both in his rookie season and later in Chicago with the White Stockings’ National League team, said that Addy was “an odd sort of genius.” What Anson knew about genius is problematic, but he no doubt recognized in Addy the quality of sharp, quick thinking that kept him out in front of the pack.

Allison, Douglas “Doug” (1845–1916) BR/TL

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Was	27/c	133/28/44	.331	.331	.481	27	1	662	.806

Tough, fearless, ornery, and moody all help describe Olympics’ catcher Doug Allison. Harry Wright had warned his friend Nick Young about a battery that would consist of Asa Brainard and Doug Allison, two high-strung and sensitive warriors. But they were gifted warriors and Young took his chances in signing them up. Allison took his catching position closer to the batter than any other catcher in baseball, and the position was for him all a part of the fun of the game. Among his 44 hits were 10 doubles, a pair of triples, and two home runs, adding up to one of the better slugging averages in the NA. Allison played for six different clubs in the NA, and after a 10-year major league career stayed on in Washington, working as a day laborer until his death at 70.

Anson, Adrian Constantine “Anse,” “Cap” (1852–1922) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Rck	25/3b	129/29/39	.325	.467	.467	16	6	792	.763

The legendary Hall of Famer was a big fellow, muscular, combative, with a booming voice that was heard all over the ballpark. He seems to be every

19th-century baseball fan's favorite, and the very soul of the big league game before it settled into the groove we know today. He played just one season in Rockford, overcoming his defensive weaknesses with the big stick that characterized his major league career. During his Forest City days, Anson was known as the "Marshalltown (Iowa) Infant," or more familiarly at the ballpark, "Anse." The popular swatsmith had been recruited by Hi Waldo and signed for \$65 a month, but, truth be told, he would have played for nothing.

Hits rattled off his heavy lumber until finally there were at or near 3,000 of them, depending on whose statistics one reads. It makes no difference. This fellow could hit, period. He was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1939, one of only four NA players to be so honored. Rockford couldn't be prouder.

Barnes, Roscoe "Ross" (1850–1915) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Bos	31/2b-ss	157/66/63	.401	.447	.580	34	11	1027	.873

Intelligent, athletically gifted, dashing. Ross Barnes was the NA's premier second baseman. As a 17-year-old stripling, he left home in western New York to play ball in the far western town of Rockford. Playing with the Forest Citys through the 1870 season, he was spirited to Boston by Harry Wright, where, in 1871, he hit .401 and wrote much of the National Association's hitting record book during his five years in the league. He was one of the most complete ball players of his era. His passing was included in the *Rockford Morning Star* obituary column of its February 6 edition, capturing Barnes in a nutshell: "Barnes had a remarkable skill in gauging ground and fly balls and many of the present (in 1915) batting rules were devised to cut off his 'Fair fouls' and other strategies at the plate, for he was one of the most scientific and consistent batsmen in the history of the sport . . . He was the personification of grace and effectiveness in the field and in his prime was the *beau ideal* of the intelligent diamond athlete, on and off the field, a gentle man and man of honor deserving of the wide esteem in which he was held." He was buried at Rockford's West Side Cemetery.

Bellan, Estaban Enrique "Steve" (1850–1932) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Troy	29/3b	128/26/32	.250	.299	.320	23	4	619	.713

The Troy Haymakers introduced the first Cuban, Steve Bellan, who was also among the first Jewish players, into major league baseball. A Cuban, as differ-

entiated from a Spaniard by birth, and a former Fordham student, he was also referred to from time to time as “The Cuban Sylph,” no doubt a reference to his graceful movements on a ball diamond. He played for Troy in 1871 and re-signed for the 1872 season, staying with the Haymakers until they folded during the ’72 season. In a 13 to 12 win over Boston, Bellan contributed five hits and five runs batted in, his best day at the plate in a Haymaker uniform. A fair, but not known as a good, hitter, he was a famous person in his homeland and later became a manager for the Havana team, ultimately revered as an elder statesman and pioneer in Cuban baseball. Estaban Bellan died in Havana at age 82.

Berkenstock, Nathan “Nate” (1831–1900) BR/TL

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Phl	1/of	4/0/0	.000	.000	.000	0	0	000	1.000

6’1,” 200-pound Nate Berkenstock, a paunchy 40-year-old, was called out of retirement to play in the National Association’s championship game on the very last day of the NA’s first season. That made him one of those rarities, a one-gamer, for it was his only major league game, although he had played for many years in Philadelphia, and, in the years before 1871, as a professional. Though he fanned three times he did contribute an outstanding catch and a couple other putouts, fielding a slick 1.000 during his patrol of right field in the Athletics’ win over Chicago for the whip flag. If it had to be a one-game career, big Nate picked the right game!

Birdsall, David Solomon (1838–1896) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Bos	29/of-c	152/51/46	.303	.321	.362	24	5	683	.769

By the time the man with the very biblical name of David Solomon Birdsall signed to play with the Red Stockings, he was a 31-year-old veteran of both amateur and professional play. He had spent the 1869 season with Nick Young’s Olympians and then returned to his native New York to play with the Morrisania Unions. He was a baseball-wise, tough competitor and a steady hand to have on the young, 1871 to ’73 Boston teams. Birdsall’s strong throwing arm and excellent range contributed to the club’s outstanding defensive play. Birdsall settled into the Boston scene after his playing days ended and died there in 1896.

Carey, Thomas John "Tom" (1849-?) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
FtW	19/2b	87/16/20	.230	.247	.253	10	5	483	.857

Tom Carey was one of seven Baltimore players who signed to play with the Fort Wayne Kekiongas during the 1871 season. A native of Brooklyn, he played on the sandlots in the New York area before becoming a Kekionga in 1871 at age 21. In a nine-season major league career, he played with Baltimore (1872-'73), the Mutuals (1874), Hartford (1875), Hartford again (from 1876 to '77 in the National League), Providence (1878), and Cleveland (1879). He was manager of the 1873 Baltimore club and hit for his highest career average that season (.337). He followed up that season with the New York Mutuals as their shortstop-second baseman and manager.

Craver, William H. "Bill" (1844-1901) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Troy	27/2b	118/26/36	.322	.339	407	26	0	846	.870

Captain of the Haymakers, Bill Craver was one of four local ball players to start out the Haymakers' first season in the National Association. A baseball vagabond, his 13-year career featured one span of seven years when he played for seven different ball clubs. A granite-tough ball player with a gamey persona to match, his days in major league ball were shrouded with controversy and allegations about fixed games. On the field of play, he was a battler who gave no quarter and played the game all out. The most notorious of his scrapes with John Law had to do with his final season, spent with Louisville's 1877 National League team. During that campaign, Louisville went into a late-season, eight-game swoon that cost them the championship. When it became known that pitcher Jim Devlin and others on the team were involved in fixing games, eyes were also cast in Bill Craver's direction. Though there was no evidence that Craver had actually been involved, both his actions and previous track record pointed an accusing finger at him. Released from the club, Bill Craver went back to Troy, by then a minor league team, to finish out his career in 1878. In contrast to his suspect past, he spent his final years, paradoxically, on the Troy police force. Bill Craver died at 57—in Troy.

Cuthbert, Edgar Edward "Ned" (1845-1905) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Phl	28/lf	150/47/37	.247	.294	.420	30	16	714	.890

A citizen of the City of Brotherly Love, Ned Cuthbert learned to play the game on the city's sandlots. He graduated to the Keystones in 1865 and spent subsequent seasons with the West Philadelphias and the Athletics. He played with Chicago's White Stockings in 1870 and signed to play with them again in 1871. But there was a problem. His wife balked at moving to Chicago. Cuthbert decided peace at the hearth was important, so he signed another 1871 contract, this one with the Athletics. The *New York Clipper* followed the Cuthbert situation into January and February, finally reporting that the contract mess was resolved when Chicago's General Manager, Tom Foley, signed Charlie Hodes and released Cuthbert from his Chicago contract. Ned Cuthbert went on to play a fine left field for Philadelphia's championship team, swift afoot and a real threat on the base paths. He completed a decade of professional baseball with the Baltimores of the Union Association in 1884.

Egglar, David Daniel (1851–1902) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
NY	33/cf	147/37/47	.320	.338	.408	18	14	658	.910

Dave Egglar's career began as a swift, sure-handed youngster of 18 with his hometown Brooklyn Eckfords. He mastered the art of the fair–foul hit, which helped him get on base regularly. He signed his first professional contract with the 1870 Mutuals, joining them for their hugely successful 1870 campaign, during which he played in 35 games, hitting at a .346 clip. Playing in 33 of the 35 Mutuals' NA games in 1871, he was a popular fixture in the New York lineup. He hit .300, scoring 37 runs. His playing career ended in Buffalo in 1886, where he remained as an employee of the New York Central Railroad's American Express Company. A father of five, he was reputed to have been "an upstanding citizen and model father."

**Ferguson, Robert Vavasour "Bob," "Death to Flying Things"
(1845–1894) BR&L/TR**

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
NY	33/3b	158/30/38	.241	.255	.291	25	4	546	.774

The "Flying Things" referred to in Bob Ferguson's nickname were baseballs and "Death" quite simply meant that whatever he went after he caught up

with. A wonderfully gifted athlete, he was one of the top defensive ball players in pre-1900 baseball. Agile, he played just about every position, most often third base, not only with great skill, but with intensity. That suited his nature. As scrupulously honest as a Puritan preacher, he rued hippodroming, the term used to characterize throwing a ball game, gambling, and other assorted evils that bedeviled the game. He was in leadership positions most of his career, starting with his player–manager responsibilities with the 1871 Mutuals. One of his more famous games came during the 1870 season when the switch-hitting New Yorker batted from the left side and swatted a Brainard pitch for the base hit that scored the tying run against Cincinnati in the game that the New York club broke up the Red Stockings' winning streak. Old Fergie scored moments later to bring home the winner. He played the game he loved for 14 seasons, winding up in 1884 with Pittsburgh in the American Association. He died in Brooklyn, just 10 years later, aged 49. The untimely death was caused by a stroke.

Flynn, William “Clipper” (1849–1881) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Troy	29/1b	142/43/48	.338	.356	.394	27	3	750	.995

Clipper Flynn was born in Lansingburgh and grew up with the game of baseball. He played with the Unions from 1867 to '69, learning the game from the pros. His baseball education continued with the Chicago White Stockings in 1870, and, when the Troy Haymakers beckoned in 1871, he was ready. During that season, Flynn starred in the 29 to 14 victory at Boston with four hits while initiating a pair of twin killings from his right-field post. In August against Cleveland, he had a pair of run-producing safeties, 11 put-outs at first base, and an assist. His .995 fielding average, fashioned principally at first base, was among the league's top marks. Clipper Flynn moved on to Washington but after the Olympics folded at midterm in 1872, he packed his bags, went home to Troy, and played baseball strictly for the fun of it. He died an untimely death at age 32 in Lansingburgh.

Force, David W. “Wee Davey,” “Tom Thumb” (1849–1918) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Was	32/ss	162/45/45	.278	.295	.383	29	8	678	.844

At 5'4" and 130 pounds, Davey Force was one of the smaller players in the NA. That didn't prevent him from being one of the best shortstops in a league that could boast a number of good ones, among them Ross Barnes, New York's Dickie Pearce, John Bass of Cleveland, Warren Goldsmith of Fort Wayne, and Troy's Dick Flowers. Force's strong arm, range, and command of the game drew the attention of the Olympics and they signed him for the 1871 season. It was his only season in Washington until he returned there for the final season of his 15-year major league career. In between his debut and his finale were stints with several teams, including Buffalo, where he was a fixture at shortstop and second base for Buffalo from 1879 to '85.

Davey Force was involved in the contractual incident that caused William Hulbert, one of the founding fathers of the National League, to bring down the ineffectual and poorly organized National Association. Hulbert, who in 1874, as owner of the Chicago White Stockings, had signed Force to a Chicago contract, learned that "Wee Davey" had also signed on with Philadelphia for the 1875 season. Hulbert took the matter to the NA's Judiciary Committee only to have them rule: a) that he (Hulbert) had first rights to Force; but b) after their first ruling, reversed their decision and ruled that Force could play with Philadelphia because the Chicago contract was invalid, having been signed before the 1874 season was over. Force played with the Athletics in 1875 while Hulbert fumed in Chicago. Force continued his career for another season, 1876, in Philadelphia, but it was played out in the William Hulbert's National League. Incidentally, Davey Force enjoyed the best year of his career in 1875, hitting .311 and leading the NA in fielding—for Philadelphia, which finished way ahead of Chicago in the standings.

Fulmer, Charles "Chick" (1851–1940) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Rck	16/ss	63/11/17	.270	.324	.381	3	0	705	.770

Rockford's general manager, Hi Waldo, brought Chick Fullmer to Rockford midway through the 1871 season to plug a hole at shortstop that had been very bothersome. It proved to be Waldo's best mid-season roster move. Fullmer started the season playing semi-pro ball in Philadelphia with the Excelsiors. After signing with Rockford in June, he returned to Philadelphia and played an outstanding game against the Athletics, which did not pass by unnoticed by the Philadelphia sports writers. The tall and spare midfielder enjoyed an 11-year major league career. His best season came in 1879, when he teamed with Davey Force at the keystone in Buffalo. Chick Fullmer lived

a full life, retiring in Philadelphia, where in 1940, having just passed his 89th birthday, he died, leaving behind his wife Annie after 65 years of marriage. He had been one of the National Association's last surviving players.

Goldsmith, Warren M. "Wally" (1848–1915) TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OPB	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
FtW	19/ss	88/8/18	.205	.239	.216	12	0	455	.767

Wally Goldsmith played for the Baltimore Marylands during the 1869 and 1870 seasons and was one of the players who visited Fort Wayne during the 1870 season, subsequently signing, as did many of his teammates, with the Kekiongas for 1871. Goldsmith was a versatile semi-pro player, playing with a number of teams. His specialty was shortstop, however, and there he turned in some fine fielding for the Kekes. His major league career was short, four seasons with four different teams. His most active year was with Fort Wayne, playing in all of their games before the club disbanded in August of 1871. He was the catcher for the Kekiongas in their last major league game, which was played against Troy.

**Gould, Charles Harvey "Chuck," "The Bushel Basket" (1847–1917)
BR/TR**

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Bos	31/lb	151/38/43	.285	.299	.411	32	6	696	.906

Blessed with a pair of big hands, Chuck Gould was dubbed "The Bushel Basket" for his ability to scoop errant throws out of the dirt around first base. He first began doing that in his native Cincinnati for the Buckeyes team. The lanky six footer attracted the attention of Harry Wright, who turned him into one of the better first basemen of the 19th century and, after playing with the great Red Stockings of 1869 and '70, was brought to Boston by his mentor, where he drove home 32 runs and led the league in double plays. His business-like attire and trademark goatee made him look more like a bookkeeper than a baseball player, which, in fact, he was for his father's dairy products business. Gould's most famous spotlight moment came with an 1871 home run against Chicago. Trailing the White Stockings 3 to 0 at Lakeside Park, the Bostons rallied, sending two runs across the plate. At that point, Dave Birdsall got to second on an error, Cal McVey singled and so did Al Spalding, loading the bases. Ol' Bushel Basket then came up and leaned

into one of George Zettlein's heaters and sent a towering smash over the left field wall for a grand slam, enabling the Red Stockings to win a crucial game in its September surge. It was a blow that came up regularly thereafter, bringing a twinkle to the elderly Gould's eye. After his death, his body was sent to Cincinnati, where his internment was followed by the placement of a suitable marker many years later, arranged by Cincinnati Reds president Warren Giles.

Hall, George William (1849–1923) BL

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Was	32/cf	136/31/40	.294	.333	.404	17	2	737	.913

On September 30, the day after the Washington Olympics concluded their NA season, George Hall had his finest baseball moment. It came on a spectacular catch he made in an exhibition game against the Philadelphia Athletics. Olympics' captain Charlie Sweasy had only moments before intentionally dropped an infield popup in an effort to delay the game as darkness approached, hoping that the score would revert to the previous inning. That was to no avail. Hall saw to that with a brilliant running catch of the Athletics' George Heubel's howitzer shot to deep center field. The next day's *New York Clipper* carried a comment to the effect that Hall had refused to stoop to any foul play to prolong the game. Would that the young Hall's career had ended on a high note like that. By 1876, his best season in a seven-year major league career, Hall was consumed in a gambling habit, and, by 1878, was thrown out of the game for hippodroming, the first such expulsion in the history of professional baseball. He had been caught red-handed in the Louisville scandal of 1877 and admitted his guilt. In the midst of his gambling habit, he had hit .323 for Louisville and led the league in fielding, but his brush with the law put an end to his career.

Hastings, Winfield Scott (1847–1907) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Rck	25/c	118/27/30	.254	.267	.373	20	11	640	.856

The capable manager of the Forest Citys, Scott Hastings, going on 25 the summer he played in Rockford, was a veteran player whose life revolved around baseball. He was Rockford's second baseman in 1869 and he caught

for them in 1870. Prior to his Rockford days, he had played not only in Illinois, but in the deep South for the New Orleans Lone Stars. It was his Lone Star contract that was at the root of the charges against him and his Rockford club during and at the end of the 1871 season. A bright young man, personable, and a popular figure about town, Hastings was as much a part of the core of those famous Rockford teams as were Addy, Barnes, Cone, and Spalding. Hall's professional career extended more than a decade, finishing with Cincinnati in the National League in 1877.

King, Stephen F. "Steve" (1842–1895)

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Troy	29/of	144/45/57	.396	.400	.549	34	3	949	.833

From 1867 through the 1872 season, Steve King played baseball in a hometown uniform. And then it was all over. When Troy bowed out of the NA midway through the 1872 season, the 30-year-old King put his spikes on a hook and spent the rest of his life in Troy, where he died in 1895. Leaving the game behind was rather commonplace during the major leagues' first decades, and not all the departures were caused by an influx of superior talent. Steve King, for example, was a fine hitter and fielded equally well. Hitting NA pitching in 1871 at a robust .396 while playing in every game, he powered 10 doubles and five triples into enemy outfields in the Haymakers' 29 games. Only Barnes and McVey of Boston and league leader Levi Meyerle, all of whom hit .400 topped King's .396. And King ranked fifth in the league in hits and total bases. Steve's younger brother Mart played for the White Stockings in 1871, joined the Troy team in 1872, and then retired after Troy folded in 1872, following his older brother in retirement. Both Kings spent the rest of their lives in Troy.

Lennon, William H. "Bill" (1848–1910)

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
FtW	12/c	48/5/11	.229	.245	.292	5	1	537	.887

The Fort Wayne Kekiongas' manager, Bill Lennon, came to the Summit City with his battery mate, Bobby Mathews. They had played ball in Baltimore and signed to play with Fort Wayne while in the city on an 1870 trip west. Born in Brooklyn, Lennon took up the game at an early age, moved around a bit, and finally wound up with the Baltimores, where he starred as a catcher

and outfielder. Like many another roustabout in the National Association, he was a heavy drinker and was finally cut from the Fort Wayners because of repeated violations of his contract stipulations regarding “gentlemanly behavior.” He had already left the team prior to his firing. Lennon also played NA ball in 1872 and ’73 before dropping out of major league baseball.

Leonard, Andrew Jackson “Andy” (1846–1903) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Was	31/2b	148/33/43	.291	.305	385	30	14	690	.863

By 1869, the 21 year old had already played several seasons in fast company, and that year Harry Wright took him aboard his “Red Stocking Express” to play in the outfield. During the years of Cincinnati’s unbroken skein of victories, 1869 and ’70, Andy Leonard patrolled the outfield under the tutorship of Wright himself. Though asked by Wright to move on to Boston with him for the 1871 season, Leonard declined, opting to play with Washington with several of his Red Stocking teammates. He spent only one season with the Olympics, and after that decided that it might be better to play in Boston, after all. For both Boston and Leonard, it was a very good move. Leonard spent the next seven seasons there on championship NA teams, and, beginning in 1876, with the National League entry. He was a smart, heads-up ball player who hit near .300 with Washington, and then .339, .320, .313, and .321 the next four seasons to wind up the NA phase of his career with a strong .320 average. In 1880, he closed out his nine-year major league career with Cincinnati, where it all began, playing both at shortstop and second base. His last season was organized baseball’s first under terms of the reserve clause, instituted after the 1879 season. It was time for the free-spirited Leonard to move on. There would be no “chattel baseball” for President Jackson’s namesake.

Mack, (b: Dennis Joseph McGee) “Denny” (1851–1888) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Rck	25/1b	122/34/30	.246	.292	.320	17	12	612	.936

Just across the river from New Jersey, near Bethlehem and Allentown, Pennsylvania, lies the city of Easton. That is where Denny Mack learned to play baseball, and played it so well that when he attended Villanova University at the height of the late ’60’s baseball craze, his pitching attracted a great

deal of attention from Philadelphia's amateur clubs and semi-pro teams. He also attracted the attention of the Rockford club, which signed him to an 1871 contract to play with the Forest Citys. During that season, he was also kept in mind as an alternate pitcher and did, in fact, pitch one game to give Cherokee Fisher relief during the busier part of Rockford's NA schedule. His strong arm caused his managers to shift him to shortstop, where he starred for a number of years with the St. Louis, Indianapolis, and Syracuse teams. Offensively, he was a good base runner, stealing 12 bases in 12 tries while scoring better than a run per game. Mack was a quiet, though an intense competitor, one of the exceptions to the more rowdy and heavy-drinking rank and file of the NA.

Malone, Fergus G. "Fergy" (1842–1905) BR/TL

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Phl	27/c	134/33/46	.343	.385	.433	33	9	818	.856

At 29, Fergy Malone, born in Ireland, was one of the older, more experienced players in the National Association. He had played for New York area and Philadelphia teams before signing to play with the Athletics in 1871. Athletics president James Kerns made Malone one of his top signing priorities and the sturdy catcher did not disappoint. He drove home 33 runs during Philadelphia's championship season, stealing nine bases and closing out the season with a fine .343 batting average. Except for the 1874 season, when he played for the White Stockings, Malone spent his entire major league career in Philadelphia. Playing even better behind the plate in 1871 than Deacon White, who was the best catcher to perform during the National Association years, Malone would have been first in line for an 1871 All-Star Team selection had one been named.

McAtee, Michael "Bub," "Butch" (1845–1876) TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Chi	26/1b	135/34/37	.274	.300	.363	10	5	663	.943

Bub McAtee hailed from Troy, New York, and knew a little bit about baseball before making the trek to Chicago, where he played with the White Stockings in 1870 and '71. A house painter by trade, he signed to play with the pros and held down the first baseman's position for the White Stockings, hitting leadoff and contributing eight doubles and a pair of triples to the

Chicago attack. A stocky 5'9", he was nonetheless quick on his feet and an agile fielder. In the company of three other White Stockings, he left Chicago to play for the Haymakers in 1872, playing in all 25 of Troy's NA games until the team folded. It was the end of his major league career and he died an untimely death at the early age of 31 in Troy.

McGeary, Michael Henry "Mike" (1851-?) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Troy	29/c	148/42/39	.264	.292	.291	12	20	583	.897

Mike McGeary, Troy's catcher, was also their leadoff hitter. Possessed of good baseball instincts, he was also a dangerous base runner, leading the NA with 20 stolen bases in 1871, enabling him to get into scoring position frequently. A slightly built, wiry fellow, McGeary endured the punishment behind the plate for several seasons before converting to second base and shortstop during his 11-year major league career. Mike McGeary registered five hits in that incredible 49 to 33 loss to Philadelphia, his most productive game of the season. While admired as a scrappy, all-out player, he seemed to have the character flaw that bedeviled so many professional athletes, involving him in game-fixing and gambling, though he was never proven guilty. As was so often the case with ball players and wagering or fixing games, he did indeed live "at the edge," causing those who knew to put the finger on him even though the review committees and courts could not. His best season came in 1872 with a very good Athletics team. That season he hit .360, his highest average in an 11-year major league career.

McVey, Calvin Alexander "Cal" (1850-1926) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Boston	29/c-of	153/43/66	.431	.435	.556	43	14	991	.883

Cal McVey made the move from the 1870 Cincinnati Red Stockings to Boston with the Wright brothers and Charlie Gould. Far more mention has been made of the Barnes and Spalding signings than of the acquisition of McVey, but as far as the 1871 season is concerned, the Iowan's contribution to Boston's success was just as great and equally spectacular. Not yet 20, the youngster had been playing professionally since 1868, signing originally with the

Indianapolis Actives as a 17-year-old pitcher and infielder. During the National Association's first season, his .431 batting average was second only to Ross Barnes' .492, as were his 43 RBIs. He was one of Harry Wright's vital cogs in four straight Boston championships. He then moved on to Chicago in 1876 when the White Stockings became the National League's first pennant winners, hitting .347 and playing the best first base in the league. After his major league career, he moved to the West Coast, where he managed and played on teams for another decade. He lost his home in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, regrouped, and spent an additional score of years in the city by the bay. Cal McVey died in San Francisco, 10 days shy of his 76th birthday.

Meyerle, Levi Samuel "Long Levi" (1845–1921) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Phl	26/3b	130/45/64	.492	.500	.700	40	4	1200	.646

The top 15 AOPS* ratings in the National Association featured Levi Meyerle's 243 (his unadjusted OPS figure, 1200, was equally astronomical). His mark, the league's best, was so gargantuan that if inserted into the all-time listing it would rank number five. The top-10 AOPS marks, all time, through the 2006 season include:

Barry Bonds, 2004	278
Barry Bonds, 2001	263
Barry Bonds, 2004	255
Babe Ruth, 1920	252
Levi Meyerle, 1871	243
Babe Ruth, 1923	238
Babe Ruth, 1921	236
Ted Williams, 1941	232
Babe Ruth, 1927	229
Pete Browning, 1882	229

*AOPS numbers are the sum of a hitter's on-base percentage plus slugging average adjusted to a player's home park factor. There is a strong correlation between AOPS and runs scored and since runs are baseball's "coinage of the realm," the all-important factor of putting a team in the position of scoring runs is crucial to assessing a player's productivity as a hitter this respect.

Long Levi came up with a year that, when compared to the rest of 1871's hitters, was something akin to the distance between planet earth and the sun. And he kept right on hitting. During his five National Association years he averaged .365 with a .494 slugging average and a .369 on-base percentage. What we have here is a skinny, vintage baseball Babe Ruth who purely and simply hit beyond the best efforts of all the others. If hitting was his game, it couldn't be said, unfortunately, that fielding was, as well. He was, in all truth, a 19th-century "muffin," that is, a ball player with brick hands, a real liability on defense. He was, to put the common phrase backward, "good hit and no field," instead of the usual "good field, no hit." But with a stick in his hands he was unadulterated murder. And his hitting wasn't confined to the infamous fair-foul hitting or that of a slap hitter. His blows included extra base hits that drove home runs aplenty for the Boston Red Stockings, including home runs, a rarity during the 1870s. The angular, lean Philadelphian played six of his nine major league seasons in Philadelphia for NA, National League, and Union Association teams. His last appearance was made in a Philly uniform in 1884, some seven years after he retired. In three games for Philadelphia that year he garnered but one hit, a double, and then left the game behind, no doubt figuring that he was better off in retirement. He died in his hometown, Philadelphia, at 76, in 1921, just long enough to see "The Babe" put the long ball into the game.

Mills, Everett "Ev" (1845–1908)

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Was	32/1b	157/38/43	.274	.287	.382	24	2	669	.967

Ev spent only one season in Washington, moving to the Baltimore franchise with his 1871 Olympics general manager, Nick Young. He was a steady, sure-handed first baseman and a good clutch hitter, so when Young indicated he was moving to Baltimore for 1872, Mills opted to go along. He had previously played with the Mutes of New York in 1869 and '70 seasons. In one of the Olies' stranger games of the '71 season, played in Chicago on June 30, Ev Mills doubled twice and got on, on an error, scoring twice and recording 19 of Washington's 27 putouts as the Olympics won 13 to 8. In this game, Bill Stearns was Washington's pitcher rather than Asa Brainard and it resulted in one of Stearns' two wins that season. In 1873, Mills was the NA's best fielding first baseman, leading the league with a .949 fielding average, one of the higher fielding marks on record in the NA's five-year history. The rangy first sacker died in his hometown, Newark, at age 63.

Pabor, Charles Henry "Charlie" (1846–1913) BL/TL

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Clv	26/lf	142/24/42	.296	.301	.366	18	1	667	.773

Charlie Pabor signed on with the Cleveland Forest Citys to manage the team and to play left field, filling in as a utility player and pitcher when the occasion arose. An affable sort who wore the long, Chester Arthur sideburns, he had played with a number of clubs before donning the Cleveland uniform, most recently with the Morrisianias of New York City in 1870. A portsider, he was a sure-handed flyhawk, playing his best ball in the outfield. Pabor's five-year major league career was spent in the NA and his best season was his 1873 effort, hitting .360 and playing in every Brooklyn Atlantics game. One of Cleveland's more popular ball players, he signed on again for the 1872 season, but the franchise folded before mid-season, and Charlie Pabor spent the rest of that summer "gone fishin'." Pabor died in New Haven, Connecticut, where he continued his association with the game at the local level. He died there in 1913 at age 67.

Pearce, Richard J. "Dickey" (1836–1908) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
NY	33/ss	163/31/44	.270	.287	.301	20	0	588	.793

Not many of us have been born on February 29. And there weren't many baseballists, as they were called who played the short fielder's position like Dickey Pearce did. He spent the first 13 seasons of his career, which began in 1856, with the Brooklyn Atlantics, where he played at the midfield positions, restyling play around the keystone as he went. A stumpy 5'3," with legs a-pumpin' and eyes tracking those bothersome little balls that no one seemed to think worth going after, he showed by example how to cut down an offense with spectacular plays that were noted with amazement in the press. He became the most heralded shortstop of his time. Between 1865 and '70, he spent six seasons with Joe Start, Charlie Mills, Bob Ferguson, and Charley Smith firing up the mighty Atlantics as they played together on a seriously dominating ball club that outclassed most everything in sight. All five of them were a part of the Mutuels' first entry into the fledgling NA. Already 35 at the entry point of the NA, Pearce was one of the old salts in the league, playing both brilliantly and honestly through the darker moments of that season. One of the game's best fair-foul hitters, he was also among the first

to put a bunted ball into the playbook. He finished his 22-year professional career, following up his playing days with umpiring. Pearce died at 72 in Onset, Massachusetts.

Pike, Lipman Emanuel “Lip” (1845–1893) BL/TL

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Troy	28/of	130/43/49	.377	.400	.654	39	3	777	.850

Lip Pike was one of the most feared hitters in the history of the National Association. He hit to all fields—and often, chalking up a .333 lifetime NA average and he drove home 244 runs (almost one per game through five NA seasons). In five additional National League seasons, he hit .303 before retiring in 1878. In 1881 and in 1887, at age 42, he made token appearances to round out a 10-year major league career. A left-handed infielder, not considered a handicap in the 1860s and '70s, he played well as a part of his team's inner defense, played a heady game and rarely threw to the wrong base. He was swift on the base lines and not only scored 43 times in Troy's inaugural season, but drove home another 39. His four circuit smashes led the league, and he wound up second in slugging (.654), third in total bases (85), and third in RBIs (39). With Steve King, Bill Craver, and Dickie Flowers, he helped form one of the most dangerous hitting lineups in the NA's 1871 season. Elected to the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame, he was among the very first to play for pay, accepting \$20 a week to play third base for the Philadelphia Athletics in 1866. With a wealth of experience behind him, he accepted the Troy managerial post in 1871, hit an impressive .377 with 10 doubles, seven triples, and four homers among his 49 hits in NA games. His athletic career was not confined to baseball. Known for his outstanding speed, he ran competitively, once racing against a trotter, beating the steed in a 100-yard dash in 10.0 seconds, winning the \$250 purse that went with the victory.

Pinkham, Edward B. “Ed” (1849–?) BL/TL

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Chi	24/3b–p	95/27/25	.263	.381	.453	17	5	814	.754

Ed Pinkham played only one season of major league ball but he made it a good one. Signed by Joe Foley, the White Stockings' general manager, the former Brooklyn Eckfords lefty was moved from the pitcher's points to third

base. The strong-armed southpaw filled in for George Zettlein in 1871 on June 2, for example, and quelled a Boston rally, enabling Chicago to beat Boston 16 to 14, but he was primarily a third baseman for the Whites. The sharp-eyed Pinkham was patient enough to wrangle 18 free passes from Association pitchers, leading the league. Ed Pinkham's third-base slot was filled by Mike Brannock in the championship game on October 30 against Philadelphia; after the 1871 season, his name disappeared from major league lineups.

Reach, Alfred James "Al" (1840–1928) BL/TL

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Phl	26/2b	133/43/47	.353	.377	.496	34	2	973	.844

Al Reach was born in London and, after moving to America, took up the game of baseball. In due time, his talents earned him a berth with the celebrated Brooklyn Eckfords—due time, in his case, being but 15 years. By 1864, he was playing ball for a paycheck, reputedly among the first, if not the very first to do so, plying his adopted trade for the Philadelphia Athletics. Like Al Spalding, the young Reach had an eye for a buck and began his entrepreneurial career before his playing days ended. His ventures included a cigar emporium that grew from a corner-store establishment to a million-dollar business, ownership of a baseball team, manufacturing baseball and other sporting gear, and publishing baseball guides. On the diamond, he was no less successful and became a vital cog in Philadelphia's National Association ball club, assisting the team win the first pro ball title in 1871 with strong offensive punch from the left side while teaming with the younger Johnny Radcliff to give the Athletics a strong keystone duo. The popular player married a Philadelphia lass and settled down in the City of Brotherly Love after his playing career ended (Reach played with Philadelphia during the NA years and then retired). His son married the daughter of business manager Benjamin Franklin Shibe and his dealings in baseball and in the community were favored and respected. The considerable influence that Al Reach had both as a player and later as an executive and sporting goods manufacturer lead one to wonder: if there is room in the Hall of Fame for Al Spalding, why isn't there room for the other Al, Mr. Reach!

Schafer, Harry C. (1846–1935) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Bos	31/3b	149/38/42	.282	.296	.396	28	13	792	.684

Harry Schafer spent 1868–’70 with the Philadelphia Athletics as a hard-hitting, strong-armed third baseman. That was good enough for Harry Wright, so he went after, and got Schafer for his Boston club. Schafer helped inaugurate the Boston franchise and liked his surroundings well enough to stay in Beantown his entire eight-season major league career. During the 1871 season, he played in every Red Stockings game, stroking seven doubles and five triples among his 42 hits. Scoring better than a run per game, he also drove home another 28. Defensively Schafer rated high marks for heady play at the hot corner, though he was a bit scatter-armed. Nonetheless, he was one of Wright’s unheralded stalwarts, a favorite among Boston’s South End Grounds’ fans. He was one the NA’s oldest living survivors at the time of his death at 89 in 1935.

Sellman, Charles Francis “Frank” (aka Frank C. Williams) (1852–1907)

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
FtW	14/3b–c	65/14/15	.231	.275	.323	10	1	598	.711

Frank Sellman played during each of the National Association years and with a different team each season, playing under his assumed name, Frank Williams. A Baltimorian, he broke into semi-pro ball at a very young 15, and, in 1869, at 17, played shortstop with the Baltimore team that included many of the players that later signed with the Kekiongas for the 1871 season, among them Mathews, Lennon, Goldsmith, and Armstrong. He chummed with Bill Lennon, Fort Wayne manager. He was given an official release after he had already left Fort Wayne prior to the Kekes’ last game. 1871 turned out to be his most active NA season as he was confined to bit roles in his other four seasons in major league baseball.

Sensenderfer, John Phillips Jenkins “The Count” (1847–1903)

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Phl	25/cf	127/38/41	.323	.323	.394	23	5	717	.814

With a name that might have come from a German military history book, Mr. Sensenderfer quite naturally picked up the nickname “The Count.” But this Count played baseball and played it well, especially in the outfield. A Philadelphian, he spent his entire career in the City of Brotherly Love, starting in 1866 with the Athletics. With many of the already-recognizable names in the 1871 lineup, Sensenderfer and his teammates knew each other

well. It was one of the keys to their championship season. "Sensy," as he was also known, played an alert and far-ranging centerfield, hit well, and enjoyed a fine 1871 season until he tore up his knee in an exhibition game in Rockford. Out for the rest of the season, he missed the championship game. The Count was more than a ball player. He was also a musician, a gentleman, and quite a lady's man about town in Philly. In the rough-hewn days of professional baseball, 1870s style, that was an exception. Never up to his pre-injury days after the Rockford injury, he played but one more full season before heading off to less-demanding physical pursuits in the city of his birth. He died there in 1903 at age 55.

Simmons, Joseph S. (Joseph S. Chabriel) "Joe" (1848–1901)

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Chi	27/of	129/29/28	.217	.223	.279	17	4	502	.894

The White Stockings' centerfielder was Joe Simmons, who had first played in his native New York with the Gothams of 1865 as a swift outfielder. In 1867, it was on to the Empires of New York, followed by a season with Chicago's Excelsiors two years later, the top semi-pro team in the Chicago area. In 1870, Simmons moved still farther west, hooking up with the great Rockfords, where he played alongside Gat Stires and Fred Cone. One of the quickest outfielders in the game, he was with Chicago for the Whites' first season in the National Association. There, he played between two more fine outfielders, Fred Treacey and Matt King (and sometimes Tom Foley). In the championship game at Brooklyn against the Athletics, he shifted to right field. Simmons played only two more seasons of major league ball after 1871, with Cleveland in 1872 and the Keokuk Westerns, which he managed, in 1875. Both franchises folded. That was apparently enough for Joe. After Chicago, with its Great Fire disaster and two franchise failures, Joe left the game in 1875, the same year the NA itself folded.

Start, Joseph "Old Reliable," "Rocks" (1841–1927) BL/TL

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
NY	33/1b	161/35/58	.360	.372	.422	34	4	794	.921

"Old Reliable's" nickname described the Mutes' first baseman to a tee. He was a glue-handed first sacker and in the long tradition of hard hitting, mid-

dle-of-the-order hitters, a striker who came through more often than not with big hits that jarred loose winning runs. With Dickey Pearce, he combined to give the Mutuals steady play and what today would be called clubhouse leadership. A square-jawed, sturdy lefty hitter, Joe played professional ball for 28 seasons, never tiring of the game he loved. He played his position bare-handed, as did his teammates, but seemed to have a knack of digging errant throws out of the dirt, a la Charlie Gould, with those big, gnarled dukes of his. A pro since the 1867 season, he played through five National Association seasons and later in the National League put in a seven-year stretch with the famed Providence Grays, playing on their championship team of 1879 with former NA stars Bobby Mathews, Doug Allison, Mike McGeary, and manager George Wright. That year, he hit .319 and led the National League in fielding with a .980 mark. Also known as “Rocks,” the amiable New Yorker played his last pro season in 1886, closing out his 16-year major league career at age 45. Joe Start retired in Providence, where he died in 1927 at age 76.

Stires, Garrett “Gat” (1849–1933) BL/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Rck	25/of	110/23/30	.273	.316	.473	24	789	3	.837

In his first at bat of the season in the National Association, Gat Stires, who had been signed up only 24 hours earlier, mauled Al Pratt’s first pitch to him for a triple in the bottom half of Rockford’s third inning. That was without practice. He had already made a fine catch in right field off the bat of Cleveland’s Charlie Pabor in the season opener for both clubs. The *Rockford Register* reporter enthused: “Stires took his bat for the first time this year (no practice), and, taking the first ball, sent it away over the clouds to center field for three bases.” Unfortunately, he died at third, and by the time the game was over, so did the Rockford nine in a game in which there wasn’t a single earned run. The final score was 12 to 4. Gat Stires led the Forest Citys in RBIs in 1871 and had a good season, ranking right alongside Adrian Anson as one of Rockford’s best. Two four-baggers and six triples helped to post a .473 slugging average, best, once again, on the team. But Stires, who had actually retired after the 1870 season only to be persuaded by Hi Waldo to come back for another year after the departure of Spalding and Barnes, this time retired for good. 1871 was his last season of major league baseball. Many years later, at 84, he died in nearby Byron, Illinois.

Sutton, Ezra Ballou "Ez" (1850–1907) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Clv	29/3b	128/35/45	.352	.357	.555	23	3	912	.795

1871's best third baseman came to Cleveland in 1870, stayed till the Forest Citys called it a day in 1872, and then, after three seasons in Philadelphia, settled down to a 12-year career with the Boston Braves in the National League. Ez Sutton led the NA in fielding in 1871 with a .775 average (no gloves, remember), and hit productively, gathering 75 safe blows, 13 of which went for extra bases (7 triples). Stockily built, Sutton had a strong throwing arm and led the National League in 1884, fielding at .908 (indeed, there were gloves by this time). In his later years, he was one of Boston's most idolized ball players, known affectionately as "Uncle Ezra." He came to Cleveland as a youngster of 19, a cross-handed hitter from the right side. After a season or two, he came to adopt the more orthodox grip, hitting .290 or better in 12 of his 18 major league seasons. He was the major league's first hitter to hit two home runs in one game. That was accomplished in Chicago's new ballpark on May 8, 1871. After his baseball career, Ezra Sutton's life was very difficult. His business venture in wood processing and sawmill work failed, he became paralyzed at 40, and his wife died in a fiery gas light explosion 15 years after the onset of his crippling disease. He died at 57, brokenhearted and impoverished, a sad ending to an otherwise productive and exemplary life.

Sweasy, Charles James "Charlie" (Charles Swasey) (1847–1908) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Was	5/2b	19/5/4	.211	.250	.263	4	0	513	.788

Charlie Sweasy's better baseball days were played out before the formation of the National Association. The best of those pre-major league years came with the Cincinnati Red Stockings in 1869 and '70. Under the tight control of Harry Wright, who kept a taut rein on his flinty second baseman, the Newark, New Jersey, native played well at the keystone. His best season was the undefeated Cincinnati campaign of 1869 when Sweasy hit some tremendous drives, often logging five and six hits in a game, and, on more than one occasion, three in one inning. He, like many another player new to all-pro competition, found National Association pitching tougher. Hard to handle and given to excessive drinking, Harry Wright parted ways with Sweasy after the

1870 season. Nick Young picked him up for utility duties, but also named him the Olympics' team captain. Sweasy's major league career ended in the six team National League with the 1878 Providence club. He returned to his native Newark after his baseball days ended, spending many years in the oyster business. Sweasy died at 60 in 1908 in his hometown, Newark, New Jersey.

Treacey, Frederick S. "Fred" (1847-?)

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Chi	25/of	124/39/42	.339	.349	.573	33	13	922	.918

George Hall, Ned Cuthbert, Dave Egler, and Steve King were among the better outfielders in the NA's debut season. But there was a better one, Fred Treacey, whose outfield play for the Whites of Chicago stamped him as the best of them all. Exceptionally good on running down fly balls hit to the deeper pockets of the league's vast outer gardens, he took off like a shot after balls that were hit over his head or beyond him in the gaps and hauled them in. In order to appreciate his barehanded artistry, understand that he was backing a fastball pitcher, George Zettlein, who rarely, if ever varied his speed, causing the good hitters in the league to shiver in gleeful anticipation of meeting Chicago. So they dug in and put the wood to "The Charmer's" heat, putting fellows like Treacey in hot pursuit. Regularly. But Fred was up to it, and he led the league in homers (4, tying others) and fielding average (.918). Captain Wood batted him somewhere between third and sixth in the order, and he recorded 33 runs batted in to go with 39 runs scored in 25 Association games.

Fred Treacey had been in Chicago for the 1870 season after having played in his native Brooklyn (Eckfords and Excelsiors), teaming with Jimmy Wood, Charlie Hodes and Ed Pinkham, before coming to Chicago for the '70 and '71 seasons. McAtee, Duffy and Mart King were also part of the 1870 Chicago nine. Speed, a good nose for the ball, and a keen hitting eye were features of his short but sweet Chicago stay. Treacey played one season of National League ball with New York in 1876 before his career ended in 1876. He was one of the unsung heroes of the NA's very first campaign.

White, James Laurie "Deacon" (1847-1939) BL/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Clv	29/c	146/40/47	.322	.340	.452	21	2	792	.821

One of the best athletes in 19th-century major league baseball was “The Deacon,” Jim White, quite possibly born ahead of his time. Had he been in his prime in the 1880s, he would have been much better known than he is today. That said, it didn’t keep him from making the most of the career time he was allotted. Leading off at Fort Wayne in the NA’s lidlifter, the left-handed hitter took the measure of Bobby Mathews’ slants and cracked the first hit in league history, a double, and went on from there to a three-hit day though the game was won by the Fort Wayners. The name Deacon stemmed from his former superintendency of the Sunday school in his hometown, Canton, New York. His life in and out of baseball testified to his never forgetting the Christian lessons learned in his tender years. He grew up to be a versatile ball player but specialized in that demanding spot behind the plate. He was a steadying influence on a very young Cleveland ball club that averaged but 21.8 years of age. Manager Charlie Pabor was 25 and Caleb Johnson was the “old” man of the crew at 27. White was Pabor’s right-hand man and directed the Cleveland defense from his catcher’s position. The Deacon was Al Spalding’s catcher during those titanic Red Stocking years when Boston creamed everything in sight and the Deacon was a big part of that success. He was a member of still another championship team, Detroit’s Wolverines, captors of the 1887 pennant. During his score of years in major league baseball, he put up some very impressive numbers, hitting over the .300 mark lifetime. Many believe that he should be in the Hall of Fame, certainly an accolade that says much about his sterling career.

Wood, James Leon “Jimmy” (1844–1886) TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Chi	28/2b	135/45/51	.378	.425	.563	19	18	988	.887

Jimmy Wood was the heart and soul of the Chicago club. He led the team in virtually all the important hitting categories and was the best second baseman in the National Association’s maiden season, as well holding the team together. A veteran into his 12th season, he made his baseball debut with the Brooklyn Eckfords at 15 and soon showed the kind of skills, savvy, and leadership abilities that would destine him to be exactly what he became: Captain Jimmy, leader of several teams. Today, he would be known as a player’s manager. Joe Foley began his search for ball players by going after Jimmy Wood, his first and only choice as the field leader for the White Stockings. To make certain there would be no slip-up in getting the native Brooklynite’s name on a contract he pegged the salary a lofty \$2,000. That worked, and

so did Jimmy. He was one of the biggest stars in professional baseball's first season.

Wright, George (1847–1937) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Bos	16/ss	80/33/33	.412	.453	.625	11	9	1075	.816

George Wright was professional baseball's first franchise player. His prodigious hitting feats and even more spectacular fielding stamped his play as Olympian. He was the number one star of the famed Cincinnati team of 1869–70, often registering as many as six and seven hits in a single game, many of them long drives that rolled far beyond outfielders for home runs. In 1869, during the Red Stockings' undefeated season, he homered 47 times during their 59-game winning streak. Small wonder that brother Harry, after having talked George into playing with Cincinnati, would make him the first recruit for the 1871 Boston club. Unfortunately, George Wright's 1871 season was marred by a leg injury that cut his NA playing time in half. Even so, he managed to hit at a lofty .412 pace, anchor Boston's defensive play, and come through with the steely-nerved clutch plays that were instrumental in Boston victories when he was there. However well the Philadelphians played, and the Great Fire in Chicago notwithstanding, the Boston nine might well have won the pennant in 1871 had George Wright been in the lineup all the way. The leg injury he sustained turned out to be the beginning of the end of his nearly superhuman play. Though he played extremely well during the championship years that followed 1871, hitting for a five-year .350 NA average, that "extreme edge" was no longer there. No matter. George Wright put up the numbers and set the pace for all those who followed in his gargantuan footsteps. He was elected to the Hall of Fame the year he died, at 90, in 1937 and was among the first so honored.

Wright, Henry "Harry" (1835–1895) BR/TR

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Bos	31/of-p	147/42/44	.299	.356	.361	26	7	655	.855

He loved athletic competition no matter the sport, but Harry Wright's first love was baseball, and his genius as a baseball person was much more far-ranging than the game he played. Cricketeer, administrator, manager extra-

ordinaire and innovator, he was involved in the game at every angle. It was, in fact, much more than a game for the elder of the Wright brothers. And with his Puritan-like work ethic, he worked at everything he did with the consummate thoroughness and artistic flair of a Da Vinci. During the 1871 season, he not only played a solid centerfield, he also relieved his young ace, Al Spalding, three times saving Boston victories, an NA best. No matter what Wright did, it got his best shot. Backing up fielders was probably one of his best innovations. His teams were noted for their skill in the art of covering bases, a skill that was achieved through practice and Wright's insistence that his fielders would know how to cover for one another. That, among other excellencies afield and on the bases, made his teams a star attraction wherever it went. A Boston visit was money in the bank.

Cooperstown has a special category for people of Wright's capabilities: the Pioneers and Executives category. Among the more than 20 distinguished baseball people comprising this list none of these worthies is more imposing in character or in contributions to major league baseball than Harry Wright. There are but four Hall of Fame inductees from the National Association era and three of them are identified prominently with the Boston Red Stockings: the Wright brothers and Al Spalding. The fourth, Adrian Anson, started his major league career in the NA's first season, as well, but settled into his Hall of Fame years in the National League. The National Association, often maligned as "less than major league," did contribute these Famers, and did get the major league ball rolling. Thanks to the Wright brothers, that contribution to baseball's tradition and legacy is a noble one.

York, Thomas Jefferson "Tom" (1851–1936) BL

TM	GP/POS	AB/R/H	BA	OBP	SA	RBI	SB	OPS	FA
Troy	29/of	145/36/37	.255	.299	.428	23	2	727	.855

Not yet 20, Tom York, the young man with a presidential name, played stellar ball in Troy's strong 1871 outfield unit. Unsung, he played in the majors for 15 seasons, 10 as a National Leaguer. York's range and throwing arm enabled him to cover the huge territory (one is tempted to say acreage in Troy's spacious ball diamonds) that was Troy's outfield. Reports in the dailies and weeklies, such as the *New York Clipper*, underscored and verified his talent for running down the booming shots of baseball's early days, specially in Troy games. 14 of his 37 hits in 1871 were for extra bases, seven of them triples and two were homers. York played particularly well against the two Forest City clubs during the season, starring both at bat and afield against them. He

came to Troy in 1870 to play with the Unions and stayed on for the 1871 season with the Haymakers. With Baltimore in 1873, he was the league's leader in fielding average; later with Providence, he led the National League in triples. Highly respected as a gentleman on and off the field of play, York's unblemished character was on display as a player and role model for the youngsters of his day. After his baseball career, York settled in New York. Toward the end of his life, Colonel Jake Rupert saw to it that the elderly ex-player had a job as a security officer in the Yankee Stadium pressbox. A year after he retired from that position, in 1939, Tom York died at age 84.

The Pitchers

It is worth noting that each National Association franchise contracted one primary pitcher who was expected to shoulder the entire burden of the pitching load. This hurler threw as many innings as possible, completing most of the games he pitched, regardless of the score. To help out from time to time, other players on the team pitched as well as playing their positions in the field to give their pitcher a rare rest here and there. It was not until the 1880s that the two-man pitching staff appeared; later, a third, then fourth pitcher was added as the game moved into the 20th century. It was not until the 1920s that relief pitching had an effect on the game. This accounts for the huge numbers of innings pitched during National Association years, as well as the disproportionate numbers of wins and losses recorded by NA pitchers. The primary pitcher and his statistics follow for each team in the 1871 National Association of Professional Base Ball Players.

Legend:

OAV Opponents batting average
OBP Opponents on-base percentage

Brainard, Asahel "Asa" (1841–1888) TR

TM	GP	IP	BB	K	H	OAV	OBP	ERA	W/L	PCT
Was	30	264	37	13	361	.288	.308	4.50	12–15	.444

Asa Brainard's name first appears on a team roster as a member of the Brooklyn Excelsiors. The 19-year-old played second base and in the outfield for the Excelsiors for the next two seasons, moving to the pitcher's points for the 1863 season because his strong arm made him an ideal candidate for pitch-

ing. Aka “The Count” because of his regal bearing, he moved on to the Washington Nationals in 1867 and made the trip west with them as their number one pitcher. The shortstop on that team was George Wright; before the 1868 season started, brother Harry, taking note of Brainard’s potential, signed him to a contract with the Cincinnati Red Stockings, the baseball world’s emerging colossus. By this time, Asa Brainard was an eight-year veteran standing at the top of his game, known throughout the baseball world as one of its top hurlers. Brainard, idiosyncrasies, temperamental outbursts, and all, stood front and center in those wildly successful years when the Reds of Cincinnati simply overpowered and dominated their opponents. During that time, he won often, found time to throw a ball at a rabbit during one game, disappear occasionally, and kept the pubs busy late into the night—much to the chagrin of his captain, Harry Wright.

When Wright moved on to Boston for the National Association’s first season, he didn’t take Brainard with him. Instead, the cannonballing right hander signed with Nick Young and the Washington Olympics. During that campaign, his best game was probably pitched against, as you were probably guessing, Boston, a 6 to 5 triumph at Beantown’s South End Grounds. Another stellar effort came against Rockford, 5 to 2, at Washington. An excessive number of innings in the pitching points, hard-drinking, and fast living took its toll on Brainard; even before the 1871 season was over, the zip from his fast one had become a memory. After his first major league season, he went downhill until his 1874, 5 and 22 record signaled the end. Asa Brainard spent the last years of his life in Denver running a pool hall and died of pneumonia there at age 47, the first of the old Cincinnati Red Stockings to pass away.

Fisher, William Charles “Cherokee” (1845–1912) BR/TR

TM	GP	IP	BB	K	H	OAV	OBP	ERA	W/L	PCT
Rck	24	213	31	15	295	.281	.302	4.35	4/16	.200

Hard-throwing, hard-hitting Cherokee Fisher would have fared better with a better ball club behind him, but that was not his lot in 1871, so he took his lumps with a 4 and 16 record. Possessing one of the best fast balls in the league (Zettlein and McBride were other pitchers with searing fast balls), the Philadelphian was just as valuable with a bat in his hands, poling three doubles, three triples, and a four-baser among his 28 hits. He also drove home 22 runs, just under an RBI per game. Furthermore, he was a good enough fielder to lead league pitchers with a .927 fielding average. Fisher started out

with the West Philadelphias as a pitcher in 1867, getting into 10 games. At 22, he was with a good Cincinnati Buckeye team, counting NA players Charlie Sweasy, Andy Leonard, and John McMullin among his teammates. That season, he pitched and played third base. In 1869, he played with the Unions of Lansingburgh, a club that won 24 and lost 9, and, in 1870, again with Lansingburgh, as a pitcher–first baseman. Cherokee’s best pitching effort in 1871, this time under Hi Waldo & Co. at Rockford, came against Fort Wayne, as he set down the Kekiongas without a run in a 4 to 0 white-washing. His career continued with Baltimore, the Athletics, and Hartford, stretching into National League play. He pitched his last major league game for Providence in 1878, giving up 12 runs in a lost cause. Fisher’s best season was with Baltimore in 1872 when he led the NA with a 1.80 ERA and posted a 10 and 1 record for Nick Young’s Baltimorians.

Mathews, Robert T. “Bobby” (1851–1898) BR/TR

TM	GP	IP	BB	K	H	OAV	OBP	ERA	W/L	PCT
FtW	19	169	21	17	261	.305	.322	5.17	6/11	.353

Only 5’5” and barely 140 pounds dripping wet, Bobby Mathews endured 15 seasons and almost 5,000 innings of major league pitching, winning 297 games (300 might have put him into the Hall of Fame), and gaining baseball immortality as the pitcher of record in professional baseball’s first game, that famous 2 to 0 shutout victory for Fort Wayne over the Cleveland Forest Citys. Mathews had apparently developed a pitch that, somewhat like the spitball that was thrown later in the century and into the Deadball Era, dropped noticeably as it neared the plate. The pitch, along with an adequate fastball, saw him through the National Association, the National League, and finally the American Association where, with Philadelphia, he put in three 30-win seasons and the last of his 297 major league wins in 1887. One of the smallest players on major league diamonds, the frail hurler was nonetheless as durable as he was versatile. He played a number of positions and played well at each of them.

Bobby Mathews was a heavily mustaschioed bachelor who kept out of trouble and moved from team to team until he enjoyed his greatest season in Philadelphia with the Athletics’ pennant-winning, American Association team in 1883. After his career came to an end, he tried his hand at umpiring and a few assorted odd jobs, but never really came to grips with a life that didn’t have baseball in it. He was stricken with partial paralysis by a disease called paresis in his later years and came upon rough times, finally moving

in with his parents. He died at age 56 at home in his native city of Baltimore, where his baseball days began.

McBride, James Dickson "Dick" (1845–1916) TR

TM	GP	IP	BB	K	H	OAV	OBP	ERA	W/L	PCT
Phl	25	222	40	15	285	.280	.307	4.58	18/5	.783

Except for four appearances with Harry Wright's 1876 Boston club in the newly formed National League, Dick McBride spent his entire professional career, dating back to the early 1860s, in a Philadelphia uniform. Highly competitive, and with a mean streak that sometimes showed itself in his pitching, he was, all the same, popular among his teammates and Philadelphia's fans. He was named the team's captain and pitched well enough in 1871 to earn the league's crown for winning percentage based on his superb 18 and 5 record. His only relief during the season came from George Bechtel who pitched in McBride's stead during his recovery from injuries at mid-season. But when a big game in Chicago came around on September 18, he re-entered the pitching points and subdued the challenging Chicago White Stockings, establishing his club as the league's frontrunner. In 1870, McBride logged a massive number of innings, 625 in all, leading the Athletics to 39 wins against amateur foes, and a 26-11-1 record against semi-pro and professional teams. During the 1872–75 domination of the Red Stockings in Boston, he won 30, 24, 33, and finally 44 games, pitching 538 innings in Philadelphia's attempt to unseat the Bostons. He was a 30-year-old veteran by that time, having pitched hundreds of innings each year since he was 15. George Zettlein and Al Spalding enjoyed better seasons as pitchers in 1871 than Dick McBride, but, in the end, it was Captain McBride and his A's who took home the NA's first pennant. Not even Harry Wright could pull that off.

McMullin, John F. "Lefty" (1848–1881) BR/TL

TM	GP	IP	BB	K	H	OAV	OBP	ERA	W/L	PCT
Troy	29	249	75	12	403	.342	.379	5.53	12/15	.444

John McMullin was one of the few portsiders among National Association players who pitched during the 1871 season. And he was Troy's main man on the firing line. He started out in baseball as a 19-year-old outfielder–first baseman with the Philadelphia Keystones in his hometown. The southpaw

moved on to three different teams during the next three seasons, the last, the Lansingburgh Unions in 1870. He stayed in the Lansingburgh–Troy area as a member of the Troy Haymakers in 1871. He was a good hitter and a fine base runner, quite possibly contributing more to the Troy attack than to its defense. As a pitcher, McMullin had control problems, evidenced by his base-on-ball totals (75), extremely high for a pitcher during NA days. That led to more base runners and contributed to his ballooning ERA (5.53). Only Cleveland’s Al Pratt issued more free passes, 77. Though he enjoyed a very active National Association career, his major league playing days ended with the league’s demise. He was another of the many young men who died at an early age (33) during the 19th century. He died in his hometown.

Pratt, Albert George “Uncle Al” (1848–1937) TR

TM	GP	IP	BB	K	H	OAV	OBP	ERA	W/L	PCT
Clv	28	224.2	47	34	296	.277	.307	3.77	10/17	.370

There was a 15-year-old in the infantry unit of the 193rd Pennsylvania Regiment who served his country in the final months of the Civil War. His name was Al Pratt, and when it came time to lay Mr. Pratt to rest, shortly after his 89th birthday, his memories of that warfare were still so vivid, and treasured only as soldiers remember them, that he had left behind the request to be buried in his Grand Old Army of the Republic uniform. That request was fulfilled, bringing an end to a long life that had been entwined with baseball in many different ways. First came his career in the game itself. It was not very long as those things go, but long enough to contain some significant entries and to make a lasting impression on people in and around the game. He started out in 1867, still only 19, with Pittsburgh’s better semi-pro teams, moving up quickly to a playing manager’s position as a pitcher with the 1868 Riversides of Portsmouth, Ohio. By 1869, he was with Cleveland’s Forest Citys, keeping company with Ez Sutton, Deacon White, and Artie Allison. He returned to Cleveland for the 1870 season and signed on again in 1871 to be Forest Citys’ starting pitcher. That summer, he posted a 10-17 record and led the National Association in strikeouts with 34. One of those 17 losses was, of course, to the Fort Wayners in that celebrated inaugural contest of the NA. Pratt was brought back for the ’72 season, but when the team folded, so did Al’s major league career. That might have been the end for many ball players, but not for Al Pratt. It was just a beginning.

Among other of his many intriguing baseball endeavors, Pratt, who was a striking personage and a favorite among the ladies, took up umpiring, manag-

ing, and was on hand for the planning and organizing of several leagues during the 1880s and '90s. He was, further, a Board of Directors member, serving both individual teams and leagues, and found time to serve as an agent for ball players, as well. "Uncle Al," as he came to be known, was more respected and loved the older he grew and was often called on for celebrations and gala baseball events, bringing back memories of "the old days," of which the last such occasion just a year before his death was Pittsburgh's celebration of the 1936 Centenary of the baseball's origins. He died two days after his 89th birthday, one of the Pittsburgh area's most loved and colorful baseball people.

Spalding, Albert Goodwill "Al" (1850–1915) BR/TR

TM	GP	IP	BB	K	H	OAV	OBP	ERA	W/L	PCT
Bos	31	257.1	38	23	333	.268	.290	3.36	20/10	.655

Much has been written about Al Spalding, both by himself and others. Rightly so. He was not only the best pitcher in National Association history, but was, beyond that, a clear-eyed, straight-thinking young man with big ideas and bulldog persistence. Before his baseball career ended, he was already thinking about sports equipment and the business world. Before he celebrated his 30th birthday, he had become one of America's foremost sporting goods suppliers, had been abroad as an ambassador for baseball, and had helped the Boston Red Stockings tear up the National Association. More than that, had been in on the ground floor of the formation of the National League. Before baseball and his subsequent entrepreneurial successes, however, there were youthful years of training by his mother, turning the young Spalding into a ramrod-straight youngster who knew sharp differences between right and wrong and who had consulted with his mother on everything from his wardrobe to his bank account. When he finally did make the break with his mother at home, he did so with her in mind, continuing to consult with her and caring for her financially as his successes began to pay off in handsome dividends. People in nearby Rockford got wind of his athletic prowess and soon had him dressed out in the uniform of the Forest Citys, turning him into a professional pitcher before his 18th birthday. After successful seasons in 1869 and 1870 with Rockford, which raised his level of notoriety many times over in big cities like Chicago, Harry Wright came calling. Wright convinced Spalding and teammates Ross Barnes and Fred Cole to sign Boston contracts, took them East, and put them right to work. The youngster, still a learner in 1871, took his lessons from the best, posting a

solid 20 and 10 in his first major league season. And then, in the company of a ball club that was superior in every respect to the rest of the league, picked up the pace, winning first 38, then 41, and finally 54 the next four championship seasons. Signing with Chicago in 1876, he led the White Stockings to the National League's first championship. He had splashed black ink all over the National Association record book and kept right on with his 1876 National League effort. By the time another season or two had come and gone, he had put his glove on a hook and turned full time to the sporting goods business. But he never forgot about the game of baseball that had first attracted him, then favored him, and finally was responsible for the good fortune with which he was blessed. He was involved in owning, then administrating, and finally, with the passing years, as a millionaire elder statesman whose opinion was often sought and whose counsel was carefully heeded. By the end of the 19th century, Al Spalding was the most respected name in baseball. Harry Wright certainly knew what he was doing when he got this Hall of Famer's name on a contract.

Wolters, Reinder Albertus "Rynie" (1842–1917) TR

TM	GP	IP	BB	K	H	OAV	OBP	ERA	W/L	PCT
NY	32	283	39	22	345	.263	.265	3.43	16/16	.500

The record book on baseball's first professional baseball season shows that Rynie Wolters, the hard-throwing right hander from the Land of Tulips, led the league in games started (32), completed (32), and tied for shutouts (1). He also led in holding opposing hitters to the lowest batting average (.263) and in innings pitched (283). Those are numbers that make it look like he was on a pennant winner, but he wasn't. In fact, his New York Mutuals placed a distant fourth with a disappointing 16 and 17 record. On the strength of that showing, he signed a lucrative contract to pitch for the Cleveland Forest Citys in 1872, but that didn't pan out either, the team having flamed out by mid-season. Wolters tried once more in 1873, this time with the Elizabeth (New Jersey) Resolutes, a team that also bowed out of the National Association before its first and only season ended. Wolters pitched his last nine major league innings for them, his days as a major leaguer finished.

A former cricket bowler, Wolters took up pitching for the amateurs in his neighborhood, finally landing a berth with the Newark Irvingtons, whose footnote to baseball history was made on the strength of their upset victory in 1866 over the potent Brooklyn Atlantics club. Rynie Wolters was the win-

ning pitcher in that 23 to 17 Atlantics embarrassment. Within two seasons, he was picked up by the New York Mutuals and he stayed with them through the '71 season as one of the most versatile and productive players on the team. His 1871 hitting statistics read like those of a heavy-hitting first baseman, like teammate Joe Start. He actually led the NA in RBI's with 44, hit .370, and was a real pain for all of the NA hurlers. He was also a pain for his managers and team executives, thinking nothing of going AWOL if he felt the need, or of doing some of his strange antics on the field of play. Wolters involved the Mutes in more than one tight spot over his unannounced disappearances, as in their last game of the season, when Frank Fleet was pressed into pitching duty because Mr. Wolters simply didn't show up for the game. Though poles apart from another baseball pixie, Rube Wadell, his antics and demeanor remind one of the great Athletics southpaw. Rynie Wolters' greatest asset was his versatility. One of the bigger players of the early NA days, he certainly would have made an All-Star squad composed of 1871's best—if in no other role than that of a utility player. Wolters died in his adopted hometown of Newark at age 74 in 1917.

Zettlein, George "The Charmer" (1844–1905) BR/TR

TM	GP	IP	BB	K	H	OAV	OBP	ERA	W/L	PCT
Chi	28	240.2	25	22	298	.267	.283	2.73	18/9	.667

On June 14, 1870, Cincinnati's Red Stockings, the storied team that had cut through 90 consecutive baseball encounters without tasting defeat, played the Brooklyn Atlantics at the Capitoline Grounds and were stunned by them, losing 8 to 7 in 11 innings. The fellow out there doing the pitching was George Zettlein, a fastballer whose pitches "knew no guile." "The Charmer," as he was known, just reared back and let the ole pill go—on every pitch he threw. There was no particular placement of pitches—he just threw, and he threw fast enough to get by as one of the early greats in the pitching points. Probably over-maligned as somewhat of a dullard, strategic nicities didn't seem to make much of a difference to big George. He played the game as hard as he could, and when the game was over, it was time to celebrate with everybody, friend *and* foe. Sort of refreshing, at that, isn't it? But wait. A closer look at his record will explain not only why Chicago was headed for a championship, but that he was probably, for the season of 1871, the best pitcher in the league. Zettlein posted league-leading numbers in earned run average (2.73) and held opposing hitters to the lowest on-base percentage (.283) among NA hurlers. In eight of Chicago's 28 Association games,

opposing clubs scored five runs or less, suggesting: a) that Zettlein was backed by a very good defense; and b) that his fast one was good enough to zip past hitters often enough to keep runners either out of scoring position, or once on base, to prevent their being driven in.

Everything considered, including the championship game in which he had two of Chicago's four hits and, further, pitched well, old George had the last laugh on those who thought he was a little less than cerebral about his pitching. A Civil War veteran, Zettlein had begun his career after mustering out in 1865, getting into his first games with Brooklyn's Eckfords. He was an 1867 mainstay of the powerful Brooklyn Atlantics, winning 31. Recruited by Joe Foley for the '71 Whites, Zettlein posted an 18 and 9 record. He came back to Chicago for 1874 and part of the '75 season. His five-year NA record was a creditable 125 and 92. His major league pitching career came to an end after a one-year stint with the 1876 Philadelphia Phillies in the National League.

A P P E N D I X B



The Championship Game

Game Coverage by the *New York Clipper*, November 4, 1871
at Union Grounds, Brooklyn, New York, October 30, 1871

The game was called at 3:10 P.M. with the Athletics at the bat. Cuthbert opened with a safe ball and earned his base, but the next three men gave chances for outs and the result was a blank . . . On the other side the White Stockings—or rather the “mixed stockings” in this game—were disposed of in the order of their appearing at bat.

In the second innings the Athletics scored and earned one run through the good hits of Fidler and Meyerle. On the Chicago side another duck egg was laid, Bechtel making a fine running catch.

In the third innings the Athletics failed to score a base hit, but by errors by Duffy and Zettlein three men reached bases and another run was scored. On the other side the same old whitewash was the result, the Whites giving easy chances for outs.

The fourth innings yielded the Athletics nothing, as they hit high balls which Treacey took care of. For Chicago, though Zettlein led off with a base hit, they again drew a blank through a fine catch at right field by Berkenstock, which elicited a round of applause for the veteran.

The fifth innings yielded nothing for the Athletics, Wood making two good catches and putting the side out . . . For the fifth time the Chicagos were whitewashed, the fifth innings closing with the totals 2 to 0 in favor of Philadelphia.

The sixth innings resulted in a blank for the Athletics. On the other side Zettlein again got a first base hit; but others failed to back him up and so the sixth duck egg was laid.

The seventh innings gave the Athletics one run, Meyerle and Bechtel batting safely for bases, Treacey making a good catch . . . On the other side Treacey made a base hit, but the desired single run was not scored.

The eighth innings yielded one earned run for the Athletics, Fisler, Heubel and Meyerle batting safely . . . On the Chicago side it was the same old tune, and now only one innings was left for the White Stockings to escape a nest of duck eggs, the eighth innings closing with a score of 4 to 0.

The ninth innings yielded the Athletics a blank, and the Chicago nine then went in to get five to win and four to tie. It was a hopeless task, as they were easily disposed of for one run, scored by a muff of Heubel's at first base.

The pitching and catching on both sides was excellent, but the Athletics out-batted and out-fielded their adversaries. The winning catch was made by Berkenstock, who bore off the palm in the outfield. The result of the contest leaves the Athletics champions and gives them the right to fly the pennant until November, 1872.

Athletics	R	1b	PO	A	Chicago	R	1b	PO	A
Cuthbert, lf	1	1	3	0	McAtee, 1b	0	0	9	0
McBride, p	0	1	0	1	Wood, 2b	0	0	6	3
Radcliff, ss	0	1	1	3	Treacey, lf	0	1	5	0
Malone, c	0	1	1	3	Duffy, ss	0	0	1	3
Fisler, 2b	2	2	4	1	Simmons, rf	0	0	1	0
Berk'stk, rf	0	0	3	0	Foley, cf	0	0	0	0
Heubel, 1b	0	2	6	0	Brannock, 3b	0	1	3	0
Meyerle, 3b	1	3	2	2	Hodes, c	0	0	2	0
Bechtel, cf	0	1	1	0	Zettlein, p	1	2	0	0
Totals	4	11	27	8	Totals	1	4	27	6

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Athletics	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	—4
Chicago	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	—1

First base by errors: Athletics, 3 times; Chicago, 2 times
 Runs earned: Athletics 2; Chicago 0
 Totals errors: Athletics 6; Chicago 8
 Umpire: Mr. Swandell of the Atlantic Club
 Time of game: 1:35

APPENDIX C



1871 National Association Standings and Team Statistics

Team	W/L	Pct.	R/G	H	HR	BA	SA	OB%	SB	FA
Philadelphia	21-7**	.750	13.4	410	9	.320	.435	.344	56	.845
Chicago	19-9**	.676	10.8	323	10	.270	.374	.305	77	.829
Boston	20-10+	.667+	12.9	426	3	.310	.422	.339	82	.834
Washington	15-15+	.500	9.7	310	6	.277	.369	.302	48	.850
New York	16-17	.485	9.2	403	1	.287	.350	.303	46	.840
Troy	13-15+	.464+	12.5	384	6	.308	.417	.334	62	.845
Fort Wayne	7-12	.368	7.2	178	2	.239	.294	.271	16	.803
Cleveland	10-19	.345	8.6	328	7	.277	.391	.292	18	.818
Rockford	4-21#	.160	9.2	294	3	.264	.364	.291	53	.821

* The standings are arranged according to winning percentage.

** Includes the Philadelphia win over Chicago for the championship.

+ Washington (2), Boston (1), and Troy (1) played tie games.

Rockford's four forfeits reduced its 8 and 17 record to 4 and 21.



Epilogue

A bright, cloudless summer day. What better than a ball game at the park. How about that game they said was being played at Walnut Grove in Detroit's beautiful Greenfield Village?

And what do we see there? What kind of ball game is this? And what kind of uniforms are they wearing? Those uniforms really look outdated!

Just a minute, here. The calendar says it's July 30 and we're in the 21st century, but do eyes deceive? Long, spindly bats, balls with weird seams, and a diamond laid out with chalk markings down foul lines that seem to go on forever, and even up a hill. There is a spot in the middle of the infield with a metal plate set into the dirt that looks like it ought to be the place where the pitcher positions himself. And the hitter stands at a circular plate that seems to be too close to the pitcher. And what is the ump doing over there in a suit and a top hat, standing on the side between home base and a players' bench. This looks like it might be very interesting.

As we soon found out, a game of "Vintage Base Ball" featuring Greenfield Village's vaunted heroes, the Lah De Dahs against the Royal Oak (Michigan) Wahoos was about to be played. The teams were all decked out in their 1860s uniforms and they were about to play according to *Haney's Base Ball Book of Reference*, an 1867 rulebook.

Both teams, members of the Vintage Base Ball Association (V.B.B.A.)¹, an organization that celebrates baseball 1860s style, had themselves quite an afternoon, enjoying the game as much as the more than 250 folks who sat on a knoll overlooking the Walnut Grove diamond. The V.B.B.A, with more than 50 member teams, and growing fast from coast to coast, play as many as 30 to 40 games in a summer of relaxed and gentlemanly fun. The conventions and vocabulary of the era they represent are all a part of a charming afternoon's entertainment, a genuine throwback to days of yore.

The Lah De Dahs and Wahoos are two of the 12 Michigan teams that belong to the V.B.B.A's widespread organization. Teams like them form a solid link with baseball's formative years. To see teams like this play is to get a little of the feel of what baseball must have been like in 1871. No gloves, underhanded pitching, and an oversized ball that got softer as the game progressed; these were all bits and pieces of an entertaining afternoon complete with a formally dressed umpire and several conferences about the rules—all very respectfully carried on.

Looking out on the field of play, a person's mind's eye saw Troy's Haymakers, and perhaps Fort Wayne's Kekiongas. Those ancient nines went through many of the same routines taking place at Walnut Grove. Players were chasing down long drives that just kept rolling beyond the reach of frantic outfielders in hot pursuit of a ball already spotted and discolored by continuous use. It might have been Bobby Mathews pitching to Lipman Pike, for all of that, getting as much movement on his moistened, 45-foot deliveries as he possibly could. And there stood Pike in the mind's eye, hands spread a bit on the bat handle, waiting for just the right pitch.

To be sure, as the professional game progressed from its bucolic beginnings to the formation, ultimately, of the National League in 1876, there were more elaborate and well-defined venues, as well as increasingly sophisticated facilities and baseball gear. Professional baseball, played in ever-improving, specially built arenas, became more and more a demonstration of baseball skills at the highest level of artistry. People were willing to pay to be on hand in stadiums where the game's best battled one another. It was a championship game every time as far as the locals, who rooted so loyally for their heroes, were concerned.

It was the constants that tied everything together. Three outs, a running catch, a home run, a fine play on a hard smash that made the old third-to-first look like a thing of beauty—all these and more linked the days of 1871 with the contest between the Lah De Dahs and the Wahoos in a new milennium at Greenfield Village's Walnut Grove . . . it was the championship game between the Athletics and the White Stockings . . . it was the opening day shutout of 1871 . . . it was the Mutuels against the Red Stockings . . . and it was all the games in between coming together in a tableau of then and now . . . of baseball—or base ball . . . it was our national pastime.

Note

1. The organization's Internet address: www.vbba.org



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