

Rock Island Reminiscences

Baseball.

WRITTEN FOR THE ARGUS BY
HARRY SAGE, FORMER MAN-
AGER AND CAPTAIN OF ROCK
ISLAND BASEBALL
CLUBS.

When I first began to play baseball in Rock Island, as an amateur, in 1880, the game was entirely different from the baseball played today. There have been innumerable changes in the rules, none of them very materially changing the game, but each one having its effect. At that time straight arm pitching was used, and not throwing. Later throwing was used, and about 1881 pitching under the shoulder was the style in use. The batsman could call for either high or low balls, and the pitcher was required to deliver the ball as called for by the batter. The rule regarding bases on balls was very much more liberal for the batter, though I can not recall the exact pro-



HARRY SAGE.

visions. No gloves were used, except fingerless gloves, and the evolution of the fingerless glove then in use to the present heavy padded mitts is a long story in itself.

Rock Island an Early Patron.
Rock Island and Davenport had baseball teams earlier than 1880, but since that time there have been few seasons when some professional team was not organized in this city. In 1882 there was organized a team known as the Rock Island Stars. This team lasted several seasons, the greatest rivalry being between Rock Island and Moline, the latter being known as the Brownies, and the two teams attracted much interest. These were amateur teams.

In 1884 a professional team was formed, the League Alliance team, of the Northwestern league, which included besides Rock Island, Vincennes, Evansville, Grand Rapids, La Crosse, and one or two others. It was with this team I signed my first contract as a professional, under Steve Hagen, of Chicago, the manager and captain. In 1885 there was no professional team in Rock Island, and my experience in the game until 1893 was away from this city. I was a member of the Pueblo team in 1885, and played with St. Paul in the Northwestern league in 1886, and with Des Moines in 1887 and 1888. The Des Moines team was the fastest minor league team of its day. The majority of the members were sold at big prices to the major leagues, and I with five others went to Toledo, of the Eastern International league. I played with Toledo two seasons, and in 1891 returned here and was with Davenport. That year I was with three teams, two of them disbanding. Davenport disbanded, and I went to Rock Island, and when that team disbanded after two months, I signed with the Lebanon, Pa., team, in the Eastern league.

In 1893 Rock Island and Moline people organized the Twin City team, in the Western league. I was chosen manager of this team, which lasted only about half of the season, Rock Island and Rockford finishing the season for the championship, the remainder of the league falling out of the race. Rock Island won out in the contest with Rockford for the pennant.

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The league reorganized in 1894, and again Rock Island won the league championship pennant.

A Remarkable Team.

The team of 1894 was a remarkable team, as a glance at the list of those who composed it will show. They were first class men, and most of them were signed later in the major leagues. Bill Kreig, now Three-Eye league umpire, played first base; Joe Cantillon, manager of the Milwaukee team of the American league and the Des Moines team of the Western league played second base; Paddy Lynch, recently umpire of the Three-Eye, played at short; and Belden Hill, Cedar Rapids manager, held down third. Others were "Putty" Zeis, not now playing, residing in Beardstown; Dan Sweeney, living at Louisville, Ky., who after leaving Rock Island was in the National league several seasons; Joe Katz, present member of the city fire department at Grand Rapids, Mich., and exceptionally good batter and the star man of the whole team; J. Andrews, later with Chicago, and afterwards manager of the North-western league team at Seattle; Harry Souler, pitcher, who later pitched great ball with Indianapolis; Al Mott, pitcher; and Harry Burrell, now an umpire in the Western league.

In 1895 another team was organized, under the I. & I. league, under a low salary regulation, the salary list being held down by rule to \$750. The people of the cities composing the league were used to better ball than could be furnished at such low salaries, and the league did not last long. Rock Island people did their share, but did not care for a poor game.

In 1896 I, together with Lynch, went to the Texas league, playing with Sherman. A cyclone struck Sherman, wiping out a good portion of the town, and with it all interest in baseball. The team disbanded as a result. We joined the Denison team, in the Texas league, and played there till a few weeks before the season closed, when the team went to pieces. I came home, and have worked at the Rock Island arsenal since, except when managing Rock Island teams in 1898, and 1899, and a portion of 1901. Barney Anderson started a team here in 1898, and after a few weeks he turned over the management to me. The team was in the Iowa-Illinois league, but the league did not last the season, and the team disbanded.

Another Great Team.

In 1899 Rock Island had the finest team that has ever played professional ball for Rock Island. Strickellets, now in the National league, and Jack Hart, a young player from northern Iowa; Will Botenous, who later managed in the Northwestern league, played first; Rob Rothermel, sold to Baltimore, in the National league, was on second; Arthur Ball, who has been playing good ball in minor leagues, was short stop; Tim O'Rourke, then an old National league third baseman, played that position; Harry Bay, another man who went to the American league and has been there ever since, was left fielder; Dr. Brott, who was studying while here, and now practices at Waterloo, played in right field. Joe Wright and Charles Doolin were two of the team's strongest men. Had it not been for bad habits, and particularly excessive drinking, Wright would have been a star major league man, but his habits kept him in minor league company. He played good ball, and was a fine batter. Charles Doolin, who is a brother of the Doolin who played a while with Rock Island early this year, was the star man of the team. He came from Cincinnati, and is now catching with the Philadelphia Nationals. I managed and caught for the team.

In 1900 it will be remembered there was no baseball here, but since then Rock Island people have had a first class articles in the Three-Eye league games. Personally, I have been out of the game since 1899, but I maintain the greatest interest in the game, and in the Rock Island team.

HARRY SAGE.

To Restore Our Flag.

The foreign commerce of the United States has grown to over two and one-half billion of dollars annually, yet most of it is carried over the seas under foreign flags. In order to restore our flag to the high seas many prominent business men are advocating the building of several ships for this trade and immediate action is recommended. In order to restore the stomach to its normal condition, to make the liver and kidneys active or to promote sound sleep, doctors and druggists everywhere recommend Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. Over 50 years' record is back of every bottle, which is a strong reason for giving it a fair trial. It always cures bloating, heartburn, indigestion, dyspepsia, costiveness, poor appetite, cramps, diarrhoea, or malaria, fever and ague. Try a bottle today.

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AT THE THEATRE.

It Never Grows Old.—From the viewpoint of scenic equipment, the coming production of Robert Louis Stevenson's thrilling drama, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," is one of the best shows to see this year. The management of this attraction determined from the outset to give the proper backing to the company engaged for the interpretation of the play, and as a result the playgoers of this city will view on next Sunday, Aug. 13, one of the most satisfying offerings of the season. Mr. Edwin Strong, the recognized star, is given an extra strong support.

A Struggle for Gold.—The Jordan Dramatic company in the four-act comedy drama entitled "A Struggle for Gold," will be played by the above named company. Manager Lewis promises us a revelation in the line of comedy. This play has proven a laughing success for the past season. All the parts are admirably sustained, as special care has been taken in procuring nothing but the best talent. A number of clever and up-to-date specialties are continually introduced during the action of the play, and between acts they will introduce all the latest novelties, giving a continuous performance at popular prices, 10, 20, and 30 cents. Ladies free on opening night only if accompanied by an escort with one paid 30-cent ticket.

Coming Soon.—Fascinating and "clever" are some of the adjectives the critics employ to describe the acting of Miss Carol Arden who is to play the leading role in "Polly Primrose" at the Illinois at an early date. She has been seen in a repertoire of different parts, and interpreted all with skill and fidelity. Mr. Justice, who will perform the part of Carlyle, was leading man with Belasco's "Heart of Maryland" for two seasons and was the "Denton" of the "Arizona" company for the last two seasons. With these trained impersonators in the chief places, the play lovers of Rock Island are assured of an evening of unusual pleasure when the rollicking "Polly" makes her bow to them. The story is one of the time of the civil war, with curling peeping in on the scene and turning things all his own way when the situation becomes strenuous. There are enough sensational episodes in it to keep the spectator stirred up while he watches the unfolding of the love romance that is interwoven with them.

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The grand ballet divertissement is an original conception and more entrancingly beautiful than any dancing con-

cert ever invented and interpreted. The legends of girls employed in evolving the elegant graceful figures of the novel ballet are artists, graduated from the best masters of the terpsichorean art, lithely and limply young and sensitively practical in accomplishing the highest and most delightful effects in dancing study. The splendors of the 16th century are revealed in reveling scenes upon a scale of magnificence and expenditure never before attempted. This prodigious display of mediaeval luxury and oriental extravagance is

only in keeping with the progressive policy of the Ringling Brothers, who have enlarged and improved every department of their enormous shows, by far the greatest in existence, until now they appear to have reached the climax of human possibility. Two exhibitions will be given here Wednesday, Aug. 30, in the afternoon at 2 o'clock and the evening at 8 o'clock. Reserved numbered seats and admission tickets will be sold at the downtown ticket office without any advance in the regu-

lar prices at the ticket wagons on the show grounds.

Bids Invited.

Notice is hereby given that the Modern Woodmen of America desires to purchase 500 tons, more or less, of screened lump, mine run, and steam coal, in car load lots, to be delivered at the head office of the society in the city of Rock Island, Ill., deliveries commencing in the month of September, 1905, and extending to and including May, 1906. Dealers are hereby invited

to submit sealed bids. Bids will be opened at the head office at 2 o'clock p. m., on Wednesday, Aug. 16. Bids should be sealed and marked, "Proposals to Furnish Coal," and addressed to the undersigned. The right is reserved to reject any and all bids.
C. W. HAWES,
Head Clerk, M. W. of A.

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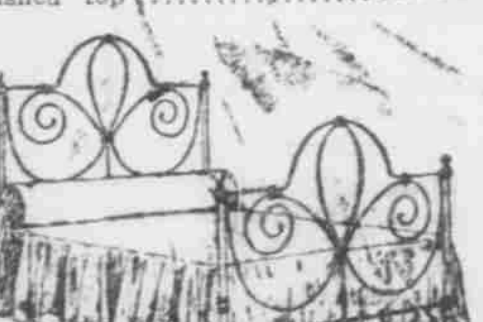
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