

Jamaica Plain Historical Society

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Boston baseball champions 4th year in a row

No, this isn't a dream. It really happened. Boston won the baseball championship four consecutive years, beginning in '72. 1872, that is. And Jamaica Plain was part of that history.

A baseball factory operated at 39 Green Street. It was established by



Harry Wright
photo courtesy of the
Library of Congress

Harry Wright, who brought Cincinnati Red Stockings players to Boston after the Ohio team disbanded. In those days, one ball was used the whole game, and was

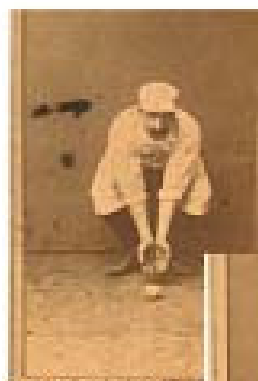
awarded to the winning team as a trophy. Balls were expensive and non-standard.

The factory moved to Lamartine Street in 1876, according to tax records.

The batting team's ball was used for each half of the inning, leading to different pitching and batting averages.

Boston's team suffered in 1876, however, when "The Four Traitors," including star pitcher Albert Spaulding, went to Chicago to join the White Stockings for better pay. The national league was formed at this time, giving clubs more control over players.

Liquor was not sold at games, and no games were played on Sundays, teams were even thrown out of the league for breaking the rules.



Black Jack Donbrook

Baseball cards, 1887-90, provided courtesy of the Library of Congress

Old Man Zedburn or other player



Cap Anson, one of The Four Traitors, was responsible

for implementing the ban on black players when he refused to play against blacks, and convinced

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Love Letters

Letters in the JPHS archive give a glimpse into the love between Sarah Denberg, a Jamaica Plain resident, and Ray Seeger, an arborist from Kansas. In between discussing town gossip, the difficulties after her accident, and how she inherited her house after her parents died, Sarah writes about her love for Ray.

From love poems clipped from the newspaper to articles that expressed

her feelings, Sarah revealed her affection for the man who once had a relationship with her sister Gretta. The letters, mostly written in the 1950s, indicate Sarah and Ray met only once a decade, yet Sarah's love remains constant throughout.

This peek into Sarah's life doesn't reveal the ending. Did Ray ever return her feelings? Was the fact that she was a deaf the reason he didn't love

her? Who did he end up marrying?

The only clue available is the lack of a death record for Sarah Denberg, and the existence of one for Sarah Seeger, who died in Jamaica Plain in 1986.

"But I'm willing to bet, you've spent more happy hours in my company than any gal you've ever known," Sarah writes. Perhaps Ray agreed.