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Albion’s Baseball Club Played on Caroline Street Field

These two photographs show the baseball grounds in Albion located on Caroline Street on land now occupied by the ARC of Orleans. A popular pastime in Orleans County, baseball teams commonly played on fields located at the County Fairgrounds until this site was created in the early 1900s. The top photograph shows the grandstand, situated in the northeast corner of the lot. A 1911 map shows the grandstand situated at an angle and a small structure to the immediate west of the grandstand. Based on the bottom photograph, we can presume that the small building on the map is the structure occupied by Robert Clark, who is selling popcorn and peanuts to those watching the game. Behind the grandstand, the peak of a house on the north side of Caroline Street is slightly visible. One would venture to guess that this is 137 Caroline Street.

In addition to the field itself, the photographs show the 1905 baseball club consisting of Howard Kilborn, 1st base; James Craffey, 2nd base and team captain; Frank VanStone, 3rd base; Ralph Vick, Shortstop; Herbert Reed, left field; Homer Brown, center field; Walter Radley, right field;
Robert Clark, Jr., pitcher; Pete Galarneau, catcher; Arnold Donovan, mascot. Standing in the bottom photograph (left to right) are Howard Kilborn, ___ McGarnwell, Robert Clark, Jr., “Doc” Davis, Homer Brown, Frank VanStone, Walter Radley, Pete Galarneau, “Doc” Creighton, Ralph Vick, and Herbert Reed. The tall man in the back wearing a derby is Timothy Donovan, a local furniture store clerk and father of the team’s mascot; Arnold is approximately 8 years old in the photograph.

It was in 1905 that Robert Clark attempted to form a baseball league in Western New York consisting of teams from Niagara Falls, Tonawanda, Lockport, Middleport, Medina, Albion, Holley, Brockport, Spencerport, and Rochester. Clark was well known throughout the area as a proficient pitcher, having signed a contract with Rochester’s Eastern League team in 1896 as the league’s youngest player at age 17. The same year this photograph was taken, Frank VanStone was offered a tryout with Erie, Pennsylvania’s baseball club, although no further note of his time with the team is noted.

In 1895, notice appeared in the local papers regarding Silas Elmore’s time with Albion’s baseball club. As rambunctious and tough young boy, he was hit by a train and lost one of his legs. Although he was “reformed” through his work with the Salvation Army, the local community took up a collection to purchase Elmore a wooden leg to ease his mobility issues. It was with this prosthesis that he was able to play at least one season with the team. He died several years later at the age of 32 from Addison’s Disease, a rare condition impacting the adrenal glands.

Upon closer examination, a large crowd has gathered to watch the game. The group is seated behind a screen of chicken wire to prevent foul balls from hitting spectators. All of those in attendance are dressed in their best attire and although a number of women are visible, they are seated together for the most part.