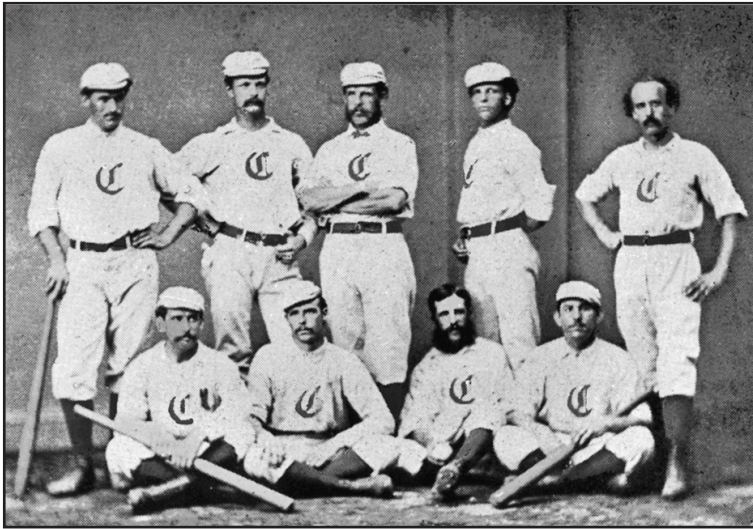


The Cincinnati Red Stockings:

The First Professional Baseball Team

Baseball has been played in the United States since the early 1800s. The game developed from the English sport called rounders. The first recorded baseball game was played on June 19, 1846 in Hoboken, New Jersey. All of the baseball players at that time were amateurs.



Cincinnati Red Stockings in 1869.

Courtesy of the Cincinnati Reds

On July 23, 1866 the organization of the Resolutes Base Ball Club was held in an attorney's office in Cincinnati, Ohio. Soon after their organization, the name of the team was changed from the Resolutes to the Cincinnati Base Ball Club.

At the beginning of the 1868 baseball season, four of the Cincinnati Base Ball Club players were paid a salary. That same year, the team also introduced new uniforms to the game. These new outfits were made up of white flannel shirts with a letter "C" on the front, a white hat, knickerbocker pants

and red stockings. At that time, no other baseball clubs wore stockings or knickerbockers as part of their uniform. Their red stockings attracted a lot of attention, and they were given many different nicknames. Of all those names, the Red Stockings was the nickname that stuck.

In 1869, Cincinnati's club president, Aaron B. Champion, announced the decision to pay the entire team a salary, making the Cincinnati Red Stockings the first professional baseball team in history. Their salaries ranged from \$600 for the substitute to \$1,400 for shortstop. All together, the salary for the 1869 team was about \$10,000.

The first professional game ever played took place May 4, 1869. Although no league was yet established, there were 15 teams in the baseball clubs. The Red Stockings defeated all of these teams — many of them twice— making a record of 130 straight wins. Their winning record came from 81 official games and 49 exhibitions.

The Red Stockings changed their name to the Reds in 1876. The Reds have made their mark on baseball history in many ways. On June 8, 1934, the Reds were the first Major League team to use airplanes to travel from city to city. On May 24, 1935, the first night baseball game was played at Cincinnati's Crosley Field. The Reds have won five World Series titles and continue to promote the city of Cincinnati today, just as they did in the 1860s.

