

players to play in the big leagues. Many historians believe that the Providence Reserves were baseball's first minor-league team.

Despite their success, the Grays disbanded because of financial problems just one year after becoming baseball's first world champions. Providence later joined the Eastern League, the predecessor of today's International League, and had many successful teams.

Over the years, Providence has had baseball franchises in the Eastern League, International League, and New England League. They've been named the Grays, the Chiefs, the Clamdiggers, the Braves, and the Rubes. Other southeastern New England cities, like Attleboro and Taunton,

Massachusetts, and Newport, Woonsocket, Cranston, and Pawtucket, Rhode Island have had professional teams.

Local industrial leagues, such as the Manufacturer's League in Pawtucket, the District Manufacturer's League in Woonsocket, and the Blackstone Valley League in central Massachusetts, also flourished.

Professional baseball finally came to Pawtucket on May 9, 1946. The Pawtucket Slaters played in the Class B New England League against teams from all over New England. Hometown hero Joe Krakowski, pitching the opener, led the Slaters to a 5-3 triumph over the Lawrence Millionaires. The most

important event of the 1946 season may have occurred the next night, at the Slaters' second home game.

That evening Hammond Pond Stadium was an important stop along the long road to desegregate baseball. According to the schedule, the Pawtucket Slaters hosted the Nashua Dodgers, Brooklyn's farm team. But according to history Hammond Pond Stadium is one of the first places where Branch Rickey helped break baseball's color barrier. Hall of Famer Roy Campanella, Nashua's catcher and cleanup hitter, was just as impressive. "Campy" hit the ball hard and called a great game behind the plate. **MSP**

Suggested Sightseeing

Pawtucket has two first-class attractions: the Pawtucket Red Sox and the Slater Mill. When the Pawtucket Red Sox aren't playing, tourists can step back into history by visiting the old Slater Mill. Like many other historical sites, tourists can get hands-on experience about life in the early days of the Industrial Revolution. Actors provide realistic demonstrations of factory life.

Located where the Blackstone River empties into the Narragansett Bay, there are many things to see at the historic complex. There's a dam, a power canal, and a riverside park. Original operating machinery is located in the Wilkinson Mill (circa 1810). There are guided and self-guided tours. The site is the crown jewel of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. The museum is open every day during the summer and on weekends in the spring and fall.

Dining Out

While Pawtucket doesn't have a lot of fancy restaurants, there are many places to have a real Rhode Island dining experience. There are plenty of pizza shops, Chinese restaurants, and American Diners. While in town, here are a few choices. There are several diners near McCoy Stadium. The Riverside Kitchen is a real Greek diner serving New York weenies and heaping helpings of fish and chips. Real Coney Island dogs, Ocean State style, are served with mustard, celery salt, onions, and a special meat sauce. If you want to get a true Rhode Island experience, flavor your fried foods with vinegar.

One of the nice things about Pawtucket is that it's easy to feed a family of four for under \$25 bucks. If you want something more upscale, Providence is just a short ten minute drive from Pawtucket. Accessing great places to eat before and after a PawSox game couldn't be easier.

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