

Ed Sproat

According to Baseball-Reference, Ed Sproat played with Denver in 1887, where he went 10-16. During his time there, he was fined and suspended for throwing a game, although he did finish the season with the club. By December 25, he is identified as signed for the Whites for 1888.

Ed Sproat didn't report to Spring Training until early April. A blurb in the Globe Democrat in April indicated that he was still sick during spring training, which is probably why he didn't appear in a single game. His first appearance with the Whites was in their second game of the season on May 1. The club opened at home against Milwaukee on April 28, with Staley starting. The Post-Dispatch reported on April 29th that the starter that day would be Jim Devlin, except that game, and the game the next day (May 30) were both rained out. The Globe Democrat on May 1 still reported Devlin as the starter for that day; Sproat started instead. One possible reason for the discrepancy might be that Devlin was formally on the roster for the Browns and he could not be transferred successfully to the Whites.

Ed Sproat appeared in three games with the Whites in May of 1888 (May 1, May 3 and May 7), going 2-1 with a 4.97 ERA. After his last game on May 7, 1888, he drops out of the news completely. Fred Nyce made his first start of the season on May 8, and then Harry Staley started the game on May 9. It looks like the plan at this point was to go with a three-man rotation (else Staley would have pitched on May 8). That would put Sproat as the starter for the game on May 10. The St. Louis Republican lists the starter for that day as Jim Burns, a local pitcher. The actual starter was Nyce. Nyce and Staley would alternate starts for the rest of the season, with the exception of a few starts in late May and early June.

What happened to Sproat? Reports from the May 7 game indicate that he had been sick for a week prior to his start, and that after three innings he grew weak, and could barely pitch anymore. (He got hammered the rest of the game for 14 more runs, including 7 in the fourth.) The most likely scenario seems to be that he got sicker and left the club. There is no mention of his being dropped from the team that I have found. An article on May 13 in The Times (Philadelphia) dated May 12 lists players cut from the Whites to that point (Alcott, McCormack, Sommers), and mentions that Sproat got pounded in his previous start, but it doesn't include his name in the list of players cut. That is the last listing I have found for him from the 1888 season. Sproat did not pitch another game in organized ball (as far as I can tell) until 1895, when he played a few games for Montgomery.

After Sproat left the Browns, he moved back to Louisville and became a fireman. In 1895, he returned to baseball and pitched briefly in the Southern League (under "Sprout" in Baseball-Reference (sprout001---)). A box score from the Montgomery Advertiser on March 26, 1895 indicates he pitched for Montgomery in an exhibition game against the Browns. (Harry Staley was one of the pitchers for the Browns that game.) He was released by Montgomery in early

May of 1895, and there is no record of his playing again in professional baseball. His obituary indicates he spent three years in the army in the Philippines during the Spanish American War. After the war, he returned to Louisville and resumed his career as a fireman. He was the fuel wagon driver of the No. 17 engine company at the time of his death in 1915 at the age of 50.

Ed Sproat's obituary (Courier-Journal (Louisville) on September 30, 1915) describes him as a former pitcher "who gained fame in the latter eighties as a National League baseball pitcher", even though he never played in the majors. This is understandable, as it also says he was "drafted by the St. Louis team of the National League". By 1915, St. Louis had been in the National League for almost 25 years, and likely few remembered or cared about the distinction between being in the American Association or the National League, let alone recalled a short-lived team from St. Louis in the Western Association.

ED SPROUT
is a pitcher who two years ago was playing with amateur clubs in the City of Louisville, his home. He was then 18 years of age, and his effectiveness in the pitcher's square attracted the attention of the managers of the old Western League Denver Club, who signed him at a good salary. He played with that club two years, and on the cessation of the Western League season attached himself to the St. Louis club in the Western Association. He has good command of the ball and is a "heady" pitcher.

Not sure if this is Ed Sproat (Louisville Courier-Journal 31-Jul-1884)

Friday.
THE Ed. Whittings have been organized with the following players: McCroy, c.; Benyer, p.; Niner, s. s.; Bently, 1b.; Herman, 2b.; Drager, 3b.; **Sproat**, l. f.; Doup, c. f.; Ponmiller, r. f.
MANAGER SULLIVAN, of the Kansas City

EVANSVILLE CORRESPONDENCE:—The Cairo folks say that when our Evansville team played theirs we had players from Cincinnati and Louisville on our nine. Our only outsider was our pitcher. Our pitcher had a lame arm and we borrowed Webber, the Henderson club's pitcher, who is a dandy, the Caicos making but three hits off him. He struck out eleven men. Our boys made seven hits off Sproat, with a total of nine. Sproat is undoubtedly the speediest pitcher ever seen on the home grounds, having struck out twenty men. If he had the control of the ball that Webber has, he would be a good enough pitcher for any of the association clubs. Our boys played in Henderson last Sunday, and were defeated by a score of six to five. Webber, the pitcher of the Hendersons, who pitched for us in our Cairo game, should be looked after by some of the Western League clubs, as he would be a great addition to any of them.

Sporting News August 16, 1886

SPROAT OF CAIRO.

He Will Pitch for the Denver Club Next Year.

CAIRO, December 1.—SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE:—Edward Sproat, the natty little twirler of last season's Cairo team, has signed with the Denvers of the Western League for the coming season. We congratulate the Denver management on their having secured Sproat, who is one of the most remarkable young twirlers in the profession. He has complete control of the ball and the curves, and a cannon like delivery. He has undoubtedly as speedy if not speedier delivery than John Healy, of the Maroons, and with a first-class catcher like Bohannon to support him will surely make his mark.

We understand that Joe Bohannon, who did

The Sporting News December 4, 1886

HOOVER, OF HAMBURG, MO.
V Denver—Sam Smith, Tom Hogan, E.
S Silch and P. Flaherty, of St. Louis; E.
d Macon and E. Sprout, of Covington, Ky.;
e S. Spriggs, of Denver; J. B. Hays, of Chi-
cago; J. Voss and Wm. Myers, of Lead-
ville.

Leavenworth Standard Dec 7, 1886

WESTERN LEAGUE PLAYERS.

The following players have been signed to play with the clubs named of the western league:

With Omaha—Frank Bandle, Frank Croning, H. H. Brimblecombe, T. H. Goodell, Frank Jenins, John Messitt, John C. Healy, W. Houseman, George Harter, Joe Walsh, F. Gunnison, Dan O'Leary, H. Bader, H. L. Veach, W. A. Rourke, W. B. Goodenough, T. L. Dorrity.

With Topeka—J. P. Conway, J. P. Ardner, Thomas Sullivan, D. E. Stearns, J. B. Gunson, J. R. Johnson, Walter Goldsby, Perry Werden, J. Kenyon, C. E. Hoover.

With Leavenworth—J. Beckley, W. Peoples, James Connelly, Bert Wilson, H. Doms, James Welch, Charles Reynolds, A. R. Winternitz, P. B. Swartzel, M. M. Goldstein, Charles Jones, N. Long, B. F. Driskell, J. D. White, J. D. Curtis.

With Denver—Ed Macon, E. Silch, P. Flaherty, Ed. Sproat, A. Voss, Ira Phillips, Louis Meyers, Sam Smith, R. Briggs.

Omaha Daily Bee January 31, 1887

Ed Sproat seems to have gotten into trouble in Denver.

Fined For Selling the Game.

DENVER, Col., July 30.—[Special Telegram to the BEE.]—The Topeka and the home club opened the third series of the Western League games at the new grounds, River Front Park, which are conceded to be the finest west of St. Louis. The audience numbered 3,000 people. On the part of the visitors the game was a slugger one from beginning to end. Their in and out fielding and battery was faultless with a single exception. The home club played the poorest game they have ever played in Denver. Their fielding and batting was careless, their pitching miserable. The only redeeming feature was Meyer's catching which was good. It seems to be the general impression that Sproat, to be revenged for the fine imposed upon him while playing in the east, sold the game. At a meeting of the directors of the Denver club to-night Sproat was suspended and fined \$350. Following is the score:

Denver 0 2 0 0 2 0 0—4

Omaha Daily Bee, July 31, 1887

[Sproat] who has been a disturbing element in the [Denver] club, has been recently fined \$350, which is the largest fine imposed on any player this season.

The St. Louis Browns have but one pitcher, King, and have called on Joe Murphy to help them out. He will pitch Friday's game against the Athletics.

Some thoughtful and literary young lady

The Daily Commonwealth (Topeka) August 18, 1887

Base Hits.

Sproat formerly with **Denver**, is now pitching for Minden.

Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln) August 17, 1887

AT FAIRMONT.

FAIRMONT, NEB., Aug. 19—[Special.]—The B. & M.'s of this city and the Mindens played today for the championship of the state. It is now a stand off, each having won a game. Out of ten games the B. & M.'s have won eight, losing one to Lincoln and today's game. Eight hundred people witnessed the game. Score:

B. & M.'s 0 0 1 4 0 0 0 3 0—8

Mindens 1 4 3 2 0 0 2 0 0—12

Base hits—B. & M.'s 10, Mindens 11.

Two base hits—Brown 2, Narramore, Toohey, Harris 2, Trout.

Three base hits—Cuddeback, Toohey.

Home run—Reeves.

Struck out—Brown 7, **Sproat** 7.

Umpire—O'Refley.

Remember the auction sale of Marsden Hill next Monday.

The Nebraska State Journal August 20, 1887
Pitched with an amateur club (the Mindens) in August

THE OFFICIAL SCORE.

LINCOLNS.							
	A.B.	R.	B.	T.B.	P.O.	A.	E.
Beckley, 1b.....	5	1	2	5	4	1	1
Lange, 1b.....	5	0	2	5	1	1	0
Shafer, rf.....	4	0	2	2	5	2	0
Dolan, c.....	4	1	2	2	5	1	1
Hoover, 2b.....	4	0	0	0	2	2	1
Herr, ss.....	4	0	2	4	3	2	1
Hall, cf.....	4	1	2	4	0	0	0
Hart, p.....	4	1	1	2	0	2	0
Reeder, lf.....	4	1	0	0	4	0	1
Totals.....	38	5	13	22	34	11	5
DENVERS.							
	A.B.	R.	B.	T.B.	P.O.	A.	E.
Sich, rf.....	5	1	2	2	4	0	0
Smith, 1b.....	5	2	2	4	9	0	0
Toben, 2b.....	5	0	0	0	3	1	1
Gorman, lf.....	5	1	2	4	1	0	0
Kientle, cf.....	4	3	3	5	1	1	0
McSorley, ss.....	4	0	0	0	3	7	0
Phillips, 3b.....	4	0	2	2	2	2	1
Mayers, c.....	4	1	0	0	4	1	0
Sproat , p.....	4	1	1	1	0	2	0
Totals.....	40	9	12	19	27	15	2

SCORE BY INNINGS.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Lincolns.....	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0—5
Denvers.....	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	3	*—9

Runs earned—Lincoln 4, Denver 2.
 Bases on ball—Off Hart 4, off Sproat 4.
 Three base hits—Beckley, Herr, Hall, Smith, Gorman, Kientle.
 Two base hits—Beckley, Lange, Hart.
 Struck out—By Hart 3, by Sproat 2.
 Passed balls—Dolan 2.
 Wild pitches—Hart 2.
 Left on bases—Lincoln 5, Denver 4.
 Double plays—McSorley to Smith.
 Umpire—Young.
 Time of game—One hour and forty-five minutes.

Nebraska State Journal September 4, 1887
 Back with Denver in September, still with them in October 1887

...
Jake Kenyon has been signed by Von der Ahe as a back stop for his Western league team of next year. Jake will hold his own with the best of them. Tom Dolan, Herr, Sproat and Beckley, also of last year's Western league, have been signed for the same team. The team will be up toward the front.
A young man...

The Topeka Daily Capital December 24, 1887

A report from December 25 identifies Sproat as already with the Whites.

...and white.
—Ed Sproat, one of the pitchers of last year's Denvers, whom Manager Loftus secured for the St. Louis Whites, wired from Louisville yesterday that he had recovered from his illness and would report here Tuesday or Wednesday.
—When old Jack Glasscock...

St. Louis Republican March 25, 1888

Ed Sproat, one of the young pitchers of the White Stocking Club, reported for duty this morning.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch April 2, 1888

...agreement.
SPROAT, one of the Western League pitchers, is still on the sick list. Manager Loftus will let him fully recover before asking him to do any work.
FRED MANN has been slapping the ball with
...for
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old
Cor

Globe Democrat April 15, 1888

Young Sproat, one of Tom Loftus' pitchers, is still on the sick list. He will be allowed to fully recover before he is put in to pitch.

The Sporting Life April 28, 201925,1888

Young Sproat, one of Tom Loftus' pitchers, returned to the city last Tuesday morning from his home in Louisville, where he was confined to his room for a couple of weeks. Sproat pitched the same afternoon of his arrival and won a twelve-inning game. Pretty good feat for a sick man.

Sporting Life May 9, 1888

"Last Tuesday" was May 1, I think.

After his last game on May 7, he drops out of the record. Reports from the game indicate he was sick, and after three innings lost his strength.

WESTERN ASSOCIATION.

Minneapolis, 15 ; St. Louis, 8.

ST. LOUIS, Mo., May 7.—[Special.]—Today's game between the St. Louis and Minneapolis teams was a slugging match, in which the visitors had the best of it. Sproat has been sick for a week. He pitched well for three innings, and then his strength deserted him and he just tossed the balls over the plate. In the fourth Minneapolis made seven hits, and these, coupled with a muff and wild throw by Burch, gave them eleven runs. In the fifth they almost repeated the work. There were some changes made in the Minneapolis team, Robinson being laid off. Alcott has been released by St. Louis. Score:

Minneapolis.....	1	0	0	7	0	1	5	1	*—15
St. Louis.....	3	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0—8

Base-hits—Minneapolis, 21; St. Louis, 11 Errors—Minneapolis, 5; St. Louis, 6. Batteries—St. Louis, Sproat and Cantz; Minneapolis, Klopff and Krieg. Umpire—Hogan.

Chicago Tribune May 8, 1888

GOT A GAME.

Minneapolis Secures a Game by Bad Playing of St. Louis.

Special to the Globe.

ST. LOUIS, May 3.—To-day's game was another display of poor ball playing. Sproat and Coutz were the St. Louis battery, Staley and Dolan being off for the week, while Kreig and Klopff formed the Minneapolis battery. Sproat let down in the third as though he was sick, and what followed was terrible. His strength seemed to desert him, and he merely tossed the balls over the plate during the remainder of the game. The Whites were two ahead in the fourth, and then Minneapolis stepped in and made seven hits in succession, and it was good-bye game for the home team. Burch had a lively time during the inning. He made a couple of muffs and a wild throw, letting in two men, and accomplished other remarkable feats. Beckley played well.

St. Paul Globe

Minneapolis 15, St. Louis 8.

ST. LOUIS, Mo., May 7. — [Special Telegram to THE BEE.]—To-day's game between **St. Louis** and Minneapolis was a slugging match, in which the visitors had the best of it. **Sproat** has been sick for a week and pitched well for three innings; then his strength seemed to desert him and he merely tossed the balls over the plate. The Minneapolis batters fell on him and lined them out until the outfielders almost fell from exhaustion. The score by innings:

Minneapolis.....	1	0	0	7	0	1	5	1	*—15
St. Louis	3	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0— 8

Batteries—**St. Louis**: **Sproat** and Cautz; Minneapolis: Klopf and Krieg. Base hits—

Omaha Dailey Bee May 8, 1888

man; Charles Newhall, fireman; John Pito.

Fireman Davis—J. Robenacker, fireman; J. M. Hughes, Nicholas Haines, Willis Levi, fireman; Ed **Sproat**, fireman; Sam Baker, fireman.

Fireman Moore—Capt. Minton, Joseph Kluth, Henry Wells, Harvey Brown, Henry Donnon, Henry Eberhardt, all

Jul

Dec 12, 1891 Louisville Courier-Journal

Pretty sure this is Ed Sproat (based on obituary)

A player identified as Sprout (sprout001---) is listed with Montgomery in 1895. I suspect this is Ed Sproat.

first base. The team left to-night for Nashville. The score:

Montgomery.		A.B.	R.	1B.	P.O.	A.	E.
Armour, c. f.	4	0	0	1	0	0	0
Peeples, s. s.	4	1	1	3	1	0	0
Morrison, 3b.	4	1	1	3	1	0	0
Neal, l. f.	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Rappold, c.	4	0	1	5	1	1	1
Bailey, p.	4	0	1	0	5	0	0
Harter, 1b.	4	0	0	11	1	1	1
Hayes, 2b.	4	1	0	2	4	1	1
Sproat , r. f.	4	0	2	2	0	2	2
Totals		36	3	7	27	13	4

Louisville.		A.B.	R.	1B.	P.O.	A.	E.
Sweeney, r. f.	5	3	2	3	1	0	0
O'Brien, 2b.	5	3	2	3	6	1	1
Shugart, c. f.	5	0	1	1	0	0	0
Welch, c.	5	0	1	2	0	0	0
Clark, l. f.	5	1	1	1	0	0	0
Hatfield, s. s.	4	2	2	4	2	0	0
Preston, 3b.	4	2	2	2	2	1	1
Luby, 1b.	4	0	1	11	1	1	1
Inks, p.	4	0	1	0	1	0	0
Totals		41	11	13	27	13	3

Innings 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 - T

April 11, 1895 Louisville Courier-Journal

The two clipping below are from the Montgomery Advertiser 26-Mar-1895

It is doubtful if that slow delivery of Ed **Sproat's** will bear critical examination—a little more steam would not hurt.

OH, HOW THEY SLUGGED.

**THE LOCALS HIT AS MUCH AS THE
BROWNS—THEIR FIELD WORK
WAS NOT AS GOOD.**

**Dowd and Cooley Get the First Home
Runs on the New Ground—Rap-
pold Did Some Hitting Himself
and Played a Fine All-Around
Game—The Pretzel Battery in To-
day, Peitz and Bricenstein.**

Once again that same old sixteen, but instead of a poor miserable little one, there is a great big eight spot after it this time.

Chris Von Der Ahe's Pretzel Pushers locked horns with the locals yesterday, and while the visitors won the game, it was a slugging match from start to finish. The batting of the locals, however, was the only thing that redeemed them, for their work in the field was of a hue so yellow that a small pox flag would have turned green with envy beside it. They must have been hypnotized, for it looked like they were in a dazed sort of condition all through the game. It was evidently an off day with them, for they all played as if they had no life in them, even Jack Hayes, who is usually so safe, making two very glaring errors. Their hitting was heavy, and showed that there is bitter punishment in store for some of the Southern League twirlers this season. Clausen got a good two bagger, while Rappold jumped into Red Ehret and lined out a long three bagger. But oh, how the Browns lit onto Ed Sproat's slow delivery—Dowd and Cooley found it made just to their taste, for they each hit staving homers. There was more hitting than science in the game, and from the work of the locals with the stick, if they field their positions in better shape today, the score will not be so lop-sided. The score is:

St. Louis—	R.	A.	B.	H.	P.	O.	A.	E.
Dowd, l. f.....6	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cooley, c. f.....6	1	2	5	0	0	0	0	0
Miller, r. f.....6	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Connor, 1st b.....6	2	5	14	1	0	0	0	0
Lyons, 3d b.....6	1	1	0	4	2	0	0	0
Ely, s. s.....5	3	2	1	4	0	0	0	0
Quinn, 2nd b.....5	1	1	3	2	0	0	0	0
Twineham, c. . .5	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0
Staley, p.3	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0
Ehret, p.2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals.. . . .10	16	16	27	15	2	0	0	0

Montgomery—	R.	A.	B.	H.	P.	O.	A.	E.
Armour, c. f.....5	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	1
Peoples, s. s.....5	0	2	0	3	2	0	0	2
King, 3d b.....5	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	2
Morrison, 2nd b..5	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	2
Hartman, 1st b..5	1	1	9	2	0	0	0	2
Bailey, r. f.....5	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	1
Rappold, c. . . .5	2	2	4	1	0	0	0	2
Hays, l. f.....5	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	2
Clausen, p. . . .3	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	2
Sproat, p.2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Totals.. . . .45	8	13	24	12	8	0	0	8

St. Louis..4	0	0	2	4	0	6	0	x-16
Montgomery0	0	1	0	0	3	3	1	- 8

Earned Runs—St. Louis, 5; Montgomery, 2. Two-base Hits—Clausen, Miller, Connor, Ely, 2. Three-base hits—Rappold. Home Runs—Dowd and Cooley. Umpire, Peitz.

Cincinnati Reds the Winner.

MOBILE, Ala, March 19.—The Cincinnati Reds defeated the Montgomery team of Southern league in an interesting game here yesterday afternoon. Catcher Spies was loaned to Montgomery to fill out the team, all of their men having not yet reported. Score.

Montgomery.....	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	—5
Cincinnati.....	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	—8

Batteries: **Sproat** King and Spies; Dwyer, Phillips and Merritt.

Tuskaloosa Gazette 21-Mar-1895

Not sure which paper these two clippings come from

to be more deliberate the better.

Joe Neal has never pitched a League game in Montgomery, but his game in New Orleans was jam up. The people here will have a chance tomorrow to see what he can do as he will go up against the hard hitting Arkansas Travelers. Something seems to be wrong with Ed **Sproat** and unless he shows up better it will look like the company is too fast for him.

May 5, 1895

Sproat has been released and some good men secured who are looked for every day.

May 08, 1895

South Jackson street, pulmonary infection.
Edward **Sprout** 50 years, 1650 West
Kentucky street, abscess of lung.
Augusta J. D. Berndsen, 51 years.

Louisville Courier-Journal 01-Oct-1915

DEATH CLAIMS FORMER NATIONAL LEAGUE PITCHER

EDWARD **SPROAT** SUCCUMBS TO THROAT AND STOMACH TROUBLE.

Edward **Sproat**, 50 years old, fuel wagon driver of the No. 17 engine company, who gained fame in the latter eighties as a National League baseball pitcher and later served in the Spanish-American War, died of bronchitis, complicated with stomach trouble, at 2:15 o'clock yesterday afternoon at his home, 1650 West Kentucky street.

Sproat's health was undermined during the three years he served as a member of the United States army in the Philippines. He had suffered from stomach trouble since he returned to Louisville soon after the close of the war with Spain. So acute was his ailment he was unable to lie down for a period of more than a year and was forced to sleep in a chair. Two weeks ago throat trouble developed and **Sproat** was forced to give up active work at the engine house.

He was a native of Louisville and began playing baseball on corner lots of the West End while still a boy. He later played in the Southern League and was drafted by the St. Louis team of the National League. When his career as a ballplayer ended, **Sproat** returned to Louisville and became a member of the city fire department. He joined the army at the outbreak of the war. He was reappointed to the fire department April 20, 1910, and had served continuously since that time.

Sproat is survived by his widow, Mrs. Margaret **Sproat**; five young children, Elizabeth, Edward, Charles, Basil and William **Sproat**; a stepdaughter, Edna, and six sisters. Funeral services will be held at 2 o'clock to-morrow afternoon at the residence. Burial will be in Cave Hill cemetery.

Obituary in the Courier-Journal:

The Courier-Journal (Louisville, Kentucky) • 30 Sep 1915, Thu

Edward Sproat

BIRTH	4 Dec 1864 Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky, USA
DEATH	29 Sep 1915 (aged 50) Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky, USA
BURIAL	<u>Cave Hill Cemetery</u> Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky, USA
MEMORIAL ID	147760777 · View Source

Find A Grave