

SABR Ballparks Committee

Committee Newsletter April-1989

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I ROOSEVELT STADIUM PLAQUE, Jersey City, NJ, is alive and well. The construction/development organization wrote the committee on February 9, asking for information about "historical data, plaques, etc. that would be considered and appropriate for the site." If you would like to express your support for this project, contact this gentleman:

Conrad E. Gack  
Senior Vice President  
K. Hovnanian Inner City Developments, Inc.  
10 Highway 35 PO Box 500  
Red Bank, NJ 07701

Mr. Gack has been very cooperative thus far with SABR. If you would like to help of the research and organization of this site plaque and possible exhibit, let me know.

II DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER, Artists and Writers on Baseball, is a very fine baseball exhibit that I saw recently at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. It features several ballpark related items. Also, the video that accompanies the show features the famed Wertz-Mays catch of the 1954 Series. I have several extra brochures on this exhibit and you may have one for a SASE of 25¢. As I understand the schedule, the exhibit is now (or will soon be) in Baltimore, then Chicago, Oakland, and New York. At the Houston show, I had a short chat with Roger Angell who gave a reading of some of his recent works. We spoke of Phil Bess's project and development of the new urban baseball type. Angell agreed that most parks of the 60s and 70s have been bad for baseball and he expressed interest in this committee's work.

III 1919 BLACK SOX SCANDAL continues at the Chicago Historical Society until June 11 and is well worth a visit. The society is sponsoring a wide range of talks and programs associated with the exhibit that has some excellent photos of Crosley and Comiskey. Also, you can sit in some 1910-style seats. Contact the society at (312) 642-4600 for more information. This show will not travel, so see it in Chicago.

IV CHANGE OF ADDRESS for these members of the committee. Their new locations as follows:

David A. Pietrusza  
26 Irving Road  
Scotia, NY 12302

Michael Dempsey  
RFD 2 Box 99 Route 201  
Voluntown, CT 06384

V FENWAY PARK'S additions to the press box and upper box area behind home plate is behind schedule according to the March 16 Boston Globe. The \$18 million project may wait until mid-May for completion. The project includes a 600-seat luxury seating area, new press facilities, and support facilities.

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- VI NEGRO LEAGUE BALLPARKS, add Lippincott Park in So. Bend, Indiana, reports the February Negro Committee Newsletter. Research by John Kovach indicates that 13 league games were played there between 1936 and 1946. Also, a game of 9/21/96 was played at Studebaker Field between the Page Fence Giants and Cuban Giants.
- VII TIGER STADIUM FAN CLUB is alive and well, though the situation for Tiger Stadium isn't as healthy. While on my way to a museum conference, I stopped in Detroit and participated in the club's "Rock and Bowl" evening for the park at a Woodward Avenue bowling alley. For the record, I played three strings with a total pinfall of about 460. Not bad, considering that I have not bowled in ten years. If you feel that effort is worth something to Tiger Stadium, send a contribution in the committee's name to the Tiger Stadium Fan Club, PO Box 441426, Detroit, MI 48244-1426.
- VIII CORRESPONDENCE REPORT I received 70 letters and sent out 61. I am a little behind in correspondence, so be patient and keep writing!
- IX NEW MEMBER Ross Bartow, a director of administration for the Tampa Sports Authority. Address: 4910 Stolls Avenue, Tampa, FL 33615 Home: (813) 884-3329; work: (813) 870-3060. He has an interest in all parks and eras with a special attention to history of public financing. Welcome to the committee!
- X TORONTO SKYDOME continues to make news. Two articles available for a 45¢ SASE: "After Skydome, Stadiums will Never Be the Same," Business Week, March 20, 1989. Also, "Toronto's Domed Stadium," Montreal Gazette, February 12, 1989.
- XI SKYDOME CLIPPINGS/INFORMATION COLLECTION is the idea of Tony Formo. He is willing to coordinate some gathering of info on this soon-to-be-opened park. If interested, contact him at 16 Bonnyview Drive, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M8Y 3G6.
- XII EBBETS FIELD & DODGERS FANS, have you seen the newest book, The Dodgers Bibliography, From Brooklyn to Los Angeles? Authored by Myron Smith it costs \$29.95 from Meckler, 11 Ferry Lane West, Westport, CT 06880 (203) 226-6967. I make no recommendation as I have not seen a copy. Has anyone bought or seen one?
- XIII CARDINES FIELD in Newport RI dates back to 1919 and has all the attributes of the classic parks of the past. The Boston Globe did a short piece on the place in its May 5 issue. Enclosed here for your reading. If anyone is in the neighborhood, how about taking a few pictures and sending some to Joe Favano who is collecting photos for the committee ballpark photo project.
- XIV BASEBALL EXHIBIT IN TORONTO, "Let's Play Ball," at the Royal Ontario Museum, open as of March 1. Call (416) 872-1212 for more info.
- XV BASEBALL HEIRLOOMS, a possible show on the old parks, could be shown on Public Broadcasting stations this spring. If you see it, let us know. Supposedly, Jeff Daniels of such movies as "Terms of Endearment" and "Purple Rose of Cairo" did the narration.

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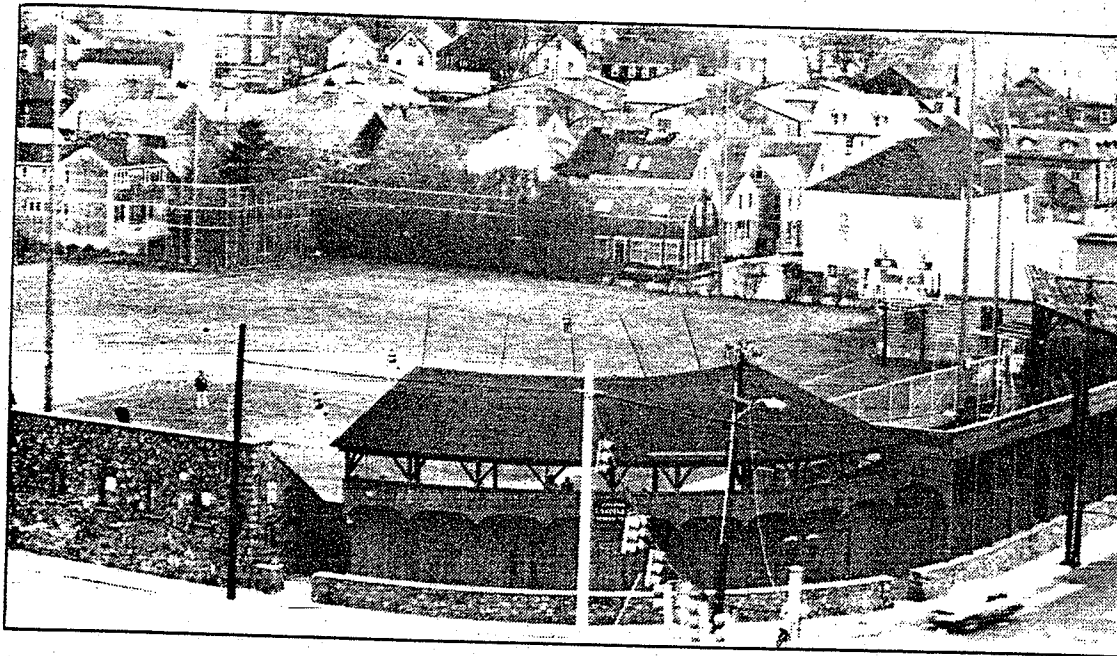
- XVI OUT OF SEASON a fine piece on Comiskey Park and its people over the fall and winter months, available for a SASE of 45¢. If you are in the Chicago area, catch the piece in Chicago Times Magazine of March-April 1989.
- XVII METROPOLITAN STADIUM AND METRODOME are the topics of research being done by Peter Opatz of 449 So. Saratoga, St. Paul, MN 55105. He was not too specific on his theme, so if you can help him in any way, please contact him.
- XVIII Louis Plummer of The World of Baseball publishing outfit is looking for photos of Cleveland Municipal, SF Candlestick and Washington Griffith. Color and aerials preferred. If you can help, call him at (703) 739-2110.
- XIX TICKET PRICING PRACTICES of teams/owners is a project of new SABR member, King Banerjee. He is interested in ballparks re their seat arrangements, how they classify and price seats, change seat and classifications, etc. If you can offer guidance, suggestions, etc. please contact him at Claremont McKenna College, Dept. of Economics, Bauer Center, 500 East 9th Street, Claremont, CA 91711. (714) 621-8000. This research could be useful to those of you interested in the economics of ballparks.
- XX CALIFORNIA MINOR LEAGUE BALLPARKS information is sought by Paul Smith, 1645 Park Street, Alameda, CA 94501. (415) 769-9345. Please contact him if you can assist.
- XXI FLORIDA SUNCOAST DOME articles from St. Petersburg sent in by Joe Favano. Copies for a 45¢ SASE. Joe is still interested in maintaining an annual photo exhibit with pictures sent in by committee members, but the submissions have been scarce of late. Write Joe at 21 Roosevelt Avenue, Old Greenwich, CT 06870, if you can contribute.
- XXII "BALLPARK QUIRKS THAT ENRICH THE EXPERIENCE" are sought by Stephen Bennett, a committee member, at 3030 Upham Ct., Denver, CO 80215. He is writing an article on the old parks and how they and their special qualities enriched the game that the fans saw. As Stephen notes, great moments have happened in all parks, but what made the game and its events, famous or not so, so memorable in places like Ebbets, Griffith, Shibe, Crosley, and the like.
- XXIII DOCTORATE THESIS indexes can be very useful to research and I recently received a selection of PhD dissertations done in the area of sport and several of them were done on baseball. Has anyone explored this option? Does anyone on the Bibliography has a list of baseball PhD works? I have a few...care to trade?

That is all for now. Next newsletter goes out in early June. Keep in touch and let us know what your research needs and works are.

*Bob Bluthardt*

6 LOISE 5/5/88

# New England Notebook



Cardines Field in Newport, R.I.

Globe photo/Bill Powers

## Newport's Sunset League primed to play ball

### Rite of spring begun in '19 continues in 80-year-old Cardines Field

**N**EWPORT, R.I. — On Saturday, as they have every spring since 1919, the players in Newport's Sunset League, reputed to be the country's oldest surviving amateur baseball circuit, begin a new season at Cardines Field. The field itself has been in existence since 1908, four years longer than Fenway Park, and will celebrate its 80th anniversary this year.

The comparison with Fenway is apt. Cardines is at least as idiosyncratic as John Updike's "lyric little bandbox" to the north, with a short haul (285 feet) down the rightfield line and a centerfield fence that juts in to avoid a house. When the outfield plays deep, rightfielder and centerfielder are out of sight of one another.

"It's the homiest and most comfortable ball park that I know of. You just feel like playing baseball," says Kevin McBurney, Providence lawyer and infielder, who will manage his own team in the six-team league this summer.

Like Fenway, McBurney says: "Cardines favors hitters. I don't think that the ball's any livelier there. It's psychological." Last year, four Sunset teams hit 112 home runs in 60 games, possibly due more to the use of aluminum bats and the prevailing sea breeze out to center than

the ambiance, according to George Donnelly, who caught in the league from 1922-1927 and has been official scorer since then.

Aside from the metal bats, little has changed on the field at Cardines, except for the addition of floodlights in the 1940s and smaller crowds, maybe 100 per night, compared to pretelevision days. Then, as many as 2,700 would turn out to watch a barnstorming Negro League team such as the New York Black Yankees or the Baltimore Elite Giants — Satchel Paige pitching — take on the Sunset all stars. "It was pretty good baseball," Donnelly says.

Thinning crowds and an explosion of hotel and condominium development along the adjacent waterfront for a time threatened Cardines. Donnelly remembers several city managers who felt the park would be more useful as a parking lot. But the placing of the field on the National Register of Historic Places several years ago provides a measure of protection, as does a busy schedule of high school and Babe Ruth games and a recent upswing in attendance. At least for the foreseeable future, teams will be converging at sunset in the park McBurney calls "the most friendly confines for a ball player."

— TOM GANNON