

SABR Ballparks Committee Newsletter

May/June 1991

Robert F. Bluthardt Committee Chairman
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I SABR XX CONVENTION IN NYC

I wish all committee members a safe journey and stay in New York for the SABR annual meeting. Unfortunately, I will be absent due to work commitments in Texas. A committee meeting has been scheduled, so check your registration packet for the day/time; I had requested a Saturday date. Not knowing who will be attending, I ask that someone volunteer to take notes of any serious discussion and such notes will be sent out in the July/August newsletter. You have been reading your newsletters, so you know what our committee has been doing. If someone wants to "take charge" to keep the conversation moving, go to it! The most important issue that will effect all committees is the restructuring of the committee operation guidelines. I include with this newsletter a summary of the issues facing the "Council of Committees" as written by task force chairman Peter Bjarkman. If you have a comment or suggestion, catch Peter in NYC and/or bring it up for discussion at the committee meeting.

II ANNUAL REPORT for our committee was sent in several months ago. If you do not attend the NYC meeting and want a copy, let me know. A copy will be included in all registration packets in NYC.

III NEW MEMBERS

We welcome two new members to our fold:

Andrew Rothman, 119 W. St. Catherine St., #3, Louisville, KY 40203

Interests in all levels and leagues for ballparks, especially Ebbets & Polo Grounds, Crosley and Louisville parks. Wants to investigate the demise of the classic parks.

Bob Busser, 824 East Panorama Road, Fullerton, CA 92631

All levels and leagues, NYC & Brooklyn, Crosley and Forbes; interested in the sites of former parks; supports marker project for forgotten parks; working on a travel guide for sports and is interested in publishing info/advice.

Welcome to the committee! Fellow members are asked to write these new members if they see a common interest or ways/means of sharing info and assistance.

IV HILLTOP PARK MARKER

Officials of the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, owners of the site that once housed Hilltop Park, home of the NY Yankees (1903-1912), have agreed in spirit to support a marker for the long gone ballpark. If you would like to write and thank someone for this far sightedness, contact Mr. David Ginsberg, Executive Vice-President and Chief Planning Officer, The Presbyterian Hospital in the City of New York, New York, NY 10032-3284. Side note: the May 20 Sporting News noted that Chet Hoff, a NY Highlanders player from 1911 to 1913, just celebrated his 100th birthday in Daytona Beach, FL. Is there anyone else alive who played at that park?

V PHOTO CONTEST

At the SABR convention you will be able to see the entries for the committee's first photo contest. Our thanks to Joe Favano for organizing this first-time activity that we hope will grow with coming years. Thanks too go to Sam Pathy and Mike Dempsey who joined Bob Bluthardt as judges for the various photos.

VI CHANGE OF ADDRESS for three committee people:

Bill Watterson, 1706 8th Avenue, SW, Olympia, WA 98502

Ray Medeiros, PO Box 190, Montesano, WA 98563

Dave Hornish, 313 30th Street, Lindenhurst, NY 11757

Other committee members are asked to keep us posted of your mailing address if you wish to receive your newsletters.

VII SPORTSMAN'S PARK MARKER

Bill Albach reports that the ceremony to honor the site of this old ballpark was held in the gymnasium of the Herbert Hoover Boys Club at Grand and Dodier in St. Louis on Saturday, April 27. The former sports editors of the two local papers, Bob Burnes of the Globe-Democrat and Bob Broeg of the Post-Dispatch, reflected on their memories of the park. Former players in the audience included Dick Sipek of the Reds, Don Mueller of the Giants, El Tappe of the Cubs, Roy Sievers of the Senators and ex Cards GM Bing Devine.

Special thanks to Bill for a copy of the draft of a history of Sportsman's Park. And another thank you to the author of that booklet, Bob Tiemann, who also sent our committee a copy.

VIII DONATIONS TO OUR FILES

In a typical month a dozen SABR people and other baseball fans will donate articles and materials for our growing files. Special recognition goes to these folks:

Jim Brown for a assortment of materials on minor league parks

Barry Evans for programs, yearbooks, and newspaper pieces on the new Comiskey and the unfortunate destruction of the real Comiskey Park.

Bruce Genther for a copy of the newly printed "House of Magic" booklet detailing the history of that ballpark in Baltimore on 33rd Street. Bruce has also been sending our files photos of the new ballpark under construction in Baltimore.

Vic Pallos for a copy of his latest set of ballparks postcards featuring many pre-WWII favorites.

Note: To order the Pallos cards, contact him at 658 Arden Avenue, Glendale, CA 91202; the Baltimore booklet is available at Memorial Stadium. You might also try the Orioles offices at (301) 243-9800. Cost is \$12.00 plus postage and handling. The Pallos cards at \$10 postage included.

IX CONGRATULATIONS to committee member Jerry Cohen whose "Ebbets Field Flannels" business seems to be making great strides. Several articles have appeared on his work of late. Also, a big pat on the back to committee member Dick Johnson whose book on Ted Williams has appeared. Ted Williams, A Portrait in Words and Pictures, was co-directed with Glenn Stout and features many fine authors and some sharp ballparks photos.

- X CORRECTION to last issue's item XXXIX that told of a story of a game in a park on the NY-NJ-PA border. The ever-vigilant John Holway notes that the border for these three states is in the middle of the Delaware River. As John says, "it's a good story, anyway."
- XI DENVER & MIAMI For expansion in the NL. How many of you had those two picked? For ballpark fans, Denver can be an interesting transition with Mile High Stadium. There is an encouraging feeling in Denver for a classic park. Local committee member Bruce Hellerstein has even designed his own field for the future franchise! Miami, of course, is another case with Joe Robbie Stadium. Now that future teams are set and there's no additional one coming, what city is going to "steal" what team? Houston is being shopped about and Cleveland is in trouble without the Gateway project.
- XII TIGER STADIUM, now one of the three oldest parks (opened the same day as Fenway in 1912) faces more challenges to its future from current Tiger management. The Fan Club's latest newsletter has an interesting feature of "Stadium Fibs" that are answered with "Stadium Facts." If you think Tiger Stadium is worth saving, get on the bandwagon and join the society at PO Box 441426, Detroit, MI 48211-1426 (303) 964-5991.
- XIII BALLPARKS OF OUR TIME, a good summary of the ballpark building boom, appeared in the Winter-1991 Vol 1 issue of Hot Stove Baseball. The author is committee member John Pastier.
- XIV OTHER ARTICLES on ballparks include a short piece with photos on Comiskey in the Sporting News 1991 Baseball Yearbook. Also, Athlon's Baseball '91 has a piece on Yankee Stadium.
- XV NEW BALTIMORE PARK continues to look like the answer for the classic park. The May-June issue of the Maryland Stadium Authority newsletter, "Opening Day" notes the great progress in construction. On May 9, 1991, the last piece of the superstructure was put in place. Now for the big question: What to call the park. The Sporting News supports the Babe Ruth name; Tom Boswell backs the unusual yet accurate tag of Camden Yards. What do you think?
- XVI MASTER'S THESIS FOUND on Johnson Field (Binghamton, NY) by committee member Dave Pietrusza. We hope to get a copy soon. Is there a piece of ballparks research sitting in your local library unknown to the sports research world?
- XVII BASEBALL RESEARCH JOURNAL in 1992 can have a ballparks theme if enough material is available. SABR publications chief John Holway has asked about these suggested pieces:
- new parks in Denver and Miami
 - altitude and homers in Denver
 - review of the new Baltimore park

It is more possible for the 93 Research Journal to be a ballparks issue with a special overview of parks; pictorial, nostalgic, whatever. One idea by John: laying one playing field over another and have some fun. Fenway on top of Yankee Stadium; Ebbets/Griffith Stadium. Several committee members have already suggested these in the past. Talk it over at the annual meeting. Better, contact John Holway at 6 Kennedy Street, Alexandria, VA 22305.

XVIII COMMITTEES AND THEIR CHAIRMEN, a list enclosed for your info and convenience. Many research projects cover more than one research committee, so call on these folks when you need help in their areas. They call on us!

XIX COMISKEY IN THE MOVIES If you see the current film, "Only the Lonely," with John Candy, watch for the great picnic scene in Comiskey Park. Candy says at least twice that "It's a shame that they are going to tear this place down."

XX BROOKLYN, BASEBALL, AND EBBETS FIELD, a major paper on that famed borough of baseball and its shrine, has been donated to our files by its author, Matthew Kachur. As soon as I read it, I'll see about having copies made available to interested folks. It's bigger (53 pages) than his effort on Yankee Stadium last semester. We sent him some material from our Brooklyn file and some of our committee people assisted him.

XXI REVIEWS NEEDED For a future newsletter a review of the Kuklick book on Shibe Park would be a good feature. Also, who has something to say about the new Comiskey? Thus far all of the media have been falling over one another in praising it. Is it that good? I'll see for myself on a Chicago visit in late July. Let's get a sampling of opinion and we'll print some summaries for our July/August issue.

XXII RESEARCH REQUESTS We have a number of interesting requests, so help out with whatever one(s) you can:

1. Baker Bowl info/materials/photos needed by committee member Bruce Genther, 15835 Haynes Road, Laurel, MD 20707
2. The Yankees Two Years in Shea Stadium (74-75). Paul Doherty, 4326 Finley Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90027 (213) 667-3151. This fellow is a true Yankees fan and he is writing about those two years when the Yankees played in their NL rival's backyard. Photos, film, home movies especially would be most helpful. If you have a resource to share, give him a call and hear his most entertaining answering machine!
3. Wrigley Field Jennifer Kfoury, (312) 321-7661, 444 No. Michigan Ave., 36th Floor, Chicago, IL 60601. She is looking for a photo of a building on Kenmore Street that had a turret and an ad painted on the roof before 1929. Cubs fans know that Kenmore intersects with Waveland on the LF side of the park. This building used to sport signs for WGN, Old Gold, and Ricketts. It is three stories now. She is working on some legal matter related to the building and could not give us more specifics. If you can help her with this, please contact her.
4. Baseball If you saw the Ken Burns project on the Civil War, then you can imagine his work for a similar study on baseball. If you have some unique materials, photos, films, insights to offer, contact the production office at Cinergy, 321 West 44th Street, NY, NY 10036 (212) 757-5434.
5. Minor League parks that are available for use right now for A or AA level teams. Tom Denton, 103 Silver Spring, Universal City, San Antonio, TX 78148 (512) 658-7589 Tom is president of the San Antonio Missions (AA for the LA Dodgers) fan club. The club is rumored to be heading to the cross-state city of El Paso where a new facility replaced the charming Dudley Dome. If that happens, Tom wants to be prepared to attract the El Paso team---or another---to San Antonio. Are there available facilities? The San Antonio park is a college ballpark for St. Mary's Univ. and it seats about 3500, but attendance fills that to 2500 regularly. I have seen a few games there and it is a great place to see a team.

XXII (cont.)

6. Preservation/Restoration/Documentation of Cardines Field in Newport, RI, a baseball site since 1871 and a structure with a grandstand that may date to 1909. Jeffrey Staats, a practicing architect, is attempting to have this ballpark put on the National Register of Historic Places. If you have any suggestions or research tips to offer, contact him at 75 Wilkey Avenue, Portsmouth, RI 02871 (401) 683-6979. He is also directing a student who is designing a stadium for Charlotte, NC as his 5th year thesis project.
7. The Decline of the Minors in the 1950s

HBO has called us again for assistance. They are doing a program on the post WWII decline of the minor leagues with the advent of major league baseball of television. Annual attendance in the minors in 1949 was 42 million; it dropped to 19 million in 1959. The fifty one leagues in operation in 1949 fell to twenty in 1970. The HBO people need film footage, home movies, photos, materials, resources, etc. that cover minor league parks of the 1950s that were abandoned or torn down. Visuals of sites of former minor league parks would be helpful too. If you have something to share, contact Greg Backer at HBO at (212) 512-5462. You can write him at HBO, Room 11-35B, 1100 Avenue of the Americas, NY, NY 10036.

REPRINTS Due to our many loyal contributors, we have a selection of reprints. Cost is six cents per page plus 29 cents for the first four pages and 23 cents for every four or additional page(s) to four. Charges should be made out to Bob Bluthardt as the local bank does not know SABR is much less a Ballparks Committee!

- a) "Comiskey mixes old, new," Boston Herald, 5-3-91 (1 pg)
- b) "No place like home," Boston Globe (Comiskey), 5-91 (1 pg)
- c) "Renovation better idea for (Chicago) Stadium," Daily Southtown Economist, (1 pg)
- d) "Supporter no fan of park," (Comiskey), Southtown Economist, 5-16-91 (1pg)
- e) "Back to the Future for Ballparks," Rangers Program, 1991 (4 pgs)
- f) "Tigers Have a Neighborhood by the Tail," NY Times, 6-2-91 (1 pg)
- g) "Remaking the Field of Dreams," Time, 4-29-91 (2 pgs)
- h) "Seeing is Believing," (long home runs), Boston Globe, 5-5-91, (1 pg)
- i) "Winds of Change at Fenway," Boston Globe, 4-5-91 (1 pg)
- j) "Schaefer Scouts for ideas at Comiskey Park opening," The Sun, 4-19-91 (1 pg)
- k) "Baseball as it is Meant to Be," Boswell, Wash. Post, 5-10-91, (2pgs)
- l) "Last Flight of the Winter Haven Snowbirds," Boston Phoenix (Red Sox last season at this spring training site), 3-22-91 (2 pgs)

Thanks to our many contributors including Fred Taylor, Bill Watterson, Gordon Thomas, Dick Clark, John Lobingier, Andy McCue, Mike Frank.

SABR COMMITTEE CHAIRS LIST

March 1991

- Dave Anderson (SABR Collegiate Committee Chairman), 416 Hilliard Avenue, Monterey Park, CA 91754 (818-280-2440 Home)
- Peter C. Bjarkman (SABR Latin America Committee Chairman), 935 North Chauncey Avenue, West Lafayette, IN 47906 (317-743-5034 Home and Office)
- Bob Bluthardt (SABR Ballparks Committee Chairman), 244 North Oxford, San Angelo, TX 76901 (915-942-0635 Home)
- Bill Carle (SABR Biographical Committee Chair), 8220 East 135th Street, Grandview, MO 64030 (816-763-1899 Home)
- Richard "Dick" Clark (SABR Negro Leagues Committee Chairman), 1080 Hull Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48198-8472 (313-487-5273 Home)
- Donald Coffin (SABR Statistical Analysis Committee Chairman), 3400 Broadway, Gary, IN 46408 (219-980-6646 Home)
- Larry Gerlach (SABR Umpire and Rules Committee Chairman), 950 North Bonneville Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84103 (801-531-9116 Home)
- Jirg Johnston (SABR Computerization Committee Chairman), PO Box 35801, Canton, OH 44735 (216-837-8344 Home)
- David Kemp (SABR Minor Leagues Committee Chairman), P.O. Box 85224, Sioux Falls, SD 57118 (605-338-8006 Home)
- Norman L. Macht (SABR Oral History Committee Chairman), 3 Graham Court, Newark, DE 19711 (302-655-2945 Home)
- Andy McCue (SABR Bibliography Committee Co-Chairman), 4025 Beechwood Place, Riverside, CA 92506 (714-787-4954 Home)
- Frank Phelps (SABR Bibliography Committee Co-Chairman), 253 Bernard Drive, King of Prussia, PA 19406 (215-265-1622 Home)
- Sharon Roepke (SABR Women in Baseball Committee Chairwoman), PO Box 3675, Flint, MI 48502 (313-239-9608 Home)
- Mark Rucker (SABR Board Committee Liaison), 137 Circular Street, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 (518-587-0681 Home)
- Lyle Spatz (SABR Records Committee Chairman), 18817 Rolling Acres Way, Olney, MD 20832 (301-924-5206 Home)
- Stephen Thompson (SABR Japanese Committee Chairman), 1426 Whipporwill Street, Norman, OK 73071 (405-364-4218)
- Bob Tiemann (SABR Nineteenth-Century Committee Chairman), 4518 Wichita Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63110 (314-535-4215 Home)