

Ballparks I Have Seen

By Ray L'Amoreaux

I was watching the Oakland A's - Chicago White Sox game on TV last night, coming from Chicago. For some reason, I had a flashback to when I saw Comiskey Park. It is one of the few vintage ballparks left. I can only think of two others - Wrigley Field (also in Chicago), and Fenway Park in Boston.

While I never saw a ball game in Comiskey, I did get to see the outside of the stadium. The year was circa 1926, and I was 7 years old. I remember my Mother's Aunt Nellie pointing it out to me, as we rode by on the street car, on the South side of Chicago. I don't remember whether we were on our way to Lincoln Park, or whether she had just met me at the New York Central Englewood- railroad station.

This memory created more memories - a domino effect! I had a flashback to other Major League ballparks that I had either just seen from the outside, or actually saw a ball game within them.

Navin Field, Briggs Stadium and Tiger Stadium - all in the same location in Detroit. Living in Michigan at the time, I saw games in all three of them. My Dad took me to my first major league game to Navin Field in 1928, and I was 9 years old. I remember seeing Charlie Gehringer, the Tigers' 2nd baseman, and Mickey Cochran, their great catcher,

While living in Berea, Ohio, I attended the Indians' games in old League Park in Cleveland. I saw Bob Feller, the Indians' great pitcher. He made his first start when he was 17 years old - having just graduated from high school. As I remember, he struck out 17 of the opposing batters. (I can't remember the team). He was the hardest thrower that I have ever seen. They didn't have the speed gun on the pitchers back then, but I am sure they would have clocked him at 100 mph! It doesn't sound too fast today, but back then it was fast! The batters couldn't hit what they couldn't see. I wonder if the umpires even saw all of his pitches. I remember getting free tickets to the Indians games during the summers of the early 1930's. I can't recall whether I got them at school, Scouting or where. I know that I appreciated the tickets and enjoyed going to the games. I don't remember how I got to the games. But, I do remember the gate where the players would enter and leave the park. It was part of the left field fence. The Indians had an attendant posted at the gate to keep the "gate crashers" out. We not only got to see the players very close, but we could very easily get their autographs.

I also saw games (both baseball and football) in the successor to League Park - the Municipal Stadium on Lake Erie. Both the Cleveland Indians and Browns played

there. It was a huge facility - holding 70,000 people. I saw Red Grange - a football legend - play there. For the Indians - besides Bob Feller, there were Earl Averill in center field and Willie Kamm at third base.

While I haven't been inside the Cleveland Indians' fairly new and beautiful - Jacobs Field, I have seen it from the outside. My friends, Kathleen and Grady Dorsey drove me all around downtown Cleveland -including "The Flats", when I was visiting Berea during one of my high school class reunions. I saw many changes from the days of 70 years earlier, when I lived in Berea.

I have seen many, many baseball games at the Oakland Coliseum, as I had a partial-season ticket for the Oakland Athletics games for about 15 years. I also saw an Oakland Raiders football game in the Coliseum. I saw one game in the beautiful new waterfront stadium in San Francisco, as well as many football and baseball games at the old Candlestick Point stadium, South of San Francisco. Before this, I even saw San Francisco - 49'ers games at Kezar Stadium in Golden Gate Park.

I saw the Minnesota Twins play baseball in the old Metropolitan Stadium, in Bloomington. I used to stay at the Marriott Hotel which was adjacent to the ball park, and an easy walk. I also saw the Twins play in their newly covered Metrodome in downtown Minneapolis. Then, I stayed at a hotel close by where I could still walk to the park.

I have attended events in Soldiers Field on Lake Michigan in Chicago, the Los Angeles Coliseum, and the Army-Navy game in Philadelphia's Memorial stadium. It was the fall of 1943, and I had just returned from flying 50 missions in North Africa. I was stationed at Atlantic City for R & R. They gave us tickets to the game, so we rode the train over to Philadelphia and back to Atlantic City. I attended a professional basketball game in the Kingdome in Seattle.

I have seen the Angels play in their stadium in Anaheim - next to Disneyland. I have seen these facilities from the outside - Fenway Park in Boston, Busch Stadium in St. Louis and Coors Field in Denver.

What wonderful memories!