

Some History of Meinert Field



**By: D. Craig Asbury
2023**

The Diamond Anniversary of a Baseball Diamond 1939 - 2014

It was the mid-summer baseball showdown between the Central Missouri Ban Johnson All-Stars and the first half-season pennant winners, the Moberly Miners.

It was the bottom of the ninth and the Miners trailed 1 run to 5. Fans had already started to leave the park as the game appeared to be over, but the Miners still had their time at bat.

Two runs were scored, two outs were given up and two runners were on base when William, a native of Moberly, came to bat. The Miners were still two runs down and as there was only one out left, he was the last chance for his team to win this game.

William took his stance and prepared himself to square off against the All-Star pitcher. The first pitch came and William took a swing. Wood hit the leathered cork with a thunderous crack and the ball took flight. It split the air directly over the field and slammed against the scoreboard in left centerfield. The crowd went wild. The umpires ruled it a homerun and William let the bat slide from his hand and trotted around the bases bringing in three more runs and the win to the Moberly Miners.

The William that made the game-winning hit in 1954 was Bill Reid, a prominent local businessman who recently passed away.

Nail biting baseball games of the Central Missouri Ban Johnson Baseball League were not uncommon. Fans turned out in droves for the games and baseball was definitely Moberly's pastime.

The early Ban Johnson League was made up of amateur players 21 years old or younger. It was as close to professional baseball one could get without crossing the line. Several of the Ban Johnson players went on to the major and minor leagues.

MOBERLY MONITOR-INDEX

TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 4, 1939

Members of the council heard both P. L. Shackelford and Police Chief Joe Klugmann, American Legionnaires interested in the formation of a Ban Johnson baseball league in this district and the organization of a league team here, request the city's support in the youth movement and propose the construction of a ball park in Rothwell Park, west of the park lake at the site of a horse show.

May Build Ball Park.

Construction of the ball park "maybe with NYA help" was suggested by Mr. Shackelford. When Mr. Klugmann had finished, Mayor Tydings said: "I like this idea."

He would, he said, "talk to" C. A. Neiswender, local district supervisor of NYA.

In February of 1939, the Ban Johnson Committee looked to expand into Moberly, but the town did not have a baseball park that was up to the requirements. Several locations were bantered back and forth, but soon a site on the NW side of Rothwell Park was selected in April.

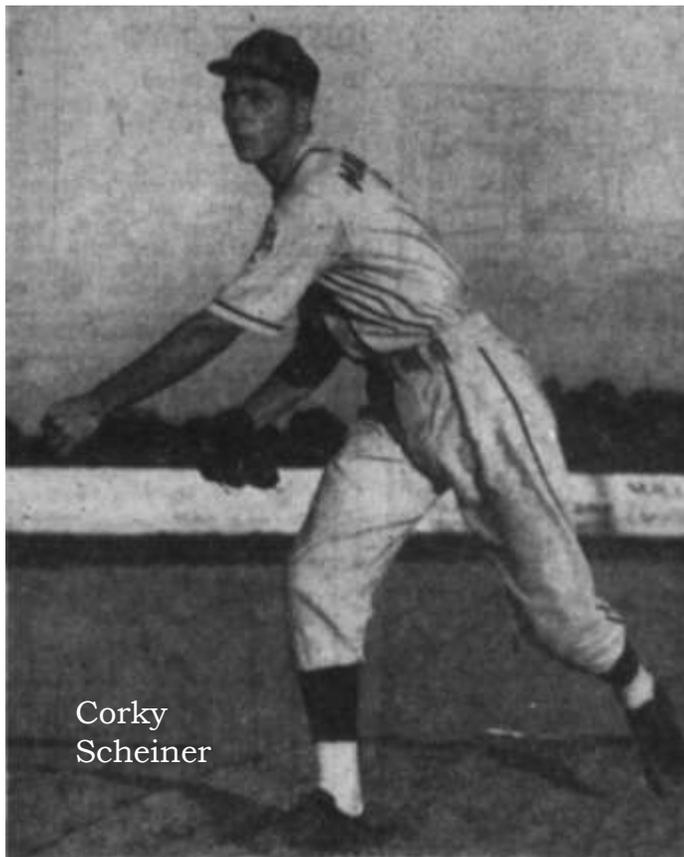
Next came the problem of financing. It was the time of the Great Depression and local public resources were few and far between. It was decided to apply for a NYA program to construct the field. (See "Civilian Conservation Corps" article for information in regard to the several Federal governmental work relief programs in the area.)

The City Council voted to pay \$583 (about \$12,500 today) to purchase the materials for the fence and grandstand. The Ban Johnson League would repay the city after it was put up. The NYA provided the labor.

Construction was immediately started and the first baseball field in Rothwell Park was built. Moberly's 'Ban Johnson Nine' played their first game on May 14, 1939

when they beat Fulton by 26 to 8. Lights were added to the ballpark during the summer and night games were soon on the schedule.

Ban Johnson baseball was played for a couple of years until WW2 when local baseball took a backseat to the war effort. In 1946, the league was reorganized and



talented Moberly boys could again play baseball. One of those signing up was pitcher Arthur 'Corky' Scheiner. The southpaw did the town and team proud with his winning ways on the mound.

It was 1949 and the Central Missouri Ban Johnson League Championship game was on the line: the Moberly Miners against the Sedalia Chiefs. Corky was the hurler for the Miners and it became a pitcher's duel. At the bottom of the ninth, the score was 0 to 0 and the game went into extra innings. The Miners scored one run in the top of the tenth and the Chiefs came to bat. Corky faced the intrepid opponents but he was determined to put an end to the battle. It took him just 5 pitches to retire the side and win the first Central Missouri Ban Johnson Championship for the Moberly Miners.

Many local boys belonged to the Ban Johnson League over the years, all whom have their own memorable story.

For the first couple of decades, the Rothwell Park ball field had no official name, although it was generally known as Ban Johnson Park. That would change in the 1960's.

Harry Meinert was the vice-president of Triangle Supply Co. and an avid baseball fan. On May 30, 1965 he attended a Ban Johnson baseball game in which his son was a player. He didn't feel well and left the game early. He arrived at his house just minutes before he died.

On June 30, 1967, the ballpark was officially renamed. Rothwell Park board president, James Lowell read the official resolution that proclaimed the field would be hereafter known as 'Harry Meinert Field' in honor of the long-time baseball enthusiast. ('Cotton' Fitzsimmons, renowned Greyhound basketball coach, threw out the first ball.)

The Ban Johnson franchise was taken over by Huntsville in 1973 although many Moberly players were on the team. Initial games were played on Meinert Field, but soon they were played at Westran High School in Huntsville.

Many changes to Meinert Field have occurred over the years, but May 14, 2014 marked the 75th anniversary of this historic Moberly ballpark.

And that is the story of The Diamond Anniversary Of A Baseball Diamond.

Ban Johnson Field Renamed to Meinert Field

Moberly Monitor-Index & Evening Democrat

Saturday, July 1, 1967

Ceremonies Friday Rename Field for Late Harry Meinert

In ceremonies preceding the Moberly-Mexico American Legion game Friday night, the venerable hardball stadium in Rothwell Park, previously known as BJ Field, was officially renamed and rededicated as "Harry Meinert Field."

An excellent crowd, enlivened by the ceremonies, the first American Legion baseball game here in 17 years and the Moberly Senior High School band, was on hand for the festivities honoring the late Harry P. Meinert, soft-spoken, well-liked sportsman and former Triangle Auto Supply executive.

The Moberly band, under the

baton of Don Shaffer, opened the activities with "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," then gave way to master of ceremonies Kent Morgan, Radio KWIX sportscaster. Morgan then introduced Rev. L. L. Johnston, president of the Moberly Ministerial Alliance and pastor of Meinert's former church, Trinity Methodist.

Meinert Family Present

Guests were then introduced, including Mayor Howard Frisbie, park board president Lloyd James, Lowell "Cotton" Fitzsimmons, Mrs. Harry Meinert and her three sons, Dennis, Jerry and Ken, and Tony Antimi,

manager of the Columbia Ban Johnson A's, of which Ken is a member.

James read the official resolution recognizing the late Mr. Meinert as a religious family man and long-time Moberly sports fan and proclaimed the field to hereafter be known as "Harry Meinert Field."

Monitor-Index sports editor Sam Richardson was called on to offer a resume of Meinert's life in Moberly, noting that the honoree was a "super sports fan." Meinert was stricken with a fatal heart attack at the park two summers ago.

Fitz Throws Out Ball

The dedication was closed with the playing of the National Anthem, then Fitzsimmons, who coached Ken Meinert as a Moberly Junior College basketball player and who has recently resigned as Greyhound coach to accept a post at Kansas State University, threw out the first ball to Legion thirdbaseman Tom Stuck, honorary captain. Stuck then presented the baseball to Mrs. Meinert.

Ken Meinert is currently on athletic scholarship at the University of Missouri as a mainstay for Mizzou's baseball team. Dennis Meinert has been transferred from New York to Topeka, Kan., and Jerry Meinert is employed in Kansas City.

H. P. Meinert, Triangle Auto Officer, Dies

Harry P. Meinert, 52, vice-president of Triangle Auto Supply Co., died Sunday night at his home, 834 West Reed street.

Mr. Meinert had attended the Ban Johnson baseball game in which his son, Kenneth, participated, but left before the game was over. He went home and called a doctor and died about five minutes after he arrived. Mr. Meinert had been suffering with a heart condition for some time.

Born in St. Louis, Mr. Meinert had lived in Moberly 12 years. He was a member of the Trinity Methodist Church.

Surviving are: His wife, Madeleine; three sons, Dennis, Carmel, N. Y., Jerry, Independence, and Kenneth, of the

(Continued On Page 6)



Harry P. Meinert

(Continued From Page 1)
home; three grandchildren; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Meinert, Christopher, Ill.; two brothers, Warren Meinert, Christopher, Ill., and Donald Meinert, Nashville, Ill.

The body is at the Mahan Funeral Home. Funeral services will be held at 2 o'clock Wednesday afternoon in the Trinity Methodist Church. Burial will be in Oakland Cemetery. The family suggests contributions be made to the Heart Fund or to Trinity Methodist Memorial Fund.

Pallbearers will be: Jim Bradley, B. N. Morgan, Elmer Halley, Curtis Mathis, Glen Sanders and Jim Brooks, all employes of Triangle Auto Supply Co.

**1966 MOBERLY CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IN
ROTHWELL PARK**



1966 MODOT Image

Pageant Festivities at the Ban Johnson Field (renamed to Meinert Field in 1967)

***Images of Meinert Field (Ban Johnson) in 2014
(The Diamond Anniversary)***

