



# FLASHBACK

HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MAY 2002

## Until We Meet Once Again—Enjoy Your Summer!

You still have time to make your reservations for this year's annual dinner. Our dinner event will wrap up our year until we meet once again in the fall.

We are planning on using the same caterer we used at last year's dinner. So please make your plans for this year's dinner, since there will be no other general meetings during the summer months.

As we break for the summer months. We would like to wish all of our members and their families a safe and pleasant summer season.

During our brief respite this coming summer, we will be planning and writing many more interesting and enlightening articles and stories for your enjoyment.



## ***CORRECTION*** **Annual Dinner** **Will Be Held** **Tuesday, May 21**

**At 6:30 p.m.**

***Christian Fellowship Church***

which is located at the corner of 165th Street and Jackson Avenue.

A story in last month's newsletter incorrectly reported the date. Tuesday, May 14th is the final day for dinner reservations.

## Schedule Update—

The Hammond Achievement Award Dinner will now take place this fall. The time and place will be announced at a later date. Watch your FLASHBACK newsletter for more details.

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## Second Chance To Make Dinner Reservations

*Please photocopy or clip out this form below and send in with your payment*

### **2002 Annual Dinner Reservation Form —**

Annual Dinner 2002 —  
Hammond Historical Society Tuesday, May 21st

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

# Attending Dinner \_\_\_\_\_ @\$10.00 donation per person

Total amount I have enclosed is: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose check or money order **DO NOT SEND CASH**

Make your check or money order payable to the:

**Hammond Historical Society - 564 State Street - Hammond, IN 46320-1532**

▶▶▶ PLEASE NOTE: Deadline for receiving reservations by mail is Tuesday, May 14th

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# History of Early Hammond Parks

*PART FOUR —  
Of A Special Continuing Series*

## **Turner Field** *Dateline: Friday, June 7, 1940* **Region's First Night Baseball Game** **—Babe Ruth Home Run Exposition**

Here's a story that we briefly *touched base* on in a previous FLASHBACK edition. Now let us *shine some light* and get into some more details on this interesting and exciting event.

As the baseball season is now well underway, we can reflect on several historical events related to American's favorite pastime that took place right here in the city.

The Calumet Region's first night baseball game brought one of the greatest baseball players of all time here to Hammond. The legendary George Herman Ruth "Mister Baseball" himself in person.

Babe Ruth came here to the area as the chief instructor in the Ray Doan traveling baseball school. He was a guest in Hammond from June 1 to June 10. The Bambino was scheduled to appear at Turner Park Field as the manager of the Local 210 Oil Workers baseball team and an exposition home run hitter as well as the first use of lights for a night baseball game in the Calumet Area.

With the deadline fast approaching, a big shipment of reflectors for use in the new lighting system had arrived at the park on Saturday, about a week before the scheduled historic game.

Baring any unforeseen delays the lights would be installed and ready for use as scheduled. All of the work for this project which included the placement of the poles and the installation of the light fixtures was done by Northern Indiana Public Service personnel.

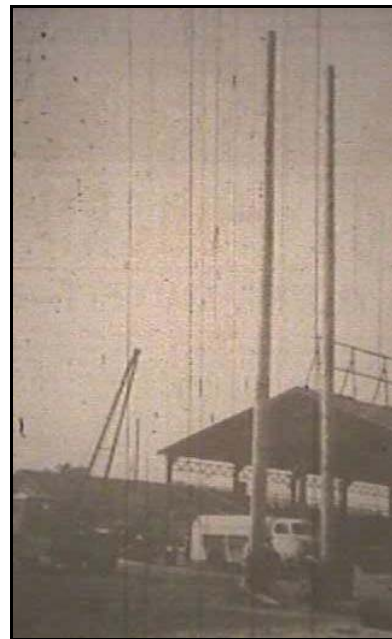
Lights for the 180,000 watt system were adjusted and readied in time for the 9 p.m. start of the game on Friday, June 7, 1940. The cost of the new lighting system was \$5,000. The official dedication of the lighting system was rescheduled for Tuesday, June 11, 1940.

Some 2,500 fans were in attendance that evening. Ticket prices for the game were 55 cents for general admission and \$1.10 for reserved seating. What a bargain!

Ruth's appearance was just before the scheduled night game at 8:15 p.m. when he demonstrated his home run swing for the crowd. The home run king swung at 21 balls, missing two and popping two balls far over the fence at right field. It was reported that Babe Ruth's lackluster performance can be attributed to him being worn out from an afternoon of golf at Olympia Fields. Ruth was donning his street clothes because his chauffeur had forgot to pick up his uniform that afternoon.

This history making night baseball game was the first of many planned night games in Turner Field. The local team The Oil Workers took out a five year contract with the Hammond Park Board with the use of the park for the night games, and the stipulation that when the contract expired, the Park Board would take title to the new lighting system.

Use of the modern lighting system was expected by many to help bolster semi-pro baseball, which has been in a slump over the past few years due in part by the rapid increase in automobile ownership, a vastly improved highway system and the radio broadcast of major league games. Thus making small town baseball games less appealing.



*LEFT: Light poles being erected next to the grandstand seats at Turner Field. The poles will soon be adorning light fixtures to be used for the region's very first baseball game to take place under artificial light..*

*BOTTOM: A scene from the first nighttime baseball game in the Calumet Region at Turner Field on Friday, June 7, 1940.*



# Brooks House Garden Acres



During the Depression years of the 1930's the Brooks House was instrumental in providing much needed social services to the citizens of Hammond and the surrounding communities. With so many people forced out of work, their resources were undoubtedly stretched to the limit.

The facility which was located on Conkey Street in East Hammond and was a haven for many residents who were down on their luck. Brooks House helped out by providing food, shelter, education and medical care for those who were in need.

In the spring, summer and fall months, Brooks House provided what it called "Subsistence Gardens" in which they maintained and grew a large variety of produce for those who needed assistance.

Work was performed by volunteers, many of those were recipients of Brooks House services themselves. Planting, plowing, tilling all vital for the gardens to be successful was a necessary evil. But the end result a bountiful harvest, were rich rewards for people who had so little.

Hundreds of families "lived off the land" of which Brooks House leased or purchased from nearby industries that was not being used at the time. A large tract of land was purchased from the Pullman Standard Company and was cared for by over 700 gardeners. The land was indeed made productive at least for a good part of the year during the growing season.

After the nation had recovered economically, many of these "Subsistence Gardens" sprouted into "Victory Gardens". As the country entered into World War II critical shortages occurred with some food staples. Since many food stocks were needed for our troops overseas. To circumvent these shortages "Uncle Sam" urged many citizens to become farmers and plant a "Victory Garden".

The four photographs on the right were taken during 1932 help to illustrate all of the efforts that went into making this project a success. If the Brooks House Garden Acres failed to provide the much needed food, the consequences would have been unthinkable. It's hard to imagine in the nation so rich in natural resources that some of it's population could go to bed with an empty stomach. But those were tough times, and Brooks House was there to help those in need.



**SOURCE INFORMATION AND PHOTO CREDITS:**  
Source information for this page and the preceding one were obtained from The Calumet Room and the microfilms of The Times at the Hammond Public Library. — Photographs on this page and the preceding one are from The Calumet Room and the microfilms of The Times at the Hammond Public Library.

# Last Call For Your Membership Dues Renewal—*Check Your Address Label*

Our fiscal year ends on April 30, 2002—

As our fiscal year comes to a close, now is the time to make sure your annual dues are up to date.

Please check the date after the name on your address label below. If the date does not read 4/03 or 4/2003 your dues need to be renewed for the upcoming year.

The current dues schedule is as follows:

**\$10.00 Individual or Couple**  
**\$25.00 Corporate or Business**  
**\$5.00 Student or School age**

Lifetime Memberships are also available for a one time cost of \$100.00 a real value! —no renewal hassles ever.

Those members who's dues are not current risk the chance of having their name removed from our mailing list as we update our files over the summertime.

*Please photocopy or clip out this form below and send in with your payment*

## 2002-2003 Annual Dues Form —

Membership Dues Renewal —  
Hammond Historical Society for Fiscal Year 2003

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please renew my annual Dues

Total amount I have enclosed is: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose check or money order **DO NOT SEND CASH**

Make your check or money order payable to the:

**Hammond Historical Society - 564 State Street - Hammond, IN 46320-1532**



**HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
564 STATE STREET HAMMOND, IN 46320-1532

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Take Note of the Dinner Location!

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

