

Carroll Merchants Park 1949

Mayor A. N. Neu to Toss Out First Ball at Opener

Mayor A. N. Neu will toss out the first ball at the grand opening of the new baseball park Friday night, preceding the Carroll Merchants-Harlan Cardinals game.

The American Legion color guard will be in charge of flag-raising ceremonies at the brief opening night program. The Elks band is also scheduled to play.

Sioux City Firm Built Steel Roof on Stadium

The Carroll Athletic Association only recently voted to add a roof to the new Carroll baseball stadium. Original plans did not call for the roof.

In charge of the hurried job of constructing the all-steel roof was C. D. Holder, steel erection contractor, of Sioux City.

Wilt, Hermsen, Kisgen Named to Concession Unit

The concession stand is expected to be a popular place at the Carroll baseball park this summer. Chairmen of the committee in charge are Bob Kisgen, C. H. Hermsen and Dick Wilt. Provisions were made for a large concession stand under the 1,500-seat concrete stadium.

Diamond Ready for Play Friday, June 10

The June 10 date will mark the first of some 40 to 50 home games to be played on the new diamond. The game will mark the opening of the new park and the home season for the reorganized Carroll team, Carroll's first full-scale baseball season in more than a decade.

Workmen are rushing to completion of the new baseball facilities, regarded as among the most modern in the state. Only finishing touches remain on the stadium, which will seat 1,500. Temporary wood bleachers will be put in place to bring the seating capacity for the new park to 4,000. The Franzwa Blacksmith and Welding shop built the batting cage and installed the backstop screen at the new baseball park.

Concrete used to anchor the huge light towers and the flag pole at the new athletic field was furnished by the Western Hollystone company of Carroll. Joseph P. Franks of Carroll was in charge of the installation of all plumbing equipment and the center field flag pole.



Seastrom Brothers, Coon Rapids, Built 1,500-seat Concrete Stadium

The Seastrom brothers, Hilmar and Wayne, contractors, were in charge of the construction of the new Carroll baseball stadium.

The stadium houses two dressing rooms, large concession stand, modern restrooms, a manager's office, and storage space. Three ticket booths also have been built.

A glassed-in pressbox with telephone service is included in the stadium. Two large dugouts were also built by the Coon Rapids firm.

Information and photos compiled from the Newspaper Archives of the Carroll Public Library, NewspaperARCHIVE.com, Carroll Times Herald, June 1949

IPS Donated Transformers for Ball Field

The Iowa Public Service company finished installation of transformers for the new lighting system for the new Carroll baseball park. The transformers for the 240,000-watt lighting system were donated to the Carroll Athletic Association.

D. W. Hanssen, manager of the Iowa Public Service company, took his men off the street lighting project to rush wiring of the field to completion for the opening game.

One hundred sixty lights have been mounted on eight steel towers.

Sioux City Firms Draw Plans for Athletic Field

K. E. Westerlind, architect, and Newell Guernsey, landscape engineer, both of Sioux City, prepared the plans for the Carroll athletic field.

Mr. Westerlind prepared the plans for the construction of the baseball stadium and Mr. Guernsey laid out the athletic fields.

Kloser Seed Store Furnished Seed for Field

Seed for the new baseball field was purchased from the Kloser Seed Store. The diamond will have a dirt infield this year. The outfield has been seeded.



Public Address System To Be Used at Opening

The public address system for the new baseball park was purchased from the service shop owned by Ben Galloway, Carroll. The P. A. system will be used to help fans follow the games and know the players better.

Schieffer in Charge Of Grading Diamond

Richard Schieffer of Carroll has been in charge of minor grading operations in bringing the playing field in condition for the grand opening of the Carroll baseball park Friday night.

Merchants Park 2017

Merchants Park Renovations To Follow Baseball Season

As general management and coaches get the Carroll Merchants baseball team ready for the season, with the first home game scheduled for June 3, 2016, the Carroll Athletic Association, along with city and county leadership, have been working on a major renovation of the ball park. The approximately \$850,000 renovation is funded by over \$700,000 in donations from the City of Carroll, Carroll County, local schools and booster clubs, businesses, and individuals. The final amount needed has been subsidized with grants.

Merchants Park was built in 1949 and, over the years, has been host to high school, college, American Legion, and semi-professional baseball. The plans for revitalization of the historic site will see work getting underway in earnest at the end of this year's baseball season. Projects to be done include bringing the structure into compliance with current building codes, providing handicap accessibility, structural rehabilitation, a new ticket booth and concession areas, new restrooms, an updated audio system, and improved dugouts. All of the work will be done to highlight and emphasize the historic nature of the stadium while also reestablishing it as one of the premier facilities in the state.

Bid Awarded For Merchants Park Baseball Stadium Renovation

On March 1, 2016, the City of Carroll received three bids for the Merchants Park Baseball Stadium renovation project slated to get underway after the conclusion of this year's baseball season. This is the second letting on the project, as the first bids requested last year yielded only one submission that the City Council rejected as it exceeded the budget estimates.

Since that time, the Carroll Athletic Association and the city entered into a 28E agreement with North Central Correctional Facilities for prison labor to complete a portion of the high-priced demolition work. The three new bids were more in line with expectations. The lowest bidder with a base bid of \$709,000 and three alternates of \$122,000 brought Rotert Construction's total to \$831,000.



Region XII Requests County Buy-In For Merchants Park Renovation

Chris Whitaker, the local assistance director for the Region XII Council of Governments, spoke with the Carroll County Board of Supervisors in regard to the Merchants Park Redevelopment project that will update the 1949 stadium.

The Carroll Athletic Association has done fundraising, collecting over \$300,000 from individuals, organizations, schools, and grants. The city of Carroll has partnered with the athletic association on the project by providing \$400,000 in funds for the renovation. Whitaker said they are now moving forward with a request for a Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) grant for an additional \$150,000 to round out the funding for the estimated \$850,000 price tag on the project. The CAT grant requires that the city and county both buy into the project.

With the great participation from the citizens, city, schools, and other organizations, the support of the county would put this project over the top. The council approved the allocation for the CAT grant application deadline of October 15.

Merchants Park Demolition Completed Without A Hitch

Carroll's 28E agreement for the use of prison labor from North Central Correctional Facility in Rockwell City was put to great use as the demolition portion of the renovation project at Merchants Park Stadium in Carroll was completed. Parks and Recreation Director Jack Wardell said this worked out flawlessly for the city, the Carroll Athletic Association, and the workers themselves.

The workers were on site for 15 seven-to-eight hour days at a cost of only \$190 a day. In addition to the demolition, they hand-dug trenches for tile under the grandstand where equipment could not reach.



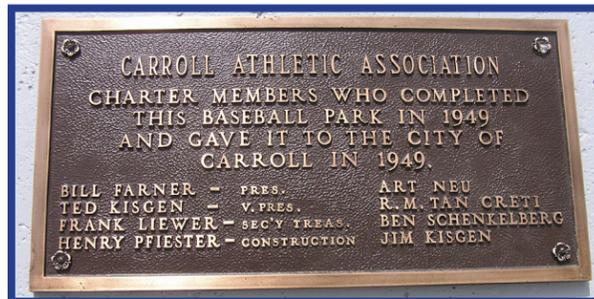
Merchants Park Renovation Nears Completion And Historical Signage To Be Added

The Merchants Park Baseball Stadium renovation is nearly complete, and Parks and Recreation Director Jack Wardell says there are just some minor items that need attention before the first home game.

The Carroll Athletic Association and the Carroll Historic Preservation Commission have partnered to create a visual history of Merchants Park that will become a part of the décor. Barry Bruner with the Athletic Association said this is a very important part of the restoration as people tend to forget where these buildings come from and why they are such a cherished part of the community. Six large displays will feature the stadium itself, the teams that have played there, memories from the Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) tournaments, and one of various players and photos of note.



Information compiled from Carroll Broadcasting, www.1380kcim.com/news, October 2015 - March 2017



Rededication Program

June 2 - 6:45 p.m.

Opening

Barry Bruner

Invocation

Rev. Tim Johnson

Welcome

Mayor Eric Jensen

Farner Family Reflections

Tom Farner

Player Introductions

National Anthem

Lindsey Thooft

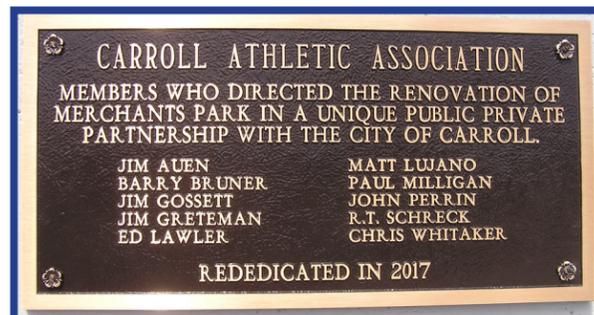
American Legion Honor Guard

First Pitches

by Mayor Eric Jensen and

Tom Anderson, Bill Farner's Grandson

Play Ball!



1947 - Thirty representatives from 13 civic organizations organized the **Carroll Athletic Club** (later **Carroll Athletic Association**) to “raise and manage funds to be used for the development of fields and facilities for athletics in Carroll,” especially to develop a new baseball field.

1948 - **Seastrom Brothers of Coon Rapids** won the contract to build the **1,500-seat Merchants Stadium** for \$24,916, including a 15-foot high grandstand with twelve rows of seats and a glassed-in press box. The stadium was 78 feet wide directly behind the home plate and had wings that extended 51 feet down the left and right foul lines. A citywide canvass solicited \$12,000 for **stadium lights**.

1949 - **Funds** to complete the stadium were donated by the Elks, Amvets, American Legion, and Moose Lodge. In a little over one year, \$102,000 was raised privately through selling of tip boards (10 cents per chance) in local bars; \$10,500 was approved for **fencing** of the athletic fields. The Carroll Athletic Association gave the baseball park to the City of Carroll.

June 10, 1949 - Merchants Stadium officially opened with a game between the Carroll Merchants and the Harlan Cardinals (who won 6-0) before 3,233 fans.

1950s - present - Home to the **Carroll Merchants** and to the **Carroll High** and **Kuemper Catholic High School** **baseball teams**, the stadium over the years has also seen Eddie Feigner, the King and His Court; a softball all-star team; all-star wrestling; music concerts like Up With People and Blues Image (1975); College Classic baseball games with Iowa, Creighton, Iowa State, and Grand View; Negro League games; Catholic Action Day services; Senior and Little League baseball games; Donkey Ball; CYO baseball tournaments; NJCAA Division II Baseball Regionals; Agarama pork and beef barbecues; steer shows; and Little League and high school state tournaments.

1965 - Name changed from **Merchants Stadium** to **Carroll Baseball Stadium**.

1996 - The **Carroll Athletic Association** was reincorporated.

2011 - Name changed back to **Merchants Park**; new **scoreboard** installed.

2014 - 2017 - **Merchants Park Stadium** was renovated and upgraded in a joint public-private partnership of the city, the Carroll Athletic Association, and hundreds of private citizens and businesses who donated their time, talents, and financial support.



MERCHANTS PARK

Opened June 10, 1949

Rededication and Reopening

June 2, 2017