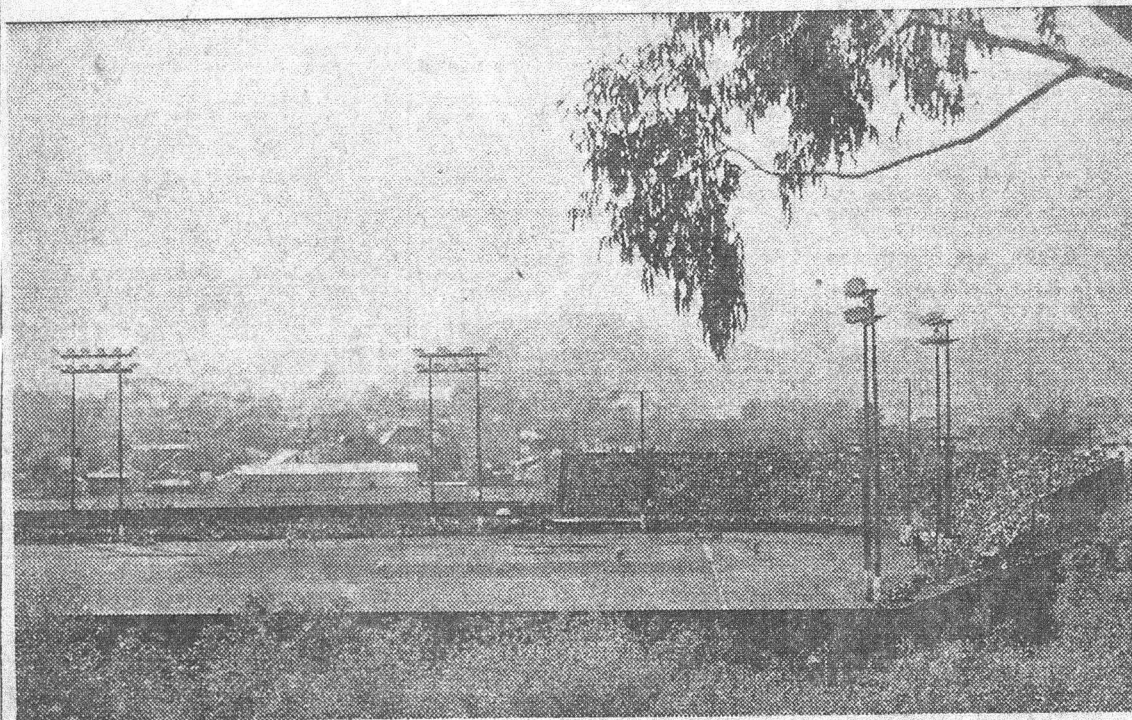


Santa Cruz Yesterdays



COMMUNITY BASEBALL PARK OF 1932

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

The most remarkable aspect of the Santa Cruz baseball park of 18 years ago was that it was built in the second year of the great depression—with \$30,000 raised from Santa Cruz citizens and business concerns.

The park, with neatly painted green fences and bleachers, was so complete that Russ Newland, sports editor of the Associated Press, in town for the formal dedication, labeled it a "jewel."

From the standpoint of 18 years after it is difficult to see how the promoters hoped to make enough to pay interest on investment and rent on the land.

Now Our Circus Grounds

The structure stood on the south side of Water street, at Branciforte creek and opposite Market street, on space now used annually by visiting circuses.

An ambitious program of sports events, including not only baseball

but outdoor boxing and wrestling under lights was outlined. The Seattle Indians of the Pacific Coast League were induced — no one knows by what financial considerations—to train here. The formal dedication came on the weekend of March 5 and 6, 1932, when the Seattle and Oakland clubs played, once in the daytime, the other time under lights.

The local committee which was given credit for raising the money consisted of Mayor Fred Swanton, President Joe Wilson of the Coast Counties Gas & Electric Co., and H. C. Rohlfs, a San Francisco restaurateur who was lessee of the recently completed Hotel Palomar.

N. Y. Giants Played Here

Biggest crowd at the park was that pictured which turned out when the B team of the New York Giants appeared. Sports writers noted gleefully that the A team, playing the same day in San Fran-

cisco, drew the smaller crowd. Roy Parmalee pitched here. Harry Danning, later a star Giant catcher, played right field.

The era of the WPA continued and sports promotion in Santa Cruz was a flop. Outside interests, noting our Sunday crowds, installed a dog racing track. It put on a good show, with trumpeters and redcoated attendants leading each greyhound around the track in the preliminary parade, but Santa Cruzans failed to throng to the betting booths and the venture folded up. Midget auto races, track meets and football were other attractions.

The bleachers and fence were finally razed, leaving a memory of a diamond on which John J. McGraw of the New York National League team once led his players. Rumor has it that the firm which furnished the lumber and the company which installed the lights were left with a deficit to write off their books.