DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH:
TELLING THE STORY OF HOUGH’S LEAGUE PARK
WITH TEMPORARY ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHIC DESIGN

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Oh, there used to be a ball park
Where the field was warm and green,
And the people played a crazy game
With a joy I’ve never seen.

How the people watched with wonder,
How they laughed and how they cheered
Yes, there used to be a ball park …
Right here … (Raposo, 1990)

There used to be a ballpark at the corner of Lexington Avenue and East 66th Street in Cleveland’s Hough neighborhood. Today, on that corner, with a large open field behind it, sits an abandoned brick building with broken windows and spray-painted graffiti. This building, a former ticket office, is the only physical remnant of League Park, the historic ballpark where Cleveland’s professional baseball teams played from 1891 to 1950. When the ballpark was built, and well into the 1920s, Hough was a thriving neighborhood, with wealthy and prominent citizens residing there. Between the world wars, as industrialism grew in Cleveland, the demographic of the neighborhood shifted to European immigrants. By the time League Park was closed and mostly demolished in 1951, many former Hough residents had moved to the suburbs. The city’s
population was declining by then, and the large, rundown, old homes in Hough became overcrowded with poor, African American residents displaced by freeway construction. Poverty and crime began to suffocate the neighborhood. By the 1960s the area was known as “Rough Hough,” and one of the nation’s worst race riots occurred there in 1966. The ticket office at League Park eventually became a community center, with its sports history largely buried, both literally and figuratively.

While some lifetime Clevelanders would argue that the stigma from the riots still lingers in Hough, the neighborhood has seen many redevelopment projects since the 1990s, including new housing and a shopping center. Despite these improvements, and despite several decades of attempts to restore League Park, the historic space remains a bare field, used primarily for area youth sports teams’ practices. In 1991, when the community celebrated the 100th anniversary of League Park, longtime Hough resident

![Figure 1. League Park historical marker (2011). Courtesy of Kevin Reeves.](image-url)
Martin Sweet, who used to play youth football on the site, attended and was amazed to discover that the park had such historical significance. He had no idea that there had been a ballpark at the site, even though a standard, nondescript state historical marker has been there since 1979 (Dolgan, 1991).

This often-overlooked marker (see Appendix A for its text) is the only on-site evidence of League Park’s historical significance. As Sweet’s amazed reaction to the anniversary celebration illustrates, such markers are rarely read (Lippard, 1997). League Park—site of the only unassisted triple play in World Series history, Babe Ruth’s 500th home run, and countless other memories—is one of the many historically and culturally significant sites in inner-city neighborhoods that have become neglected because of financial restraints, politics, perceived lack of community interest, and concerns about crime and vandalism. As an avid baseball writer wrote after visiting the site, “Given Cleveland’s baseball history, it is discouraging to find such a modest commemoration of achievements at the site of League Park” (Farley, 2007).

For many across the country League Park is hallowed ground, rich in baseball history. Baseball fans seek out the location just to remember and imagine baseball’s past. The late Fannie M. Lewis, who served as the Hough area’s city councilwoman from 1980 until 2008, noted how older folks would visit the bare field, “making a pilgrimage of sorts to this place that represents their youth” (Briggs, 2007), and advocated tirelessly throughout her tenure to restore the site. While city officials have talked about creating a completely rebuilt ballpark for years, and a “Coming Soon” sign is on the property (see Appendix B), a clear time frame is elusive, though the most recent proposal seems to be
moving forward. Just as for Cleveland’s sports teams, the theme regarding the restoration seems to be “there’s always next year.”

This open, unmarked, uncelebrated historic site offers an opportunity to temporarily activate the space through environmental graphic design. Such an installation could increase community awareness and pride, as well as enhancing the experience for visitors. Temporarily marking the place could be accomplished at far less expense than building a new park. The designs could be created to last for an extended period of time, to ensure that the space is properly honored until the new park is built. In addition, environmental graphic design could increase awareness of the site’s historical significance and aid efforts to raise the necessary funds to proceed with the complete restoration.

Writing about historic ballparks in Roadside Baseball, Chris Epting pleaded:

The ground of those ballparks was sacred and should at least be identified. Put up a building if you must, create another parking lot if you have to, but please let people know what happened there. Maybe even try to preserve a shred or two of what once stood. Make it known that there was once a field here, with bright green grass and fresh dirt. Where dreams came true and where hearts were broken. (2009, p. 10)

League Park offers a better opportunity than most former ballpark sites in that the open space is still there and still used by the community.

The purpose of this research project, focused on League Park as a case study, was to gain an understanding of how to develop temporary design solutions for inner-city historical sites while utilizing narrative and community involvement. This thesis
explores how the narrative of a historically significant urban space, along with community engagement, can support the development of temporary design interventions that resonate with authenticity and result in a sense of community ownership, pride, and awareness.

The complexity of the site and the issues it has faced require review of various issues and themes. The idea of temporary environmental graphic design in an inner-city context is presented as a way in which a modest change can become the impetus for larger change. The depth of history at the League Park site necessitates understanding the idea of placemaking narratives, especially for historic sites. In addition, the concept of authenticity must be interpreted so as to guide the designer. The role of community engagement in the design process is another key issue. Finally, a brief review of historic baseball parks in communities and baseball nostalgia will help to provide a context for telling the story of the case study site, League Park.

*Figure 2.* League Park illustration. Suntala, J. (1996) Courtesy of Jeff Suntala.
An ethnographic research approach, including readings, observations, and interviews, has been used to frame the relevant questions, gain insights, and inform the development of the proposed design solutions. The historical site is relevant to two distinct audiences—residents of the Hough neighborhood and key stakeholders such as city officials, baseball officials, historians, and community activists; as a result, representatives of both audiences were interviewed to provide in-depth information and perspective to the themes being explored.

Ultimately, this thesis is a case study of how a historic site in an inner-city neighborhood can be honored with more than just a plaque. Many historical sites across the country are marked with similar tombstone-like remembrances. But a visit to League Park leaves the definite impression that there is more to tell. League Park is a living space that has much to say, not just about a ballpark but also about a community. While politics and economics have delayed League Park’s rebirth for decades, there is new hope for action within the next few years. Many desire to see a new ballpark occupy the space. But in the meantime, temporarily installing a design that tells a story offers another fascinating, inspiring use of the space. The design recommendations in this thesis are not intended to replace or compete with the idea of restoring League Park; rather, they arise from the opportunity to achieve a valuable, affordable temporary solution instead of just waiting until next year.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

From a theoretical and methodological perspective, exploring the narrative of a historically significant urban space with the intent of creating temporary environmental graphic design (EGD) solutions involves a variety of themes. In addition, because the field of EGD is relatively young and inherently multidisciplinary, it is both necessary and valuable to review theory and methods from many different disciplines, including, but not limited to, urban planning, urban design, landscape design, sociology, architecture, and industrial design.

The literature reviewed in this chapter is divided into six topics directly related to the study. The first section explores the basic definition of environmental graphic design and the parameters involved in working with inner-city spaces. Second, the idea of creating temporary solutions or making small changes to a space is reviewed. Third, within the context of placemaking at a historical site, the specific themes of sense of place, narrative, interpretation, memory, and history are examined. Fourth, the concepts of authenticity and one of its counterpoints, “Disneyfication,” in design are defined and explored. Fifth, community involvement in the design process is reviewed. Finally, the chapter looks at the role of ballparks in history and their influence on communities. The theories and perspectives reviewed provide the necessary background to support the research conducted in this study, as well as to support the design solutions. As Craig Berger has written, “The best design projects have a background that goes well beneath the visual surface” (2005, p. 7).
Environmental Graphic Design in Inner-City Neighborhoods

Developing an understanding of the general practice of EGD will help to establish the parameters necessary for this study. In response to the cultural changes of the mid-20th century, the fields of architecture and graphic design were combined with influences from industrial design and urban planning to form a cross-disciplinary field of study, now called environmental graphic design (Berger, 2005). EGD provides a unified visual system of information within the built environment. It differs from other fields, including the practice of public art, in that it is explicitly designed to communicate information through words and images. According to designer Wayne Hunt, there are essentially three distinct though overlapping areas of EGD: signage and wayfinding, interpretation, and placemaking (Calori, 2007). The complexity of EGD projects calls for interdisciplinary work that integrates graphic design, architecture, industrial design, urban design, and urban planning, among other specialties. As a result, this young field “is relatively long on practice but short on theory and formalized methodology” (Calori, 2007, p. xiii). However, the cross-disciplinary nature of the field means that theory and research from a variety of sources can be applied to EGD research.

While any EGD project has its own set of challenges, designing for inner-city projects has unique parameters. Concerns about vandalism, safety, and costs can dictate the direction and limitations of the project. Because of the cost involved in developing and maintaining a project, most inner-city neighborhoods lack any form of EGD, though some may have historical plaques, monuments, or public art murals. Inner cities are more often visually defined by the litter on the streets, graffiti on buildings, broken and boarded-up windows, and bars and locks on store doors. All these appearances are a
form of visual communication, causing the observer to make assumptions about the nature of the community. Depending on one’s level of comfort within this environment, such sights can cause a passer-by to feel safety concerns. Urban public spaces have become increasingly privatized because of widespread fear of crime and strangers (Jacobs, 1961/1992). This can be harmful to cities. “If people choose not to use a particular place or environment because, at best, they feel uncomfortable there, and, at worst, they are afraid and feel unsafe, the public realm is impoverished” (Carmona, Tiesdell, Heath, & Oc, 2010, p. 148).

Though written in 1961, Jane Jacobs’s classic *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* presented an optimistic approach to dealing with city safety that remains relevant today. Jacobs’s book, which became influential in the field of urban planning, was written in response to the modernist urban planning of the time that promoted separation of residential, commercial, and industrial spaces. She argued that this separation created isolated spaces that destroyed communities. With regard to safety, Jacobs added that it doesn’t take much to create fear on city streets and that, when fear takes hold, people will use the streets less, which in turn makes them less safe. To keep the streets safe requires clear marking of private and public space, neighbors on the lookout, and regular use of the sidewalk. In addition, Jacobs wrote that parks are not automatically good for a community; rather, they can often have negative effects and be prone to vandalism. They need to be used by a variety of people and for variety of reasons to be successful (Jacobs, 1961/1992).

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a multidisciplinary approach to crime through the use of environmental design. This name was developed by
criminologist C. Ray Jeffrey in his 1971 book of the same name, which built on some of Jane Jacobs’s ideas. In addition, early in the 1970s architect Oscar Newman came up with a similar approach, called “defensible space.” While Jeffrey’s work evolved to encompass understanding of both physical and mental environments that deter offenders, Newman’s work focused on steps that cause offenders to be visible and enable communities to feel comfortable reporting crime when they see it (Jeffrey, 1971; Newman, 1972). In 1991 criminologist Tim Crowe published a book that further promoted the CPTED concepts. Law enforcement and government organizations have utilized CPTED programs to influence offender behavior. Recognizing that criminals are influenced by the threat of being caught, CPTED strategies employ methods that let offenders know the high likelihood of detection. The techniques applied include natural surveillance, which maximizes visibility of a space; natural access control and marking territory, clearly defining public and private spaces; and maintenance of the site, to reflect control and care (Crowe, 1991).

However, sociologist Jeff Ferrell has argued against environmental design tactics that exclude city dwellers and make the city less inclusive. He has strongly opposed seminars like “Crime Prevention through Environmental Graphic Design,” which explore manipulating the environment to reduce crime through the use of surveillance, access limitations, and designed boundary reinforcements, including benches with interrupted bars to prevent lounging or overnight sleeping. Ferrell’s main concern seemed to be with the exclusion of street performers, graffiti artists, skaters, and the homeless; he did not address how to handle other urban dwellers, such as gang members and criminals, who
can be truly detrimental to a city. He seemed more concerned with the concept that
designers manipulate the environment to create a less public space (Ferrell, 2001).

There is a need to understand the complexities of inclusion and exclusion in
public spaces, and how design can be utilized to create a safer environment. However, it
is important to recognize how designs might exclude those who may have previously
used the space. A balanced approach to creating an inclusive yet safe space should be
employed. The community space needs to be a safe place where all are welcome.

Small Changes with Temporary Environmental Graphic Design

Many EGD projects are large in scale; some of them take many years to complete.
It is not clear when the City of Cleveland will proceed with building a new ballpark at
League Park. But, in the meantime, the value of making small changes with placemaking
can be significant. Nabeel Hamdi, whose book *Small Change* (2004) examined design
solutions from a more global perspective, also advocated for placemaking as a catalyst
for change, noting that imagination and creativity are valued as the impetus, while reason
and planning carry the idea through. The whole site needs to be addressed—looking for
parallels between things, events, people, and buildings, using creativity, refusing to
accept the given, and instead seeking to invent new approaches (Hamdi, 2004). Hamdi
has learned that the best way to get past obstacles is to change “incrementally and with
example. The concept of catalyst—of practical interventions with strategic objectives,
looking for starting points, building prototypes is key” (Hamdi, 2010, p. xvii). He
encouraged beginning not by looking at numbers and statistics, but by looking where to
intervene. Hamdi likened this approach to urban acupuncture, finding a way to release
the energy of the place and create ripples of change. Starting something visible in a place helps to draw interest and increase awareness (Hamdi, 2010).

Urban planner and author Kevin Lynch wrote that spatial environments need not wait for large future plans, adding that the “environment can be a teaching device for supporting this attitude of mind, a set of clues for enlarging the future image” (1972, p. 95). Change can be symbolized with relatively inexpensive forms of visible signs indicating future action. These signs can stimulate interest, though Lynch cautioned against proclaiming change if, in fact, the change is not certain, as such communication can feed negativity: “Announcements must keep to near-future results that are backed by the decisions to carry them out” (Lynch, 1972, p. 98). There is a delicate balance between promoting hope and following through with action.

Lucy Lippard has stated, “the virtue of temporary and ephemeral works is that both sites and places change. … Temporary works can stimulate people and move on; or they can change as the place changes, reflecting the reasons for the changes good and bad” (1997, p. 288). Architecture professor and urban historian Dolores Hayden indicated that it is possible to mark and honor public places with a limited budget to enhance their historic and cultural value, while also being sensitive to the community and diversity. Community-based projects do not need to be expensive; the project simply needs people willing to move beyond traditional roles and to involve the community in the process (Hayden, 1996). Sometimes starting small can lead to larger changes. The small change or the temporary intervention can be the impetus for movement.
Placemaking at Historic Sites

While placemaking can occur through architecture, art, interior design, and various other disciplines, what separates EGD placemaking is the intent to communicate information. Placemaking is a way of creating a sense of place through signage, interpretative elements, gateways, landmarks, or gathering points (Calori, 2007). The idea of placemaking for historic sites encompasses the ideas of sense of place, narrative, interpretation, history, and memory.

In the 1990s, a broad movement began to shift away from recognizing history with stand-alone markers toward exploring cultural landscapes and places. According to Lippard, monuments are popular political concessions that address memories on the surface. She stated that these monuments “are even further from ‘reality’ than historical preservation. … Usually a sorry substitute for any actual remains, [they] can serve several contradictory purposes—resurrecting history, laying it to rest, and attracting tourists” (Lippard, 1997, p. 107). In addition, these markers are often difficult to read (especially for passing drivers), can be inaccurate, and do little to inspire people to think there is something more to see. Hoelscher and Alderman (2004) also recognized the common practice of spaces that commemorate history through monuments and memorials but, in doing so, leave out the full story. They advocated moving beyond this political posturing to become more inclusive in storytelling. A more imaginative approach and use of signs could provoke more thought and actually connect the place to the content. Hayden (1996) wrote, that in order to make places connect with people, designers and their teams need to create products that are based on the experience of the place, including all five senses, as well as the politics of place.
**Sense of place.** Often referred to as the Latin concept of “genius loci” or the idea that people feel the spirit of a place, the sense of place influences the placemaking of a site. “As places change over time, there is a ‘continuing narrative’ involving past, present and future sense of place” (Carmona, Tiesdell, Heath, & Oc, 2010, p. 119).

Lippard wrote, “A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth. It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there” (1997, p. 7).

Places are not only the settings for a culture’s myths, narratives, rituals, and ceremonies. Sometimes, they become the main characters. And people are drawn to those places where a culture’s narratives are not only told but play an important role in defining that town’s or city’s or nation’s character and identity, helping to remind them not only who they are but why who they are is important. Places act as reminders of a community’s identity, past, and present. (Borer, 2006, p. 221)

The aging process itself embodies a building or a space with endurance and enhances its identity in an intangible way. Public spaces represent communities, and their physical landscapes tell a story about conditions and what is valued (Sanders, 2009).

In *The Image of the City*, the results of a five-year study on how users navigate spatially through cities, Lynch (1960) wrote that it is the people’s engagement with a space that “gives it meaning as a ‘place’ ” (p. 6). In the same book, Lynch coined the term “wayfinding.” In the classic phenomenological approach to the study of place, *Place and Placelessness*, Canadian geographer and professor, Edward Relph (1976) added that the intangible quality of place is not easily formally analyzed, but is obvious based on people’s experiences and feelings. These feelings create the sense of place,
though it is the human interaction with the setting, activities, and meanings that establishes place identity (Relph, 1976). In Spaces and Places, noted geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977/2003) explored how people develop attachments to places. He explained that the term “space” becomes a “place” when people get to know it and value it; place is the embodiment of feelings and images about a particular space (Tuan, 1977/2003).

However, the words place and sense of place are used widely and loosely in today’s society. Reflecting on the art of placemaking, Hayden noted that the word place “is one of the trickiest words in the English language, a suitcase so overfilled one can never shut the lid” (1996, p. 14). Ronald Fleming (2007) lamented that “place” words and the importance of place are used so frequently that they are at risk of losing their value: “The words get stretched to accommodate a variety of conditions until they are overused and exploited. … ‘Sense of place’ is easily touted to flaunt the cosmetic charms of a new development slapped up with an instant picturesqueness of pasteled and plastered sheet rock” (Fleming, 2007, p. 14).

In Jiven and Larkham (2003), Norwegian architect and phenomenologist Christian Norberg Schulz (1980) argued that sense of place and character are not the same as genius loci, even though many people use the concepts interchangeably. Schulz believed that the terms are different and serve different purposes. Some think “that genius loci and ‘character’ can be created through appropriate design and planning: this runs contrary to the view that these characteristics emerge from individual and community perception, values and experience” (Jiven & Larkham, 2003, p. 74).

While there may be a perceived loss of the sense of place today, the situation parallels the time when cities grew to a point of not being navigable and designers needed
to find new ways to help people move about and restore the sense that they belonged (Berger, 2005). Many people do not visit the historical sites near which they live, but any threats to alter or destroy these sites tend to provoke a reaction, even for those who have never visited the site. “The revival of these unvisited, hearsay settings conveys a sense of security and continuity” (Lynch, 1972, p. 40).

Places can be both functional and symbolic. Places can provide an anchor, a foundation, or a “mnemonic” device for shared experiences between people in the present, past, and future. “Mnemonic” devices, either as ideas or objects, help individuals retrieve or preserve memories. Public places as public symbols can do the same for communities. They can act as reminders to people in the present about people, events, or ideas from the past. … Places endowed with meanings by one generation, whether implicitly or explicitly, provide meaning for the next, thereby constructing a bridge between the past and the future that binds people together. Such bindings foster living connections between people and places. (Borer, 2006, p. 210)

**Narrative.** Narrative is one component in placemaking that adds to the sense of place. Narrative discourse involves a diverse range of fields, including landscape architects, artists, architects, planners, and geographers. Narrative helps people understand and experience space and place. It encompasses both what story is told and how the story is presented. It has the ability to link intangible memories and stories to the tangible, physical space through stories. “As these stories encode histories and memories, they imbue sites with dimensions of time and associations not readily available to the outside observer” (Potteiger & Purinton, 1998, p. 6).
The use of narrative in interpreting a space can go beyond the clean, simplified abstraction of modernism and the layered complexities of postmodern simulations; it is not linked to any one style. However, any narrative deals with issues of subjectivity and with what is real. Questions include: “Whose story is told and why? What systems of belief are established through stories? How does one sort out the many layered (personal, ethnic, regional), multiple, and often contested stories of a place? What are the ethics and politics of telling stories?” (Potteiger & Purinton, 1998, p. ix).

Narratives do not need to be continuous; they can be spatial, allowing the viewer to interpret meanings. This option gives the designer an opportunity to utilize different forms of narrative simultaneously to layer past and present history, parallel views, or nonlinear associations. Because of the multitude of options, the designer must decide whose story to tell, what is the purpose of the storytelling, and how to make the story intelligible. Designers need to be aware of the implications of these decisions and of the value systems they express (Potteiger & Purinton, 1998).

Narratives can be determined by exploring landscapes physically, socially, and politically, and by working in collaboration with residents, planners, preservationists, and designers. Hayden advised finding the narrative of identity within the site, to tell the greatest meaning for the whole city (Hayden, 1996). Fleming encouraged designers to build on the mental associations of a place in order to create narratives that leave a strong impression. “Just as memory can nourish place, so imagination can reinvigorate it and extend its resonance” (Fleming, 2007, p. 17).

**Interpretation.** Interpretive design can be used to tell the narrative. It relays information about a concept, object, site, event, history, or corporation. The story is often
presented in the form of an exhibit, which can be temporary or permanent, inside or outside, with the use of supportive artifacts, graphics, and other materials. “Exhibits can serve a placemaking role in that they often become destinations unto themselves” (Calori, 2007, p. 7). Utilizing interpretive programs aids in adding depth to interpretive storytelling. “An interpretive program, as it relates to environmental graphic design, is a system of signs, graphics, and other visual elements that share short stories reflecting on the history, people, culture, ecology and architecture of a place” (Fromet, 2010).

Often interpretive planners are hired to assist environmental graphic designers with identifying the story and structuring the program of an interpretive design. Working as a team with the planner, designer, and client allows for comprehensive solutions. Interpretive planner Nancy Desmond has stated that connecting people, through both emotion and intellectual stimulation, is the key to interpretive work. Providing this type of connection helps to create a sense of community ownership and pride. The success of an interpretive program is based on how connected people are to the space. Planner John Veverka has said that success comes from the story and from making sure that the appropriate audience for the site is addressed and that the economics of the site are manageable. Often, sites connect with other area businesses to increase awareness and business (Fromet, 2010).

Interpretive guidelines for sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places offer suggestions similar to those of Desmond and Veverka on how to tell the story in a suitable space. The first step is planning, which includes finding out what the story is and who the audience is. The story should be inclusive and should not avoid controversy. “Interpretation that avoids difficult subjects presents an unrealistic and ultimately
uninteresting view of the past” (Thomson & Harper, 2000). Sites have many stories, so it is necessary to consider what themes exist and decide what should be the focus, i.e., what one wants the audience to remember. It is important to look beyond the surface. In addition, the audience needs to be identified, as well as the goal of the interpretive elements and what makes the most sense within the budget and on the specific site (Thomson & Harper, 2000).

**Memory.** Memory has also been the subject of cross-disciplinary studies extending from psychology into anthropology, sociology, communication, history, and geography. “Memory and place conjoin to produce much of the context for modern identities” (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004, p. 347). The unique aspect of memory is its ability to be both personal and collective.

Dolores Hayden has called for learning “to design with memory rather than against it” (1996, p. 248). She added that identity of a place is linked with memory and that urban sites contain these memories. Place memory encapsulates the human ability to connect with both the built and natural environments that are entwined in the cultural landscape. It is the key to the power of historic places to help citizens define their public pasts; places trigger memories for insiders, who have shared a common past, and at the same time places can represent shared pasts to outsiders who might be interested in knowing about them in the present. (Hayden, 1996, p. 46)

Fleming stated that, while designers may be drawn to the physical landscape of a place, for most people it is the memory of the human interaction in a space that defines the location. The recollections and associations help to make the site endearing (2007).
The place itself can stimulate visual memory, which Hayden calls an “underutilized resource for public history” (Hayden, 1996, p. 47). While museums have used artifacts as visual stimulation, social historians are not necessarily equipped to interpret the value of visual memory. “Yet stories about places could convey all these themes and memories of places would probably trigger more stories” (Hayden, 1996, p. 47).

Hayden emphasized the need to acknowledge diversity and to decide what to include in an interpretive setting. Public spaces are filled with both personal memories and collective or social memories, and even those that have been repurposed or demolished “can be marked to restore some shared public meaning, a recognition of the experience of spatial conflict, or bitterness, or despair” (Hayden, 1996, p. 9).

Memory has the ability to adjust history to the present. “Instead of remembering exactly what was, we make the past intelligible in the light of present circumstances” (Lowenthal, 1975, p. 27). This action can result in censoring the past, or selectively remembering what one chooses to remember. But it is important to present the uncertainty of the past with diverse viewpoints and perspectives; “otherwise the past is too static to be credible” (Lowenthal, 1975, p. 26). It is inevitable that our present knowledge and perspectives will skew the past. “Even when we strive for fidelity to the past we create something new that reflects our habits and preferences” (Lowenthal, 1975, p. 36). Memory cannot retain everything; if it did, we would be overwhelmed with information. “Memory is the result of a process of selection and of organizing what is selected so that it is within reach of expectable situations” (Lynch, 1972, p. 36).
According to Lowenthal, personal memories, awareness of memories learned from other people’s writing and storytelling, and nostalgia combine to make the past powerful. “Erosion and decay erase some landmarks, but the cumulations of time mostly surpass its dissolutions. Even a past fragmented by ruin suggests long-continued occupance” (Lowenthal, 1975, p. 10).

Lippard wrote that the past is as close as yesterday, but that the idea of nostalgia is a way of keeping certain things in the past, where they can safely be visited without leaving present-day comforts; “history lurks in every old house, but history itself is highly selective” (Lippard, 1997, p. 85). Lowenthal called nostalgia one facet of the past, an ailment that afflicts all, having not so much to do with “being uprooted, as having to live in an alien present” (1975, p. 2). The past is necessary to interpret the present, as everything seen is interpreted through a lens based on our past knowledge and experiences. “Each scene and object is invested with a history of real or imagined involvements; their perceived identities stem from past acts and expectations. Without the past as tangible or remembered evidence we could not function” (Lowenthal, 1975, p. 6).

**History.** Lippard discussed the need to understand the difference between history and memory. Personal memory may be less factual, but history as a collective memory can be manipulated or dictated by larger forces, including the government (Lippard, 1997, p. 102). But, as Hayden (1996) writes, reclaiming this history offers inner-city communities the opportunity to reclaim their identities.

History alone is not enough to create a place; the history has to be carried forward in some way to sustain the place (Tuan, 1977/2003). The lack of funds for preservation
has actually helped, in some cases, to preserve authentic sites, preventing uncharacteristic changes to old things (Lippard, 1997). Hayden argued for the importance of recognizing the story of the space and its struggles, along with the history of the site. Noting the existing body of work on urban landscape history, cultural identity, and urban design, Hayden recognized the value of studying space as a cultural product, but advocated for a more collaborative approach to research among environmental psychologists, anthropologists, geographers, and historians. Understanding the complex history of a place enables all involved to make choices about the future of the place. “It also offers a context for a greater social responsibility to practitioners in the design fields” (Hayden, 1996, p. 43).

In *Mickey Mouse History*, Wallace (1996) contended that the country has become obsessed with the past, as evidenced by the volume of restored historical sites and museums. While these may be interesting spaces to visit, more often the information is presented as past events, separate from the present. Visitors consume the information without being asked to connect it to their current lives. Preservationists now recognize the value in saving historic sites in urban neighborhoods to improve social integration (Wallace, 1996). Lippard concurred with Wallace’s concerns, noting that historical societies provide artifacts with little context, and that museums provide hands-off, isolated objects void of context. Buildings that are recontextualized create a sense of what it was like then, without the reality of the experience. “History is commodified by replicas when the original is too far gone, but somebody thinks it should be preserved” (Lippard, 1997, p. 95). Lynch also grappled with the question of what to save and why,
noting that it is important to see the conflicts of the past based on the conflicts of today so that the past is not encapsulated and irrelevant to present viewers (Lynch, 1972).

In contrast, in *The Presence of the Past*, 1,500 individuals were surveyed to find out their thoughts about history and the past. Most of the people interviewed felt connected to the past, in part because of the connection to history that they felt at museums and historic sites (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998). The survey found that individuals trusted historic sites and museums because of the immediacy of the experience. While academics and theorists reflect on what is authentic and inauthentic, this study indicates that the consumer values it for what it is, real or constructed.

Dolores Hayden and Sheila de Bretteville formed a nonprofit organization called “The Power of Place” to position history in public places through collaborations with architects, historians, designers, and artists. In regards to architecture Hayden stated, it “has not seriously considered social and political issues, while social history has developed without much consideration of space or design. Yet it is the volatile combination of social issues with spatial design, intertwined in these controversies, that makes them so critical to the future of American cities” (Hayden, 1996, p. 8).

What people desire primarily in historical recollections is the familiar connection, not necessarily physically old things. “We prefer a world that can be modified progressively, against a background of valued remains, a world in which one can leave a personal mark alongside the marks of history” (Lynch, 1972, p. 39). Lippard stated:

History known is a good thing, but history shared is far more satisfying and far-reaching. The layered history of words and places is barely visible to the outsider, and less and less visible to the insider. Towns can wither on the vine as the
obsolete is preserved out of stubbornness or impotence. Or town histories can inform their residents’ current lives. Past places and events can be used to support what is happening in the present, or they can be separated from the present in a hyped-up, idealized no-place or pseudo-utopia. We need more fluid ways of perceiving the layers that are everywhere, and new ways of calling attention to the passages between old and new, of weaving the old place into the new place. (Lippard, 1997, p. 85)

A city’s history can be a valuable teaching device beyond the plaque and the historical tour. “That ‘William Blake lived here’ is trivial, unless the visible structure influenced what Blake did, or expressed his personality, or unless its location had some bearing on his personal history” (Lynch, 1972, p. 54). The use of signs and other communications can help to bring out history. Forty years ago, Lynch (1972) wrote that environmental design was moving beyond the physical building of roads and land and recognizing the value and importance of human activities that occur within the physical realm. This realization changed design from a merely physical discipline to a spatial one.

**Authenticity in Design**

When one deals with history in placemaking, it is also necessary to be aware of the concept of authenticity and how it relates to design. Authenticity, a concept that entered the field of urban design through archeology, is difficult if not impossible to achieve (Ouf, 2001). Authenticity relates to the real or genuine nature of a space or design. Relph noted that sense of place could be authentic or contrived and artificial, and that authenticity reflected genuineness and depth (1976). He explored the concept of
kitsch and suggested that placelessness is created from a detachment of places, where the contrived overpowers the authentic.

In contrast to authenticity is the idea of “Disneyfication,” or constructed illusions of space, influenced by the simulated environments created in Disney theme parks. Generally, Disneyfication carries a negative connotation and reflects an inauthentic, generalized and pleasant solution, stripped of any negativity or conflict (Ferrell, 2001). In the field of design this approach translates to “place-theming,” or the intentional development and shaping of a place around an idea. Reflective of a postmodern society, place-theming places emphasis on commodified environments, with a wider range of styles and overt symbols used to identify the space. Place-theming can occur in a host of settings, not limited to tourist centers, malls, historic sites, and redevelopment sites. These “re-invented places” start with a basis in reality, but are distorted and lose their sense of authenticity in the process (Carmona, Tiesdell, Heath, & Oc, 2003/2010). In response to a growing sense of decadence in design, academics and theorists rejected the idea of Disneyfication and admonished postmodern designers for their “over-the-top extremism of many projects. Too many designers were using inappropriately coy references to historic styles or simply visual ‘overcooking’ their solutions” (Berger, 2005, p. 16).

Despite this objection, there remains a demand for entertainment sites (including themed restaurants, amusement parks, and casinos) where Disneyfication is quite suitable for the setting. Therefore, designers need to understand what is appropriate and when. Berger advises that environmental graphic designers should “ensure that the built environment is enhanced, not marred, by their efforts” (Berger, 2005, p. 19).
Even though the public tends to like the entertainment value of such place-theming spaces, theorists often criticize them. Jane Jacobs indicated that there was something even worse in a city than disorder, “and this meaner quality is the dishonest mark or pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served” (Jacobs, 1961/1992, p. 15). In “Variations on a Theme Park,” Sorkin (1992) harshly placed blame on urban design for creating disguises plagued with superficiality. Criticizing such surface-level uses of symbolism, Carmona, Tiesdell, Heath, and Oc stated, “Disney-fication involves presenting an existing, perhaps historic, place in ways that encourage tourism, but do not encourage exposure to, and may trivialise, the actual history” (2010, p. 131). Sorkin described modern city living today as involving security, segregation through gated communities, and a superficial pleasantness (Disneyfication) that creates more social divisions (1992). Sorkin’s concern was that seemingly public spaces like malls, marketplaces, and theme parks are actually private spaces that have been manipulated in certain ways. As technology advances, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine what is “real” and “unreal,” what is “public” and “private.” The growing use of realistic simulations adds to questions of authenticity (Sorkin, 1992).

Ferrell called the use of Disneyfication and aggressive environmental design for security measures a form of creating “sanitized communities” and “faux monuments to a past that never was” (Ferrell, 2001, p. 15). Strongly opposed to this tendency, Ferrell indicated that it leaves behind a dictated environment—a conformed, commodified space, void of its authentic voice. “Now, Disney is taking the world of fake plastic fun to the streets. Disney’s design strategies have driven urban gentrification projects,” most
notably Times Square in New York, where they are both praised for cleaning up cities and challenged for changing the overall “authentic” character of a site (Ferrell, 2001, p. 6). Disneyfication adds to the sanitization of urban life, and it is often sold to communities as a way to clean up the streets, but in the process it eliminates and excludes the people who previously resided there.

Potteiger and Purinton indicated that place-theming is the packaging of memories in a structured and controlled narrative, adding that it serves “nostalgia and compensates for a sense of fragmentation and lack of security outside its bounds” (1998, p. 18). The search for depth has been criticized as nostalgic or naïve, but postmodern design has the ability to play with the surface and to simulate depth. The concept of plurality in the open narrative on the surface can contrast with the closed narratives found in theme parks, restaurants, and malls. The issue then is not public versus private, or a question of authenticity, but rather the idea and level of control. Closed spaces are commodified, private, and determined with controlled meaning. Open spaces are participatory, public, layered, with multiple interpretations by the audience (Potteiger and Purinton, 1998).

However, it is important to note that often the staged authenticity is what the tourist is expecting. “Although somewhat less than genuine, it is interesting that the staged experience seems to be enough for many tourists, suggesting that what they may in fact be searching for is a sense of anti-modernity” (Larsen, 2009, p. 81). The story of a space is about what is told and what is left out. “Unable, or unwilling, to verify or question such claims of authenticity, the tourist often chooses to believe in the narrative that he is being told” (Larsen, 2009, p. 91). Tuan expressed the sense that, in many such cases, the past “calls for illusion rather than authenticity” (Tuan, 1977/2003, p. 194).
Nandinee K. Kutty, an economist and policy consultant, has discussed how development threatens urban cultures and creates a loss of authenticity. In her view, “Authenticity is a valued attribute for tourists as well as residents” (Kutty, 2008), important to the cultural vitality of a city, and development often creates gentrification that makes the space inaccessible to the current residents. Kutty recognized that the need to preserve cultural identity in neighborhoods should not prevent modern progress and growth. But she also acknowledged that, while authenticity is valued, the commodified objects and places are popular. The success of places like Disney World indicates that tourists are drawn to the inauthentic:

EuroDisney, which is outside of Paris, now gets more visitors each year than Paris, which is still seen as a culturally authentic experience. Hence, while the tourism argument for supporting cultural authenticity has some merit, there is equally a tourism argument for supporting the kitsch and inauthentic. The buying public out there is, indeed, satisfied with an ersatz facsimile or a convenient canned culture. (Kutty, 2008)

Larsen (2009) added that it is irrelevant in today’s postmodern world whether the tourist site is authentic or inauthentic; tourists respond to the space in a way that works for them. People do not necessarily desire authenticity, but are more interested in building a relationship with a space. Ouf stated, “Other alternatives to total authenticity might still be considered to produce the same final result of a place with a historical identity, depending on the local conditions, as long as honesty is observed” (2001, p. 75). Ouf stressed the importance of authenticity but admitted that it should not be the only objective in urban conservation (2001). Designers need to be conversant with both
concepts, authenticity and Disneyfication, in order to understand the appropriateness of their design solutions for a given environment and target audience.

**Community Involvement in Design**

Lippard noted that place and community are not the same thing:

Like the places they inhabit, communities are bumpily layered and mixed, exposing hybrid stories that cannot be seen in a linear fashion, aside from those “preserved” examples which usually stereotype and oversimplify the past. As community artists can testify, it takes a while to get people to discard their rose-colored glasses and the fictional veneer of received “truths.” Community doesn’t mean understanding everything about everybody and resolving all the difference; it means knowing how to work within differences as they change and evolve.

(Lippard, 1997, p. 24)

Hamdi (2010) emphasized that community involvement should be integral in the placemaking process. “It cultivates ownership and, with it, a sense of belonging and responsibility, both of which are important to the health of place and community” (Hamdi, 2010, p. xvi). This process changes the roles of experts, making them collaborators and listeners rather than bosses.

In these participatory design processes, designers can filter input through the lens of their preconceived plan, accepting only what fits. Collaborating and acting more as a facilitator can avoid this tendency to downgrade the significance of community input. “When voice is given to the community, the traditional division between artist and viewer, or designer and community, blurs. Places have a greater potential of being
sustained when more members of a society consider themselves participants and when professionals become more aware of the potential everyone has in shaping their landscape” (Potteiger & Purinton, 1998, p. 195).

Fleming (2007) called for collaborating with multi-disciplinary teams to build cultural context and connections, and then working with the community on metaphors that the community can acknowledge as its own. He acknowledged that there was not an established formal process for involving the community. To fill that void, Fleming developed environmental profiling, which is intended to capture the history, character, design constraints and opportunities, behavioral analysis, and traditions of the area. This information is pulled together in a brief, which is used to elicit themes and metaphors about the particular place, thus empowering the community in the process (Fleming, 2007). If the process truly involves the community, the focus will be on the place. “The challenge is to be a problem solver for the community” (Fleming, 2007, p. 24).

The goal of planning for placemaking is to work with the community to develop commitment to the project. This effort helps to create ownership of the narrative that is developed and brought to community members, and it provides an opportunity for them to reclaim their story. In addition, placemaking needs to focus the design solution around the objectives defined by the community (Fleming, 2007). Without this planning and research, the design results will lack the depth and resonance needed to be successful and sustainable. The process does not tell the artist what to create, “but it requires research that extracts meaningful content from a site, thus establishing metaphors for the use of both artists and community, and hence setting expectations for all” (Fleming, 2007, p. 288).
Schneekloth and Shibley advocated that placemaking should not be relegated just to designers; doing so “dismembers others because it denies the potential for people to take control over events and circumstances that take place in their lives” (1995, p. 3). Placemaking has the ability to empower communities through action, and often it is the community members who have the most intimate knowledge of their space. “A critical practice of placemaking attempts to give legitimacy to all forms of knowledge. As such it does not privilege any single interpretation or professional perspective over the dynamics of the whole place” (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995, p. 4). The process of placemaking should include open dialogue, confirmation, inquisition, and framing of the action; these steps are not sequential and can occur simultaneously throughout the process (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995). Similarly, Lippard recommended finding out what is important to community members and what they would like to see preserved and why (Lippard, 1997).

Hayden agreed that including the community in the placemaking process can be the impetus for new models of historical commemoration and preservation. The inclusive process can help to create a greater sense of place and also recognize diversity (1996).

Design interventions can help to tell the story of a space and increase the community’s interest in its own history. But community engagement is critical. It is often a face-to-face process, although this should be supported by written communication. It is about giving respect to members of a community, listening to them and talking to them as equals, and earning their trust. As in research, there are no shortcuts and no substitutes for quality. A good process builds the
audience for the projects as well as gathering essential information. (Hayden, 1996, p. 229)

Potteiger and Purinton have observed that lesser-known stories are often found in oral histories, in diaries, or through exploring and listening. “Asking questions is a way of finding stories and engaging communities with their own understanding of places. Questions not only ferret out information, but also challenges assumptions and initiate discourse” (Potteiger & Purinton, 1998, p. 193).

**Historic Baseball and Ballparks in Communities**

Finally, the nature of this particular case study requires a brief review of the role of ballparks in communities. Only a few scholars “have explicitly offered detailed excavations of the specific places and spaces where Americans took their sport” (Dyerson & Trumpbour, 2010, p. 1). Nevertheless, the stadiums of the past are revered like cathedrals. The places where sports are played and the influence of these places on both sport and politics reveal a strong relationship to “shaping modern American spaces and places” (Dyerson & Trumpbour, 2010, p. 1).

Ritter (1992) also noted the wide-ranging role that ballparks have played in American cultural life. “People have been born in them, gotten married in them, ritually taken their children to them, died in them, and even had their final remains scattered over them” (p. 1). For older fans, the first major league park they visited “occupies a hallowed niche in the corridors of memory” (Ritter, 1992, p. 1). But these famed ballparks of yesteryear are much different from the ballparks of today. Mostly built between 1909 and 1915, they were intimate, unique parks, integrated into their communities. “When
ballparks were in the middle of a city, or built-up suburbs, they melded into the daily life of the community, into the city’s social and economic fabric. By and large these ballparks were good neighbors, bringing activity, commerce, and enhanced property values to the areas where they were built” (Ritter, 1992, p. 4). Robert W. Creamer wrote in the introduction to *Lost Ballparks*, “In the old parks there was always a feeling that you were at home, that you knew the players and the other spectators, that in a sense you were living in the same neighborhood” (Ritter, 1992, p. xii).

While most of the early ballparks are gone, they are still cherished. “They had their faults, no doubt, but they had magic as well, magic that will live for years in the memories of those who were lucky enough to have passed through their turnstiles” (Ritter, 1992, p. 7).

And the sport played in the ballpark is steeped in American tradition. In the companion book to their documentary film series *Baseball*, Ward and Burns (1994) reflected on the historical impact of baseball:

> [T]he story of baseball is also the story of race in America, of immigration and assimilation; of the struggle between labor and management, of popular culture and advertising, of myth and the nature of heroes, villains, and buffoons; of the role of women and class and wealth in our society. The game is a repository of age-old American verities, of standards against which we continually measure ourselves, and yet at the same time a mirror of the present moment in our modern culture—including all of our contemporary failings. (Ward and Burns, 1994, p. xxix)
In the 1920s and 1930s baseball was the national pastime, and it reflected the American ideals of individualism and competition (Crepeau, 1980/2000). It was a source of civic pride and provided a sense of community. Early ballparks were built cheaply with wood and were moved frequently; when steel began to be used in their construction, they had more longevity in the neighborhood. Though some have suggested that the park added value to the neighborhood, Reiss commented that “a ballpark’s main impact on an area’s future was psychological, since its influence on land uses and property values seldom extended more than a couple of blocks from its entrance” (1999, p. 133).

Nostalgia for baseball is not new. As baseball historians have observed, there has always been caution for change and deep respect and affection for tradition. “Although romantic memory has long been a part of baseball, nostalgia regarding ballparks seems to be a contemporary phenomenon” (Dyerson & Trumpbour, 2010, p. 74). The early 20th-century ballparks, built with the new materials of steel and concrete, were forward-thinking places meant to improve the spaces they occupied. And, just as today, these parks were built to make money. However, the history of the past gets clouded over with nostalgia and memory; while the golden age of baseball is viewed with innocence, even then baseball had problems of over-commodification, gambling, and labor issues (Dyerson & Trumpbour, 2010).
CHAPTER III  
RESEARCH METHODS  

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of how to develop temporary design solutions for inner-city historical sites utilizing narrative and community involvement. The historic League Park site in Cleveland’s Hough neighborhood was selected as the case study for this research. Use of an ethnographic research approach for this study made it possible to see the environment through the eyes of the people who live in the neighborhood and those who have a vested interest in the historic site. The goal was to understand the space through both perspectives to develop authentic temporary design interventions for the historic urban space. Ethnographic research methods provide a qualitative, humanistic approach to understanding how people respond to and interact with physical space, and interviews are a critical component of this approach.

Interviews  

To ensure that the research was conducted properly and ethically, the research content and methods were reviewed by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board and approved in December 2010. From January to August 2011, research was conducted to examine the space and the narrative of League Park. Interviews were the main method of collecting data. Information acquired from community members and experts in identified fields served to uncover the history of League Park and its neighborhood and to understand why the urban site is in its present condition. Additional ethnographic methods included in the research were observations of the site and reviews
of historic photographs and maps. Primary and secondary sources of research
information, including published articles and literature, were used to support the analysis
and research as well. I attended several related conferences, including the Society of
American Baseball Research (SABR) Jack Graney Chapter meeting on January 29, 2011;
the Vintage Base Ball Association Conference on March 25-27, 2011; and the SABR
Seymour Medal Conference on May 14, 2011. These conferences provided opportunities
to hear lectures on League Park and other related baseball topics, and to informally talk to
and interview the attendees. I presented preliminary research results at the SABR
Seymour Medal Conference.

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the League Park site, interviews
were conducted with past and current residents of the Hough neighborhood, along with
key stakeholders including city officials, baseball historians, baseball authors, and
dedicated baseball fans. The research parameters included conducting interviews with
present or former neighborhood residents age 18 or over, both male and female. These
residents signed a release form and were assured that their input would be used
anonymously. Key stakeholders who participated in the study were asked to grant
permission for their names to be used.

Residents of the Hough neighborhood where League Park is situated were
interviewed to identify their feelings about League Park and their neighborhood. All
interviews were semi-structured; questions varied depending on the nature of the
interviewer’s association with the space. General themes included asking for their
thoughts on the space, what story is important to tell, and thoughts on the City of
Cleveland’s intended renovation of the space. These anonymous interviews were
obtain. More information was gathered from community members who
wished to be named in the study, including community activists and past residents. Many
current residents were apprehensive about signing the release form, despite the assurance
of anonymity. A longer time frame to become integrated into the community may have
provided a better response rate; such community integration is recommended for future
studies, so as to create more of a participatory design research model.

The second group of interviews was conducted with key stakeholders associated
with the space or the research content, including a city official, a baseball official,
baseball historians, community activists, and baseball enthusiasts. These interviews were
not anonymous and provided key insights and context to the themes being explored.
Among these interviewees, Joe Twardzik, Marlene Sewell, and Fred Schuld had all
attended games in their youth at League Park and retained cherished memories that they
were eager to share. Baseball writer Gary Gillette, who worked with the city of Detroit in
an unsuccessful effort to save Tiger Stadium, provided insight into the nature of politics
and ballparks. The chief of staff for the City of Cleveland, Ken Silliman, has worked to
put the most recent plan for restoring League Park into action and provided information
on the current renovation plan. Paul Volpe, president at the private architectural firm of
City Architecture in Cleveland, has worked with Silliman to create the designs for the
new park and has also been involved with the project for several decades. Volpe
provided a history of his involvement with the project. Paula Gist has spearheaded the
League Park Restoration Committee, serving as chairwoman and a leading voice for the
Hough neighborhood; in her interview Gist elaborated on the community’s involvement.
Author Morris Eckhouse has followed the renovation proposals since 1979, as has Bob
DiBiasio, senior vice president of the Cleveland Indians baseball team; both provided details on past efforts. Having briefly worked with youths in Hough, historian Christopher Busta-Peck provided a unique perspective about their thoughts. Two avid League Park supporters, Vintage Base Ball player Jay Demagall of the Cleveland Blues and Paul Mazoh of Bertman’s Ball Park Mustard, contributed thoughts on the importance of the grounds to them and others. Finally, attendees at the Vintage Base Ball Association Conference, the SABR Jack Graney Chapter meeting, and the SABR Seymour Medal Conference provided additional input for this study. Attempts to reach the Hough area’s current elected representative, Ward 7 Councilman T. J. Dow, were unanswered, as were attempts to talk with the director of the League Park Society, a group dedicated to the renovation of League Park. All interviews with key stakeholders were loosely structured, with individuals being asked general questions about their knowledge of and relationship to the League Park space. The time and length of each interview varied; some interviews were conducted over the phone and others in person.

The data collected from both neighborhood residents and key experts provided insights to aid in authentically telling the story of League Park in the space. The information was compiled in an ethnographic thick description for interpretation as well as to support the design decisions. The information helped to establish the value of placing a design in the space; what could be designed in the space, how, and where; and who the audience should be. The goal was to use the information to create designs that resonated with the residents so that they could take pride in the space, as well as to provide the appropriate and respectful homage to the history of the park for baseball enthusiasts.
Additional Research Methods

Additional methods of research included observations of the site and a thorough review of historic photographs, souvenir programs, ticket stubs, and various other memorabilia. The League Park site was visited on several occasions for various lengths of time to observe the activity in the space.

Cleveland has a wealth of research materials available regarding baseball history, and these were utilized to gather information. The Cleveland Public Library opened a sports archive in May 2011 with historical sports books, magazines, articles, and artifacts. “We will have more baseball-related material than any other building in the country” except the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., said Tena Wilson, a library administrator (Galbincea, 2011). The Cleveland Baseball Heritage Museum, established by Bob Zimmer in the Colonial Arcade and Marketplace, contains artifacts from Cleveland baseball history and from around the country, especially materials on the Negro Leagues. The Western Reserve Historical Society also has many early baseball photographs, including historic ones taken by Cleveland Press photographer Louis Van Oeyen.

Limitations

Like any ethnographic research, this study has inherent limitations related to the author’s personal bias and knowledge base. The research is subjective and qualitative, and bias is inherent because of one’s personal background. The research cannot be replicated exactly (Visocky O’Grady & Visocky O’Grady, 2006). Moreover, not all available information could be collected, as only participants who volunteered to be
interviewed were included in this study. Individuals were given the opportunity to participate, and they could refuse for any reason.

Many people did decline to participate. While the quantity of respondents is relatively small, the amount of information that they shared for this project provided a wealth of information and insight. However, if this project were proceeding further, a larger base of community involvement would be recommended. Full immersion in the culture over an extended period would have helped to make respondents more comfortable with participating and would add to the strength of the study (Visocky O’Grady & Visocky O’Grady, 2006).

**Ethnographic Research in Design**

The choice to use ethnography for this study was based on the value that it provided and its relevance in design research. Ethnographic research, derived from cultural anthropology, uses such tools as interviewing and cultural immersion to elucidate specific cultures and values. The field of industrial design adopted this method of research to develop products, and other design fields have adopted its use as well (Wasson, 2000). Ethnography requires data collection and analysis, which can include observation with field notes, conversations with people, and photos. It can be conducted in teams with roving cameras, in-depth interviews on site, narratives, and analysis. The goal in design is to collect the information and solve the design issue, more so than to provide an analysis. However, this skimping on thoroughness of analysis can lead to less solid design results (Wasson, 2000). There is great value in analyzing the results.
Most designers use the visual component of ethnography to understand meaning and to understand patterns, but neglect to see the benefits of the writing component of the research. Frankel (2009) explored this type of writing, called thick description, in her presentation at the 2009 International Association of Societies of Design Research conference. In “Communicating Design Research Knowledge: A Role for Ethnographic Writing,” Frankel explored how designers can utilize ethnographic writing to create a thorough description of a subject, which can include poetry, conversations, and visual modes of information.

Frankel (2009) indicated that some ethnographers have criticized designers’ use of visual representation in ethnography, labeling it “discount ethnography” due to the superficial nature of the results in comparison to thick descriptions, and some designers too have expressed concern about the process of design representation, which tends to generalize. The results are often the product of visual thinking, in which designers immediately develop solutions to the problem when they begin their research, establishing a bias, before the experience has been digested and more thoroughly examined. The thick description process delays immediate solutions by requiring layers of information to be applied, patterns to be examined, and concepts to be explored and then by stipulating that all this input should be recorded in written form. These ethnographic accounts are generated to describe the situation, not to reveal the design solution prematurely (Frankel, 2009).

Written ethnography allows the story to come alive, with detail, to help in formulating future plans and ideas. This writing technique enables designers to communicate ideas to their clients and improve the quality of their solutions with more
accurate descriptions of people and cultures. Frankel (2009) argued that designers need to be able to build better arguments with descriptive evidence to support their decisions. Noting that design ethnography research is usually written up as part of the design process, Frankel stressed that it should not be simplified. Rather, the research should be documented so that it can validate and contribute to building the library of design research (2009).

Many of the recent writings on the use of ethnographic design have focused on industrial and user-centered design. David Gilmore of IDEO, a design and innovation consulting firm, has been involved with user-centered design research since 1997 and uses the qualitative nature of ethnographic research to develop strong narratives, enhancing the design process. Many quantitative researchers, though, are skeptical of the ethnographic research process, questioning the validation of information from such a small group of people and expressing skepticism about the value of the process in comparison to professional market research (2002).

There are important differences between ethnographic research and the market research process. Ethnography is used to inspire and to provide details; market research is used to validate design, for business decisions, and to generalize solutions to a broad audience. Each has different goals. The value of ethnography is that it is “a design process grounded in the realities of people’s lives, not in stereotypes” (Gilmore, 2002, p. 31). Ethnographic research seeks out stories from non-average people of particular interest to a specific project; it is not survey data collection. “Ultimately the persuasive moment comes when a person feels the rich texture of life present in a piece of ethnographic research—either through having an experience or through hearing a story
about a real person” (Gilmore, 2002, p. 33). In this sense, ethnography is not about the volume of people interviewed, but rather places emphasis on interviewing key people who have a story to tell. “When doing any kind of user research you can study large numbers shallowly or small numbers in depth” (Gilmore, 2002, p. 32).

Gilmore cited two examples of ethnographic approach. The first is self-observation, which is used to raise questions, not answer them. The second is storytelling with a sense of authenticity. In some cases, the stories elicited need to be confidential, but they must also maintain relevance and integrity. Ethnography in design is growing in popularity, with the goal of gaining deeper understandings of users and culture. Gilmore also addressed how ethnography can be translated into improving designs; though Gilmore’s focus was on product design, the observations are applicable to EGD as well. The key is to maintain the “real” reflected in the ethnographic research through what is produced. If the result is stereotypes, the research process was irrelevant (Gilmore, 2002).

**Participatory Design Research**

While this study worked with the community only on a limited basis, if it were to proceed further it would benefit from the application of participatory design research. Participatory design research entails involving and empowering the community in the research process and is an approach used to facilitate social change. This concept differs from ethnographic research, where the goal is to examine and analyze what is found, but not to produce change. In participatory design, the researcher seeks to work with the community and to contribute to community transformation (Barab, Thomas, Dodge,
Squire, & Newell, 2004). Wasson (2000) stated that community involvement can create tension in participatory design research, also known as collaborative research or action research. The researcher brings his or her own biases to the research, and these biases influence how the study is conducted and communicated. Choices must be made among conflicting ideas or agendas. Whose story is told, and whose gets left out? (Wasson, 2000).

Participatory design research is generally distinguished by three components. It is people-centered, usually involving traditionally disenfranchised groups; it supports empowerment through knowledge; and it combines both theory and practice to develop solutions (Wasson, 2000). This role involves moving beyond being a researcher and makes the designer a social activist who functions both inside and outside the social context. The designer must understand that the design solution is dependent upon those who will use it and that therefore, for the solution to work for these people, they must be part of developing it (Barab et al., 2004). Participatory design also uses a means of developing a thick description, and it combines social commitment with the realization that design solutions cannot address all things for all people. The process involves building trust (Barab et al., 2004). The designer becomes an agent of change, a social activist, with the understanding that the design solution’s success depends on the end users actually using it and valuing it within their system.
CHAPTER IV
CASE STUDY

An ethnographic approach encompassing interviews, observations, and literature review was applied to uncover the story of League Park. Understanding the narrative of both League Park and the Hough community serves many purposes in this research. On a broader level, it provides an understanding of the space and its history, why there is value in marking it, and why it has remained unmarked. On another level, it helps to identify themes and stories that can be used in design implementation. On the surface League Park is about baseball, but below the surface is a complex space layered with history that includes professional football, race issues, politics, economics, and community. League Park was built in the Hough neighborhood for a reason, and it has been neglected for many reasons. It is thus necessary to review both a brief history of the Hough neighborhood and the story of League Park to develop an ethnographic thick description. Attempts to honor and restore the site have been discussed for decades; understanding these previous efforts is another critical aspect of developing the rationale for a temporary design intervention. In addition, understanding how other historic ballparks of the same era have been honored and remembered helps to establish a larger baseball context.
Hough: The Early Years

Figure 3. 1892 Hough area map. Atlas of Cuyahoga County and Cleveland, Ohio (1892). Retrieved from http://cplorg.cdmhost.com/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p4014coll24/id/238/rec/4

The area of Hough in Cleveland, Ohio is generally defined as bordered by Euclid Avenue to the south, Superior Avenue to the north, East 55th Street to the west, and East 105th Street to the east. It was named for farmers Oliver and Eliza Hough, who settled in the area in 1799. The farmland was eventually subdivided, and taverns and inns were built for travelers who passed through the city (see Appendix C). By the 1880s Cleveland was a thriving city with a large port industry. Hough was a prominent place to live in Cleveland from 1880 to 1920, filled with predominantly white, well-to-do
families. Euclid Avenue became known as “Millionaire’s Row” because of the concentration of millionaires who built their expensive homes there. Prominent Cleveland families who lived in Hough included Newton D. Baker, the Bolton family, and the Severance family. The area between East 73rd Street and East 79th Street of Hough became known as “Little Hollywood” because of its wealth and prominence, though as early as 1926 (“Find Vice Stalks ‘Hollywood’ Area,” 1926) there were reports of gambling raids, and in 1931 (“Gambling Cases Continued,” 1931) there were complaints of “ladies of the night” in this part of town. Hough was a major commercial and entertainment center east of downtown.

From 1920 to 1940 the neighborhood demographic changed with the arrival of immigrants from Germany, England, Poland, and Austria who worked in the city’s mills and factories. Many lived in the large apartment buildings in Hough, or in modest homes. Some of the larger older homes were converted to apartments and rapidly deteriorated as they aged and were not cared for (Busta-Peck, 2009).

The Underground Railroad brought African Americans from the South into neighborhoods of the North, including Hough. Some African Americans settled in the area with the help of local lawyers, and many served in the large mansions between 1880 and 1920. The work opportunities in the factories and mills of Cleveland brought many more African Americans between the two world wars (Wolff, 1990). The area was significantly impacted as its aging housing stock declined, the demographic of the neighborhood shifted, and the population of Hough increased significantly.
League Park (1891)


Professional baseball began in Cleveland in 1869, and there were many ballparks in Cleveland, some even referred to as “league park,” prior to the one built on the corner of Dunham Avenue (now East 66th Street) and Lexington Avenue, with its opposite corner at Linwood and East 70th Street. However, the building of League Park in 1891 “helped establish baseball as an institution in Cleveland” (Eckhouse and Crouse, 2010, p. 15). In 1887 the owner of the Cleveland City Railway Company, Frank DeHaas Robison, became owner of an American Association baseball team, the Cleveland Forest Citys. The team later became the Spiders, and in 1889 it played on a field at Euclid and Payne Avenue. But in 1890, Robison secured a 10-year lease for the land at Lexington and Dunham, which was strategically located where two of his streetcar lines passed. The permit to build the ballpark was issued in February 1891, and work began immediately to build the Cleveland Base Ball Grounds. Sod and wood were repurposed from Brotherhood Park, where the Cleveland team in the Players League had played. Robison had built that ballpark as well, but was unable to secure the lease renewal (Egan, 2008). By April the chairs were being screwed in and everything was finished except for a few minor touches. The Plain Dealer (April 21, 1891) noted that “The new grounds are a thing of beauty, and it is to be hoped that they will bring joy forever to the hearts of the base ball patrons” (“One Day More”). The park was officially named National League Park, but was soon referred to as League Park (Schneider, 2001).

League Park as completed in 1891 was a green, wooden structure, designed by former city engineer and architect, Walter Rice (see Appendix D). Tom Lawrence supervised the building and landscaping. Built with one single grandstand behind home plate and a covered pavilion along the base lines, the park included 20 box seats on six
private balconies, all of which were sold out before the season began (Egan, 2008). The park had 9,000 seats, with bleachers in various locations (see Appendix E). Overall, it looked very temporary, and it was smaller than many contemporary ballparks (Enders, 2002; Gershman, 1993). As with many neighborhood ballparks at the time, the streets surrounding it dictated the size and shape of the space. To make the park larger, permission to close the street would have been needed. This was unachievable, as the owner of a saloon and two houses across the street refused to sell or move, forcing League Park into a rectangular shape with a short right field and long left field (Gershman, 1993). After a while, the wooden portion of the right field fence had “eye-level knotholes that magically reopened every time management filled them in” (Benson, 2000, p. 107). Neighborhood children would put holes in the fence so that they could catch a glimpse of the game.

Figure 6. Streetcars in front of League Park (n.d.). Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.
The location of the ballpark adjacent to the streetcar lines allowed Robison, along with his business partner and brother, M. Stanley Robison, to sell combination tickets that included a seat on the streetcar and a ticket to the ballpark (Schneider, 2001). The streetcars dropped patrons off only 20 feet from the main gate. Since few people drove automobiles at the time, only 20 parking spaces existed at the park. The local paper advertised that patrons should take the cable car or electric streetcar, again adding to Robison’s revenue. When the park opened on May 1, 1891, the Spiders arrived in grand fashion in a decorated streetcar, at the end of a parade complete with balloons, circus animals, and a band (Benson, 2000).

Opening day, May 1, 1891, was described in the following day’s Plain Dealer as “a magical opening—there never was one like it and there never may be another” (“A Grand Opening,” 1891, p. 4). The green grass was filled with yellow dandelions, and red, white, and blue bunting hung from the balconies and archways. Flags were hung throughout at the top of the park (Egan, 2008). With only nine career wins under his belt, not quite a baseball legend yet, Denton “Cy” Young pitched the opening game for the Cleveland Spiders as they defeated the Cincinnati Redlegs, 12 to 3, in front of a capacity crowd. The overflowing crowd was a pleasant surprise, and the Plain Dealer article noted, “Base ball is very much alive in Cleveland.”

The Spiders continued to play at League Park until 1899, even playing in the Temple Cup Series, a championship series between the National League’s first- and second-place teams of the season. Cleveland finished the 1895 and 1896 seasons in second place and went on to win the Temple Cup in 1895 against Baltimore, four games to one.
Ever the businessman, though, Frank DeHaas Robison purchased a baseball team in St. Louis in 1898 and, in the off-season, shipped the best Cleveland Spiders players, including Cy Young, to St. Louis. As a result, in 1899 Cleveland had one of the worst seasons in baseball history, finishing the season with 20 wins and 134 losses, 84 games behind the first-place Brooklyn Dodgers (Jedick, 1978/1992). The team was so bad that fans boycotted the team and nicknamed them the “exiles,” “wanderers,” and “forsakens” because they rarely played at home (Ward & Burns, 1994) and “misfits” because they played so poorly (Jedick, 1978/1992). Home attendance at League Park was so poor that, after 27 games, the team played exclusively on the road (Schneider, 2001); when the season ended, the Spiders were kicked out of the National League (Johnson, n.d.).

In 1900 a minor-league team, the Cleveland Lake Shores, played at League Park. Prominent Cleveland businessmen John Kilfoyl and Charles Somers purchased a Grand Rapids team from the Western League with the intent to join the new American League. Somers became known as the “father of the American League” (Jedick, 1978/1992) and provided financial assistance for the entire league to get it established (Reidenbaugh, 1985). In 1901 businessman Ban Johnson renamed baseball’s Western League, until then a minor league, as the American League with the goal of establishing a rival to the National League. Without a team in Cleveland, Robison reluctantly released the League Park space to Kilfoyl and Somers, recognizing that, if the new baseball owners built a new ballpark, it probably would not be on his streetcar line, significantly impacting his business. The new Cleveland team became the Bluebirds, but was often called the Blues. Attempts were made to change the name to the Broncos in 1902, and in 1903 the name was changed to the Naps, in honor of Napoleon Lajoie, one of the team’s stars.
(Schneider, 2001), who had joined the team in 1902. Lajoie’s presence and success increased attendance and enthusiasm for the team, resulting in the firm establishment of the franchise and of League Park (Johnson, n.d.).

League Park (1910)

![League Park (1910).](image)

*Figure 7. League Park (1910). Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.*

As a result of the increased crowds, growing enthusiasm for baseball, and the new building materials available, League Park was torn down and rebuilt on the same location in 1910 (see Appendix F). New construction actually began in 1908, when a brick ticket house was added to League Park on the corner of East 66th and Lexington. Charles S. Schneider, a Cleveland architect who also designed Stan Hywet Hall in Akron, Ohio,
designed the building. This structure housed the Cleveland Base Ball Company’s business offices with rooms for the cashier, auditor, and private quarters on the second floor for the owner (Charleton, 1986).

As wooden ballparks were prone to fires, beginning at the turn of the century many ballparks were built with modern materials, beginning with Philadelphia’s Shibe Park in 1909. The wooden ballpark at League Park was replaced with a more modern, fireproof park using steel and concrete. While its capacity doubled that of the previous ballpark on the site, it still had one of the smallest capacities in the major leagues at 21,000 (Enders, 2002). Individual box seats became available, though benches were still present in the general-admission sections and the newly added left-field bleachers (Jedick, 1978/1992). The Cleveland firm of Osborn Engineering, which would go on in the next three years to design other baseball parks, including Comiskey Park in Chicago, the Polo Grounds in New York, Navin Field in Detroit, and Fenway Park in Boston, designed the new League Park. The architect was Frank B. Meade (see Appendix G).

The park cost approximately $300,000 to build, which was comparatively less expensive than the amount spent on Shibe and Comiskey. Gillette and Enders (2009) wrote that the lack of money spent on the park was evident: “As nondescript as its name, League Park was without question the least successful of the classic field-era parks” (p. 66). The reopening of the park was grand, but the facility was not in the same scale as other same-era parks. Pedestrian traffic flow was improved, as was the field, but it did not have the grand palazzos or the luxuriousness of the parks in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Pittsburgh. Still, the park was accessible to the average fan (Gillette & Enders, 2009). One reason for League Park’s less-than-glamorous look was the speed of its
reconstruction. The rebuilding began after the 1909 season ended and was completed in six months, over a rough Cleveland winter (Gibbons, 1953).

On April 3, 1910, the Plain Dealer indicated that the site was ready:

Anyone having a stiff neck on Thursday, April 21, does not need to stay away from the opening game for fear that he might injure the lame section of his body by stretching to look around a post. There are no posts to obstruct one’s view at the new grounds. In fact there is nothing so far discovered that will prove any kind of handicap to Nap patrons. (“New League Park Is Grand Plant,” 1910)

The article delighted in the new park and its seating arrangements, close to the field and comfortable. Bleacher seats had been moved from right field to center field. It was wrongly guessed that the high right-field fence would be difficult to hit the ball over. Electric lighting had been added in the passageways. Twelve exits existed for easy egress, and there were improved locker rooms for both the home and visiting clubs.

On the day of the opening game, the newspaper exclaimed that the park was one of the greatest in baseball: “Such a plant as will meet the eyes of the Cleveland rooters today can be considered a pride to any city and Clevelanders can justly be proud of the splendid edifice erected by the baseball company of this city” (“To Open Finest Plant in League,” April 21, 1910). The article also indicated that several factories were shutting down for opening day. Cy Young, who had returned to the Cleveland team in 1909, pitched the opening game just as he had done when League Park opened in 1891; this time, though at age 42 he had already accumulated 490 of the amazing 511 wins in his major-league career, he lost to Detroit 5-0 (Eckhouse & Crouse, 2010). Not surprisingly
for Cleveland in April, the opening game held a threat of rain, and there had been snow on the ground earlier in the week (Egan, 2008).

Just as in 1891, neighbors refused to sell property to expand the configuration of the space. It was common for ballparks of this era to have unusual outfields based on the neighborhood space available, but even so League Park was unique. The distance to right field was only 290 feet, while most major-league parks had a right-field distance of 330 to 380 feet. The distance to left field was 385 feet (Pahigian, 2008). A wall consisting of 20 feet of cement plus 20 feet of fencing was erected in right field; it became one of the more impressive and memorable features of the park. Joe Twardzik visited League Park as a youth and remembered how exciting it was when a ball was hit off the crazy, unpredictable right-field wall (personal interview, April 20, 2011). Balls that hit the cement could ricochet back unexpectedly; balls hitting the fencing could gently bounce off or get stuck; balls hitting the steel support poles could end up in left field (Pahigian, 2008). Fans loved it, with fielders chasing balls while the batters ran the bases. Young fans played “wall” at home, replicating the excitement of fielding balls off League Park’s right-field wall (Jedick, 1978/1992).

The stands were double-decker, with the edges of the upper and lower decks vertically aligned, bringing the front rows of the upper deck very close to the action on the field. However, this feature also meant that those in the back rows could not see much action in foul territory (Johnson, n.d.). The park was considered cozy, as fans sat so close to the field that they could hear the players and the players could hear them. Schneider recalled that League Park was an intimate park, and most thought there wasn’t a bad seat (2001). Every Friday was Ladies’ Day, and women sat free in the upper deck.
while their male companions sat in seats below. The women would bring their knitting and would also send notes and treats to the players below (Segall, 1986).

Kids loved the park for many reasons. They were always trying to get in, and any ball hit over the fence could be returned at the gate for free admittance. Lexington Avenue was always filled with children waiting to get the ball. Some youths were chosen to help with the turnstiles, and still others over age 16 (or who appeared to be over age 16) worked as vendors. Peanuts, popcorn, Cracker Jacks, pop, coffee, and hot dogs were sold. Directly across from right field on Lexington Avenue was Dunham School, and students would climb the fire escape to catch glimpses of the game after school. Nearer to center field, the roofs of Andrews Storage Company provided better views, but presented a more dangerous climb (Ritter, 1992). Dan Keegan, the Indians 1920 batboy
who lived right behind the park, recalled, “No kid ever thought of paying. A large group would always gather on Lexington Avenue eyeballing the skyline for a hit coming over the screen. If they returned the ball it was good for free admission” (Jedick, 1978/1992, p. 11). Other kids would peer under the cracks of the outfield fence, pleading for players to throw balls over (see Appendix H).

Marlene Sewell was one of those kids. She grew up just down the street from the ballpark and went to school at Dunham Elementary, where students would race to the fire escape after school to watch games at League Park across the street. Others would rush to Lexington Avenue to try to retrieve a ball and earn a free admission. Dunham’s students were considered the luckiest kids in the city because of their proximity to the ballpark. The “knothole gang” would look for holes in the wall to catch a glimpse of the action. Sewell’s favorite memory was how the club would let kids run the bases, and
how she would stand at home plate and visualize what it would be like to hit the ball (telephone interview, August 31, 2011).

The baseball team settled into its new home and, in 1915, changed its name to the Cleveland Indians. In 1916 Jim “Sunny” Dunn purchased the team and made two promises: that he would bring the pennant to Cleveland and that, when he did, he would change the name of the field to Dunn Field (see Appendix I). True to his words, the Cleveland Indians won the 1920 World Series, and League Park became Dunn Field. Dunn died in 1922, and his wife carried on the team until it was sold to Alva Bradley in 1927, at which time the field reverted back to the name League Park (Lewis, 2006).

The End of Baseball at League Park

But, by the late 1920s, the once modern park was outgrown and city officials began plans to construct a much larger multipurpose stadium on the shores of Lake Erie in downtown Cleveland. League Park thus became the first ballpark of its era to be replaced (Gillette & Enders, 2009). When the new Cleveland Municipal Stadium was completed in the middle of the 1932 season, the Indians moved out of League Park. But the team soon discovered that filling the stadium was a challenge, especially with the Great Depression impacting attendance. And, to the disappointment of fans and players, the field was not well suited for home-run baseball. So, after the 1933 season, the team arranged to move back to League Park for weekday games, while continuing to use Municipal Stadium for weekends and holidays (Johnson, n.d.; Eckhouse & Crouse, 2010).
In a series of articles published in the *Cleveland Press*, Frank Gibbons wrote about the move to Municipal Stadium:

The old park was really a poor relative by now. The owners knew it was on the way out and little was done to keep it bright. Other parks of the same vintage, notably Fenway Park in Boston and Briggs Stadium in Detroit had been remodeled and enlarged. They were modern and attractive. League Park was just an old man of a park by now, glad to welcome the folks back for a few weekday games. (Gibbons, 1953)

The split park arrangement lasted until 1946, when the colorful Bill Veeck took ownership of the team. Just 32 years old, Veeck was young, energetic, and eager to make money. The king of promotions, he brought in a teepee to center field and an orchestra to each game in an effort to enliven League Park. But ultimately he recognized that the stadium held more people, which meant more revenue. Unceremoniously, the Indians ended their tenure at League Park on Saturday, September 21, 1946, losing to the Tigers 5 to 3 (Gibbons, 1953). There were only 2,772 fans in the stands. It was the one of the only parks of its time to not have lights, and due to the neighborhood constraints it was never expanded after the 1909-1910 reconstruction (Gillette & Enders, 2009). Only one professional night game was ever played at League Park: for a game between the Negro League’s Homestead Grays and the House of David, a portable lighting system was borrowed from the Kansas City Monarchs (Johnson, n.d.).

While the Cleveland Indians moved out of League Park in 1946, the Cleveland Buckeyes of the Negro American Leagues continued to play at League Park for a few more years. Amidst other attempts to put together Negro League teams in Cleveland, the
Buckeyes were the only team that existed for more than a few years (Pahigian & O'Connell, 2004); since 1943 they had rented both Municipal Stadium and League Park for games (Liscio, 2010). The Buckeyes played in the Negro League World Series in 1945 and 1947, winning the 1945 series against the Homestead Grays. Game two of that series was played in League Park. The team moved to Louisville, Kentucky in 1949 and returned to Cleveland briefly in 1950. But by then the color line had been broken in Major League Baseball, with Jackie Robinson joining the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947; as baseball integrated, the Negro Leagues came to an end, and so did professional baseball at League Park.

Permanently settled in Municipal Stadium, the Cleveland Indians sold League Park to the City of Cleveland. Most of the park was demolished in 1951, except for the ticket office and one lower tier of bleachers (Jedick, 1978/1992). The city turned the park into a playground, and the field remained for amateur baseball use (see Appendix J). Frank Gibbons described what was left of it in the Cleveland Press in 1953:

League Park is a faded old lady of a ball park these days. It sits out there at 66th St. and Lexington Ave. with hair down and paint cracked. The city owns it and the kids use it for a playground, their yells drowning out the roar of the past. The famous right field wall is gone. A wire fence with little character has replaced it. There’s only one deck left on the grandstand. Yet, to most Cleveland adults, old League Park is still the local shrine of baseball. Municipal Stadium, the mighty monarch of the lake front, has made big baseball history since it was opened in 1932. But it’s got to live much longer to produce a story as warm as the one wrapped around the broken down park at E. 66th and Lexington. … It was a
beautiful thing in its architectural youth. Its red brick façade glowed in the summer sunsets. Its double-decked grandstand swept down the foul lines like great wings. Most important to the fans, the park was so intimate they could hear the cussing of their heroes and, sometimes, feel the tobacco spray. (Gibbons, 1953)

While no ceremony was held when the Cleveland Indians left League Park, many nostalgic articles have been published since then. “League Park has grown in significance since its funeral” (Dolgan, 1991, p. 5-F). In 2006, a writer described the current field with heartfelt emotion:

To say the place has seen better days is an understatement. An empty building, some broken brick walls and chain-link fence contain the garbage-strewn field. Lonely and neglected are the remnants of League Park at East 66th Street and Lexington Avenue. Lost to progress, lingering in indifference, it was once home of Cleveland baseball, host to some of the game’s most historic events. I’m here for a baseball moment, a true fan walking hallowed ground. At first I’m disappointed by the decrepitude and emptiness of the place. Then the ghosts of baseball past tickle the soul of the kin in me. Suddenly I see the outlines of the old diamond, and with an open mind, willing heart and some bats and balls, anyone can still play baseball in League Park. (O'Karma, 2006)
Historic Baseball Moments at League Park

Many historic baseball moments help to define the significance of League Park. Professional baseball was played there for 60 years, and the park is ripe with the early history of the Cleveland Indians franchise, as well as the Negro American League team, the Cleveland Buckeyes. Cy Young, Tris Speaker, Earl Averill, Addie Joss, Bob Feller, Jack Graney, Shoeless Joe Jackson, and many other greats played there for the Indians and their predecessors, not to mention the famous members of visiting major-league teams. Famed Negro League players also made their mark at League Park, including Sam Jethroe, Quincy Trouppe, Archie Ware, and Parnell Woods. Following are a few key events in the park’s history; more are listed in Appendix K.

Addie Joss was a popular pitcher for the Cleveland Naps who pitched a memorable perfect game on October 2, 1908, defeating Chicago’s Ed Walsh, 1 to 0. Joss lost his life to meningitis in April 1911, leaving behind a wife and nine-year-old son. To raise funds for Joss’s family, the team held a benefit game on July 24, 1911, that featured the best players from around the league. Many consider it the first baseball all-star game.
The Cleveland Naps faced a team of stars including Eddie Collins, Ty Cobb, Sam Crawford, Frank Baker, Tris Speaker, Hal Chase, Gabby Street, and Walter Johnson. The all-stars beat the Naps 5 to 3, and the game raised $13,000 for the Joss family (Reidenbaugh, 1985). A rookie named “Shoeless” Joe Jackson played right field for the Naps. The employees at League Park worked the game for free. Cobb forgot to bring his uniform, so he wore a Cleveland uniform for the game (Mazzoline, 2011).

The 1920 season for the Cleveland Indians was particularly historic. On August 16, at Polo Grounds in New York, Ray Chapman was hit in the head by a pitch and died as a result, becoming the first player to die from an accident on the ballfield (Condon, 1967). The team was inspired to continue its season with a “do it for Ray” attitude and recovered to move on to the World Series that year (Rose, 1950/1990). When the Indians won the American League pennant on October 2, 1920, fans in the city of Cleveland showed surprisingly little excitement because the team had come close to winning in the past and failed. On the front page of the *Plain Dealer*, Henry P. Edwards wrote:

> Could it actually be true that Cleveland had won a pennant after forty-two years of strenuous effort? The fans did not enthuse. … Too often they had seen Cleveland’s representatives on the diamond come close to winning the pennant only to lose in the final month, the final week, the final days. They were just dazed. (1920, p. 1)

But to the fans’ surprise, the Indians had finally made it to the World Series where they would face the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Game one of the series was supposed to begin in Cleveland, but prior to the series owner Jimmy Dunn had ordered additional temporary seating built along the 20-foot-high
concrete base in right field, along with the addition of a double-decker grandstand to left field. The additional seating was not ready in time, and Cleveland had to petition to move the first game to Brooklyn (Lewis, 2006). The Dodgers won two of the first three games before the series made its way back to Cleveland. Thousands of fans both inside and outside the park gathered to cheer their team.

The most memorable and historical game of the series was game five, held on October 10, 1920, at the newly renamed Dunn Field. In the first inning, Elmer Smith homered into right field, hitting the first grand slam in World Series history. In the fourth inning, pitcher Sarge Bagby hit a home run, the first home run hit by a pitcher in a World Series. And to top it off, second baseman Bill Wambsganss in the fifth inning completed the first and still the only unassisted triple play in World Series history. As news of the events spread, the town went crazy. Franklin Lewis, sports columnist for the Cleveland Press, wrote:

What happened … in Dunn Field was believed at first only by the 26,684 mortals inside the enclosure. As the years wore on and as there were more opportunities for comparing the Sunday game, fifth of the Series, with others played, it became more and more certain that this one contest would occupy a place of honor in any gallery of athletic performances. (Lewis, 2006, p. 129)

Cleveland went on to win the 1920 World Series.

Inspired by hockey and football’s use of numbers on their uniforms, the Indians experimented with numbers on their sleeves in June of 1916, but abandoned the idea after a few weeks (Patell & Waterman, 2009). At the beginning of the 1929 season the New York Yankees were supposed to become the first major league baseball team to put
numbers on the back of their uniforms. But their game was rained out, so on May 13, 1929, in a League Park home game against the Yankees, Cleveland became the first baseball team to place numbers on its players’ backs. Previously the scoreboard had listed names, but switched to listing only the numbers. Adding numbers on the jerseys was another way to increase revenues, as it encouraged fans to purchase a scorecard to figure out who the players were (Benson, 2000). The scorecards indicated the corresponding numbers and names of players. In addition, a special number was stamped on the scorecards, and the number was announced during the game. The holder of the winning number received a free pair of tickets (Jedick, 1978/1992).

On August 11, 1929, when the New York Yankees came to town again, Babe Ruth hit his 500th home run over League Park’s famous right-field fence, becoming the first major-league player to achieve that milestone. One of the kids chasing balls on Lexington Avenue, Jack Geiser, retrieved the ball and returned it to Ruth in exchange for $20, an autographed ball, and the chance to sit next to the Babe in the Yankee dugout (Rose, 1950/1990).

In 1941 another Yankee, Joe DiMaggio, would add the final hits to his 56-game hit streak in a game at League Park. The next day, in a game at Municipal Stadium, DiMaggio’s streak was broken.

On July 24, 1945, in the midst of their championship season, the Negro League Cleveland Buckeyes faced the Kansas City Monarchs for the only time at League Park in the season. Fans were treated to a showdown with Satchel Paige pitching for the Monarchs and Jackie Robinson, also of the Monarchs, hitting a home run in the ninth inning. The Buckeyes prevailed, though, by 3 to 2.
Having won the pennant in 1945, the Buckeyes faced the Homestead Grays in the Negro League World Series. Game two was held on September 16, 1945, at League Park in front of 10,000 fans. Eugene Bremer was pitching for the Buckeyes, and in the seventh inning the Grays were ahead. Then Buckeye Willie Grace hit a home run over the right-field fence, and in the ninth inning the game was tied. Much to the fans’ dismay, the manager kept the pitcher, Bremer, in to bat with the bases loaded and two outs in the ninth. Bremer knocked a ball to right field that hit the fence, helping score the winning run. The Buckeyes went on to win the series in four games, clinching the final game at Shibe Park in Philadelphia on September 20, 1945. As was common at the time due to the racial disparities, the win was covered in Cleveland’s African American paper, The Call & Post, but barely mentioned by the city’s two major papers (O’Karma, 2006).

In one other unusual baseball event, Alta Weiss of Ragersville, Ohio made her League Park debut on October 2, 1907, pitching in front of 3,182 fans for the all-male, semi-professional team known as the Vermilion Independents. A woman playing baseball was a rarity, and fans took special trains from Cleveland and other towns to see her play in Vermilion. She was featured in newspapers, and the following year she played on a traveling team called the Weiss All-Stars (“Miss Alta Weiss,” n.d.).

Fred Schuld, who attended games at League Park in his youth and during his years as a teacher, has collected extensive information about baseball in Cleveland, including many stories about Cleveland Naps player Jack Graney and his dog, Larry. Larry, a bull terrier, became the team’s only ever dog mascot and was even included in the 1916 team photo, taken at League Park. Larry went everywhere with Graney and the team and even was able to find his way home via ferry on several occasions from
Cleveland to Graney’s hometown of St. Thomas, Ontario. Graney would put the dog on a ferry in Cleveland, and when the dog arrived in Canada it would run home. Larry was also formerly introduced to President Woodrow Wilson (Fred Schuld, telephone interview, August 19, 2011). Jack Graney is also remembered as one of the first players to wear a number on his sleeve in 1916, and as the first former player to become a radio broadcast announcer. He went on to do radio broadcasts for the Cleveland Indians games from 1932 to 1953 (Ulrey, n.d.).


**More Than Baseball at League Park**

While League Park was built for baseball, it was used for a variety of other purposes and visited by several notable individuals. It was not uncommon for ballparks to increase revenues by leasing the field for other events including football games, boxing events, and circuses (Gillette & Enders, 2009). As early as 1901, the manager of the Cleveland team, Bill Amour, thought the team could earn some money by turning the playing field into a skating rink in the off-season. Dirt was gathered around the edge of
the field to hold the water. Unfortunately, the water could not be contained, and the project ended up flooding the neighborhood (Benson, 2000).

“League Park is considered the birthplace of professional football in Cleveland as the site where the Cleveland Indians defeated the Carlisle Indians on October 8, 1916” (Eckhouse & Crouse, 2010, p. 27). As early as 1912 professional teams known as the Tigers, Erin Braus, Panthers, Indians, and Bulldogs tried to establish themselves, and some used League Park as their home field. In 1924, the Bulldogs, formerly of Canton, captured the National Football League title under player-coach Guy Chamberlin (Charleton, 1986). Area college football teams including Western Reserve, Case Tech, John Carroll, and Baldwin-Wallace also used the space for games. Case and Western played a Thanksgiving Day game for years at League Park. Marlene Sewell, who had grown up in the area, recalled that going to the Thanksgiving Day game was a family tradition (telephone interview, August 31, 2011).

In 1945 the National Football League’s Cleveland Rams, tied in their division with Detroit, hosted the Green Bay Packers at League Park. Over 28,686 fans filled the stands, and many of them barely noticed when some of the temporary stands collapsed. Nearly 700 fans fell to the ground, and many were urged to leave. But the game was so exciting that only those who needed medical attention left. The Rams went on to beat the Washington Redskins to win the NFL title, after which they moved to Los Angeles (Jedick, 1978/1992). Even after professional baseball left League Park in 1950, coach Paul Brown brought his Cleveland Browns football team to use the site for practice (Jedick, 1978/1992). Famed Browns players including Otto Graham, Lou Groza, Bobby
Mitchell, and Jim Brown, along with the 1964 world championship team, all practiced at League Park.

In 1934, the Plain Dealer proclaimed the return of Ohio State football to League Park, in the team’s first appearance in Cleveland since 1916. The article stated, “Scarlet and gray bunting will decorate League Park Saturday and songs and cheers will bounce off the right field wall” (“In O.S.U. Re-Entry,” 1934).

League Park was also used for concerts. On June 22, 1916, Adella Prentiss Hughes, pianist, music promoter, and founder of Cleveland’s Musical Arts Association, presented the Metropolitan Opera House’s Orchestra in Wagner’s Siegfried at League Park (“To Give Opera,” 1916). Along with the Musical Arts Association, Hughes was instrumental in founding The Cleveland Orchestra in 1918. The famed band director Lieutenant John Philip Sousa brought a band of 300 to Cleveland for the Victory Chest campaign in May 1918, playing two concerts daily for four days at League Park, all of them free to the public except the final concert on Saturday (“Sousa and Band,” 1918).

In 1917, Cleveland’s Army Day celebration included a parade down East 12th to Euclid and then on to East 70th, ending at League Park. Five hundred soldiers were in the parade. A boxing event at League Park included 10 bouts with soldiers trained by boxer Johnny Kilbane, conducted between the quarters of a football game, along with a military drill and band concert, with the proceeds going to Camp Sherman’s Emergency Fund (“Cleveland’s Army Day,” 1917). In 1920 Kilbane, then the world featherweight champion, defended his title successfully against Arty Root at Dunn Field before a crowd of 14,000 (Rose, 1950/1990).
A three-ring circus was brought to League Park on June 14, 1919, to celebrate soldiers who had fought in the world war. Bands were also scheduled to perform under the direction of Nikolai Sokoloff, music director of the newly formed Cleveland Orchestra (‘‘Circus’ Is Part of Celebration,’’ 1919).

On May 21, 1927, a baseball game stopped in the seventh inning when news reached the park that Charles Lindbergh had arrived in Paris on his trans-Atlantic flight. The band played “The Star-Spangled Banner” while fans stood up and removed their hats. Then the game resumed (Benson, 2000).

In 1949, the movie The Kid from Cleveland was partially filmed at League Park. Highlighting the 1948 World Series championship Cleveland Indians, the film told the story of a troubled youth who was helped by the entire championship team (Colmes &
Kline, 1949). League Park was used to portray the spring training scenes. Marlene Sewell, who grew up in the neighborhood, indicated in an interview that she was in the stands for the filming, as were most of the other kids from the neighborhood (telephone interview, August 31, 2011).

From the 1950s until the 1980s League Park’s former ticket office became the League Park Center, serving as a neighborhood community center and offering music lessons, recreation, and other cultural events. Concerts were regularly scheduled at the park. Civil-rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. held an outdoor rally at League Park Center on July 28, 1965, to encourage city voting (Robertson & Davis, 1965). Even though the grandstands had been removed, baseball fields were on the site and basketball courts were added. A swimming pool was on the grounds near left field for many years, but has since been removed. Recently the ball field has also been removed.

The Hough Neighborhood, 1950s to the Present

Just as League Park had aged, so had the Hough neighborhood. By the time League Park closed in 1951, this once-prominent neighborhood in Cleveland had changed dramatically. As in many U.S. cities, highway construction through neighborhoods and better schools and newer housing in the suburbs all contributed to urban flight from the cities. While, in 1950, Cleveland was noted as having relatively good race relations, ensuing tensions revealed that it was not immune to the racial difficulties that pervaded the country (Liscio, 2010).

After World War II businesses and government leaders wanting to revive Cleveland focused heavily on the redevelopment of downtown, but in doing so neglected
the brewing racial tensions in the inner-city neighborhoods (Bartimole, 2011). The middle-class immigrant families increasingly moved out of Hough, and poor, displaced African American families moved in. From 1950 to 1960 the population of Hough went from 5 percent nonwhite to 74 percent nonwhite (Miller & Wheeler, 1995). The buildings in Hough were old and not well cared for. Landlords lived outside the area and neglected to maintain their buildings. Some were foreclosed or abandoned. Overcrowding and deterioration worsened in the 1950s. Racial discrimination and lack of jobs led to a high poverty rate (Hudak, n.d.). Vandalism, arson, and poverty were all prevalent in the Hough neighborhood. It was an uphill battle for residents who attempted to keep their neighborhood safe and clean (see Appendix L).

![Figure 13. Hough neighborhood (1955). Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.](image)

Urban renewal programs aimed at rebuilding blighted areas tore down whole neighborhoods but failed to complete the housing projects, leaving vacant lots (Wye, 1995). By the 1960s Cleveland was labeled as having more slums than any other
American city (Dyerson & Trumpbour, 2010), and Hough had the unfortunate distinction of being called the worst slum in America (Wolff, 1990). At that time Rev. Albert Koklowsky, pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Parish and Mission Center, located across the street from League Park on Lexington Avenue, wrote that, thanks to limited garbage pickup, trash was strewn everywhere, and that the Hough area was filled with despicable sights and sounds, odors, decay, rats, and broken houses and windows. He stated, “In my ghetto I see a desperate people, a people without hope. Their eyes have no light, no confidence, no vision” (Wolff, 1990, p.1). In 1965, the Cleveland Press ran a series of articles warning of a crisis in Hough (Miller & Wheeler, 1995).

The foreshadowing proved to be true. On July 18, 1966, racial tensions in the Hough neighborhood reached a boiling point, and one of the most serious riots anywhere in the country occurred over the course of several days. While the frustration had been brewing for years, the riots were spurred by an argument at the store on the corner of East 79th and Hough Avenue. An African American who had just bought a bottle of wine was refused a glass of water by the white proprietor. Racial slurs later appeared on the store door, and arson fires were started later in the evening. Cleveland mayor Ralph Locher called in 1,700 National Guardsmen to deal with the looting, vandalism, gunfire, and arson that occurred mostly between East 71st Street and East 93rd Street. During the riots four people died, 46 were injured, and millions of dollars of damage occurred. The riots perpetuated fear in white Clevelanders and added to the racial divisions in the city (Dyerson & Trumpbour, 2010). “The Hough riots seemed like a dramatic signal of the ongoing decline of the city once known as the mirror of industrial progress” (Perry, 1995, p. 23).
Two years after the riots, in a 1968 undergraduate thesis for Princeton University, Marc Lackritz explored the causes and ramifications of the Hough riots. He wrote:

The businessman driving to his home in the eastern suburbs from his office downtown would see only a glimpse of the life behind the invisible walls
surrounding the area known as Hough. Although he would see rows of
dilapidated houses and streets with nothing but garish bars and small store-front
churches, he could not have much empathy for the dwellers inside the walls nor
much understanding of the smoldering fire within the ghetto. The white middle-
class experience prohibited full understanding of the black ghetto because the
values, institutions, and mores inside the walls of Hough were so different from
those of the surrounding areas. Thus, the experience of Hough coupled with the
lack of understanding and empathy by the white community helped the vicious
cycle to spiral on downward. Few people outside the ghetto realized the
consequences. (Lackritz, 1968, p. 40)

The riots changed the Hough neighborhood (see Appendix M). Buildings burned
in the riots stood abandoned, and vacant lots and stores served as constant reminders of
what had happened. The negative impact of the riots was reflected in the further loss of
businesses, property values, and population. Areas nearest to the riots were impacted the
most. “Cleveland’s post-riot experience helps highlight how urban economies absorb
adverse localized shocks. In this case, the areas closest to the riots did not bounce back at
the riots’ aftermath. Rather, the shock appears to have had long-lasting, negative impact”
(Collins & Smith, 2007, p. 384). The media coverage and overall destruction added to
the negative perception of the neighborhood (Collins & Smith, 2007).

Unfortunately, the persistent poverty in the Hough neighborhood perpetuated its
decline, fulfilling the prognosis described by Coulton and Chow (1995, p. 216):

As the poor are increasingly confined to particular neighborhoods, their isolation
from the mainstream may act to limit avenues of escape from poverty. Areas of
intense poverty are commonly associated with a convergence of undesirable conditions, from deteriorated housing and physical environments to family disintegration, school failure, delinquency, crime, and substance abuse. When these conditions become acute and widespread in particular geographic locations, they … may become forces that tend to keep residents in poverty.

**Revitalizing Hough**

Many people still associate the Hough area with the riots. The population in Hough as of 1966, when the riots occurred, was 72,000, but by 2009 it had dropped to 33,000. This population drop is also reflected in the change in housing density, as can be observed by comparing aerial photographs of the area from 1952 to 2010, particularly in the area surrounding League Park (see Appendix N). “Hough is a community that still bears the scars of the riots. Much of the housing that is left is in need of major repairs. Nearly all of the neighborhood’s commercial establishments have long since disappeared. Abandoned houses and vacant lots dot the area. But Hough is on a comeback trail” (Busta-Peck, 2011). New housing, Lexington Village, was built in 1985 as a $13.7 million first phase of a larger project coordinated by the Famicos Foundation, a local nonprofit housing rehabilitation organization, and a private developer. The second phase added additional housing to the development in 1990 for $7.1 million (Keating, Krumholz, & Metzger, 1995). Numerous new single-family homes have been built, and a 100,000-square-foot Church Square shopping center was built at East 79th and Euclid. A drive through the neighborhood now reveals, on any given street, a mix of abandoned
lots, boarded-up houses, old houses in disrepair, and newer homes. There are other signs of life in the community as well, including a thriving community center, a newly planted vineyard, and one of Cleveland’s largest urban farms, located between East 66th and East 70th, stretching from Chester Avenue to Euclid Avenue. This farm is maintained in partnership with Cleveland’s oldest building, the Dunham Tavern (1824), located adjacent to the urban farm on Euclid Avenue. The Cleveland Botanical Garden maintains the farm and uses it as an educational learning space, while Dunham Tavern is a nonprofit museum (see Appendix O).

Across from League Park is the Fatima Family Center, a community center run by Catholic Charities. Founded in 1973, the center grew from the counseling and outreach ministry of Our Lady of Fatima Church, and it is now housed in a newer building filled
with life and activities for all residents, including after-school programs, day camps, employment preparation, tutoring, and emergency assistance. LaJean Ray-McNair, director of the Fatima Family Center and also a resident of Hough, has stated, “No one realized the resources, supports, and strong families we have here. This is an incredibly asset-rich community” (“Fatima Family Center,” 2002).

New life can also be found on East 66th between Chester and Lexington Avenues. On the corner of East 66th and Hough, amidst old apartment buildings, vacant lots, and newer homes, is Chateau Hough, a vineyard planted by author, ex-convict, and former newspaper editor Mansfield Frazier with $15,000 from a Reimagining Cleveland grant. His was one of 58 projects chosen to put city lots to use. Frazier hopes that the presence of his vineyard will help to change the perception of Hough and produce a high-quality Pinot Grigio besides (Smith, 2010).

Historian Christopher Busta-Peck previously worked at the Cleveland Public Library’s Hough branch and also assisted at a Hough day camp in 2009. He indicated that getting the children interested in baseball and neighborhood history was a challenge, but that local youths seemed to respond to visual stories and to black history, including researching houses in the neighborhood where Negro League players used to live (personal interview, March 11, 2011).

One Friday night in August 2011, League Park was filled with young people practicing football and cheerleading on the site. It could have been anywhere in America as coaches barked at the young players and parents sat talking in lawn chairs on the sidelines. When I approached a group of about 10 parents, only one was interested in talking for this study. However, that person was eager to talk at length about Hough and
League Park, having grown up in the neighborhood. Initially he was suspicious and wanted to know what was happening with the League Park project, suspecting that the author was involved with the renovation. When informed that this project was not directly related to that initiative, he relaxed and revealed that he had grown up in Hough and had spent many hours at the League Park Center playing sports. He said that these were the most important recollections for him, although he recognized the baseball history of the site as well. The man said local residents were concerned that something might be done with the space that would take it away from the community, so they wanted to see something done for the community in that space before anything else could happen (personal interview, August 19, 2011).

**Restoring League Park**

Since as early as 1979, there have been concerted efforts to restore League Park to its early glory. In January 1979, a small notice in the *Plain Dealer* indicated that a new committee had been formed to achieve designation of League Park as a historic site and to have summer programs for children there. Gabe Paul, then president of the Cleveland Indians, held the first meeting, which included John Cimperman, head of the Cleveland Landmarks Commission, State Senator J. Timothy McCormack, and Peter Meros, a specialist on restoration of landmarks (Strassmeyer, 1979).

Seven months later, on August 25, 1979, League Park Day was held at the park, a historic marker was placed, and the site was designated as a Cleveland landmark. The event was called the official kickoff for the League Park Restoration Committee’s fundraising drive, and the park was spruced up for the day. Addressing any fears
regarding safety in the neighborhood, a report prior to the event noted that extensive
security including the Cleveland Police, the Cuyahoga County Sheriff’s Department, and
a private detective agency would be on the grounds for the day. John Cimperman,
chairman of the committee, indicated the group’s desire to restore sandlot and recreation
baseball to the park and the need for maintenance funds, adding, “Plus we want to use the
nostalgia of the park to possibly serve as inspiration to young athletes” (Grossi, 1979a).

Former batboys, former players, and fans joined in the celebration on August 25,
1979, including Bill “Wamby” Wambsganss, who had the only triple play in World
Series history in 1920. With only the ticket office and one set of bleachers remaining, it
required considerable imagination to envision how the park used to be. Wambsganss
said, “It’s so different now. … I always thought it was a little unfair for us right-handed
hitters. I used to hit a lot of balls to left for deep outs. Then some leftie would come up
and pop one up over the right-field fence” (Grossi, 1979b). Former batboys told stories
of running to buy beer for Babe Ruth, and about balls that he hit all the way over
Lexington Avenue. New basketball courts had just been installed behind the ticket
office, and several youths were playing basketball as the historic marker was unveiled.
When a ball landed near Wambsganss, one of the youths retrieving it, clearly not
knowing or appreciating history, asked, “Man, what’s with all these people walking on
our court?” (Grossi, 1979b).

A year later, in 1980, sportswriter Hal Lebovitz wrote an article in the Plain
Dealer entitled “League Park: Is it Restored?” He opened the article by stating, “I hope I
never have to write a column on this subject again” (Lebovitz, 1980). Noting the League
Park day of the previous year, Lebovitz recalled the success of that day, the money and
memorabilia that had been donated, the speeches by city leaders and ballplayers, and the excellent condition to which the field had been restored, along with the promise to help with its upkeep. “It would be a showplace to help rejuvenate the neighborhood,” he noted. Plans had been made to have the Indians’ Class A minor-league affiliate play Cleveland State University, with the Indians covering the costs involved. However, the field had not been adequately maintained, and it was deemed not playable for the event to occur. Lebovitz contacted the office of Cleveland Mayor George Voinovich, which looked into the situation, acknowledged that the field had not been kept in shape, and said that the mayor would not let that happen again. Prophetically, Lebovitz questioned the city of Cleveland’s resolve:

I can’t understand why this town always seems to start something and rarely follows through. … Maintaining this historic baseball site—and using it—is a small matter in light of some of our other problems. Yet, it’s an important matter more than proof a promise can be kept, more than being symbolic. It’s one step toward reestablishing the inner city as a viable part of our town. (Lebovitz, 1980)

Another League Park Day was held on June 30, 1984, sponsored by the League Park Restoration Committee and Friends of Landmarks. It was led by Cleveland Landmarks Commission director John D. Cimperman, and approximately 200 people attended, including Virgil Easter, wife of the late Indians player Luke Easter, and Bill Wambsganss. With high hopes that a restoration was still possible, Cimperman indicated that more than $100,000 would have to be raised from public and private funds to clean, paint, and restore the grandstand and to maintain the field. In addition, the plans called
for an indoor-outdoor exhibition space in the old locker rooms that would describe the historic events of the park (Lustig, 1984).

With no notable movement forward, in 1986 the Plain Dealer reported that the Ohio historical marker on the League Park site had been found lying on the sidewalk one morning over the winter and had ended up in a storage closet waiting to be remounted. But even with it in place, some people interviewed who lived and worked in the area did not know that the park was once home to the Cleveland Indians, or football’s Cleveland Rams, or the 1945 Negro League world champions, the Cleveland Buckeyes. When legendary Cleveland Indians pitcher Bob Feller visited the park in 1986 and heard of the desire to preserve League Park, though efforts by the League Park Committee had clearly stalled, Feller lamented, “We destroy all our old historical monuments, our beautiful architecture, our beautiful crafts, our beautiful houses, and put up something made of glass and functional” (Segall, 1986). As of 1986, the site had two ballfields for practices and pickup games and a swimming pool in the former park’s left field.

In 1988, Brent Larkin of the Plain Dealer raised the issue of the stalled restoration again in a commentary entitled, “League Park Should Be More Than Asterisk in Indians’ History.” While acknowledging that most residents no longer had memories of baseball at League Park, he observed that older residents still remembered its intimacy. Larkin wrote:

One would think that a place so steeped in tradition would have been preserved carefully over the years so that future generations could revisit and relive the memories of baseball’s glory years. Nope. Not in Cleveland, where City Hall bureaucrats care a lot more about big, fat Urban Development Action Grants for
downtown building projects than they do about saving slices of Cleveland’s history. (Larkin, 1988)

At this point John Cimperman was indicating that getting the needed money from the city for the restoration had been difficult, and that the project’s cost had risen to $250,000. Cimperman said community support was needed. Councilwoman Fannie M. Lewis, the neighborhood’s outspoken representative on City Council, had been advocating for the restoration for several years and was putting pressure on City Hall to make changes to the site. She said, “I’m angry about this. … We have the plans to fix it up, but we have not been able to get the city to move. The deterioration is bad, but it’s not beyond repair. League Park is a memorable place for people from all over the city” (Larkin, 1988).

When League Park turned 100 in May 1991, a small celebration was held at the site. It was planned by Morris Eckhouse and Allen Pfenninger, then leaders of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) (Dolgan, 1991). Guests for the event included former players Bob Feller and Mel Harder, as well as Bob DiBiasio, public-relations director of the Cleveland Indians. A proclamation from Mayor Michael White was read. Eckhouse noted that the movement to restore the park had begun in 1979 and indicated that there was still hope: “If the place can be made relatively safe, I would like to see the grandstand hollowed out and a small museum established inside” (Dolgan, 1991, p. 1-F). However, safety in the Hough area was a huge concern, and the ticket office, which housed the United Way-funded League Park recreation center, was heavily locked and secured. Yvonne Williamson, who worked at the center, indicated that she had been robbed at gunpoint several years earlier; there had also been break-ins and a recent rape near the grandstand (Dolgan, 1991).
In 1994, the restoration cause was taken up by a group of ministers and community leaders with Working for Empowerment through Community Organizing (WECO), a citizens group composed of businesses and churches. WECO proposed a League Park recreation and cultural center to help in addressing the economic and crime problems in the Hough neighborhood. The group met with Mayor White to explain that the weak economy was adding to the crime and poverty problems in their neighborhood. They proposed that a restored League Park, with fields for high-school teams and a museum honoring the Negro Leagues, would spur major economic development for the community. Businesses would benefit from the increased activity in the area and could share resources to boost employment (Huffman, 1994). The process again appeared to be moving forward in 1997, when Cleveland City Council approved economic development loans for land acquisition, demolition, and site preparation for the proposed League Park museum, retail, and housing complex (“Cuyahoga County,” 1997). Neglected for too long, by 2002 the lone remaining grandstand had to be demolished, and supports were installed for the one remaining wall (Appendix P). In the process underground tunnels on the site, once used to connect the locker rooms, were discovered. Mayor Jane Campbell ambitiously committed $1.8 million of city funds toward an $18 million project with League Park as the centerpiece, including a 4,000-seat ballpark and a museum dedicated to baseball. City Architecture drew architectural plans and a video was produced. With little movement forward, three years later, in 2005, City Council approved $100,000 to hire experts to help with fundraising. Fannie M. Lewis, who had been fighting for the renovation for 20 years, added that fans would come from across the country to visit the site and that it would be a good example of how to restore a
community (“City Council approves first step to restore League Park.” 2005). But this attempt fizzled as well.

Once again, in 2007, Mayor Frank Jackson and the city of Cleveland announced plans to rebuild League Park, this time with a smaller plan and a reduced cost of $8.5 million, of which $5 million would be raised from bonds in 2008 and 2009, with the remaining $3.5 million to come from private donations. The city’s goal was to build a 2,500-seat park for youth and high-school baseball and to restore the ticket house. Paul Volpe, president of City Architecture, indicated, “It’s a real hole in the neighborhood right now. … More than a decade of talk of restoring the ballpark at last looks to be more than just talk” (Briggs, 2007). As the designs were still being analyzed, no timetable was set, but Councilwoman Fannie Lewis had “no doubt that League Park will glisten once again” (Briggs, 2007). Volpe thought the plan was achievable too, though this was the third time that he had drawn up plans (Turner, 2007).

The 2007 renovation plans spawned a variety of feedback on many online blogs, including Clem’s Baseball Blog, a comprehensive baseball blog site that includes information and diagrams of classic ballparks. One out-of-town commenter said he had visited the site in summer 2007 and stayed just six to seven minutes, depressed that there was not even a ballfield to run the bases on. Another acknowledged that the space provided a sense of nostalgia, but that it is worth a visit only for those who can “feel” history (Clem, 2010). Other responders to the article on the planned renovation were baffled that the City of Cleveland would spend money on this project rather than on education or job creation (Turner, 2007).
In response to the lack of movement on the League Park project, in 2008 a group of baseball fans established a nonprofit organization, the League Park Society, with the goal of preserving the park. The Society created an online petition directed to Cleveland City Council, asking that it be allowed to restore and rebuild League Park. It stated that, even though few physical remnants of the park remained, “the soul of League Park is still very much alive” (“Welcome to the Home of the League Park Society,” n.d.).

In 2009 an article posted on examiner.com indicated that, since the 1970s, there had been five different plans to restore League Park, but that all had failed for various reasons (Felegy, 2009). Russ Haslage, director of the League Park Society, envisioned a restored park with a museum and gift shop, along with a field for Little League baseball, vintage games, and city events. The Cleveland Indians indicated that they supported the idea but were not directly involved in the project, because the City had not agreed to lease the lot to the society (Felegy, 2009). The society presented its plans produced by Osborn Engineering (the company that had designed the original park), and City Architecture also presented a proposal to city officials and residents. The two plans were different, and residents expressed various concerns, including their desires for a playground, football facilities, or even a water park. Councilman T. J. Dow indicated that many details awaited resolution but that, after the plan had been agreed upon, groundbreaking would occur in 2010. Dow stated, “This recent activity is reason for optimism. But several plans have come and gone in the past, so proponents of the restoration should remain cautious until dirt is moved” (Felegy, 2009). This has continued to be true.
In 2010, on the 100th anniversary of the construction of the second League Park, another celebration was held, with the League Park Society, the Cleveland Blues Base Ball Club, Bertman’s Ballpark Mustard (which had sold mustard there), the Cleveland Bar and Grill, and Merry Arts Bar and Grill participating. They produced a “Save League Park!” billboard, offered tours of the park, and staged two vintage base ball games—the Cleveland Blues versus Forest City, and Channel 19 television versus the historic Base Ball All-Stars (Demagall, 2010a). (The Cleveland Blues Base Ball Club is a vintage base ball team that plays by 1864 rules, and League Park is its home field. It currently uses the space, even though no field currently exists on the site.) A member of the Cleveland Blues club, Jay Demagall, wrote, “League Park still exists today as one of the oldest ball grounds/ballparks in the world. The question is what do we do with this treasure? Can Cleveland maintain and save what is left, or does it fall into decay, development, and destruction like all of her predecessors?” (Demagall, 2010b).

In February 2011, the City of Cleveland once again began the process of moving forward with the renovation of League Park, allocating $387,000 to City Architecture to develop plans to restore the ticket office and bleacher wall, along with putting in a field. With $4.5 million now reserved for the project, the current goal is to move forward in 2012. “Political dissension and a $20 million price tag kept it from happening until now,” indicated Councilman T. J. Dow, who was seeking to carry forward the vision of the late councilwoman Fannie Lewis (Hitch, 2011). The plan requires an additional $3.5 from outside investors to complete the full restoration. Dow emphasized that the project is about baseball and revitalizing the community. Paula Gist, chairwoman of the League Park Heritage Committee, which was commissioned by Dow in 2009, expressed her hope
that businesses will return to Hough, “but more importantly, so will the spirit of her community” (Hitch, 2011). The city indicated that it is an “urban renewal project as much as a baseball project: the Hough neighborhood is not in the best of shape, and the ballpark is seen as a way to improve the area” (“Cleveland's League Park, 2011”).

Fannie Lewis had been similarly adamant that the current project was about much more than baseball: “She saw the project as a way to help revive a community charred by riots, poverty, and neglect” (Gillispie, 2011). Residents have been vocal in expressing their concerns and desires to Mayor Frank Jackson and his chief of staff, Ken Silliman. They want to make sure that the space is accessible to the community and that youths can enjoy it (Gillispie, 2011).

In Silliman’s interview with me, he indicated that Mayor Jackson had inherited the League Park project that had begun with former Mayor Michael White and had been carried forward by Mayor Jane Campbell. Silliman said that the project had become more modest than Campbell’s vision, but that it would still achieve its original objectives of preserving history and being a community focal point and a city recreational asset.

When asked to describe the story of League Park that should be told, he responded that it is “no one story, it is for the community, it is a community landmark” (personal interview, March 1, 2011). According to Silliman, this time the renovation will move forward because the money has been set aside from bonds and because the process has already started with City Architecture. Phase one of the project includes a restored ticket house, a new ballfield, and a defined perimeter of the park for on-street parking, lighting, landscaping, and sidewalks. The total cost for this construction when proposed by City Architecture in 2010 was $4,515,000. The second phase would expand the facilities to
include locker rooms, restrooms, grandstands, and a year-round plaza and picnic area to tie in with the ticket office. This cost was estimated at $3,282,000 (City Architecture, 2010).

Paul Volpe, founder, president, and principal of City Architecture, has been involved with the League Park project since his tenure as an architect for the City of Cleveland from 1983 to 1989, when Fannie Lewis began advocating for the site’s restoration. Lewis had always emphasized that the project was about more than baseball; it was also about young people, jobs, and the Hough community. Lewis was “possessed with the idea,” Volpe recalled, adding that Ken Silliman of the Mayor’s office “cares deeply about the project.” Volpe said that, although history cannot be replicated, it can be restored, and that League Park, as one of the only vintage baseball parks left, needs to be restored (personal interview, March 7, 2011).

Bob DiBiasio, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs for the Cleveland Indians, said in a telephone interview that the subject of League Park does not come up as much as it used to since the passing of Hall of Fame Cleveland Indians pitcher Bob Feller in December 2010. Feller was a fixture at the Indians’ current home, Progressive Field, during Indians games and would often recall memories of League Park, where he had made his Major League Baseball debut. DiBiasio said it was easy to be mesmerized by Feller’s stories, but that, as the players who once played at League Park get older, the memories are not as present. DiBiasio indicated that League Park represents the Cleveland Indians, one of the oldest institutions in Cleveland (telephone interview, August 3, 2011).
The Indians’ 2011 advertising campaign actually mentioned League Park, including, among a series of questions, “What if there were no League Park?” The Indians organization has supported efforts to keep the League Park memory alive. One of DiBiasio’s first responsibilities as an Indians representative was to attend the 1979 League Park Day. But nothing happened after that and the organization could not focus on the brick-and-mortar challenges. Rather, the Indians helped to keep baseball alive on the site by funding Little League and City Recreation baseball until the drug activity in the neighborhood forced even those activities to end. But DiBiasio said that the Indians would be willing to support baseball again on the site. He noted that the site holds tremendous nuggets of history, and that people seem to love the sentiment of history, but that many obstacles have prevented the League Park project from moving forward (telephone interview, August 3, 2011).

Paula Gist is on the League Park Heritage Committee that has been working with the city on the restoration plans. In a phone interview she indicated, “Generations of people don’t know about League Park and baseball, they know about the League Park Community Center.” Residents under age 30 are surprised to find out about the site’s baseball history. The space is a community green space, with a long history of rumored restoration. When the League Park Society formed in 2008, the community was concerned that baseball “outsiders” would make decisions about and for their community, so they rallied to have a voice in the decision-making process. This time the renovation proposal has made more progress than any of its predecessors—it has designs, money in the bank, and some neighborhood investment. But, Gist said, there is still a need to prove that the project will happen, and education is needed to cause people to value the space as
an asset. Right now the space is wide open, and recreating the big wall from Lexington to Linwood would break up this openness—a change that would be jarring to some in the community. But Gist expressed her view that the project would be a big win for the community and would hopefully encourage the arrival of more businesses. She hoped that the park would be ready soon (telephone interview, August 31, 2011).

Gist indicated that many different opinions exist in the community about the space; some want to see a waterpark there, while others want something for football. But, as Gist noted, the space was about baseball, and baseball is America’s most beloved America pastime. “Why not capture that?” she asked. “It doesn’t have to be shiny new, you can respect the old.” For Gist, the story of the park includes how the park made this now-struggling neighborhood special. A restoration would help the community see that it has a jewel within its borders and would provide an opportunity for community revitalization. Black youth have veered away from playing baseball, partly because of the lack of facilities for minorities to develop the required skills of the sport; the park could provide the opportunity to develop those skills.

At the SABR Jack Graney Chapter Day on January 29, 2011, Greg Crouse and Morris Eckhouse, authors of Where Cleveland Played: Sport Shrines from League Park to Municipal Stadium, spoke on their book to a crowd of approximately 40 people gathered at Progressive Field in Cleveland. Their lecture asked what parts of League Park’s history should be remembered. They noted, for example, that the plaque at League Park does not mention the Addie Joss all-star game or the 1945 NFL champion Cleveland Rams who played there. Eckhouse added that he felt the park never should have been torn down, because it was a great architectural building with great stories and a
place where memorable things had happened. But when Eckhouse and Crouse asked who was in favor of restoring the space as a modest ballpark and museum, only five of the approximately 40 attendees raised their hands. And this was a group of baseball researchers and ardent fans. One skeptic responded, “League Park is in the ghetto, and is less attractive to use. Like it or not, that is a fact.” Others replied, “It is never going to happen,” noting the money required and that only a few people are truly interested.

Eckhouse added that what makes League Park special is that the space is still available to stand on and has not been built over with development. Maybe it is enough just to have the space, he wondered. Cleveland’s John Hay High School uses it for football practice, Eckhouse stated, and the coach makes a point of telling the players that they are playing on hallowed ground.

In my follow-up phone interview with Eckhouse on February 25, 2011, he indicated that the lack of enthusiasm shown for the renovation of League Park at the SABR meeting was probably due in part to the 30 years during which the project has floundered. He stated, “The thought is that we’ve been down this road before, what’s different this time?” In addition, many people are skeptical that anybody will go to the Hough neighborhood because of its long history as a rough part of town. And, to a large extent, people do not believe it will happen, given the other pressing financial issues that the city faces. The project has seemed to gain and then lose momentum, in a cycle that began back in 1979 with League Park Day. The key, Eckhouse remarked, is to find out how the community members feel about the space, since the park is part of their community and baseball has left their community.
Eckhouse described the story of League Park as about baseball, community, and the evolution of the space, adding that it is useful to know how the space has evolved. He stated:

The biggest challenge is, even if you figure out the story of the space, how would you get people there? There used to be basketball courts and a swimming pool, and now even those are gone. Why? Is it because one group wants the space returned to baseball of the 1920s, 1930s, [and] 1940s, and the other wants it to be purely a community space, occasionally used for baseball? (Eckhouse, telephone interview, February 25, 2011)

Current Use of League Park

While the site used to have youth baseball, there are no longer any baseball fields on the site. The Cleveland Baseball Federation offers free recreational baseball to residents of Cleveland, supported by Cleveland Indians Charities, and also operates the national Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) program to help keep kids off the streets and challenge them physically and academically. But the teams play at the Thurgood Marshall Recreation Center on Hough Avenue. Currently the community uses League Park for youth football and cheerleading, and on a nice day you can find people having picnics or walking their dogs there.

In 2008 the Cleveland Blues vintage base ball club was formed and played its first game at League Park, with former Cleveland Indians player and perfect-game pitcher Len Barker throwing out the first pitch. Playing by vintage rules, the team calls League Park its home field. On March 25-27, 2011, the Vintage Base Ball Association held its 16th
annual convention in Cleveland, welcoming vintage base ball players and enthusiasts from across the country. As a part of the convention, players played a vintage base ball match, using 1864 rules, at League Park (see Appendix Q). It was a very cold day, and many players were reticent to attend the game, but the draw of League Park overcame the cold. One player remarked, “It is just cool being there.”

In a joint interview, Cleveland Blues player Jay Demagall and Paul Mazoh of Bertman’s Ballpark Mustard both likened League Park to a cherished, sacred baseball place. Demagall said, “It’s magical there,” adding that the Cleveland Blues play their best there, and that others want to play there because of the site’s history. Mazoh indicated that his grandfather, a Polish immigrant, started selling food products at League Park and eventually sold the famous Bertman’s Ballpark Mustard there. Both agreed that the space should belong to “everybody,” including both baseball fans and the Hough community, to keep the spirit of the place alive, and that it is important to balance history with the community’s current needs. Demagall indicated that the Blues have played hundreds of games at the site and that it has always been safe. Both would like to see the park renovation keep the spirit of what once was there (personal interview, March 8, 2011).

Audio tours of League Park can be found on a website, magicalbaseball.com, run by past SABR president and author Morris Eckhouse. Tourists can phone a number while at a Cleveland baseball site and listen to history. The companion audio tour to the book Where Cleveland Played includes three stops for League Park.

In May 2011, the Cleveland State University Department of History launched a Cleveland History mobile application containing more than 400 oral histories, 60 videos,
and 1,000 images, including some of League Park (see http://clevelandhistorical.org).

Mobile applications are enriching historical tourism, offering comprehensive background about sites that is accessible by smartphone (Kessler, 2010).

League Park is also cited in many baseball pilgrimage books. Author Josh Pahigian listed it in his book *101 Baseball Places to See Before You Strike Out*, commenting that the remains of League Park leave an impression, though when the book was published there was still a baseball field on the site (Pahigian, 2008). In *The Ultimate Baseball Road Trip*, Pahigian and O’Connell (2004) recommended visiting League Park during the day due to the questionable neighborhood safety. They added, “There are efforts to restore the site, but the city should get on this one fast. It would be a shame to let it deteriorate any further. League Park is definitely worth a visit and a photo for anyone who is a fan of old ballparks” (p. 249).

**Same-Era Ballparks**

League Park’s 1910 renovation made it one of 13 new or reconstructed ballparks for major-league teams that were built between 1909 and 1915 with the new steel and concrete stands, though most still had wooden bleachers or other wooden features. These parks, built after the wooden parks and before the multipurpose stadiums, were sometimes referred to as “jewel box” ballparks or “classic” ballparks, with a focus on intimacy and baseball. These “classic” parks included Shibe Park in Philadelphia; Forbes Field, Pittsburgh; Polo Grounds, New York; Braves Field and Fenway Park, Boston; Navin Field, Detroit; Ebbets Field, Brooklyn; Comiskey Park and Wrigley Field, Chicago; Crosley Field in Cincinnati; Sportsman’s Park in St. Louis; Griffith Stadium in
Washington, D.C.; and League Park in Cleveland (Lowry, 2006; Ritter, 1992). Only Fenway and Wrigley are still in use as major-league parks; and a minor-league field, Rickwood Field, in Birmingham, Alabama, built in 1910, is preserved (Barra, 2010).

This surge of new parks helped to establish baseball as the national pastime and also helped to establish the American League. Seven of the new parks were for American League teams (Bluthardt, 1987). “These ballparks reflected their time and culture through their locations, construction and appearance, special features, and effects on their neighborhoods and the game itself” (Bluthardt, 1987, p. 43). Most parks sought impressive looks, with Comiskey modeling the Colosseum in Rome, and Cincinnati’s Crosley Field reflecting the classical era. Shibe Park in Philadelphia was a massive building, with Ionic pilasters flanking arches. Ebbets Field had a massive baseball-themed chandelier. In contrast, Fenway and League Park were modest with their brick facades (Bluthardt, 1987).

Today, the “jewel box” ballparks are marked and remembered in a variety of ways. Shibe Park in Philadelphia opened in 1909 and closed in 1970. It was damaged by fire in 1971 and further destroyed in 1976. The site has a plaque but is mostly an unmarked, vacant lot, with a church occupying part of it. Forbes Field in Pittsburgh also opened in 1909 and closed in 1970; remnants of it, including a portion of the original outfield wall, are integrated into the University of Pittsburgh campus. A path of bricks in the sidewalk shows where the rest of the wall was, and home plate is encased in one of the campus buildings (Pahigian, 2008). Polo Grounds in New York was one of several parks referred to by the same name on the same site. The third Polo Grounds was built in 1890. A fire in 1911 destroyed the grandstand portion of the park. Polo Grounds IV was
built on the same site with concrete and steel. The park was demolished in 1964, and public housing opened on the site in 1968; the only remnant of the field is a stairway where fans could stand outside the stadium and get a clear view of the game without buying a ticket (Lowry, 2006; Ritter, 1992).

Braves Field in Boston was built in 1915 and closed in 1952. Portions of the park are currently part of the Nickerson Field sports complex, owned by Boston University. Fenway Park in Boston was built in 1912 and is still used by the Boston Red Sox. Fenway’s left-field wall, affectionately referred to as the Green Monster, is akin to the right-field wall that once existed at League Park (Lowry, 2006; Ritter, 1992).

Detroit’s Navin Field, also known as Tiger Stadium and Briggs Stadium, opened in 1912 and was abandoned in 1999. Despite efforts to save the park, it was demolished in 2008-2009 after sitting vacant for nine years. Baseball writer, author, and analyst Gary Gillette was actively involved in the process to try to save Tiger Stadium, serving as board member and secretary of the Old Tiger Stadium Conservancy. He indicated that the biggest barriers in saving the stadium were the poor economy and politics (telephone interview, March 17, 2011). Volunteers maintain a ballfield on the site.

Ebbets Field in Brooklyn was built in 1913 and closed in 1957. The field was razed in 1960, and a high-rise apartment building exists on the site, with a plaque marking its location. Comiskey Park in Chicago opened in 1910 and was torn down in 1990 after a new Comiskey Park was built across the street. The original site became a parking lot, on which an outline of a batter’s box indicates where home plate was situated in the old park (Lowry, 2006; Ritter, 1992).
Crosley Field in Cincinnati was home to the National League Reds from 1912 through 1970. The city of Cincinnati bought the field and demolished it in 1972. The site today consists of several buildings, a parking lot, and a street that was put in after the demolition. A plaque on the site commemorates the old ballpark. A life-size replica of the original Crosley Field was built in Blue Ash, Ohio (Lowry, 2006; Ritter, 1992).

Sportsman’s Park was the name of several parks built on the same site in St. Louis. The steel and concrete version of Sportsman’s Park was built in 1909 and closed in 1966. The site is now home to a boys and girls club; the buildings have been demolished, but a sports field still exists (Lowry, 2006; Ritter, 1992).

Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C. was constructed quickly to replace a wooden structure on the same site that had been built in 1891 but destroyed by fire in 1911. The new concrete and steel park was originally called National Park, but was subsequently renamed for its owner, Clark Griffith. The park closed in 1961 and the space deteriorated due to neglect. It was demolished in 1965, and a hospital now occupies the site (Lowry, 2006; Ritter, 1992).

An example of an historic ballpark that has survived is Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama. Built in 1910, it is preserved to reflect its look from the 1930s and 1940s. It is open year-round and serves as a ballpark and museum, with self-guided tours that lead visitors through the stands, dugouts, and fields while providing historical information. In 1985, when the park was threatened by a deteriorating neighborhood, crime, and parking problems, construction of a new, modern minor-league stadium began in the suburb of Hoover. The last minor-league game at Rickwood was played in August 1987, though the park continued to be used for local baseball and football games. In
1995 a group of dedicated fans, business, and community leaders formed the Friends of Rickwood, and since 2005 more than $2 million has been spent to restore the field. Rickwood is certified by the National Park Service’s Historic Building Survey as the oldest baseball grandstand on its original site in the nation (Barra, 2010).

The Friends of Rickwood provided a model for saving old ballparks that preservationists have utilized for other sites, including Durham Athletic Park in Durham, North Carolina; Bossie Field in Evansville, Indiana; and Engel Field in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Marketing it as a high-profile baseball location and as a living history museum saved Rickwood. The reasons to save Rickwood included “status as America’s oldest ballpark, its rich history, its role in the community and its civil rights story, its architectural significance, and its potential to be a catalyst in community revitalization” (Barra, 2010, p. 216). Efforts to market the site have included brochures, websites, travel guides, and the self-guided tour. But the key to the site’s survival is funding, which relies on continued popular interest (Barra, 2010).
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS

League Park is a unique space. While other historic “jewel” baseball parks have been redeveloped, or abandoned, League Park remains an open space waiting to be remembered. It is a green space utilized by the community and still cherished by the baseball world. It is a multi-layered story about League Park and Hough. It is a story about the site of some of the most famous moments in baseball history, and about an inner-city community that was once a prominent neighborhood, but has battled issues of race, poverty, crime, drugs, and gangs for years. In addition, the story includes history of other sports and of the community. And finally, it is about the politics of a struggling city.

Through ethnographic research, including interviews, observations, and a review of primary-source literature, a thick description of League Park was developed. How do this thick description and research bridge to a design intervention? Knowing the audience is as important as knowing the story. Both must be understood in order to develop the story in the space and add to the authenticity of the design. There are two distinct audiences for League Park. Baseball enthusiasts revere the site, but, for those who live in the Hough neighborhood and use the park, League Park does not appear to be a cherished treasure. It is a jewel in the rough, and its surrounding residents are not connected to its history. How can the community feel a sense of pride and ownership about a neglected space with a littered field, or an abandoned building with broken windows and graffiti?
The Hough community is invested in having a say about the space; local residents want to continue to have a place for community events and a centerpiece that they can be proud of. However, many who reside in Hough do not know the history of the space and have no emotional connection to it. The community needs to feel ownership of the space, but many in the community do not know its historic value. Engaging the community in a participatory design process could serve to educate the community about the space and its history. To some extent, participatory design is happening through the League Park Heritage Commission’s role in the proposed city of Cleveland renovation. The community has been invited to attend meetings and provide input. But, as Gist indicated, attendance varies because of the history of stops and starts of the project. Over the years the city of Cleveland has had two different “coming soon” signs on the space. As Lynch (1972) indicated, this type of false promotion breeds negativity. An apprehension exists in the Hough neighborhood because of false hopes of renovation and fears that the space will not be “theirs.”

As the research indicated, the many times that restoration talk has started and stopped have left people wondering if and when the project will ever really happen, especially when the city has so many pressing economic concerns. Others continue to be optimistic and enthused by the idea. To many the Hough neighborhood still bears the scars of the 1960s riots and is considered an unsafe place. For those who do not live in the area, a drive through the neighborhood sends mixed messages, revealing lovely homes mixed in with boarded-up buildings; the scattered nature of revitalization makes it hard to tell if Hough is on the upswing or downswing.
Some baseball enthusiasts are invested in revitalizing the space for the preservation of history. But even these enthusiasts can be broken down into groups: those who would actually visit the park, others who might drive by but not get out of the car for fear of their safety, and those who like the idea of the revitalization but would never visit the site anyhow because of the location and its rough history. Given the multitude of audiences and the various levels of engagement, the story that is told needs to be accessible on several levels in order to connect with a variety of audiences and to respect the needs of all. And the research indicates that, to engage the community, the story should not be limited to baseball, but should be inclusive of the total history of the site. As Poettiger and Purinton indicated, narratives can be layered with past and present history in a nonlinear fashion (1998). In addition, this multilayered approach is necessary because baseball is not as revered as it once was among African American youth. A wider approach is necessary. Baseball has struggled in the inner city and is not played nearly as much as other sports like football and basketball. Baseball historian Dorothy Seymour Mills writes that society’s interest in baseball has changed. Today’s youths have many more entertainment options, while older fans still appreciate the history and memory of the sport (Mills, 2010). Therefore, creating an emotional connection with the space for the youths of Hough is a great challenge.

The sheer quantity of efforts since 1979 to restore the site indicates both a desire and a need to mark the space. Perhaps this next round of renovation plans will move forward, but in any case there remains an opportunity to tell the story of League Park at League Park, for the community to know the treasure that is in its midst, and for visitors to have something to see when they visit. A different, less expensive approach to the
space can be adopted, and a temporary intervention might spur the necessary activity, ownership, and pride needed to move larger efforts forward. As Hamdi (2004) wrote, temporary placemaking design has the ability to stimulate change through small changes in the environment.

In a booklet entitled *Designing a Better Cleveland*, Stephen Litt (2010) advocated applying design concepts to make Cleveland a better city. He added:

> The complexity of city planning and urban design can seem overwhelming, and large-scale solutions can be costly. But not all urban interventions need to be expensive. Sometimes the wisest course is to break down big projects into small-scale segments that can be built in increments. (Litt, 2010, p. 18)

Temporary designs are an option in EGD that provides life to spaces in the city. In 2009 Kent State’s Urban Design Collaborative promoted temporary uses of vacant lots and buildings in the city of Cleveland’s Pop Up City program. This program sought to bring dead spaces in the city to life, even if only briefly. “Pop Up City is an urban design experiment that tests alternative scenarios for future developments and provokes debate about how we can and should use Cleveland’s many spectacular but underutilized spaces” (Schwartz, 2009).

Nancy Ann Coyne, artist, curator, and visual anthropologist, designed a temporary environmental graphic design piece for an exhibit for the Twin Cities skyway system in Minnesota. Called “Speaking of Home,” it showcased 23 Americans on large portraits printed on fabric and indicating their countries of origin, with text panels explaining each subject’s definition of “home” as well as the word *home* in their native language. Coyne called her exhibit “an insertion, an intervention, into what otherwise is a purely
retail/office environment designed for work and consumptions. As a colleague pointed out, the project unfolded like a thought process in space” (Heller, 2008). Heller drew this conclusion:

American cities and towns are increasingly interested in creating places that imbue a sense of shared identity and public history or create an experience for its citizens. The broader message or question: in what ways can public art and environmental graphic design transform civic, utilitarian architecture and built environments into places of meaning, intimacy, and emotional connection for the public through the power of design. (Heller, 2008)

In many ways, the green space of League Park leaves it open to placemaking interpretation and intervention. For those who have visited the site, or who are baseball fans, the hallowed baseball grounds have a pervasive sense of place, layered with a history that lurks beneath its green grass. But the richness of the space is buried to the extent that not everybody is aware of its history. Older residents and baseball fans have treasured memories and stories, but most of today’s community members know the place as a green space where people can practice sports and walk their dogs. While history can be defined by the facts of the past, memory—how people experienced and remember the site—also must play a critical role in telling the narrative of the space. Its rich history, including baseball, football, and various other community events, along with League Park’s subsequent years of neglect, provides a context for interpretive design, and shared memories help to rebuild emotional connection to the place. Giving the community such an emotional connection to the space is critical to the success of any League Park restoration.
For the site to be truly authentic, the original ballpark would need to be still standing. Obviously it cannot be reconstructed, but the ticket office and remaining grandstand wall offer a glimpse of the authentic site. These structures should thus be preserved to tell part of the story. In addition, reflecting the history and memories of the space through interpretive and narrative elements that do not mar the original site would add to the authenticity of the design approach. Creating designs that fit within the context of the site and incorporate community input would help to prevent any Disneyfication of the honored place.
CHAPTER VI

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

A temporary environmental graphic design project at League Park has great potential, along with several limitations. It is important not to degrade any of the remaining elements of a historic site, so painting murals, installing hardware, or imprinting text on the brick would be inadvisable. In addition, it is important to recognize and tastefully acknowledge the historical significance of the site. As Fleming wrote, it is important to “exercise good judgment in order to avoid physically overwhelming a place. It is somewhat ironic if a historic marker further erodes the character of the place it describes” (2007, p. 233).

The glass in the ticket office is broken, and graffiti marks the brick, showing that the site is a target for vandalism and thus limiting the materials that can be used. Elements that could be easily accessed or removed would be ill-advised. In addition, given the hope that substantial renovation will soon move forward, the cost of the intervention should be reasonable, but the installation should be durable enough to remain in place as long as needed. In the following discussion, the process of actual fabrication is not described. The design ideas shown are meant to suggest how the story can be told in the space through a temporary design intervention that is mindful of limited financial resources, accessibility concerns, and issues of vandalism.

Within these project parameters, it should also be noted that the design suggestions are not as comprehensive as they would be if the community had been fully engaged in a participatory design process. Even so, this project has sought to indicate that understanding the story can lead to the creation of solutions that resonate with
authenticity. The community could be involved in the temporary design intervention in a variety of ways, such as composing stories to include in the space, having school children included in the art-making process, or having seniors from the Fatima Center share their stories. In addition, corresponding art-making projects, lectures, and bulletin boards could be implemented in conjunction with any design intervention to enhance the experience and story. This process could expand the scope of the project and educate residents about the historic site in their neighborhood. It is not possible or necessarily desired, especially in a temporary design intervention, to tell the whole story of League Park; rather, the goal is to connect the audience to the place in a memorable and engaging way, with more than just a plaque.

The design is limited spatially as well. Three design concepts, all of which recognize a single gateway or focal point of the park, have been conceived based on the thick description of the research. The three concepts overlap somewhat with regard to content, but each presents a different approach. The following discussion is about how and where a story might be told in the League Park space. The designs are limited concept studies to reflect basic ideas. Ideally, community input would guide and influence the design direction.

**Gateway**

The ticket office and grandstand wall at League Park represent the last remaining parts of the original park. They constitute the focal point of the space and are situated only a few blocks away from the major east-side thoroughfare of Chester Avenue. Their location at Lexington and East 66th is also directly across the street from the newer
Fatima Family Center. This corner, which sees significant traffic and is actively used by pedestrians, provides a type of canvas on which to install temporary designs. As Hamdi (2010) indicated, if the process were likened to “urban acupuncture” this is a critical part of the space at which to tap into its energy.

Since the ticket office building is prone to vandalism, the mostly broken windows would be replaced with plexiglass or a similar product, so as to limit their ability to break. These windows would provide a framework for the display of interpretive information behind them. However, the height of the street-level windows are not conducive for young people to see into them, so each design would incorporate a simple concrete step below the windows, recreating the experience that the kids on Lexington Avenue had long ago as they looked for things to step on so that they could peer into the game through the wall. The remaining perimeter of the park, which is more residential, is not recommended for inclusion in the project for both safety and visibility reasons.

A simple wayfinding sign at the corner of East 66th and Chester, acknowledging League’s Park existence, would go a long way in telling its story. Thousands of people travel downtown every week on Chester Avenue without realizing that the site of this historic ballpark is only a few blocks away. Just putting up a sign on this busy street would provide awareness of both the park’s existence and its location. In addition, on the south side of East 66th and Chester is one of Cleveland’s largest urban gardens, the Cleveland Urban Farm, and the oldest building in Cleveland, the Dunham Tavern, is right around the corner on Euclid Avenue. Connecting these historic and thriving places with League Park would help to position this part of town as a historic area.
Curious and interested fans turning onto East 66th toward League Park would see new homes, abandoned lots, closed businesses, churches, and Mansfield Frazier’s vineyard. Identifying the League Park ticket office with something more than just its current, nondescript historical plaque would signal to fans that they had arrived at League Park and indicate that there was something more to see. The design recommendations would incorporate elements visible from a car or bus for those just driving by, but would also include more details for those who decided to get out of their car and look around, and for pedestrians. The design implementation would focus heavily on a tiered visibility and layers. This would allow people who drove by to experience the park on one level, while those who parked and walked around would obtain another level of information. A layered approach also reflects the layered history of the site. The narrative would emphasize the story of League Park through old photos and people who had played or impacted the site in some way. In this way the site could permit individuals to connect to it from a multitude of perspectives, not just baseball. It is important to note other historical events so as to emotionally connect to the audience in ways beyond baseball. While some might know Babe Ruth, they might also be interested to know that Sousa played there, or that Martin Luther King Jr. spoke there. The wider range of stories and people creates more opportunities to connect to a larger audience.

**Temporary Design Concepts**

The first design concept is based on the story that women used to come to the ballpark and sit above the men with whom they came. The women would knit, but would also use their string to tie notes and gifts for the players, sending them down like
fishhooks on a line to the recipients below. This recollection creates a striking visual image and fits into the idea that this design is delivering messages to the community and visitors. The concept also fits in with the term “tight-knit community” and the idea that a baseball and baseball mitt both contain stitching. Knitting and stitching elicit multiple visual references that could be woven into the design to tell stories about the community and baseball.

To implement this design theme, the ticket office windows would display historical images and stories about League Park, each appearing to be hung on string as if lowered to the viewer. In addition, the existing chain-link fence on Lexington could be utilized as a canvas to weave in information. Corresponding street banners along Lexington could also be utilized. This project could engage the seniors at the Fatima Family Center in a coordinated knitting project, related to the overall theme.

The second concept refers to the movie Field of Dreams, based on the novel of the same name by W. P. Kinsella. Inevitably, when talk turns to building a baseball park, people recall the famous line, “If you build it, they will come.” In the movie, a farmer plows down his corn to build a baseball field, and ghosts of historic baseball players, including “Shoeless Joe” Jackson (who played for Cleveland before going to Chicago and becoming a key figure in the Black Sox scandal), wander out from the cornfields to play baseball. In the film, the character Terence Mann, played by actor James Earl Jones, sums up the reason why people would visit the ballpark:

The one constant through all the years, Ray, has been baseball. America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It has been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt and erased again. But baseball has marked the time. This field, this game:
it’s a part of our past, Ray. It reminds of us of all that once was good and it could be again. Oh … people will come, Ray. People will most definitely come. (Gordon, Gordon, & Robinson, 1989)

While at first this approach may sound too much like a cliché, it actually provides a strong hook to a temporary design solution. The phrase “If you build it, they will come” could be used as a witty tag to pull people to the site, and Cleveland’s nearby urban farm could be recruited as a partner to actually plant some corn along the outfield. The corn would be only a temporary intervention and would not take away the community space that residents currently use for youth football. This idea could literally provide food for the neighborhood, just as the park’s restoration is perceived as a potential economic contributor to Hough. In some ways, planting on the site would be a very authentic solution, because the Hough neighborhood was originally farmland, and this fact too could be communicated in the interpretative elements. And those who have driven by Frazier’s vineyard on East 66th know how grapevines in the inner city seize one’s curiosity; planting corn along an outfield in the neighborhood could have the same visual impact, making people pause and wonder what was going on. Those baseball fans who did make the pilgrimage to the site would readily understand the reference.

While the corn could provide the hook, the corresponding visual elements that could be included in the windows of the ticket office and in banners would provide the explanatory depth, focusing on the people who played there and who supported League Park’s rebirth. The visuals could play on the line, “When you build it, they will come,” highlighting the various historic and community figures who have come to the park and thus tying in stories of both baseball and the community. Visitors could imagine the
people who had once played at League Park or who have played a role in seeking to save it. It would be critical to not limit these names to famous baseball players, but to add in community names, and also to have a way for community members to include names. Community members could be asked: if the City of Cleveland does finally rebuild the park, who from the past would come? Given the number of newspaper obituaries mentioning that the deceased fondly remembered visiting League Park in his or her youth, it is conceivable that League Park lived in the hearts of many who could be included on this wall and in other corresponding print or web modalities.

The final solution, perhaps the most traditional, would focus on the game of baseball and baseball elements, while still incorporating old photographs and timelines of historic events at the park. This design would rely heavily on visual graphics that represent baseball, with supporting photographs. The larger ticket office windows would be used to display baseball images, layered with specific details about the park and about past players, influential figures, and community members who had supported League Park. While the overall image would represent baseball, the photos would not be limited to baseball, but would pull from the entire history of League Park. The timeline would cover events from the park’s construction to the present. In addition, the sidewalks and chain-link fence would be marked with numbers to highlight and orient visitors to the field’s length. Particular attention would be paid to honoring and marking the famous right-field wall.
Map of Hough

The area of Hough in Cleveland, Ohio is generally defined as being bordered by Euclid Avenue to the south, Superior Avenue to the north, East 55th Street to the west, and East 105th Street to the east.

Hough Neighborhood

Currently, Hough is a mixture of old, boarded-up houses, vacant lots, abandoned buildings, and brand new homes.

Map of League Park

League Park is situated with Lexington Avenue to the south, Linwood Avenue to the north, East 66th to the east, and East 70th to the west.
Site Audit

Remnants of League Park include the ticke office and a grandstand wall.

Figure 19. Site audit of League Park as it appears today (2011). Courtesy of Kevin Reeves.
Description

The colors reflect the earth tones of the baseball field, as well as the colors of the baseball teams that played at League Park including the Blues, the Cleveland Indians (blue and red), and the Cleveland Buckeyes (blue and red). To reflect the history, LHF Billhead 1900, a decorative font reminiscent of the turn of the century, is used in headlines.

LHF Billhead 1900 Regular
ABCDEFghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890!()$::&
Concept 1 - Notes on Strings
This concept reflects the historical notion of notes being dropped down to players on the field.

*Figure 21a. Concept 1: Notes on strings.*
Concept 1 - Notes on Strings

This concept reflects the historical notion of notes being dropped down to players on the field.

Figure 21b. Concept 1: Notes on strings.
Concept 1 - Notes on Strings

This concept reflects the historical notion of notes being dropped down to players on the field.

Figure 21c. Concept 1: Notes on strings.
Concept 1 - Notes on Strings

This concept reflects the historical notion of notes being dropped down to players on the field.

Figure 21d. Concept 1: Notes on strings.
Concept 1 - Notes on Strings

This concept reflects the historical notion of notes being dropped down to players on the field.

*Figure 21e.* Concept 1: Notes on strings.
Concept 1 - Notes on Strings

This concept reflects the historical notion of notes being dropped down to players on the field.

Figure 21f. Concept 1: Notes on strings.
Concept 1 - Notes on Strings

This concept reflects the historical notion of notes being dropped down to players on the field.

After

Figure 21g. Concept 1: Notes on strings.
Concept 2 - If You Build It...

This concept reflects the “if you build it” theme from the movie Field of Dreams. The design focuses on the people who played at or had an impact on League Park.

Banners

Corn in the outfield

Figure 22a. Concept 2: If you build it …
Figure 22b. Concept 2: If you build it …

This concept reflects the “if you build it” theme from the movie Field of Dreams. The design focuses on the people who played at or had an impact on League Park.
Concept 2 - If You Build It...

This concept reflects the “if you build it” theme from the movie Field of Dreams. The design focuses on the people who played at or had an impact on League Park.

Figure 22c. Concept 2: If you build it …
Concept 2 - If You Build It...

This concept reflects the “if you build it” theme from the movie *Field of Dreams*. The design focuses on the people who played at or had an impact on League Park.
Concept 3 - Baseball

This concept incorporates baseball elements in the environment in a subtle but evoking way to draw attention to the fact that the space used to be a ballpark.

Figure 23a. Concept 3: Baseball.
Concept 3 - Baseball

This concept incorporates baseball elements in the environment in a subtle but evoking way to draw attention to the fact that the space used to be a ballpark.

Figure 23b. Concept 3: Baseball.
Concept 3 - Baseball

This concept incorporates baseball elements in the environment in a subtle but evoking way to draw attention to the fact that the space used to be a ballpark.

Figure 23c. Concept 3: Baseball.
Concept 3 - Baseball

This concept incorporates baseball elements in the environment in a subtle but evoking way to draw attention to the fact that the space used to be a ballpark.

Figure 23d. Concept 3: Baseball.
Photo Credits for Design Concepts

The design concepts utilize photos from the following sources:


Feller, Bob (n.d.). Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.

Gehrig, Lou & Ruth, Babe (1927). Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.

Hughes, Adella Prentiss (n.d.). Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.


Kilbane, Johnny (1921). Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.


League Park, various (n.d.). Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.

Lewis, Fannie (1971). Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.


Figure 24. Photo credits for design concepts.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

An opportunity exists to tell the story at League Park. It has existed for a long time. Perhaps the latest proposal by the city of Cleveland will move forward, making any temporary designs unnecessary. Regardless, the story of League Park is yearning to be told. As those who played there and those who witnessed games there grow older, the memory of the historic park fades further away. Their stories need to be captured before the memories are too far away. As writer Morris Eckhouse indicated, the space lacks a truly comprehensive book on its history, and a full-length history of League Park is long overdue (Eckhouse, telephone interview, February 25, 2011). The story should be told in the space temporarily at first, and more permanently when a new park is built. And those in the community need to know that they are the keepers of the historic space. They can fulfill this role only if they know the story and feel connected to it.

Regardless of whether Cleveland moves forward with a renovation of League Park, it is hoped that this research might encourage others to find historic sites in the city that might have a story to tell through environmental graphic design. I have sought to suggest how the use of temporary environmental graphic design can provide forward momentum, recognizing that even a small change can be a catalyst, an impetus for movement. Hough has clearly struggled for a long time as a community, and the city of Cleveland has struggled as well. But League Park is a diamond in the rough, and it needs to be shined for the community and the city, and for baseball fans everywhere.

Philip Germany, in an article entitled “Acres of Baseball Diamonds,” recalled a story of an African farmer who heard tales of diamonds on the continent. The man sold
his farm at a cheap price and went looking for the diamonds. When his search came up empty-handed, he drowned himself. But the person who had purchased the farmer’s land ended up finding diamonds in a creek on the land. The concept of diamonds hidden in our midst can be applied throughout the city of Cleveland, and specifically to League Park. While the efforts to restore League Park continue to be discussed, what other diamonds are there in the city? (Germany, 2009). Germany adds:

If we are only patient and take time to study and explore nearby surroundings instead of dismissing them as old and useless we’ll find the gems that can help turn this city around and enhance the urban landscape. We could be standing on our own acres of diamonds. (Germany, 2009, p. 5)

Whether a new ballpark is built or we Clevelanders are again left lamenting that “there’s always next year,” there is an opportunity to tell a story in the space, for those who visit and for those who live there. Little League coaches often tell their young hitters to quit trying to hit home runs and just get on base. Maybe the city of Cleveland and League Park can heed that lesson and, rather than going for the home run, aim for hitting a single. Maybe just telling the story in the space is a good place to start.
Appendix A: Text of Ohio Historical Marker Commemorating League Park

League Park opened on May 1, 1891 with the legendary Cy Young pitching for the Cleveland Spiders in their win over the Cincinnati Redlegs. The park remained the home of Cleveland’s professional baseball and football teams until 1946. In 1920 the Cleveland Indians’ Elmer Smith hit the first grand slam home run and Billy Wambsganss executed the only unassisted triple play in World Series history. Babe Ruth hit his 500th homerun over the park’s short right field wall in 1929. With the park as home field, the Cleveland Buckeyes won the Negro World Series in 1945.

Sponsored by Cleveland Landmarks Commission, Rotary Club of Cleveland, and The Ohio Historical Society; 1979
Appendix B: Current League Park Renovation Sign

(2011) Courtesy of Kevin Reeves.
Appendix C: Hough Area Map, 1881

1881

The plot of land owned by William H. Burridge would become the site of League Park. Pink markings indicate a brick or stone building, yellow marks indicate a frame building.

Note the concentration of buildings along Euclid Avenue.

Appendix D: Specifications of League Park, 1891

Distances (in Feet)

Left field: 353
Left-field power alley: 352
Left-center field: 362
Center field: 409
Center field corner: 445
Right-center field: 390
Right-field power alley: 348
Right field: 290

Height of Fences

Left field: 10 feet
Center field: 10 to 20 feet
Right field: 20 feet wood, 20 feet fencing

Seating capacity: 9,000

Home to National League Cleveland Spiders, May 1, 1891 to September 24, 1899;
American League Cleveland Blues (later Broncos, then Naps), April 29, 1901 to September 6, 1909
Appendix E: Photos of the Original League Park, 1891

(n.d.) Courtesy of the Baseball Hall of Fame.
Appendix F: Specifications of League Park, 1910

Architect: Osborn Engineering

Distances (in Feet)

Left field: 375
Left-field power alley: 387
Left-center field: 413
Center field: 420
Right-center field: 340
Right-field power alley: 319
Right field: 290

Height of Fences

Left field: 5 feet
Center field: 10 feet
Right field: 20 feet concrete, 25 feet screen

Seating capacity: 21,414 (1910)

Home to National League Cleveland Indians, April 21, 1910, to July 30, 1932, and April 17, 1934, to September 21, 1946; Negro League Cleveland Buckeyes, 1943 to 1948 and April-June 1950
Appendix G: Photos of the Reconstructed League Park, 1910

(n.d.) Courtesy of the Baseball Hall of Fame.
Appendix G (continued)

1910

Scoreboard 1942

1911

1910

Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.
Appendix H: Activities In and Around League Park

Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.
Appendix I: Hough Area Map and Dunn Field, 1921

Renamed Dunn Field in 1920.

Dunn Field Pointers (1921)

After the 1920 championship season, a brochure was printed describing available seating and views available for purchase.

To Our Patrons

DEAR PATRONS: In recognition of the loyal support which has been accorded our efforts to provide Cleveland with its first World’s Championship club and its facilities for the enjoyment of the public which has brought the record earnings, we have arranged for a series of games which will be most appealing to our patrons. The arrangement has been made to provide for the enjoyment of all those who have supported our efforts in the past and to offer an opportunity for new patrons to find out the advantages of supporting this club.

The following pages of this brochure are descriptive of the outcomes to Dunn Field, and the value scheme of box and reserved seat tickets, and are designed to attract our patrons so that we may offer the highest advantage of the service we desire to render with the minimum of effort and confusion.

C. J. DUNN, President
The Cleveland Baseball Company

Appendix J: League Park in Decline

Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.
Appendix J (continued)

1961

1966

Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.
### Appendix K: Historic Baseball Events at League Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 1, 1891</td>
<td>Cy Young pitches opening game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2, 3, 5 1895</td>
<td>Hosts first 3 games of Temple Cup (Cleveland Spiders vs. Baltimore Orioles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Temple Cup champions (precursor to World Series)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 8, 1896</td>
<td>Lost Temple Cup Championship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 30, 1899</td>
<td>League Park hosts last National League home game after the Cleveland Spiders finish with one of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>worst records in the history of baseball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 29, 1901</td>
<td>Cleveland Bluebirds first MLB game in American League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2, 1907</td>
<td>Debut of female pitching sensation Alta Weiss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2, 1908</td>
<td>Addie Joss perfect game against Chicago White Sox, 1 to 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 19, 1909</td>
<td>Shortstop Neal Ball first unassisted triple play in AL History at League Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 19, 1910</td>
<td>Cy Young wins 500th game, Cleveland Naps 5, Senators 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 24, 1911</td>
<td>Addie Joss Memorial Game (first &quot;all-star game&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 27, 1914</td>
<td>Nap Lajoie gets 3000th hit in League Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 19, 1915</td>
<td>Washington Senators steal a record eight bases in one inning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26, 1916</td>
<td>John Gladstone &quot;Jack&quot; Graney – recognized as first player to wear a uniform number and later first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>player to move from field to broadcasting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 10, 1920</td>
<td>Historic firsts in World Series play:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-first grand slam in World Series history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-first unassisted triple in World Series play, Bill Wambsganss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-first pitcher to hit a home run in World Series, Jim Bagby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 12 1920</td>
<td>Indians win first World Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 7, 1923</td>
<td>Indians scored 27 runs against Red Sox – set then American League record for most runs in 9 inning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 22, 1923</td>
<td>Walter Johnson logged his 3000th career strikeout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17, 1925</td>
<td>Tris Speaker gets 3000th hit in League Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13, 1929</td>
<td>First MLB game with both teams wearing numbers on jerseys, Indians versus Yankees at League Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 11, 1929</td>
<td>Babe Ruth hits his 500th career home run, first player to do so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10, 1932</td>
<td>Cleveland’s John Burnett collects a single game record 9 hits in 18 innings, Indians get 33 hits,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Athletics 25 – set one and two team records, Philadelphia defeats Cleveland 18-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 6, 1936</td>
<td>Bob Feller, age 17, debut in exhibition game against St. Louis Cardinals, 8 pitches 3 innings,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strikes out 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 13, 1936</td>
<td>Bob Feller beats Philadelphia 5-2, allows 2 hits, strikes out 17 for new American League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strikeout record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 16, 1941</td>
<td>Final game of Joe DiMaggio’s 56-game hitting streak, 3 hits (a double and a single)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 24, 1945</td>
<td>Satchel Paige and Jackie Robinson with the Negro League Kansas City Monarchs lose to the Cleveland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buckeyes 3-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2, 1945</td>
<td>Wilbur Hayes Day at League Park to celebrate business owner of the Cleveland Buckeyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 20, 1945</td>
<td>The Cleveland Buckeyes win Negro League championship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 13, 1946</td>
<td>Ted Williams hits only career inside the park home run – clinches pennant for Red Sox, Red Sox 1,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cleveland 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 21, 1946</td>
<td>Last Indians game at League Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>The Cleveland Buckeyes win Negro American League pennant, lose championship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix L: Efforts to Clean Up Hough

Hough beautification
1959

1965

Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.
Appendix M: After the 1966 Riots

1967
Lexington and East 77th

1967

1967

1968

1978
East 70th and Linwood

Courtesy of Special Collections, Cleveland State University Library.
Appendix N: Aerial Photos of Hough and League Park

1952 - 2010

Aerial photos reveal the changes in the League Park space and the Hough neighborhood.

Appendix N (continued)

1952

Appendix N (continued)

1962

Appendix N (continued)

1970

Appendix N (continued)

Appendix N (continued)

2002

Appendix N (continued)

2010

Appendix O: The Hough Neighborhood Today

Dunham Tavern on Euclid Avenue

Cleveland Urban Farm

Chateau Hough

Chateau Hough

Fatima Family Center

Appendix P: League Park Bleachers Before Demolition

The remaining bleachers were torn down in 2002.

Appendix Q: League Park as Vintage Base Ball Field

The vintage base ball team, the Cleveland Base Ball Blues Club, plays their home games at League Park.

Collection of the author.
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“To Give Opera at League Park ” (1916, April 30). *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, p. 42. Retrieved from Newsbank/Readex online database (Cleveland Plain Dealer Historical Newspaper, 1231F770C86F4188) at http://infoweb.newsbank.com


