

LAMAR PORTER FIELD AND MEMORIES OF LITTLE ROCK SPORTS DURING THE 1950'S

Two guys, Norris Guinn and Willis Callaway, wrote a book about growing up around Lamar Porter Field in Little Rock and playing baseball there in the 1950's. They also included a history of the various baseball and softball leagues that were played in Little Rock in that era. The major league accomplishments of Little Rock area players Brooks Robinson, Bill Dickey, A. L. Gatewood, Pat Seerey, Leo Nonnenkamp, Tom Gulley, Lee Rogers and others are an interesting reading.

Numerous players, coaches, and umpires are mentioned, along with some humorous things that happened along the way. The book follows the 1952 Little Rock Little League All-Star team in its journey to the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA., giving game details and capturing the emotions of young boys reaching a dream shared by so many kids who enjoy playing baseball. How Little Rock's Jr. Deputy Little League baseball program got its start, including the construction of the field, is included.

Lamar Porter was home to numerous state champions over the years including the Midget League, Pony League, American Legion Doughboys and the expanded Little Rock American Legion Baseball League. There are over 90 pages of pictures and newspaper articles covering the players and coaches in these leagues, including individual and team photos. Pictures are also included that show Lamar Porter Field under WPA construction from 1935-37. A copy of the 1935 original Warranty Deed from the Porter family donating the land to the city of Little Rock is shown. The Porter family bought the land and designated it for park use in memory of their son, Lamar Porter, who died at 21 in a car accident while a college student in Virginia.

Lamar Porter Field, located at 7th and Johnson near Stiff Station, was a playground melting pot for kids from all parts of the city where they learned responsibility, and how to make friends and play together without adults supervising their actions. Many "Porter Brats" earned their first pay check at a very early age by dusting seats, shagging balls and doing other odd jobs around Porter Field.

The co-authors also contrast the conservative, peaceful culture of the 1950's to the more liberal and sometimes violent society of today. Without worry or fear, parents would let their young kids spend the larger part of the day at Porter with no way to contact them. The little guys would ride their balloon tire bikes for practice and games with their glove, bat and flashlight on the handle bar to Porter and back home without any fear day or night. The kids had Winkler's Drive-In, Brightop's Service Station and several Mom and Pop grocery stores in the area to get refreshments and snacks so there was no need to go home for lunch. Before air-conditioning, video games and play stations, kids spent most the day outside with their friends during the summer time. Today many parents are afraid to let their kids out their sight, and for good reason. Hopefully, this book will bring back some fond memories for those who grew up in the 1950's.

The 320 page 8-1/2 x 11 soft back book is \$25, with \$5 going to the Friends of Lamar Porter organization which maintains Porter Field and provides summer baseball leagues. Add \$5 for postage and handling if ordered by mail, using a check or money order, and

allow ten days for delivery. You may also order the book by phone from the SportStop using your credit card and expect delivery within three to four days. The book may be purchased at the following locations:

The SportStop (501-224-4033) in Trellis Square, 10720 Rodney Parham Road, Little Rock, AR, 72212

Troy's Sports Center in Southwest LR (501-568-6554), 7507 Baseline Road, Little Rock, AR, 72209