



September 13, 2021

Michael Greguol, CAHP  
Heritage Planner  
City Planning  
City of London (Ontario)

Dear Mr. Greguol:

As Major League Baseball's Official Historian, I write today in support of the City of London's application to the Canadian Federal Government to recognize Labatt Memorial Park as a National Heritage Site.

This improbable survivor dates to 1877, when the professional game and league play were new: the International Association was founded as a rival to the National League, established the year before. Today scholars of the game identify the International Association as the game's first minor league, with many players from both sides of the national border.

The earliest MLB ballpark still in use is Boston's Fenway Park, from 1912. The concrete-and steel edifices of that era testified to the magnates' confidence in the enduring popularity of the game. The largely wooden construction of the earliest period reflected their hope that professional baseball would take hold.

Labatt Memorial Park is the oldest extant ballpark built to accommodate spectators—the key to the game. Canada and the United States have shared this pastime from its beginnings. They have built ballparks, torn them down, and replaced them. Only this one, from the dawn of the game, survives.

Now, I believe, is the right time to honor Labatt Memorial Park as a National Heritage Site.

Thank you for your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Thorn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Thorn  
Official Historian, Major League Baseball

# Paul M. Beeston

Michael Greguol CAHP  
Heritage Planner  
City Planning  
City of London

Dear Mr. Greguol,

Please accept my enthusiastic and unconditional support of the City of London's *application to our Federal Government to recognize Labatt Memorial Park as a National Heritage site.*

*Having lived in London for twelve years, I spent many evenings at Labatt Park in the 1960s-1970s; enjoying the great game of baseball at this historic ballpark, that was just shy of it's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary when I attended my first game in the 1960s.*

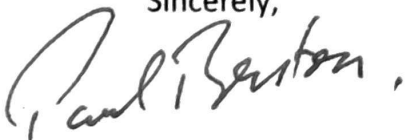
This ballpark, located in the centre of the city, has played host to professional, semi-professional and amateur teams of all ages for over 140 years and is recognized by fans of all sports, but for fans of baseball in particular. Labatt Memorial Park means London.

We do not have many venues in Canada (or North America for that matter) that have stood the test of time. Labatt Memorial Park has clearly met this threshold. Labatt Park was and is a meeting place where citizens from generations long ago to the present enjoy the game in the exact same location, on the bank of the Thames River.

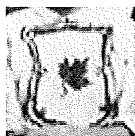
As a former president of both Major League Baseball and the Toronto Blue Jays, I recognize my bias. As a Canadian citizen and fan of the game, I am impartial in my thoughts and support and encourage without reservation the recognition of Labatt Memorial Park as a National Heritage Site.

I would be pleased to provide further details should you require.

Sincerely,



Paul Beeston CM



## Centre for Canadian Baseball Research

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398 Queen St. E., P.O. Box 3305, St. Marys, Ont. N4X 0A6

**Date:** March 4, 2019

**To:** Mayor and Members of London City Council

Labatt Park (nee Tecumseh Park) was at first considered to be too far out of town to ever be sustained by a baseball loving public in London. How wrong those 1877 naysayers were! It's not only an urban jewel on the edge of the city's downtown but Canada's claimant to international standing as the game of baseball's oldest ballpark. Long may it reign as a nationally recognized treasure.

The undersigned heartily endorse the consideration of Labatt Park for National Heritage designation.

Robert K. Barney, Director

William Humber, Director

Brian "Chip" Martin, Director

Andrew North, Director

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## **Tecumseh/Labatt Park**

In early 1877, after months of controversy, Canada's new baseball champions, the London Tecumsehs, finally acquired a new park to replace their temporary home at the Exhibition Grounds, near today's Victoria Park.

Finding new quarters was essential to the team, whose popularity was soaring. Contests with archrival Guelph Maple Leafs, for instance, had drawn as many as 10,000 spectators. After the collapse of temporary stands during a Guelph game the previous year, Tecumseh directors needed something permanent to meet team needs and those of its growing legion of fans. Besides, every September, late in their season, the team lost their field to the annual Western Fair.

W. J. Reid, a successful china merchant and team backer, found a chunk of land across the Thames River from downtown. The low-lying field at the river forks was susceptible to flooding, but when dry, animals grazed there. Impromptu games, including baseball, had been played for at least two decades on the grassy meadow where natives had once grown corn. The six-acre site, located in a small settlement known as Petersville, had great potential. It was an easy five-minute walk across Kensington Bridge from downtown shops, businesses, and homes and the Grand Trunk Railway station on York Street.

The field was named Tecumseh Park. Of the playing field, the *London Advertiser* said:

There is a strong force at work leveling and preparing the new grounds for the Tecumsehs, and numbers visit the place during the day to view the location and watch proceedings. Every friend of the club appears pleased with the pluck and enterprise displayed by the Tecumseh managers in grappling so successfully with the difficulties thrown in their way by certain citizens who opposed the granting of a ball field off the Park grounds. Property in the immediate neighborhood of the new ball grounds has increased in value a hundred per cent, since Saturday.<sup>i</sup>

A contract for 2,000 yards of sod was let to a Mr. Murdoch, and fencing and construction of stands for spectators proceeded quickly, along with a “brisk competition” for the lease of the refreshment stands. The city provided road shavings to help raise and level the land.

Construction was overseen by contractors Broadbent and Overall. The work included installation of a telegraph wire from the downtown office of the Montreal Telegraph Company so game scores could be relayed promptly to and from other ballparks.<sup>ii</sup>

A 600-seat grandstand arose in short order as well as bleachers and a separate structure for reporters, scorers, and telegraph operators. The playing surface featured an in-ground watering system. A “director’s pavilion” was also erected, paid for by new Tecumseh president Jake Englehart.

The new ballpark caught the attention of the *Canadian Illustrated News* a few months later. The publication

featured an illustration of Tecumseh Park during a game between London and Guelph. “The baseball grounds and buildings,” it said, “have been fitted up at an expense of upwards of \$3,000 and without doubt are the best for the purpose in the Dominion.”<sup>iii</sup>

The first game, was an exhibition match against the city’s premier amateur team, the Atlantics on May 3. Two days later, the first professional game was a 6-2 loss to the Hartford (Connecticut) Dark Blues.

During 1876, the Tecumsehs emerged from the shadows of the Guelph Maple Leafs, winning all four of their contests before thousands of rabid fans. To beat Guelph at their own game, the Tecumsehs began adding Americans to their roster. The Tecumsehs captured and mirrored the young city of London’s hopes and aspirations, just as the Maple Leafs had done for Guelph, a town half the size of London.

So by 1877 it wasn’t far-fetched for either team to want to play some of the best teams in the United States on a regular basis. Topnotch competition in Canada was hard to find. Barnstorming American teams often visited Southern Ontario and regularly sought games with London and Guelph because of the good crowds they drew. Despite their relatively small size compared to many American cities, London and Guelph felt the strong attendance at their games was a factor that might help gain them entry into any U.S.-based professional loop. When it came to attendance, the Ontario cities were already in the big leagues.

In 1877, London and Guelph became founding members of the International Association, a league that competed head-on against the one-year-old National League. And London won the inaugural pennant at Tecumseh Park when the Tecumsehs defeated the Alleghenys of Pittsburgh in October.

London left the International Association after 1878, although at one point the Tecumsehs considered joining the National League.

By 1936, the park had become run down and at risk of being demolished when the Labatt Family purchased it, donated \$10,000 to help rebuild it and gave the property to the city of London. It was renamed Labatt Memorial Park.

In 1990, the park was awarded the Beam Clay Baseball Diamond of the Year Award as the best natural grass ballpark in North America.

In 1994, the park was declared an historic site under the Ontario Heritage Act.

In 2009, the Guinness Book of World Records named Labatt Park the World's Oldest Baseball Grounds.

In 2011, Baseball Canada held a contest in which voters chose it as "Canada's Favourite Ballpark."

During its long history, several professional, semi-professional and amateur teams have called Labatt Park

home. The longest tenant has been the London Majors of the Intercounty Baseball League.

**By Chip Martin, author of *The Tecumsehs of the International Association*, founding director of the Centre for Canadian Baseball Research, member of the National and Canadian Baseball Halls of Fame and of the Society for American Baseball Research.**

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<sup>i</sup> *London Advertiser*, April 17, 1877.

<sup>ii</sup> "Ball and Bat," *London Free Press*, April 25, 1877.

<sup>iii</sup> *Canadian Illustrated News*, July 14, 1877, quoted in Pat Morden, *Putting Down Roots* (St. Catharines, Ontario: Stonehouse Publications, 1988), 47.





## CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SPORT & HEALTH

July 15, 2021

Michael Gerguol, CAHP  
Heritage Planner  
City Planning  
City of London

Dear Mr. Greguol:

The City of London has an illustrious baseball history, from the early exploits of the London Tecumsehs almost a century and a half ago, to the wartime and postwar London Majors, longtime participation in the Intercounty League, and various stints with the minor leagues and independent league baseball. One constant throughout its history is Tecumseh/Labatt Park which has the distinction being “the world’s oldest, continually operating ballpark in baseball history.” This claim is not mere “boosterism, but has been carefully documented by Dr. Bob Barney and Riley Nowokowski, who demonstrate that London’s claim is stronger than that of the two other competitors for this honour, Clinton and Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

Given its significance I am pleased to write in support the proposal for the national historic designation of Labatt Park. As a baseball historian who has also worked in support of the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, I am very committed to recognizing the history of the game across the country as well as London’s pre-eminent place in that larger story.

Yours sincerely,

ColinHowell

Dr. Colin Howell  
Academic Director  
Centre for the Study of Sport and Health  
Saint Mary’s University  
Halifax, NS, B3H 3C3

**Michael Greguol, CAHP,  
Heritage Planner,  
City Planning,  
London City Hall,  
206 Dundas St.,  
London, Ontario,  
N6A 1G7**

**Frank Cosentino. PhD,  
Professor Emeritus  
York University, Toronto  
M3J 1P3**

**July 27, 2021**

**Dear Sir:**

**I am writing this letter in support the City of London's Heritage Department quest to have Labatt Park declared a National Heritage Distinction Site.**

**There is no question that the upcoming article to the *Ontario History* by Dr. Bob Barney and Riley Nowokowski and the action by the Guinness Book of Records verifies your claim.**

**The purpose of this missive is not to so much repeat the already submitted records. My submission has more to do with my national outlook, to make the public more aware of significant events, to instill pride in our nation.**

**For more than 30 years I taught courses in sport history with emphasis on Canada. I discovered that we, as a nation, suffered from "cultural amnesia". We had few books, movies, music and, yes, sport, within our memory banks. Students who took the courses were always surprised and amazed that Canada had such an abundance of stories, perhaps ones that their grand parents recalled but not so the students' generation.**

**One example re baseball: It was known by many as America's Pastime, its date of "discovery" in 1845 by Alexander Cartwright and his team the New York Knickerbockers. But that was 8 years after baseball was played in Canada at Beachville on June 4, 1838. (Canadian Encyclopedia, William Humber, p.143). Sometimes, there is a tendency when "legend" interferes with "fact" it is the legend that is promoted or printed.**

**Writing as an author of mostly Canadian sport books, I am well aware of the difficulty of Canadian books still being published. The Heritage projects are therefore even more valuable for identifying terminal points, markers if you will, of our Canadian History and it is my humble opinion that London's**

**Labatt Park “has played an important role in the growth and development of baseball in Canada and is recognized as the world’s oldest baseball grounds. (And I’m pleased to mention that as a member of the Intercounty Baseball League I played in Labatt Park.)**

**All the best in this very noteworthy and necessary addition to Canada’s National Heritage Distinction Site.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Cosentino". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "F" and "C".

**Frank Cosentino**

Frank Cosentino, professor emeritus and senior scholar, York University, played ten years in the CFL and coached 12 years intercollegiate football. He was on two Grey Cup winning teams and coached 2 Vanier Cup winners. He has authored or co-authored 18 books. See [www.valleyoldtimers.com](http://www.valleyoldtimers.com) He is a member of the Canadian Football Hall of Fame Class of 2018

William Humber, 15 Beech Avenue, Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada L1C 3A1  
educator, author and historian  
wa.humber@gmail.com

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This letter is written in support of Labatt Memorial Park's designation as a National Historic Site of Canada. In so doing, it would recognize the extraordinary story of baseball's deep, and often misunderstood, heritage in this country.

Baseball's development as a modern game is one shared by Canada with the United States in all important aspects of its evolution from a folk game, through multiple modernization experiments, to its taken for granted sports identity today. As a folk game, we have ample records of its play in Canada from the late 18<sup>th</sup> through the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in a period before the game claimed any national identity. The 4 June baseball contests in Upper Canada in 1819 and 1838 are simply one example of the continuity necessary for this joint venture between Canadians and Americans to develop a modern foundation. As the game rounded into a true modern form in the 1850s through early 1870s Canadians controlled all aspects of the game's play in their country including internal organizational leadership, lineups of local players, and teams who not only represented towns and cities regardless of size but who often competed against each other for national supremacy.

This Canadian initiative would become increasingly connected with its American partners in the form of regularized cross border play and the sharing of player talent. As late as 1876, however Canadian teams in Ontario had their own distinct league as a counterpoint to the American-based National League. In 1877, the London Tecumsehs and Guelph Maple Leafs took a leap of faith in the sport's future by fully integrating their organizations into the International Association, a radical attempt to create a different approach from the exclusive membership model of the National League. Had it succeeded baseball in North America might have come to resemble the tiered but open network of teams later popularized in European soccer. Unfortunately, it failed and so a caste system of major and minor league entities, with no on-field opportunity for the latter to join the former, came to define baseball, as it would other modern sports in North America.

At the centre of this process was the London Tecumsehs organization, which effectively declared its big league status in 1877 by constructing Tecumseh Park, on the very site of today's Labatt Memorial Park, for their first season in the International Association. The Park had all the aspects of a major league facility of its day including telegraph resources not only to broadcast game reports to the outside world but also to receive those from other cities. Guelph would leave this circuit by the end of the 1877 season while London's possible off-season intention of applying for, or accepting, National League membership was abandoned at least in part because it would have meant a loss of lucrative exhibition dates with local rivals.

In 1878, the era's foremost sports paper, the New York Clipper, described the International Association as baseball's leading professional entity. At the same time, the National League was still dealing with how it might replace expelled franchises in New York and Philadelphia after the 1876 season, and the impact of a gambling crisis in Louisville in 1877. Its future was by no means certain. Alas, the International's long-term survival was not to be. London left the International Association by season end of 1878 and its baseball future would forever be one of either membership in baseball's minor league

“caste” system, or in the independent, semi-pro, Intercounty Baseball League. In all of these entities Tecumseh Park, renamed Labatt Park after severe flooding in the 1930s destroyed any remnant of its original built iteration, has been continuously maintained as the place for the highest available level of baseball play, though home plate has shifted so that fly balls are now hit toward the Thames River.

It is an extraordinary story and more so since this living symbol of the game in Canada continues to function with the same purpose as when the site was built upon in 1877, though never again at its early major league level. It is simply the oldest continuously functioning ballpark site anywhere in the world as defined by being a place for both a grandstand of spectators and a ball diamond of players.

Labatt Memorial Park is a historic jewel in the Canadian landscape of built-upon features. As such, it should be designated as a National Historic Site in Canada.

In appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke that ends in a small flourish.

William Humber,  
Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame inductee 2018



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HISTORICAL

SOCIETY

Attn: Mail Room, Michael Greguol (206 Dundas) c/o 300 Dufferin Ave., London, ON N6B 1Z2  
Letter of Support: National Designation for Labatt Memorial Park

Designated National Historic Sites provide opportunities for Canadians to capture, share, celebrate and learn from our countries exceptional designs, cultural traditions, important figures and defining events. Recognizing this criterion, I am writing in support of the application to designate Labatt Memorial Park.

One need only look at the popularity of Cooperstown, New York to acknowledge how significant national centres of sport history can develop. Cooperstown functions as a hub for baseball scholarship and tourism. It is a site of pilgrimage for baseball enthusiasts and allows the roots of the sport to be preserved and shared. Labatt Park is positioned to become a similar hub of present sport activities, research, education-focused public history and sports-focused tourism. It is the home of the Inter-county Baseball League's London Majors, making the ballpark a lively site for baseball fans to visit. It also hosts the Major's Alumni Association, a team of researchers and former players committed to the study of baseball's history and to the commemoration of baseball's greats within the Park. It has maintenance and preservation support from the City of London and Tourism London. This team of caretakers and stakeholders is equipped to ensure the park functions as a strong national historic site for public appreciation.

Canada marks less than a handful of places connected to its baseball heritages. While it does have museums and halls that speak to the history of the sport, Labatt Memorial Park offers a new opportunity for the culture of the sport to be understood and more tangibly felt. The ballpark occupies the same footprint it did in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a historic site, it was known as Tecumseh Park, and was the home base of the London Tecumsehs, who became Canadian Champions. It was also a major site in the early years of Canada's baseball leagues – drawing international teams across borders to play at the Park against Canada's best athletes. The Park operated as a training ground for some of Canada's highly-skilled baseball players and as a site for Canada's cycling enthusiasts (as the hometown of the Canadian Wheelmen's Association). It was also where the Eager Beaver Baseball Association grew up. While the Association was locally run by the Public Utilities Commission, it became a model for other baseball training programs and was emulated across the country.

Professionally, I maintain ties with the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, the London Majors, the Society for American Baseball Research and the Canadian Centre for Baseball Research, and Western University and I understand that there is great demand amongst those who run such organizations (as well as among the sport-loving audiences that these sites and organizations serve) for Labatt Park's full significance to be recognized and celebrated. As the longest-continuously-operating baseball grounds in the world (with a history dating back to 1877) and as a site of numerous stories and events of national significance, it belongs in our country's list of designated heritage sites.

With regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Stephanie Radu'.

Dr. Stephanie Radu  
Curator

**Thursday, September 16, 2021**

Michael Greguol  
Heritage Planner, Planning and Economic Development  
City of London  
206 Dundas Street  
London, ON N6A 1G7

Greetings,

On behalf of Tourism London, the destination marketing organization for the City of London, I'd like to provide this letter of support towards the National Heritage Site Designation Application for Labatt Memorial Park, the world's oldest baseball grounds. This designation would provide the much-deserved recognition of this historic site which has been hosting baseball for nearly 150 years and has welcomed some of Baseball's most legendary and impactful players including Ty Cobb, Satchel Paige, Honus Wagner among many others.

Not only is this designation important from a civic pride perspective, but it's also extremely meaningful for tourism. Each year, many passionate tourists travel to London to visit Labatt Park to learn more about this historic facility which they've discovered through their own research. To support this tourism demand, this past summer we launched a tour program where we produced signage and offered guided tours around the venue ([www.labattparktours.com](http://www.labattparktours.com)). The program was an overwhelming success, with guests traveling from across Ontario to learn more about Labatt Park and its impressive history.

This shows that the demand for tourism exists, and by receiving National Heritage Site Designation, it would officially acknowledge and recognize the important heritage of Labatt Park while allowing us to promote at a national level, resulting in an increase in tourism for the City.

We are proud to support this application and appreciate you taking the time to review this letter. Best of luck as you continue to go through this process and please don't hesitate if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zanth Jarvis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Zanth" being more prominent than the last name "Jarvis".

Zanth Jarvis  
Director, Sport Tourism  
Tourism London  
[zjarvis@londontourism.ca](mailto:zjarvis@londontourism.ca)  
(226) 984-8640



Architectural Conservancy Ontario – London Region Branch  
Grosvenor Lodge, 1017 Western Road, London, ON N6G 1G5

Monday, September 20, 2021

Mr. Michael Greguol, Heritage Planner, City of London

**Re: Labatt Park as a Canadian National Historic Site**

Dear Mr. Greguol:

I am writing in support of the designation of London's Labatt Park as a National Historic Site of Canada.

Our National Historic Sites are places of profound significance. They bear witness to our nation's defining moments and exemplify our creativity, accomplishments, and culture. Each of our National Historic Sites tells its own distinctive narrative, part of the greater story of Canada, and contributes to a better understanding of our country as a whole.

The following points illustrate the importance of Labatt Park:

- Labatt Park is the world's oldest baseball field, in use since at least 1877.
- It is also London, Ontario's oldest sports facility.
- The park was built for the London Tecumsehs, one of the best-performing ball teams in the world at that time. The Tecumsehs won the inaugural pennant of the International Association, established to rival the National League in 1877.
- The park was designated an historic site under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act in 1994.
- The Roy McKay Clubhouse dates to 1937, having been built after the devastating Thames River flood of that year. This clapboard building, an important London Majors gathering place, was designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act in 1996.

The fact that London, Ontario is home to the world's oldest baseball park seems to be largely unknown beyond London's heritage community and baseball historians. Designation as a National Historic Site would help to remedy this situation, as subsequent promotion would help publicize the park to Canadians and baseball fans around the world. Tourism will bring sightseer dollars to London's core and help revitalize our downtown.

London has only four other National Historic Sites: Banting House; Wolseley Barracks; the former Middlesex County courthouse; and the Ridout Street complex known as "Bankers' Row." The two latter sites are owned by developers, making their future as historic monuments in doubt. I would argue that, for a city of its size, London should have more nationally-recognized sites. London does not lack history but often seems to lack "home town pride" or the will for self-promotion. The addition of another site helps remedy this situation. Labatt Park is eminently worthy of being our next National Historic Site and we at ACO London fully support its designation.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Grainger  
Past President, London Region Branch, Architectural Conservancy Ontario





29 September 2021

Dear Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada Secretariat,

It is my pleasure to write to you in support of Labatt Memorial Park receiving official designation as a National Historic Site. For over a century, the grounds at Labatt Memorial Park have provided entertainment, leisure, and community to thousands of Londoners, spectators, and hosted professional athletes from all over North America. An official designation from the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada would recognize the important role Labatt Memorial Park has played as a site of culture, leisure, and the development of professional baseball in Canada.

Located at the forks of the Thames River on Wilson Avenue, Labatt Memorial Park holds the record for the world's oldest baseball field. The site is already recognized at local and provincial levels as a site of significance under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, but merits national recognition as well. Other national historic sites in Canada have earned their designation for playing an integral role in the development of professional sports in our country and for embodying exciting moments in our sporting history. Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens and the Montreal Forum in Quebec, for instance, are two notable examples designated for their contributions to Canada's hockey culture. Originally built in 1877, the grounds at Labatt Memorial Park have played a similar role in charting the development of baseball in Canada. The field has hosted countless teams and numerous championship games featuring Canadian and American athletes throughout its lengthy history. As a proud Londoner, I remember attending many games with my father, hearing stories about visiting legends such as Satchel Paige as well as homegrown heroes such as Frank Colman and Tom Burgess, and those who came to London after storied professional careers such as Denny McLain and Fergie Jenkins. Recently, Labatt Memorial Park was the most appropriate venue to host London's returning Tokyo Olympians Damian Warner, Maggie McNeil, Miranda Ayim, Susanne Grainger, and Jennifer Martins in a celebration of their spectacular achievements. The world's oldest baseball field is firmly rooted in history and looks forward to the bright future of sport.

Labatt Memorial Park is an important site that reflects the development of Canadian baseball and tells us how Canadians have used sport to cultivate a sense of pride and community. It is my hope that the Historic Sites and Monuments Board strongly considers designating Labatt Memorial Park a National Historic Site to ensure it remains an important site of Canadian sporting history.

Sincerely,

Terence Kernaghan



## Society for American Baseball Research

Cronkite School at ASU  
555 N. Central Ave. #416, Phoenix, AZ 85004  
602.496.1460 (phone)  
SABR.org

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October 4, 2021

Michael Greguol, CAHP  
Heritage Planner  
City Planning  
City of London Ontario, Canada

Dear Mr. Greguol:

The Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) and its members have long known that the City of London embraces a distinguished place in baseball history, from the early years of the 1870s until the present day. To further this fact, SABR is currently publishing a substantial book on the history of baseball in Canada, of which the story of Tecumseh-Labatt Park is one of its most substantial chapters. Our organization, with nearly 7,000 members worldwide, is dedicated towards preserving the history of baseball, including its rare artifacts from the past that continue to have a presence in our lives today. Labatt Memorial Park in London is one such rarity, being baseball history's oldest ball-grounds precinct. The names of some of Canada's and America's most revered National Baseball Halls of Fame members (in St. Marys, Ontario and Cooperstown, New York) played at the Park at one time during their noteworthy careers—Ferguson Jenkins, Ty Cobb, and Charlie Gehringer among them. The Park's rich history has been both honored and ably embellished on-site by distinguished plaques, colorful storyboards, enhanced City of London beautification efforts, and well-received heritage tours.

Therefore, SABR eagerly and enthusiastically registers its unreserved support for the efforts of the City of London in the quest for Labatt Park to become a National Historic Site. Such a distinction is a powerful agent in the heritage protection/preservation of this now hallowed 144 year old site-location enjoyed by both London and greater Canadian visitors/users.

Yours in baseball,

Scott Bush  
SABR CEO  
XXXXXXXXXX

# Hidden History of Hamilton Road



October 5, 2021

Michael Greguol  
Heritage Planner  
City of London  
[mgreguol@london.ca](mailto:mgreguol@london.ca)

## **Designate Labatt Memorial Park as a National Historic Site**

The Hamilton Road Community has enjoyed many significant connections to baseball in London, beginning in the 1870's. Jacob Englehart was among London's pioneer oil refiners and a founder of Imperial Oil of Canada. Imperial Oil's first refinery was located in the vicinity of Hamilton Road and Adelaide Street. Mr. Englehart was the major sponsor of the London Tecumsehs, "Canada's First Major League Baseball Champions".<sup>1</sup>

There have been many great players, managers and team owners that have come from the Hamilton Road area of whom we are most proud! Included are; the late great Stan (Gabby) Anderson, Gerry Anderson, Norm Aldridge, Stan "Tubby" Jones, Tom "Scrap" Brownlie, Barry Howson, Frank Colman, Alfie White, Irene Brownlie, Pearl Price, Marion Clarke-Knowles, Barbara Bossance, and many others.

The present owners of the London Majors Baseball Club, Scott Dart and Roop Chanderdat were raised in the Hamilton Road area and went to school here. In the late 1950s and early 60's the London Majors were owned by Frank Colman and his brother Jack, who also came from the Hamilton Road area.

It would be wonderful if Labatt Memorial Park could become a National Historic Site.

Thank you!!

Barbara Barclay/Brenda Logan  
Co-Chairs, Hamilton Road Community Association  
Members, Hidden History of Hamilton Road

<sup>1</sup> *"The Tecumsehs of the International Association"*, by Brian "Chip" Martin, pub. 2015



Intercounty Baseball League "Gabby Anderson's Golden Bat" presentation. Standing l-r are: Mike Mitchel, Barry Boughner, Rick Corner, Dave Byers of the Majors Alumni, Cleveland Brownlee, designated hitter for the London Majors and Richard Anderson. Gabby was raised on Glenwood Avenue in the Hamilton Road area.