

Centre for Canadian Baseball Research

Annual Conference: St Marys, ON

November 1 - 2, 2025

Diamond Park

Toronto's Forgotten Ballpark

Bill Park

(no relation)



TORONTO BASEBALL GROUNDS (SUNLIGHT PARK)



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Good, Ada, 1948

The Toronto Baseball Grounds was the home field of the city's first professional baseball team, the "Torontos" of the International League. The field included entrances on present-day Broadview and Eastern Avenues, and two wooden grandstands with cushioned seating for 3,000 fans. At the opening game on May 18, 1886, between Toronto and Rochester, Lieutenant-Governor John Beverley Robinson threw the ceremonial first ball.

In 1887, the addition of star pitcher Edward "Cannonball" Crane helped the Torontos achieve a remarkable 15-game winning streak. That September the team clinched the city's first baseball championship with back-to-back home victories over Scranton. The Torontos moved to Hanlan's Point Stadium in 1897. Their old baseball field then became popular with amateur teams who called it "Sunlight Park" after a nearby soap factory. The field was closed and the grandstands demolished in 1913.



Above the 1886 "Sunlight" was a diamond of dirt purple grass field.



Left: Boston-born Edward "Cannonball" Crane later played in New York.
Herbert Stone at Toronto, 1911 (1881).

HERITAGE TORONTO 2015



PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL AT HANLAN'S POINT



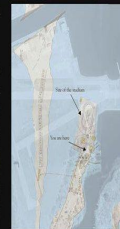
Hanlan's Point Stadium circa 1905
Toronto Public Library

In 1910, the baseball team, now called the Toronto Maple Leafs, replaced its wooden stadium with a concrete, 18,000-seat structure named Maple Leaf Park. The team remained there for the next 15 years, winning pennants for adoring fans in 1912, 1917, and 1918.

In 1926, the club was moved to a more accessible, state-of-the-art stadium at the foot of Bathurst Street. The island stadium was eventually demolished and the site redeveloped for the Toronto Island Airport.



Hanlan's Point Ferry Dock circa 1906
Toronto Public Library



1910 map of Hanlan's Point over 2001 aerial photo of Hanlan's Point and Toronto Island Airport
1910 map courtesy of Toronto Public Library, Copyright: CCL

HERITAGE TORONTO 2006



MAPLE LEAF STADIUM



Baseball action at Maple Leaf Stadium, 1950s. The Maple Leafs won 10 International League titles from 1966 to 1967. Second baseman Mike Golder played 1,070 games for the Maple Leafs in team record. He also led the team in career home runs.
City of Toronto Archives



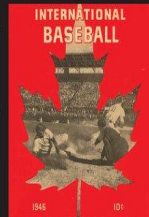
Maple Leaf Stadium, 1959. A classic "jewel box" design, the stadium reflected the style of other ball parks built around the same time, such as Yankee Stadium in New York City.
City of Toronto Archives

The Toronto Maple Leafs, the city's first professional minor-league baseball team, played at a stadium on this site from 1926 to 1967.

Designed by architecture firm Chapman & Oxley with Roy Bishop and financed by team owner Lawrence "Lol" Solman, Maple Leaf Stadium replaced a smaller ball park on Toronto Island. The new stadium held 23,500 in its large, single-tier stand.

The Toronto Maple Leafs won the International League in their first season at the stadium and would win five of their ten championships here. In 1951, new owner Jack Kent Cooke transformed the Maple Leafs. He signed the team's first Black players, pitcher Leon Day and catcher Charlie White, and drew record crowds with promotions, celebrity appearances, and other game day entertainment. The team won two titles during this time.

Cooke sold the Maple Leafs in 1964. Falling attendance and rising costs forced the team to stop playing in 1967. The Maple Leafs moved and became the Louisville Colonels in 1968, then the Pawtucket Red Sox in 1972. Maple Leaf Stadium was demolished in 1968, ending professional baseball in Toronto until the arrival of the major-league Toronto Blue Jays in 1977.



Maple Leaf Stadium program, 1946
City of Toronto Archives



Leon Day (left) and Charlie White (right), the Maple Leafs' first Black players, with Jack Kent Cooke, 1951.
City of Toronto Archives

HERITAGE TORONTO 2018

Heritage Toronto Historical Markers 2025

Toronto Baseball Grounds

Hanlan's Point Stadium

Maple Leaf Stadium



Diamond Park

Heritage Toronto Plaques: Historical Marker Project



Hanlan's Point Stadium

Before and After Diamond Park

Hanlan's Point Stadium Opens 1897

**replaces Toronto Baseball Grounds
(Sunlight Park)**

Seating Capacity: 9,300

**Roller Coaster, Vaudeville Theatre,
Dancing Pavillion, Midway, Tea
Garden, Shooting Gallery, Hotel.**

Wobbly Financing + Mediocre Teams

Capacity vs Convenience

Hanlan's Point vs Diamond Park



Take Me Out to the Ballgame



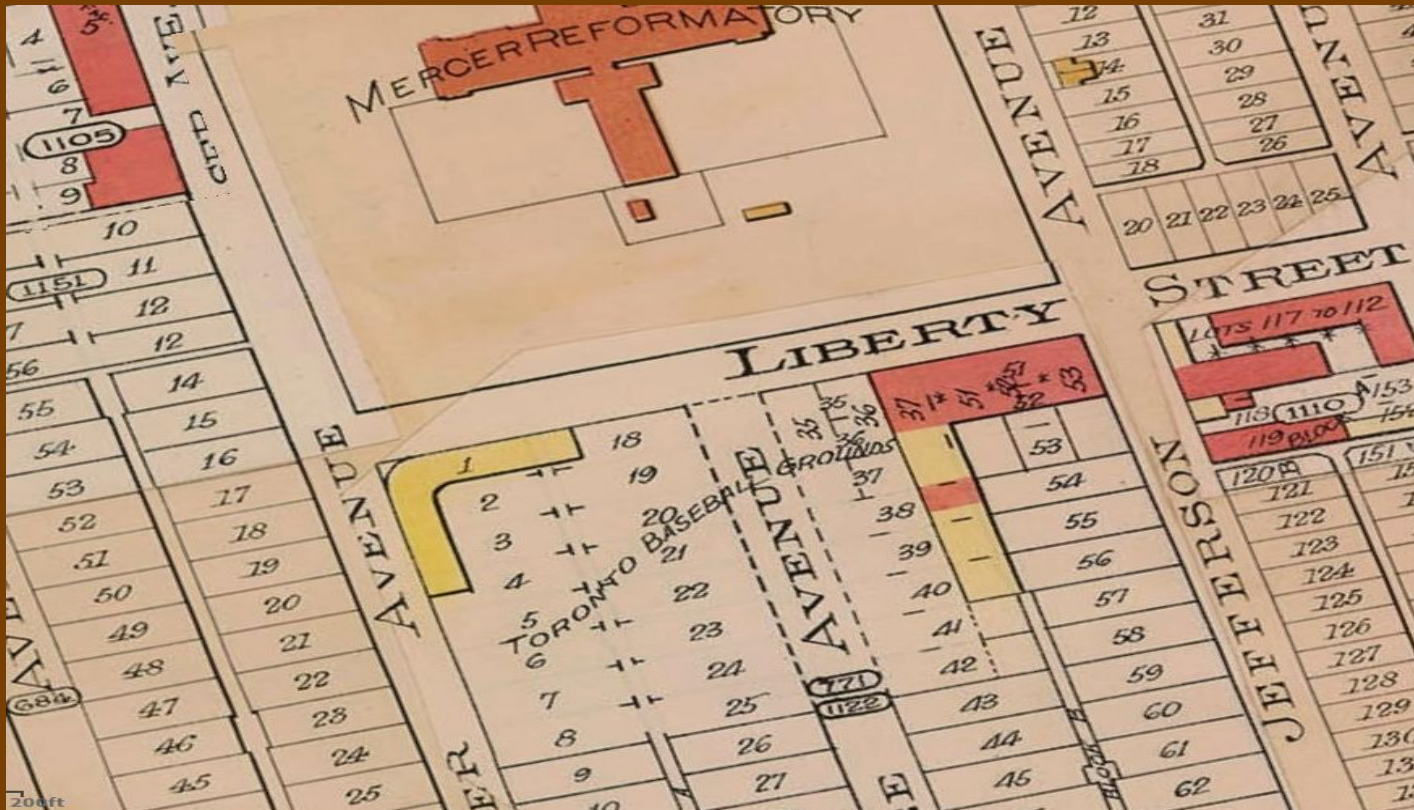
Mayflower Ferry (900 Passengers)

Departs for, Returns from Hanlan's Point Every 30 Minutes



Dufferin Gate - CNE: ca 1910

Diamond Park 600 Metres to North



Diamond Park - Built by Consortium of New Owners

Liberty Street & Fraser Avenue - Short Porch in Left



The “Toronto’s” Baseball Club

Diamond Park

Opening Day: May 10, 1901

Capacity: DP - 6,000 vs HP - 9,300

**Tickets: 50 cents Reserved;
25 cents General Admission**

Loss to Worcester Quakers 6 - 5

Convenience vs Capacity

Diamond Park vs Hanlan’s Point

Visiting Teams to Diamond Park 1901

Buffalo Bisons

Hartford Wooden Nutmegs - Team Folds

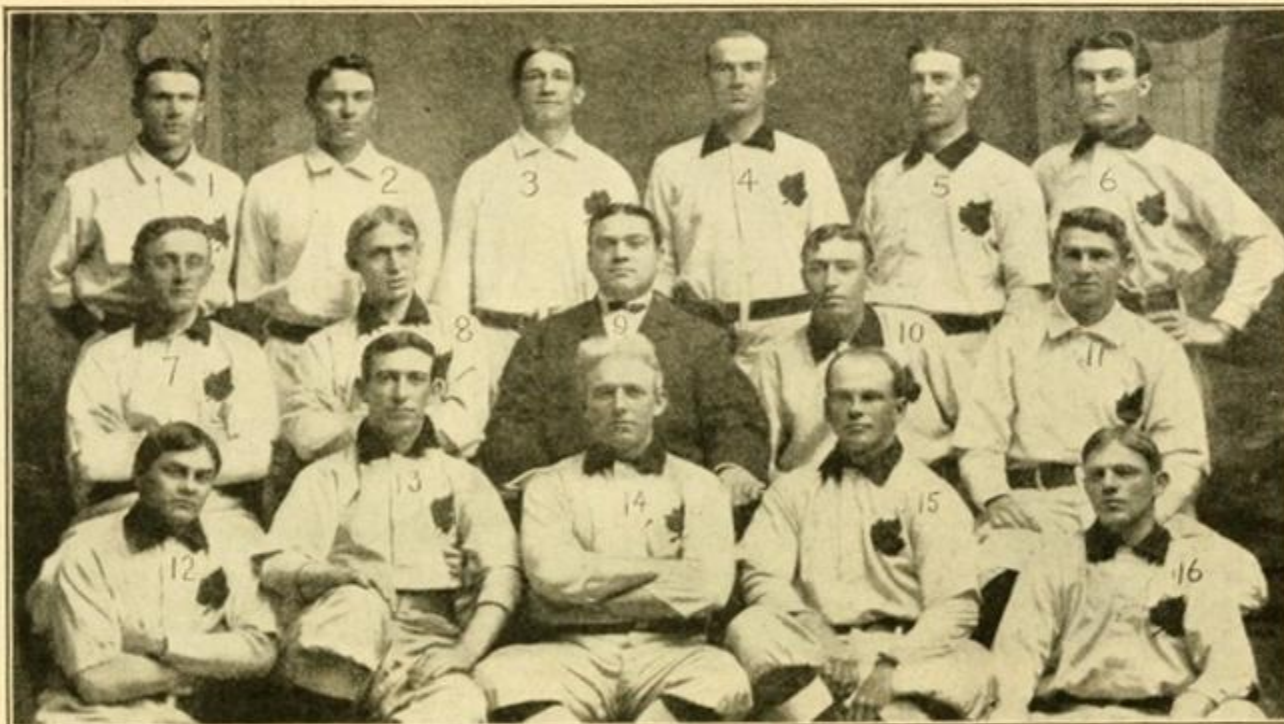
Montreal Royals

Providence Clamdiggers

Rochester Bronchos

Syracuse Stars / Brockton B's - Mid Season Move

Worcester Quakers > Hustlers 1902;



1—Weidensaul; 2—Hargrave; 3—Soft; 4—Massey; 5—Pappalau; 6—White; 7—Brennan; 8—Gardner; 9—Barrow, Mgr.;
10—Briggs; 11—Wolfe; 12—Bruce; 13—Downey; 14—Bannon, Capt.; 15—Carr; 16—Miller.

TORONTO BASE BALL CLUB.

Toronto Maple Leafs 1902

Eastern League Pennant Winners (85 - 42); Top 100 Teams; Avg Att 2,300



Ed Barrow

Manager Toronto Maple Leafs:

Manager: 1900 - 1902 ; 1905 - 1906 ;

25% Owner 1899 - 1902

New York Yankees 1920 - 1945

Business Manager / General Manager Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio

10 Time World Series Champions

National Anthem Each Game, Uniform Numbers, Fans Keep Foul Balls

Cooperstown: 1953

Monument Park, Yankee Stadium: 1954



Lou Bruce

Toronto Infielder & Pitcher 1901-1904
Cumulative: BA .330 W 34 L 9

First Nations Mohawk from St Regis NY

Graduate University of Pennsylvania:

Dentistry

Graduate Syracuse University:

Theology (Methodist Minister)

Diminutive: 5'5" / 145 pounds

MLB: Philadelphia Athletics - 1904

30 games; .264 BA; 8 RBI

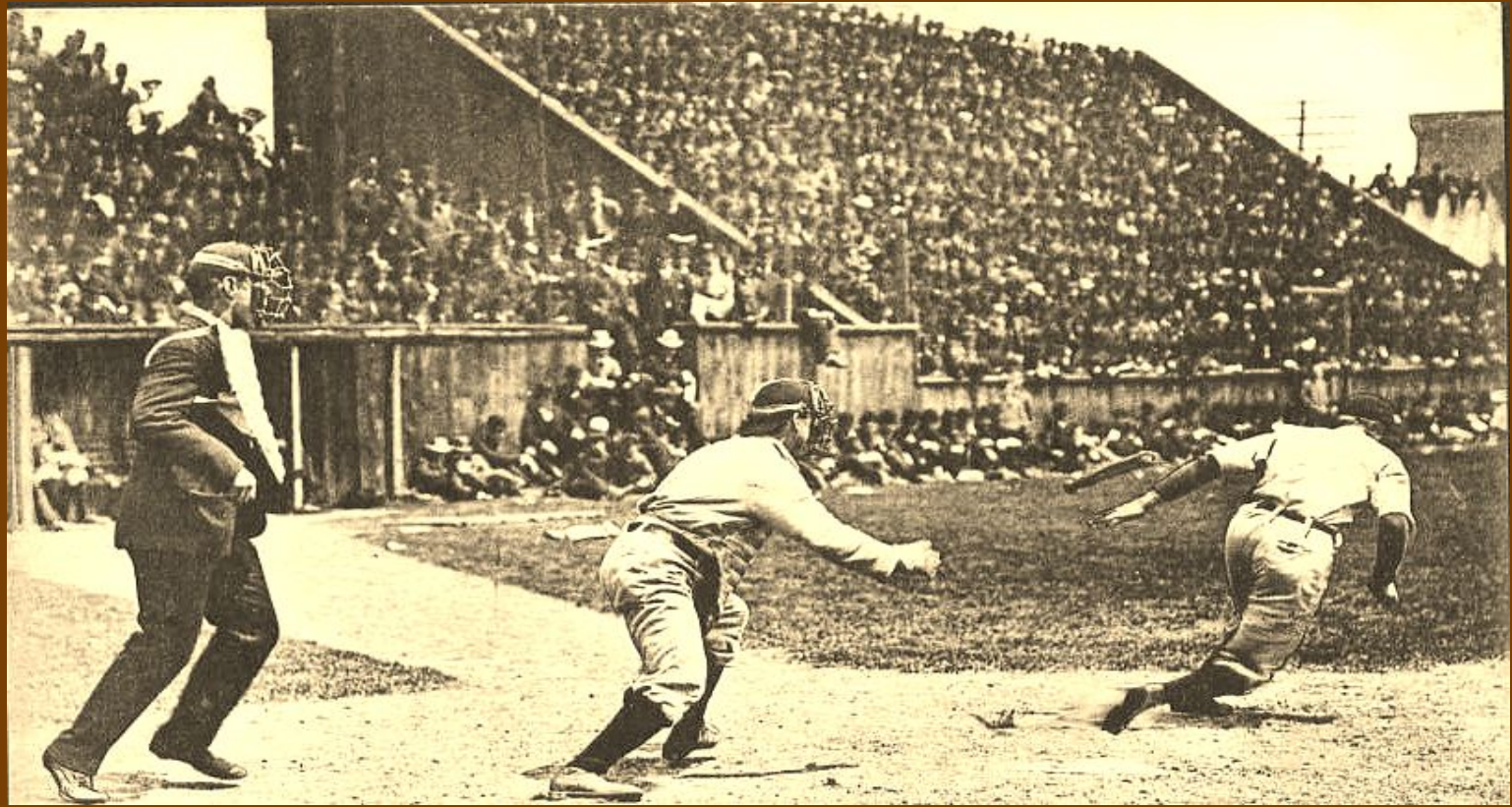


April 19, 1904 – Great Toronto Fire – (Bay & Front Sts)

17 Alarm Fire, 100 Buildings Decimated, \$10 Million in Damages, 1 Fatality

1903 Hanlan's Point Stadium Destroyed by Fire

1905: Maple Leafs Finish Last; Debts Called; Team Purchased by J J McCaffery et al



Diamond Park: Opening Day 1907

Visiting Teams to Diamond Park 1907

Baltimore Orioles

Buffalo Bisons *

Jersey City Skeeters

Montreal Royals *

Newark Sailors

Providence Grays *

Rochester Bronchos *



Toronto Baseball Team 1907
Eastern League Pennant Winners



Joe Kelley

Manager: 1907 & 1909 - 1914

1907: Record - 83 - 51 .619

No Pitcher with Losing Record

3 Players hit .300 + (including Kelley)

17 Year MLB Career: 1891 - 1906

Career: .317 BA .853 OPS

**Inducted National Baseball Hall of
Fame: 1971**



Jack "Bullet" Thoney

Toronto: OF / 3B 1906; 1907

BA .294 (1906) .329 (1907)

1906 Leads Team with 6 HR

1907 Leads Team with 5 HR

Wins two separate match races against a local sprinter in September 1907 at Hanlan's Point Oval.

Thoney races in his baseball uniform.

Boston Red Sox: 1908; 1909;

BA: .255 (1908) .125 (1909)

264 Major League Games: over 6 Seasons



August 1909 - Hanlan's Point Stadium Fire

Stadium is Re-built (1910) as 'Maple Leaf Park': Capacity 17,000



Return to Diamond Park 1909

Diamond Park Cumulative Record 1901 - 1907

Wins	Losses	Winning %	Finish
485	437	.526	1st x2 2nd x2



Diamond Park Demolished 1911



Former E W Gillett Company 2025

South East Corner of Liberty Street & Fraser Avenue



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Gould, Allen, 1948

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Above the 1886 "scorecard" with names of all players playing for the Torontos.



Left: Boston-born Edward "Cannonball" Crane later played in New York.
Herb Rouse Stone at Toronto, 1871 (1869).

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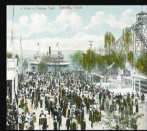
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Hanlan's Point Stadium circa 1905
Toronto Public Library

In 1897, Toronto's professional baseball club moved to the new Hanlan's Point Stadium – part of the larger Hanlan's Point Amusement Park on this site. Baseball and lacrosse joined other attractions here, including hotels, thrilling amusement rides, and such curiosities as a diving horse.

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Herb Rouse Stone at Toronto, 1871 (1869).
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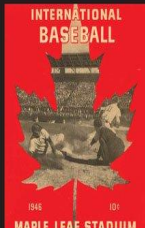
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Toronto Baseball Grounds

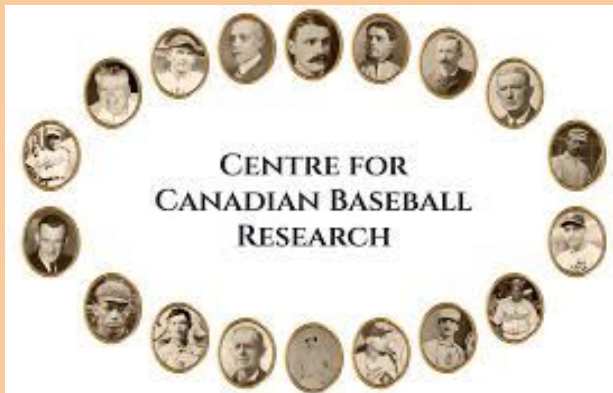
Hanlan's Point Stadium

Maple Leaf Stadium



Diamond Park Historical Marker Project

Forgotten No More



Thank You - Contributors to Date

Heritage Toronto: Diamond Park Historical Marker Project

Goal \$7,500 / Raised to Date 25%

Donations of \$20 or more generate a receipt for income tax purposes

To make a donation Google: *JustGiving Diamond Park*
Or

Access the QR Code

