

# A BASEBALL MUSEUM? THAT'S THE TICKET!

By **WILLIAM C. KASHATUS**

**I**MAGINE A 17,000-square-foot museum at the Phillies' new ballpark that traces the history of Philadelphia's pro baseball teams from the late 19th century through the present.

Devoted primarily to the Phillies, but including the Athletics and the city's Negro League teams, the museum would exhibit more than 1,000 artifacts, some of which would be on loan from the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

The centerpiece of the museum would be an actual Hall of Fame, housing plaques of all the outstanding ballplayers in Philadelphia's history. The 1980

World Series trophy would be displayed in this area. A 225-seat auditorium would be in the museum, to be used for an orientation film, as well as for seminars and corporate groups to rent for special meetings.

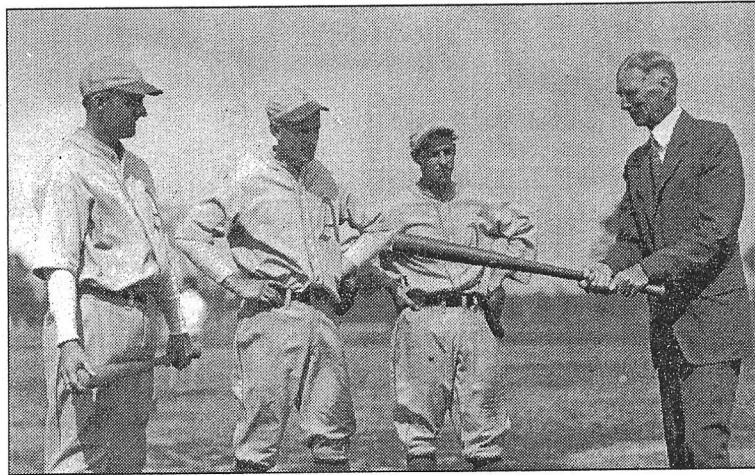
Sound appealing? The Atlanta Braves and Texas Rangers think so. That's why they built museums in their new parks. Neither club, however, enjoys the advantages that we have here.

► Philadelphia has a much more illustrious baseball history, dating back to the founding of professional baseball in 1876.

► The Philadelphia Athletics Historical Society, with almost 1,000 members and its own museum and gift shop in Hatboro, possesses a trove of memorabilia. It has already expressed a willingness to lend artifacts and provide assistance.

► Hall of Fame artist Dick Perez and Negro League artist Dane Tilghman, both residents, have expressed a strong interest in displaying their artwork in a Philadelphia baseball museum.

Considering the bottom-line mentality of major league baseball, why should the Phillies in-



**Museum would help Phils honor the past and court the future.**

vest in a multimillion-dollar enterprise like a baseball museum?

While a new ballpark will buy the club a honeymoon period of several years, it is a short-term solution to a much larger problem for the Phillies: how to capitalize on the city's baseball history and attract younger fans.

Not only would a museum showcase the Phillies' glory years, but it also would soften the hard feelings that still exist among some of the Phillies' heroes of yesteryear, who believe

the club doesn't do nearly enough to honor their contributions to the game, or to show current players the significance of the city's baseball tradition.

But honoring the past is only part of the solution. While the RBI ("Reviving Baseball in the Inner City") program and the Phillies' Baseball Academy are earnest efforts to reach out to a younger fan base, they do not receive the kind of time and effort from players that is needed to change their unattractive image

as spoiled young millionaires.

Tug McGraw, star reliever for the 1980 world champion Phillies, likes the idea of a museum but wants it tied to a baseball school.

He envisions classrooms inside the new ballpark, where retired teacher-coaches, grad students and college interns could give youngsters a better understanding of the game through computer technology and a curriculum based on history, math, physics and literature. Classes would be followed by on-field practice with the players, who could also conduct motivational seminars for inner-city youth.

To be sure, a baseball museum and school is a multimillion-dollar proposition, requiring a costly design and installation process, as well as a professional staff to maintain it.

But the Phillies' brain trust must ask whether they can afford not to invest the money and space for such a facility if they hope to generate the fan appeal — and revenue — needed to survive in the sport today. ★

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