

MANSFIELD MEMORIES: Card's Field hosted countless sporting events for three decades

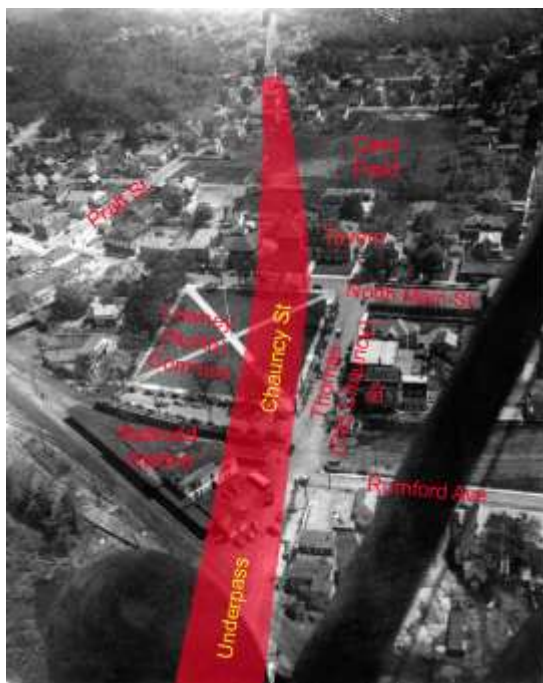
By Kevin McNatt and Andrew Todesco | Mansfield@wickedlocal.com

Aug 4, 2020

This is the fourth in a four-part series on athletic fields of Mansfield.

Mansfield Town Meeting purchased four acres of land known as Card's Field in 1929 for \$1,950. It turned out to be money well spent.

To understand where Card's Field was remember that before the underpass opened in 1957 Chauncy Street ended at North Main Street. Drivers had to go left onto North Main, then right on Pratt Street. If a driver tried to continue straight at the end of Chauncy Street he would have driven through Card's Field.



Still confused? To use current reference points, the former Card's Field now includes a "new" stretch of Chauncy Street. We would also find the Car Wash Pros, Cumberland Farms, a shopping plaza (30 Chauncy St.), Dunkin' Donuts and the Flannel Cow Creamery on the site.

The town bought Card's Field in 1929 to provide a "safe place" for the students of the former Spaulding School on Crocker Street to have recess. Selectmen said it also provided a place for the children of the North End to play and would take them "off the streets."

Card's Field was used for nearly three decades for countless sporting events. There was a diamond that was used for Mansfield High, "town teams," and Little League baseball. The backstop abutted the bend in Crocker Street.

Football was played at Card's Field too. Various "town" football teams held games there, and the junior high football squad used it for games and practice. In the 1940s there was even an exhibition youth soccer game, although it would take some time before the sport took root in town.



Children play at Card's Field near site of present Flannel Cow Creamery. Behind them is Chilson Avenue.

In the Great Depression the children of Mansfield invented "Kick-the-Bar." Lacking a baseball in tough economic times, a section of old bicycle tire about eight inches long was placed upright in a small pile of dirt and a player would kick it. He or she would then run the bases as in baseball. Kick-the-Bar continued into the '40s and '50s.

Card's Field was the site of many a game.

In August 1929, the Downie Brothers circus set up its big top at Card's Field. "A real three-ring spectacle," the performance featured trapeze artists, tight rope walkers and aerial acrobats. The menagerie included elephants, tigers, lions, leopards, birds, trick horses and galloping ponies. More than 2,000 people attended.

A more serious tone was struck in World War II, when a portion of Card's Field was used as a collection site for Mansfield's "Junk Rally." In 1942 the nation was running low on scrap iron and rubber for the war effort. Scrap metal could be converted into weaponry and scrap rubber into masks.

An ad for the local scrap drive implored residents, "Let's jolt them with junk from Mansfield."

Card's Field was the site of many community events. The Sons of Italy lodge conducted field days so large they attracted crowds across downtown that were estimated to be as large as

THE LARGEST MOTOR CIRCUS IN THE WORLD

DOWNIE BRO'S

BIG 3 RING

WILD ANIMAL

CIRCUS

MUSEUM AND MENAGERIE

A GREAT COLOSSAL PERCEPTION IN AMERICAN PERFORMING ELEPHANTS HORSES-PONIES LIONS-TIGERS BEARS-GIRTS PRES-PRES ANIMALS

Herd of performing Elephants

300 PEOPLE - 50 BIG ACTS
25 FUNNY CLOWNS
3 RINGS - ELEVATED STAGE
STEEL ARENA
5 - BANDS OF MUSIC - 5
OPEN DENS OF WILD ANIMALS

WATERPROOF TENTS
SEATS FOR 3000 PEOPLE
WORLD'S GREATEST WILD AND DOMESTIC ANIMAL ACTS
MONSTER FREE STREET PARADE AT NOON
2 PERFORMANCES DAILY 7 PM AND 8 PM
DOORS OPEN ONE HOUR EARLIER

ONE TICKET ADMITS TO ALL OF THE BIG SHOW
POPULAR PRICES **25¢** and **50¢**
WILL EXHIBIT AT

MANSFIELD
ONE DAY ONLY
THURSDAY, AUGUST 15th
Circus Grounds Card Field
FREE PARKING SPACE ON GROUNDS
SPECIAL ADDED FEATURE
The Hanneford Family World's Greatest Riders
AT EACH PERFORMANCE

August 1929,

JUNK RALLY

for MANSFIELD

and vicinity

Fri., Sept. 25
at Card Field or
rear of Town Hall



Junk helps make guns, tanks, ships for our fighting men
Bring in anything made of metal or rubber

Tin cans are not being collected in Mansfield at present.
All junk to be donated—proceeds go to U.S.O.

Throw YOUR scrap into the fight!

JUNK MAKES FIGHTING WEAPONS

One old tin can will provide many new bullets for army and navy rifles.

One old wire hammer will help make 100 bullets.

One rubber car tire will make 1000 new tank treads in 12 days.

One old motor will help make 1000 new tanks.

Let's Jolt them with Junk from Mansfield

If you wish to tell your junk dealer direct, if he will not accept it, contact The Mansfield Salvage Committee.

Mansfield Salvage Committee: Ernest W. Beale — W. Howard Reynolds
This advertisement is sponsored by SHELDON FOUNDRY CO.

In 1942, a "Junk Rally" was held at Card's Field to scrap iron and rubber for the war effort.



4th ANNUAL

K. of C. CHARITY FROLIC

Spectacular
128 ft.
Aerial Act

1949 FORD
Tudor Sedan
to be given away

Early return of ticket sales is requested by Ticket Committee Chairman Ralph Backderf.

RIDES
GALA MIDWAY
GAMES
\$300
FREE Nightly Awards to people on grounds

EVERY NIGHT
TWICE Saturday Afternoon & Evening
Special Events for Children

Cut Prices for Children Saturday Afternoon

Card Field Aug. 8-13 Every Nite-All Day Sat.

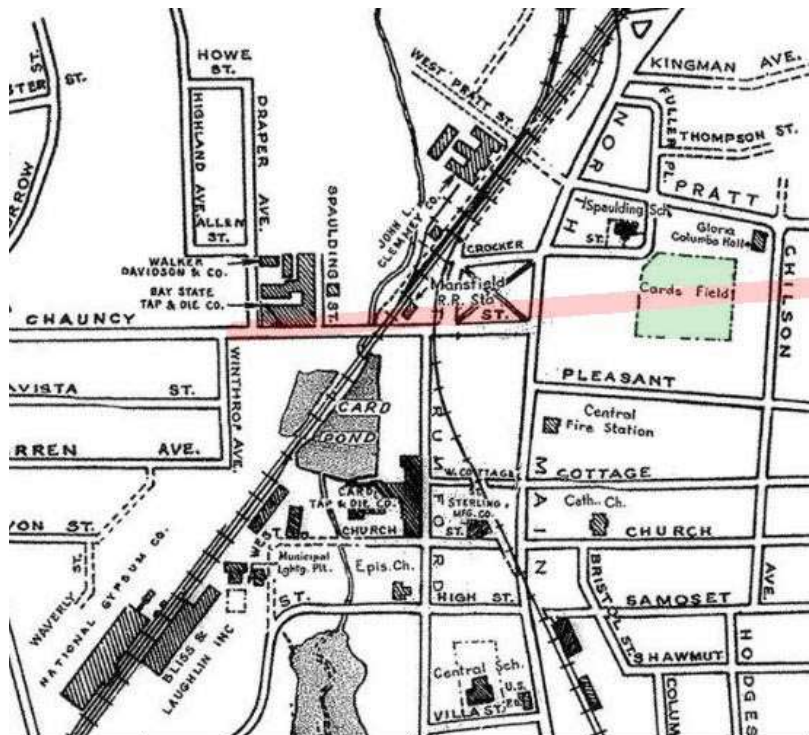
Knights of Columbus advertise a Charity Frolic at Card's Field.

10,000. Card's Field was the focal point of activity. The day's events usually culminated with a fireworks display at Card's.

In 1947 the Knights of Columbus sponsored a field day that included a 12-mile run. It began at Capron Park in Attleboro and ended at Card's. The race field was so strong it included Boston Marathon legend Johnny Kelley.

Card's Field disappeared with the construction of the underpass. The Chauncy Street extension was built and the town sold the remaining land to local businesses.

The next time you drive by, be sure to give a thought to old Card's Field.



Above is a 1952 map showing Card's Field.