

SACTO. UNION
FEBRUARY 18, 1962

Vincent F. Stanich Beholds the Bushers

LaSalle Baseball Night Has Lon

Back in 1938, Joe and Jack O'Neil, who had spent many years in the local bush leagues, decided that it would be a good idea to gather in the old time bushers and throw a "beer bust." This initial party was hosted by the two brothers, who were successful service station operators at the corner of 1300 L Street.



Vincent F. Stanich

The much publicized event was held at the Southside Park Clubhouse on April 2, 1938. The following invitation was issued: In order to keep our gathering on a not too large scale, it is necessary that we confine our invitations to approximately those who played during the years that our Rooney-O'Neil team was in existence. It is very easy to forget fellows of 25 years ago. We may have overlooked some that all of us would like to have present. If you think of any, mail their names to us at 1300 L Street, Sacramento. Signed: Joe and Jack O'Neil.

That was the beginning. The party was a tremendous success and the price was right. The two O'Neils picked up the tab. It was not intended to be an annual event, but would be given at intervals.

EDMONDS FIELD SITE

Then the war came along and the annual get-together was forgotten. With the cessation of hostilities in the far flung corners of the earth, things appeared to be getting back to normal, but when the party was again to be held, Joe and Jack had passed on. Thus, it appeared that the old timers would no longer have a sponsor.

However, in memory of his two brothers, Steve O'Neil, the youngest of the clan, conceived the idea of again having a beer bust. With the help of Father Richard Dwyer, editor of the Catholic Herald, the locale of the party was changed. It was held in the foyer of Edmonds Field and a series of parties there again proved to be popular.

It proved to be a huge organizational task and a little expensive. That is where the newly organized La Salle Club came into the picture.

LA SALLE CLUB ENTERS

The stalwarts of this newly found group, who were organized, primarily, to raise money for athletic equipment of the Christian Brothers High School, conceived the idea of promoting the annual Old Timers Baseball Night. It had a two-fold purpose. It would focus attention on La Salle Club and also it would provide good will among the old time baseball players and their friends. This first annual affair was held in the Christian Brothers cafeteria at 21st and Broadway on Feb. 16, 1952. Since then the La Salle Club has prospered and the Old Timers had found an annual meeting place.

The first chairman, again in deference to the Rooney-O'Neils, thought it wise to name the youngest of the Rooneys to handle the event. It was Joe Rooney, who with the assistance of a very fine committee, did a great job in getting many of the Old Timers to attend. We are not going to list the entire group who put in an appearance, just a few of them.

The active pros present were Jo Jo White, Jim Tabor and Eddie FitzGerald. Those present who have since passed on were Les Sheehan, Bill Hickey, Bob Nixon, Vince Horton, Merv Shea and Terrence McCaffrey.

OTHERS ON LIST

Others in the public eye who were on hand were



OLON OLD TIMERS—Monday's annual Old Timers' night at the LaSalle Club recalls oldtimers who played with the Solons. This picture, taken some years ago, shows, in first row, from left, Tony Boroja, Ralph (Sailor) Stroud, Mike Bakarich, Harry Hampton, Bernie DeViveiros, the late Cooie McGinnis; back row, from left, Kettle Wirts, the late Merlin Kopp, Ray Rohwer, Frank Osborn, Hank Ness, Kenny O'Kane, the late Vince Horton.

over the "mike" during the evening, relating some of their baseball experiences.

Those handling the "night" were Wirts, Westlake, Rooney and Steve O'Neil. The crowd crammed every nook and corner of the cafeteria.

In 1955 the party was turned over to Larry Williams to chairman the affair. The theme for the party was the "Parade of the Old Timers." In addition the baseball famous Knezovich family which was comprised of five brothers, all former pitchers for the Christian Brothers High School. They were Paul, Ray, Al, Mel and Don. They displayed their wares from 1935 to 1949.

The committee assisting Williams were Al La Tour, Steve O'Neil, Frank Sousa, Al Westlake, Henry Ludeman, Kettle Wirts, Lou Bordisso, Tom Kane, Barney Pendergast, Cy Puliz and Joe Rooney.

This was the biggest crowd since the inception of the series.

DONOVAN ON HAND

To begin naming all those in attendance would be too lengthy. However, Jerry Donovan, representing the Pacific Coast League, was on hand as well as the Solon official family that year, which included Fred David, Charles Graham, Joe Bittencourt, Dave Kelley and N. G. Culjis.

The crowd was so large and noisy that it was difficult to present any kind of an organized program.

In 1956 the La Salle Old Timers Night really hit the "jackpot" as far as having former major leaguers to put in an appearance.

Getting Walter Mails, Earl McNeely and Stanley Hack to appear before the filberts was a real deal. In addition, Hack, who was to manage the Chicago Cubs that year, introduced two of his proteges who were to report to Chicago that spring. They were Johnny Briggs and Richie Myers.

Other former major leaguers present were Vince

The three Rohwer brothers from Dixon were on hand for the first time. They were Otto, Eggert and Ray.

Bob St. Clair, 49er tackle, was the guest of Dick Saccani.

Members of the Solon club present were Jackie Tobin, Harry Bright, Heist, Cuno Barragan, Jerry Streeter, Tommy Agosta, Johnny McNamara.

Those whom we would like to remember as being guests that night include Herman Pillette, Les Sheehan, Charley Graham, Johnny Lane, Sam Stassi, Sr., George Loftquist, Mike Strazzo, Cy Young, Harold Shouse, Hiney Finkelstein, Max Baer. They have all passed away since that party and that is just five years ago.

The 1958 edition of the La Salle Baseball night was finally moved to the gymnasium. On this particular night the surviving members of the Rooney-O'Neil baseball team were honored. In addition, Ross "Brick" Eldred was present with the La Salle Award as a professional and Jimmy Westlake got the Buddy Ryan Award.

Larry Williams and his committee did another excellent job in bringing out a large crowd.

Stu Nahan handled the program and the high-

AZEVEDO TO APPEAR

Clarence Azevedo, former mayor of Sacramento, will present the awards to old timers at Monday night's La Salle Club event.

light was his interviewing Nippy Jones, who played a prominent part in the World Series win of the Milwaukee Braves the preceding year.

The principal speaker of the evening was Leslie O'Connor, president of the Pacific Coast League. In deference to his contribution to local baseball, Julius Anspitsky was invited to sit on the stage with the

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