



Alexandria Times

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Out of the Attic

More than 20 years of baseball at Baggett's Field

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Image: Baggett's Field can be seen here in this overlay of the 1921 Sanborn Atlas on a 1927 aerial photograph, showing the infield, grandstand and even the faint outline of a football field.

In 1915, Benjamin T. Baggett prepared a baseball field on the property owned by his mother, Sarah M. Baggett, on upper King Street, where King Street, Cameron Street and Commonwealth Avenue now intersect. Opening day for the new park was May 1, 1915, and the local Cardinal Athletic Club took on the Technical High School baseball team of Washington.

The Alexandria Gazette reported that, "the Cardinals' new home is situated in King street near the Union Station. It is over four acres in size, with everything to please the fans in the matter of accommodation, both as to scenery and location, and an abundance of lime water."

Furthermore, the paper anticipated the Cardinals' new park at Baggett's Field would become, "an excellent place for persons to spend their leisure time during the summer evenings watching the great national sport." In 1921, the paper proclaimed that the ballfield was the "best field in the city" and had an estimated seating capacity of 500.

In addition to the Cardinals, the Alexandria Athletic Association – nicknamed "the Triple As" – and the Dreadnaught Athletic Club frequently played their home games at Baggett's Field, which would sometimes take on the name "the Dreadnaught Park" for the occasion.

Other ballfields in the City of Alexandria included one on North Alfred Street between Madison and Montgomery streets and one near the shipyard, now Ford's Landing. The Alexandria clubs' out-of-town opponents hailed from places like Washington, D.C., Clarendon, Fredericksburg, Culpeper, Charlottesville and Richmond, making the location of Baggett's Field, adjacent to Alexandria's Union Station, an attractive and convenient place for other teams to come and play.

The proximity to the railroad also made it an attractive location for fans to come sit and watch the game from the raised railroad berm – and avoid paying admission to the grandstand. In 1916, Amos Lyles of Commerce Street was accidentally struck by a train while watching a game between the Cardinals and a team from Tenleytown, D.C. from the train tracks. He was taken to the Alexandria Hospital where he was treated for a cut on his head and released.

Others also played at Baggett's Field, including teams from churches, offices, factories, newspapers, fire stations and local military installations – including the Alexandria Torpedo Station. The Alexandria Police Department also fielded a team throughout the 1920s and 1930s and at least two of their team portraits, taken at Baggett's Field, survive.

Baggett's Field appears on the 1921 Sanborn Atlas as the "Base Ball Grounds," with a grandstand, trolley station and confectionary. It also appears in a 1927 aerial photograph, showing the





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infield, grandstand and wooden fence. Also visible are the faint outlines of a football field, oriented north/south. When not being used for baseball, Baggett's Field was also the site of football games, carnivals, festivals and other civic gatherings. The field closed at the end of the 1936 or 1937 season when a car dealership was built on the lot.

"Out of the Attic" is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as "Marking Time" and explored Alexandria's history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into "Out of the Attic" and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.

These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by staff of the Office of Historic Alexandria.