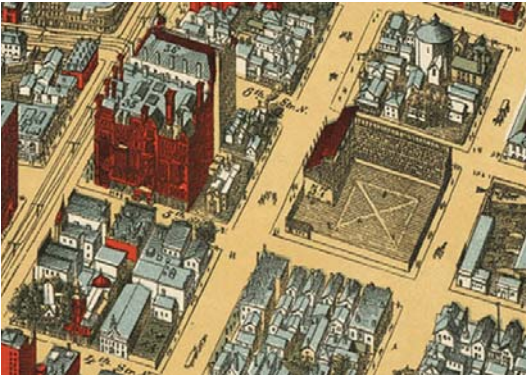


Minneapolis and St. Paul Ballpark Sites



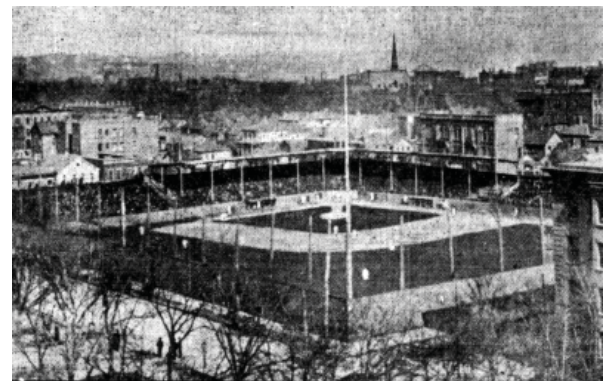
Athletic Park, across N. Sixth Street from Target Center and adjacent to Target Field, was a tiny ballpark that served the Minneapolis Millers from 1889 to 1896. The distance down the foul lines was approximately 250 feet. Perry “Moose” Werden, helped by the friendly dimensions, set a professional record with 42 home runs in 1894 and topped that with 45 in 1895; 37 of his 45 home runs that year were at Athletic Park. The first major league game played in Minnesota took place here, between Milwaukee and Columbus of the American Association on October 2, 1891. The site is now occupied by Butler Square, a warehouse converted into offices and restaurants.

Nicollet Park opened in 1896, and the Minneapolis Millers played here through 1955, the final game in the ballpark also being Game 7 of the Junior World Series. The Millers beat the Rochester Red Wings of the International League in the final game to win their first Junior World Series. Nicollet Park was a favorite of strong left-handed hitters, such as Ted Williams, who won the American Association triple crown in 1938, and Joe Hauser, who hit 69 home runs (50 at Nicollet) in 1933. A bank now occupies the site.



The St. Paul Saints played at **Lexington Park** from 1897 to 1956. As friendly as Nicollet Park was to left-handed hitters, Lexington was equally unfriendly. For many years the distance down the right-field line was 365 feet with the fence atop an embankment. A gale destroyed the fence in 1951, and a new fence was erected, closer to home plate. Several businesses are now on the site, including the headquarters of the Wilder Foundation and a bank, which put up a display that includes a commemorative plaque purchased by the Halsey Hall SABR chapter with money raised from ex-players and fans.

The Saints played most of their games from 1903 to 1909 at the **Downtown Ball Park**, also known as the Pillbox, because of its small size. Fans had the chance to watch baseball while getting a few of the construction of the rotunda for the state capitol, which was completed in 1905. The Pillbox was also home to an all-black team, the St. Paul Colored Gophers, and hosted a series in 1909, billed as the “world’s colored championship,” in which the Gophers beat the Leland Giants of Chicago. The site is now occupied by a building that houses the laboratories for the Minnesota Departments of Health and Agriculture.



Metropolitan Stadium opened in 1956 in a suburb of Minneapolis and was used initially by the Millers, although the ballpark was built to accommodate a major league team. The Minnesota Twins moved in and played here for 21 seasons starting in 1961. The Met hosted the All-Star Game and four games of the World Series in 1965. Harmon Killebrew hit the longest home run ever here, a second-deck blast on June 3, 1967. The home run is noted with a chair hanging from a ceiling in a shopping center that is now on the site, along with a home plate embedded in the floor.