

## Clover Hill Dedicates Ball Park

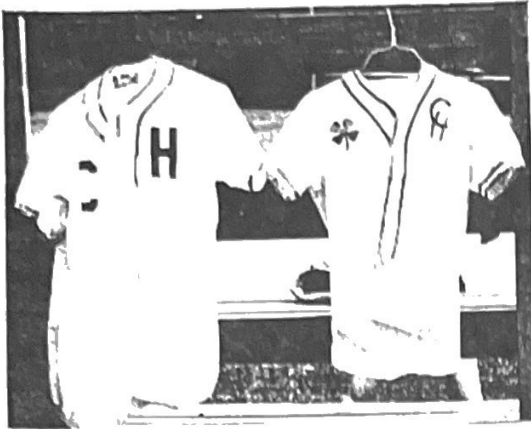


J. N. MILLER, CENTER CONGRATULATES PRESIDENT BERNELL HILL OF THE CLOVER Hill Ruritan Club prior to the opener Thursday night in the new Clover Hill lighted baseball park built under the leadership of President Miller and the sponsorship of the Clover Hill Ruritan Club. Marion Ruleman, Robert Shifflett and Paul Simmers, members of the board of trustees, left and "Buck" Bowman, who has long been an advocate of a lighted park in the community, along with Manager Gordon Shifflett of Ottobine watch the pre-game greetings.

# Buck Bowman Park

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## VINTAGE UNIFORMS



*Bucks*



### HOW BUCK BOWMAN PARK BEGAN

Buck Bowman not only sold farm machinery, he sold ideas. And the idea of night baseball in Clover Hill was an obsession with him. It so happened in 1953 that the Dayton Ruritan Club was making a serious effort to organize a Ruritan Club at Clover Hill. In July 1953, the new club was chartered. Soon this community service organization was looking for a major project. "Why not build a place for night baseball?" was Buck's ready suggestion. The idea caught on and was quickly supported by Clover Hill's many baseball enthusiasts. However, there were many difficulties that became apparent: costs, a place, technical problems, and the source of electricity.

But the idea was growing and obstacles would be overcome. On May 1, 1954, the Ruritan Club called a meeting of interested people at the Clover Hill School. Plans began to evolve. Jimmy Miller offered the land behind Clover Hill Store. Walter Hedrick offered trees on Mole Hill to be cut for lumber. It was reported that the City of Staunton was getting new baseball lights and their used lights were for sale at a low price. Ninety foot poles were available from a distance, but there were doubts that the pole trucks could navigate the highway intersections to Clover Hill.

The construction of the park quickly got underway. Volunteers offered their services generously. Rockingham Construction Company set poles and hung the wires. However, the holes were dug by volunteers by hand. They were 8 feet deep and very rocky with frequent cave-ins. Claude Rexrode built the bleachers.

The total cost was \$7,724.14 and the indebtedness of \$6000.00 was secured by 12 members signing notes of \$500.00 each to the Planters Bank in Bridgewater. The notes were all paid by the park in 1960. The first elected trustees were Jimmy Miller, president; Paul Simmers, treasurer; Bernelle Hill, secretary; Marion Ruleman, Buck Bowman, R.G. Shifflett, and Gordon Shiflet.

The park opened the night of July 1, 1954. At the ceremony Hugh Smiley sang the National Anthem, Ellis Matheny spoke appropriately, and a rousing baseball game followed. Clover Hill defeated Towers 5-4 as more than 700 fans cheered. The Rockingham County League was then made up of Bridgewater, Dayton, Towers, Keezletown, Linville, Spring Creek, Briery Branch, and Clover Hill. The Clover Hill team was formerly Ottobine, and a new chapter of baseball history began.

Buck Bowman continued thinking, talking, and most of all, working for baseball the rest of his life. He died January 13, 1980. Afterward "Clover Hill Park" was given the name "Buck Bowman Park," which means DEDICATED TO BASEBALL.

--Submitted by Mr. Bernelle Hill