

2012 Year opened

as of

2015 only shock-pad for a HS field

2015 110 turf fields out of 786 high schools

Clock centennial 1912 graduation class donated to Union School (Central Intermediate School); the school was torn down in 1978 and the clock went to the Flat River Historical Museum until School Board President Janet Ralph asked the museum to donate it back to the school district to place at Legacy Field

An Extraordinary Design

Throughout construction of Legacy Field, and no doubt for many years to come, we expect our visitors will wonder over the unique characteristics of our new stadium. For the faithful Greenville fan, a number of features readily remind them of what most inspired this visionary design, our own D.K. Black Field. While careful attention was paid to designing a modern facility with more than adequate capacity and exceptional safety features, the joy in sharing the new home for our students, whether they play football, march in our bands, lead us in spirited cheers, or pronounce their passion from the stands, is in celebrating the storied past which so heavily influenced the final design. In the short stories that follow, we hope you too will be moved by the rich history we continue to embrace.

After much consideration, and many suggestions from students, staff, and community members, the name “Legacy Field” was selected. The term *legacy* refers to property or things of great value (like traditions and memories) which are “handed down” from ancestors to those that follow. Our stadium is filled with references to our rich past, honoring the many proud moments, and even some sad memories which define us to this day. We opened this facility celebrating our past, and embarking on the next phase of a journey which will include a new set of stories, memories, accomplishments, and relationships we will pass on to generations to come.

Why a Bowl?

From early in the design, community members made clear the importance of actively participating in the events we will host at Legacy Field. Whether listening to our fine bands, chanting in harmony with our cheerleaders, or rooting on our football teams, we are used to being close to the action. By constructing the new field with bleachers on steeply sloped hills, constructing a field lowered and not separated by a typical running track, Greenville fans and guests are right on top of all the action, as they were accustomed at D.K. Black Field. Quite simply, building a stadium like most others just wasn’t the right decision for Greenville. It had to be a bowl.

To accomplish this vision, over 55,000 cubic yards of earth were displaced from this site. When the excavators withdrew, they left this valley much like the deep gorge used for decades to host Greenville football at D.K. Black Field. From this field, athletes and artists alike can appreciate their position in this grand arena.

The Centennial Clock

Truly one of the most exciting stories is that of the grand timepiece which overlooks Legacy Field from its perch at the north end of the stadium. Originally installed as construction of Central High School in 1912 was completed, the clock was a celebration of generosity and perseverance on the part of a community who labored to raise the funds for its purchase.

When the long vacant building, adjacent to D.K. Black Field was demolished in 1977, a handful of artifacts, including the clock, were thoughtfully preserved. The clock found its way to a new space in the front wall of the Flat River Museum where it stayed for the next thirty-five years.

As construction of Legacy Field was taking shape, hopes for inclusion of a clock seemed beyond reach, until the Board of Trustees from the museum decided unanimously, to donate the original Central High School clock back to Greenville Public Schools for installation a full century after its initial dedication. All of the labor involved in moving the clock was donated by Builder's Glass of Greenville and a plaque commemorating the one hundred year journey was sponsored by the GHS Class of 1962 in celebration of their fiftieth anniversary.

The Franklin Street Bridge

Just as the steep hills bordered D.K. Black Field, Legacy Field has been constructed with bleachers built on high banks overlooking the playing surface below. The original site near Union (Central) High School was a deep gulley spanned by a long wooden bridge in line with Franklin Street to the north of the school and south of the field. The bridge was known for its place in the romance of youngsters who likely walked hand-in-hand across its distance. Though the bridge was removed many years ago, and likely for the purpose of developing the baseball and eventual football fields below, we have been fortunate to recreate that feature in the plaza area above the tunnel. We fully expect the carefree days of youth will include strolls along this plaza during some of our most exciting events for many years to come.

Learning From Great Loss

To some, losing an important athletic contest is of great significance. At Greenville, we understand and appreciate that there are far greater tragedies. Two devastating events from our own history are represented in design cues at Legacy Field. The first, a number “4” permanently molded into the retaining wall at the south end of the field helps us remember the earliest days of organized high school athletics, and the inherent danger of such an aggressive activity. On November 5, 1904, as reported by the Greenville Independent news paper at the time, and more recently in The Daily News, Henry Loding, a Greenville player was injured in a head-on collision on the field. Later in the game, he collapsed near the back of the endzone, was rushed away for medical care, but passed away that evening. The game of football was abruptly suspended in Greenville for the next twelve years. But, a committed community member, Dr. Duncan K. Black believed so strongly in the value of athletics, that he coordinated the dedication of outdoor athletic fields, donating much of the property himself, for what later bore his name, D.K. Black Field. After years of absence, young men from the community began organizing their recreation into a formidable football team once more.

Football had returned to Greenville High School and in no time, our athletes earned a reputation for talent and character which has defined all of our athletes for the many decades since. Then, on September 8, 1977, tragedy struck once more. This time, Greenville’s Greg Blumberg collided with another player in the season’s opening game at Lakeview. Our own Jeff ‘Doc’ Day was the first to respond to the downed player who he was able to revive on the field. Greg survived three weeks with the significant spinal injury, but has left a mark on the hearts of every Greenville player and fan since. In a Daily News editorial written at the time by John Stafford himself, he referenced important lessons learned including: “...*we should be reminded to make each day count, and above all to appreciate one another, while we’re here.*” As a reminder to all of our players of the dangers inherent in the game of football, and as an example of great courage in the face of tragedy, Greg’s number “8” stands with our team along the home sideline near the forty yard line where his fateful collision occurred.

A Break in Football Action

Following the tragic loss of Henry Loding in 1904, the community agreed to suspend the game of football for the next several years. Football was simply too aggressive an

activity and represented too great a risk. It wasn't until Dr. Black initiated a push to provide athletic fields for the students of Greenville High School, that some of the youthful play began to organize into a regular football program in 1916. Legacy Field has been constructed with a bowl structure much like D.K. Black Field, but with a tall retaining wall encircling the field providing appropriate distance between the barrier and the field of play, but not distancing spectators from the action. The otherwise continuous wall features a distinctive relief along the northeast sideline which is symbolic of the years when football was not a part of our school program. This space is used to store our blocking sled for other than practice times. The image of that sled resting in this gap can stir the emotions not unlike that of players taking a reverent knee while a downed teammate's needs are attended. Every consideration for improving safety was included in the design of Legacy Field, in honor of our vivid memories of great loss. At the time of construction, Legacy Field was recognized as the softest playing surface ever constructed. Unlike most synthetic turf fields constructed with a maximum 8 millimeter sub-surface shock pad, Legacy was the prototype application for a new 23 millimeter pad design. It's twin and simultaneous construction was a portion of the facilities constructed in London, England, for the 2012 Summer Olympic Games.

Reflecting at the Bonfire

While our most recent classes might share the tradition of celebrating a valiant effort on the football field by meeting at the bonfire, this tradition has much deeper roots in Greenville. Though there are no formal records, the stories of teams and fans, from home and our visiting schools gathering around such a bonfire after events at D.K. Black Field are yet another component of an already rich history. When early designs for Legacy Field were developed, inclusion of a permanent brick fire pit was suggested as a way to accommodate bonfires within the stadium at all future home events. The brick lined fire pit is gas-fed so that no logs will need to be brought in, and no ashes or other waste removed from a fire with instant emergency shut-off capability. We look forward to many years of post-game bonfires to come!