

WELCOME TO PHILMONT NEW YORK

Old Philmont #13 – Baseball part 2

This part of the Baseball series begins about the time when the Great Depression hit the United States, and ends with the advent of the consolidated schools. The teams then were no longer ‘Philmont’ teams, but belonged to the school.

Baseball teams were in no short supply during the 1920’s and early 1930’s. The first photo is of the Philmont High School baseball team of 1932. The gentleman in the center wearing a suit was ‘Prof’ Case – school principal, and not a force to be toyed with as any number of students from that era still recall !



During this period, home games were still being played on the Bidwell lot, but something happened to change the game of baseball in Philmont. Its name was John M. Oden, seen in photo number two.



Mr. Oden came from Brooklyn and in 1934 bought two adjoining farms near Harlemlville. He was a sportsman in every sense of the word, and came to Columbia County to enjoy his hobby. He was an astute business man, involved in inventing the metallic hose and fittings for dispensing gas & oil. There are of record no less than six patents covering his improvements from 1918 to 1931.

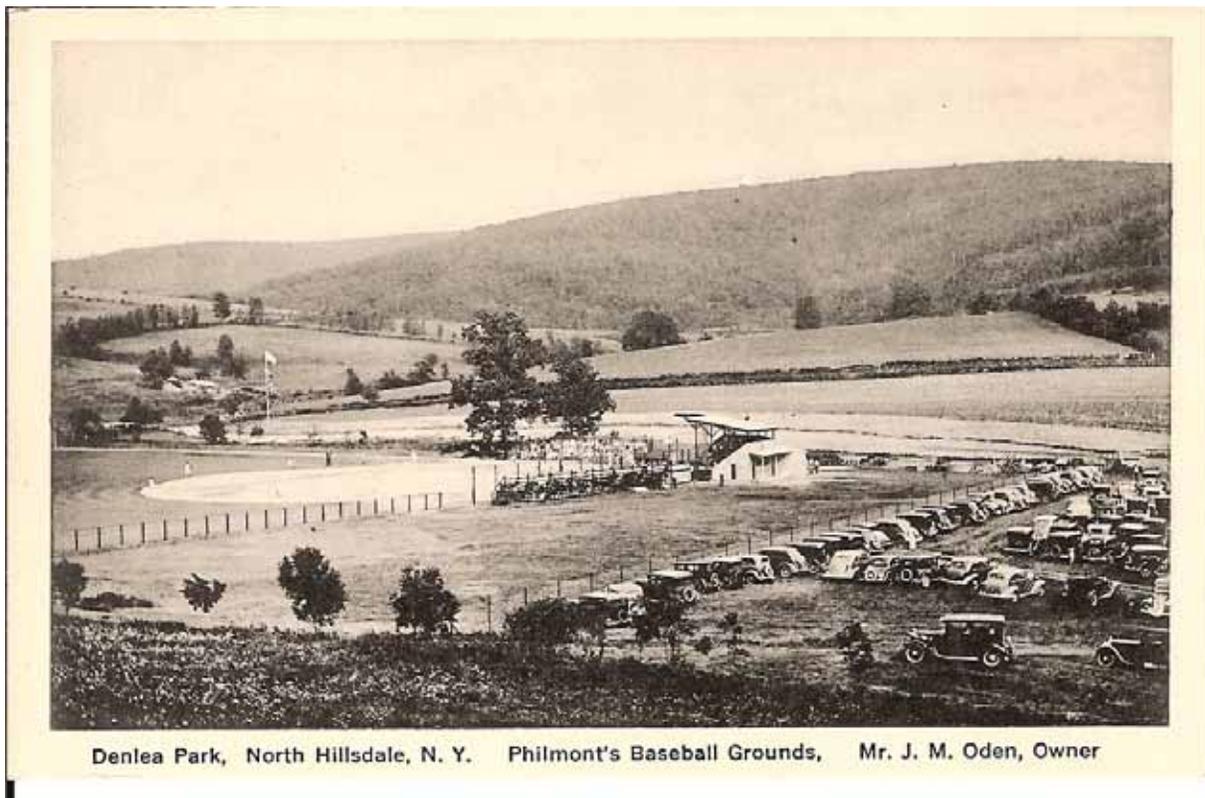


Photos three and four show the farm house and outbuildings after renovation and landscaping were complete. The whole property was estimated to be over 300 acres. He also constructed/improved a cabin on the property to be a small hunting/fishing lodge. The next photo shows the interior of this lodge.

While improving the property, he donated food and money to the needy of the Village of Philmont – all with strict instructions not to divulge the source. He expressed a desire to do more for the Village and area, and since we did not have a decent baseball field, he decided to create one ! He certainly did it right !!



Denlea Park was the result. Shown in the photo is what became Philmont's Baseball Grounds. A full major league field, with covered grandstand, food concession, rest rooms, player dugouts, foul line bleachers, and parking lot. The formal dedication was July 4, 1936. All this in rural Columbia County, with the nearest center of population Philmont's 2000 souls.



There are several good photos taken of teams, and others, at the field. The first that shows the Philmont team with 'P' on the jersey is probably the earliest. Stanford (Snooks) Orsted and Bill (Billy) Robertson still remember the field well. Orsted was on the 1932 High School Team, Bill was bat boy in this photo starting at .50 per game !



The next photo shows Philmont's team with the whole name on the front of the jersey. This and the previous photo had to be taken 1936-1937.

Along with the ball park and teams, there had to be a few other smaller frills. The advertising fan combination score card is one. Another is the 1937 score book provided by the Wilson company. The first entry is a game between Stottsville & Philmont, 16 May 1937. The spelling – Stottsville – is as it is in the book.



