

Ohio Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum—2901 Key Street. Maumee. OH 43537. Hours: Wednesday through Saturday. 11 a.m.-7 p.m.: Sunday. noon-5 p.m. Admission charge.

The Ohio Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum is located adjacent to the Lucas County Recreation Center's Ned Skeldon Stadium. Here the Toledo Mud Hens, with arguably the most colorful nickname in baseball, play. Their notoriety has been maintained by Jamie Farr (a Toledo native) on the television series *M.A.S. H.*

The museum is unusual in some respects. First, all of the displays are in a one-room building. Second, the majority of holdings are on contract loan from the collection of Thomas Eakin of Shaker Heights, Ohio, to Lucas County. These are supplemented by periodic traveling and special displays.

The exhibits center upon the four long-term professional teams in Ohio—the Cleveland Indians, Cincinnati Reds, Columbus Clippers, and the Mud Hens. The displays include uniforms, equipment, balls, scorecards and memorabilia: many are autographed. Native Ohioans and others who played for the Buckeye state's teams are contributors. From the distant past these include Lew Fonseca, Roger Bresnahan, Hal Trosky, Red Ruffing, Joe Vosmik, Cy Young and Hank Gowdy, and from more recent years. Roy Hughes, Joe Nuxhall, Bill Mazerowski, Joe and Phil Niekro, and Frank Howard, to Pete Rose and Mike Schmidt. "Outsiders" displays include a kimono worn by Babe Ruth from a tour in Japan.

Ohio teams have been moderately successful through the years with Columbus winning nine and Cincinnati 10 pennants, while Cleveland and Toledo have won just three in their respective leagues. The large picture of the 1927 American Association champion Mud Hens, with Casey Stengel as manager, is striking, as is the section of seats in front of a picture of long-gone Swayne Field in downtown Toledo.

The major feature of the museum is the Hall of Fame honoring native Ohioans and those who played in Ohio for their accomplishments. These pictures and short biographies are simply but attractively displayed within the center. Inductions (averaging four to six members) are held annually in August and the occasion has grown in stature in recent years. There are presently 115 members.

The museum's size and limited financial resources have kept it from becoming a broad-based Ohio baseball museum. Missing is coverage of other Ohio cities with longtime minor league association such as the Ohio State, Ohio-Indiana, Eastern, Central and Mid-Atlantic leagues. College successes such as Ohio State's NCAA championship of 1966 and Marietta College's recent accomplishments could also be included. Several high school programs have reached national prominence and seven national American Legion youth baseball champions have been from the Cincinnati area, the last in 1988 when Budde Post, with Pete Rose, Jr., won the tournament. Ohio has

won several of the prestigious National Amateur Baseball Congress championships which merit inclusion in a well-rounded museum. Minority participation has been recognized with a recent temporary display of black professional baseball in Ohio. A permanent exhibit would be welcome as would recognition of Ohio women who played in the All American Girls Baseball League in the 1940s and '50s. The museum publishes a quarterly newsletter of its activities as well as stories of historical interest about Ohio baseball under the editorship of the museum's curators. The curators also conduct periodic seminars centering on Ohio baseball history.

Despite some limitations, the museum is a worthwhile stop for the historian looking for an overview of Ohio professional baseball history, and combining that with an evening of watching the celebrated Mud Hens play, one can gain a feeling of what community baseball is still about today.

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