

**Collection Number**

BA MSS 19

**Title**

Lighting Crosley Field, Cincinnati

**Inclusive Dates**

1934-1935

**Abstract**

Records of the Cincinnati National League Ball Club related to the lighting of Crosley Field. Collection consist of specifications, including diagrams from General Electric, Westinghouse, and Giant for lighting the field so the team could play baseball at night.

**Provenance**

The collection was donated to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in 1970 by the Cincinnati Reds. Papers arranged and described by Anne McFarland in July 2000, with additional processing in January 2003.

**Access**

By appointment during regular business hours, email [research@baseballhall.org](mailto:research@baseballhall.org).

**Historical Background**

Until 1935, major league baseball games were played in the daytime. Powell Crosley and his general manager at the time Larry MacPhail, were attempting to bring their attendance up to compete with the larger cities such as New York and Chicago. The Great Depression and a mediocre team had caused gate receipts to plummet. They saw night games as a way to increase gate receipts by providing the working man with a way to see a baseball game without impinging on his work week; the National League allowed Cincinnati seven experimental games to prove the viability of baseball being played at night. Crosley saw increased gate receipts during the night games and this convinced many of the other teams to follow suit.

Although this was the first official major league night baseball game, the concept was not a new one. On September 2, 1880, the first game of night baseball was played in Massachusetts between employees from Jordan Marsh & Co. and R.H. White & Co. Unfortunately, the field was not well lit and many errors were committed. In 1909, August Herrmann, the owner of the Cincinnati Reds, held a game under lights between two local Elk lodges. The lighting scheme used was insufficient and rather than trying to increase the number of foot candles in the stadium, the idea was abandoned.

Minor league and Negro Leagues teams had been using lights to play at night for a number of years before the practice was adopted by the major league teams.

**Sources**

National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. [Research File]: *Night Baseball*. Cooperstown, NY: National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, 2003.  
National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. [Research File]: *Night Game 1930-1941, Firsts*. Cooperstown, NY: National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, 2003.  
Wheeler, Lonnie and John Barker. *The Cincinnati Game*. Wilmington, OH: Orange Frazer Press, 1988.

### **Scope and Content**

This collection consist of "Proposals and Recommendations". This includes material from three companies bidding on the project. The companies were General Electric, Giant, and Westinghouse. Each company included blueprints, booklets, description of their products and photos.

Also included in this collection are the recommendations by the National Association and one folder of various blueprints showing lighting plans and schemes.