

## Escapism at John Galvin Park

By Steve Rodriguez

*USA Today headline of August 26, 2024: Historic ballpark featured in 'A League of Their Own' burns to the ground in Southern California*

*Excerpts from article: Ontario's Jay Littleton Ball Park, located roughly 40 miles outside of downtown Los Angeles, burned down Thursday night, according to a news release from the Ontario Fire Department. The park was built in John Galvin Park between 1936 and 1937. The park has all-wooden grandstands... (and)...has been featured in numerous Hollywood films, including "Eight Men Out," "The Babe Ruth Story," and "A League of Their Own." The ballpark was dedicated to Joe "Jay" Littleton in 1998, "an important local figure in baseball and youth sports." The park was named a historic Landmark in 2003.*

Back in the day when rapid-paced winds of change  
and rebellion did battle with forces of  
conformity and institutions, an  
already ancient ballpark stood in to act  
the role of escapist Americana.

From the stormy mid 60's through the early  
70's a creaky baseball citadel  
exercised a magic for all who entered.  
As political and societal lines  
were drawn with ferocity and citizens

expected to take sides, Littleton's chalk lines  
laid out each night on the field invited  
and entranced fans, while offering athletes  
steady navigational guidance.  
A rough-hewn venue, the splintery jewel

showcased a diamond of its own—  
surrounded by a vast green sea outfield,  
and a wooden grandstand which appeared  
more fitting for a cinematic contest  
set in Ruth's or Shoeless Joe Jackson's heyday.

Reports of war, protest, and riots failed  
to penetrate inside, left to stalk beyond  
the glow of American Legion game lights.  
Exhausting evening news names like Savio,  
Westmorland, and Agnew denied admission.

On warm summer nights, winds blowing stiff  
across the country were here shorn of strength,  
leaving hard hit balls and hard questions hanging  
in dense air. Word of distant rice paddies  
and burning cities muffled for nine innings.