



I'm not old enough to know the Babe, Teddy Ballgame or Joltin' Joe. I've been to Yankee Stadium, Fenway Park and Coors Field, but never The (original) House That Ruth Built, Ebbets Field or the Polo Grounds. Baseball certainly connects my father and I, but there's always going to be a gap – an unavoidable chasm that's created between a little boy who saw the game at its very finest hour and one who never did.

And that's okay. It's still the grandest of games. And it still can connect generations. But oh how fine it would be if somehow, someday, I could see what he saw,

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cheer where he cheered or walk through a turnstile back in time?

Bruce Hellerstein thinks I can.

"It was the fastest contract signing in history," I overheard Hellerstein say last night. "I couldn't sign the paperwork fast enough."

Hellerstein, the creator, curator, owner, operator and official box-unpacker of B's Ballpark Museum, which is newly located at 1940 Blake Street in Denver, was telling a guest at the museum's grand opening just how one of the greatest baseball collections in America (the Smithsonian calls Hellerstein's chest of treasures "one of the top 21 finest private baseball collections in the world") has recently made the move across the street from Coors Field, a plan that Hellerstein has been concocting for quite some time.

The disclaimer on Hellerstein's web site ([www.ballparkmuseum.com](http://www.ballparkmuseum.com)) says that B's Ballpark Museum is "the best kept secret in baseball," but that may not be the case anymore. It's not that Hellerstein was trying to hide some a secret passion; it's just that a lifetime of work (or "play," as he might call it) wasn't nearly as accessible as it is now. His wife, Lynn, and his daughters, Annie and Becky, were always okay with Bruce's "original" museum, which happened to be in located in their Centennial basement. But allowing *everyone* who loves baseball into a museum underneath the family kitchen isn't exactly realistic.

As a CPA (by day), Hellerstein specializes in estate, gift and trust (EGT) taxation and planning. This knowledge, combined with lifelong love affair with baseball led to the creation of what he calls his "family's living legacy" – or, as it's now known by all, [HYPERLINK "http://www.ballparkmuseum.com/museum/"](http://www.ballparkmuseum.com/museum/) B's Ballpark Museum, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. I was lucky enough to visit this massive collection of baseball memorabilia back in Hellerstein's basement. And even eight years ago, when I first met him, Hellerstein talked of moving his vault somewhere where fathers and sons could easily enjoy it. He's finally done it.

I got an invite from Hellerstein a month or so ago. On the phone, Hellerstein sounded as giddy as youngster attending his first baseball game – he'd finally found the perfect spot to house his collection, and he was hosting a grand opening. I was flattered to get the invite, but that's how Hellerstein operates. He remembers people, places and the most obscure details imaginable.

Of course I had to go. And even more naturally, I had to invite my dad. I've written about B's Ballpark Museum before, but it's one of those relationships that must be revisited more than just



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once, especially now that it's in a new home. For me, it's a glimpse into baseball's past, a place in history I've never been. For my dad, it's a reunion. Quite literally, he's able to walk through the same turnstile he might have walked through in old Yankees Stadium. He's able to look up a light from a chandelier, a glow that shined down on him as he stood in the grand entrance of Ebbets field when was seven years old. He's able to sit in a stadium seat from the old Polo Grounds, perhaps the same splintery bucket in which he plopped his butt before the Giants moved westward.

And that's just the smallest of samplings. Hellerstein's museum has it all – blades of outfield grass, jarfuls of infield dirt, baseball cards, photos, game programs, game-worn uniforms, and the most random pieces of brick and mortar from every Major League Baseball park one can imagine. It's an amazing collection of stuff that somehow avoided being tossed away after a garage sale, a compilation that tells the story of baseball more clearly than any book ever could. It's personal and it's passionate.

But best of all, it's *there*. Hellerstein's dream to bring his love of baseball to the masses has finally been realized at 1940 Blake Street for everyone to see. I took my dad to see it last night. You should take yours.

*For more information on Denver's newest attraction, "B's Ballpark Museum," visit [www.ballparkmuseum.com](http://www.ballparkmuseum.com).*



"Comparing Tiger Woods to Mike Tyson is asinine. One guy was a fraud, dominating a watered down sport and taking on inferior opponents. The other has bested the top fields in golf time and time again. Get a clue!" - Gary in Franktown

