

Packers

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got lost."

Sipes, also a member of the Packers Hall of Fame board, obtained East High School's permission to remove the artifact in exchange for two new goal posts that were donated to the school by the Hall of Fame.

Randy Brice, another Hall of Fame board member, hiked out to the field with Sipes to cut down the metal goal post and load it onto a truck to transport back to the Hall of Fame offices near Lambeau Field.

Brice, whose grandparents watched games at Hagemeister Park, remembers the story of a 1922 game that the Packers won on a phantom field goal. The skies over Green Bay had gotten so dark that officials could not tell Packers kicker Cub Buck had not yet even kicked the ball.

Once he got a look at the goal post Sipes had found, Brice was sure it was authentic.

"It was kind of exciting that we had stumbled onto that," he said. "I thought, 'That's got to be it. It's here.'"

Sipes, however, decided that a little more investigation was in order. So he snipped off a small piece of the goal post and sent it to a metallurgist. The expert in the physical and chemical behavior of metals and alloys was Russ Cochran, whose father, Red Cochran, was a Packers coach starting in the

1950s.

Russ Cochran, a metallurgical engineer in St. Louis, said tests showed that the material in the goal post dated to the 1920s

or earlier. Just to be sure, he sent the sample to some university acquaintances who had done similar tests on the Titanic wreckage.

The results were the

same: The metal in the goal post was from roughly the same period as the doomed ocean liner, which sank in 1912.

"It's basically detec-

tive-like work," Cochran said. "I was glad to help out."

With the authenticity question seemingly resolved, the Hall of Fame set out to find a place to display its newest find. But the facilities available on the lower level at Lambeau Field did not offer enough space. So the goal post stood for seven years in a garage behind the Hall of Fame's offices.

Starting last month, renovations inside Lambeau Field forced the temporary relocation of the Hall of Fame to the Neville museum. That was when Sipes and his colleagues seized on the opportunity to make room for their treasured piece.

The Hagemeister Park goal post now stands among the trophies, uniforms and other items to be displayed in the downtown museum for approximately the next year. For about \$400, fans also can purchase a piece of scrap metal from the goal post mounted on a commemorative plaque.

Beth Lemke, the museum's interim executive director, said she finds the goal post particularly interesting, because it was built by hand and because it reflects a time when visionaries in Green Bay were assembling a game that the community — and the nation — would come to love.

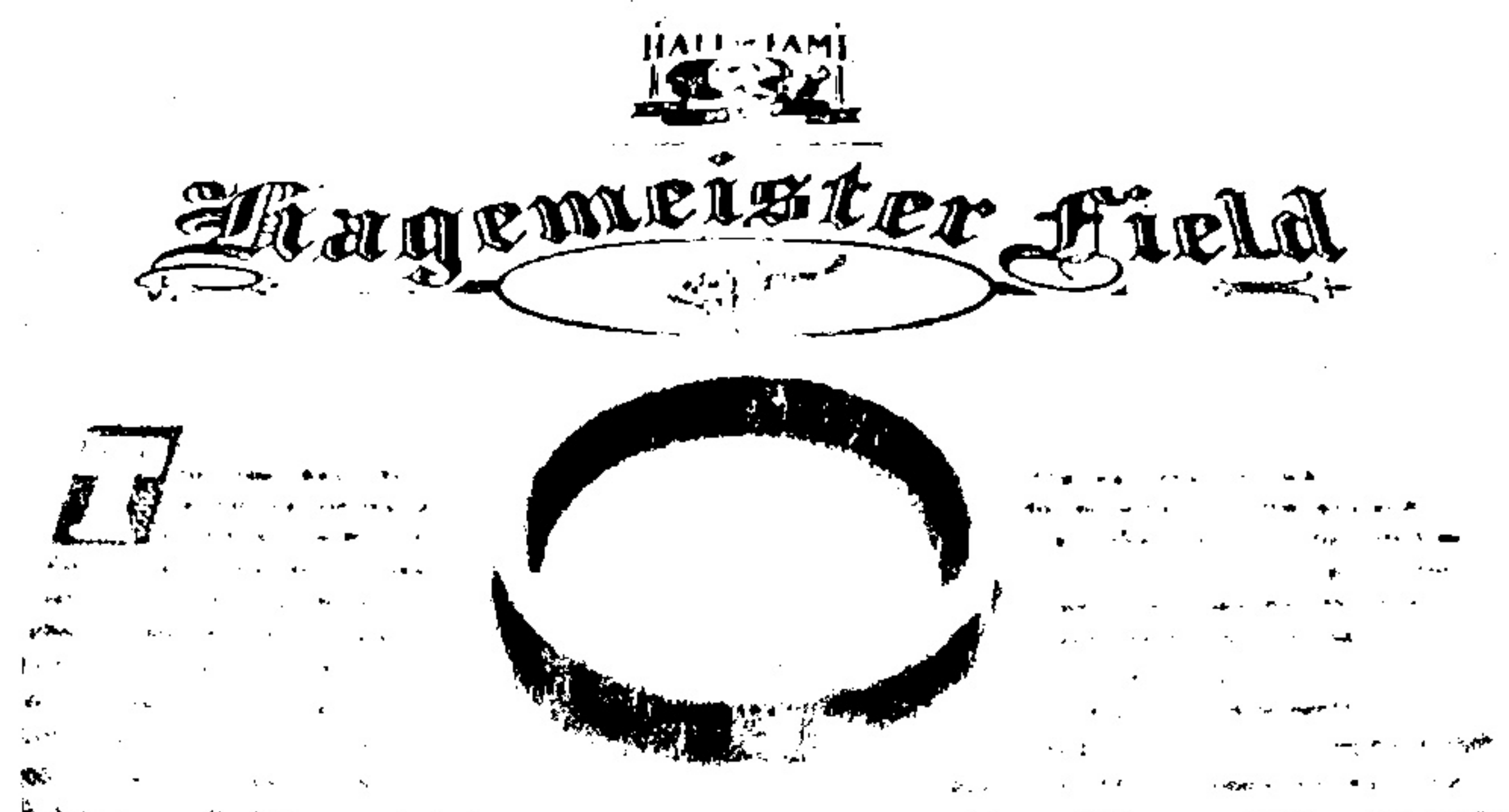
"That's the story that's exciting," Lemke said. "It was created by the people who were creating and shaping football as we know it today."

Sipes hopes the goal post will remain on display after the Neville museum exhibit closes and the Hall of Fame collection returns to Lambeau Field.

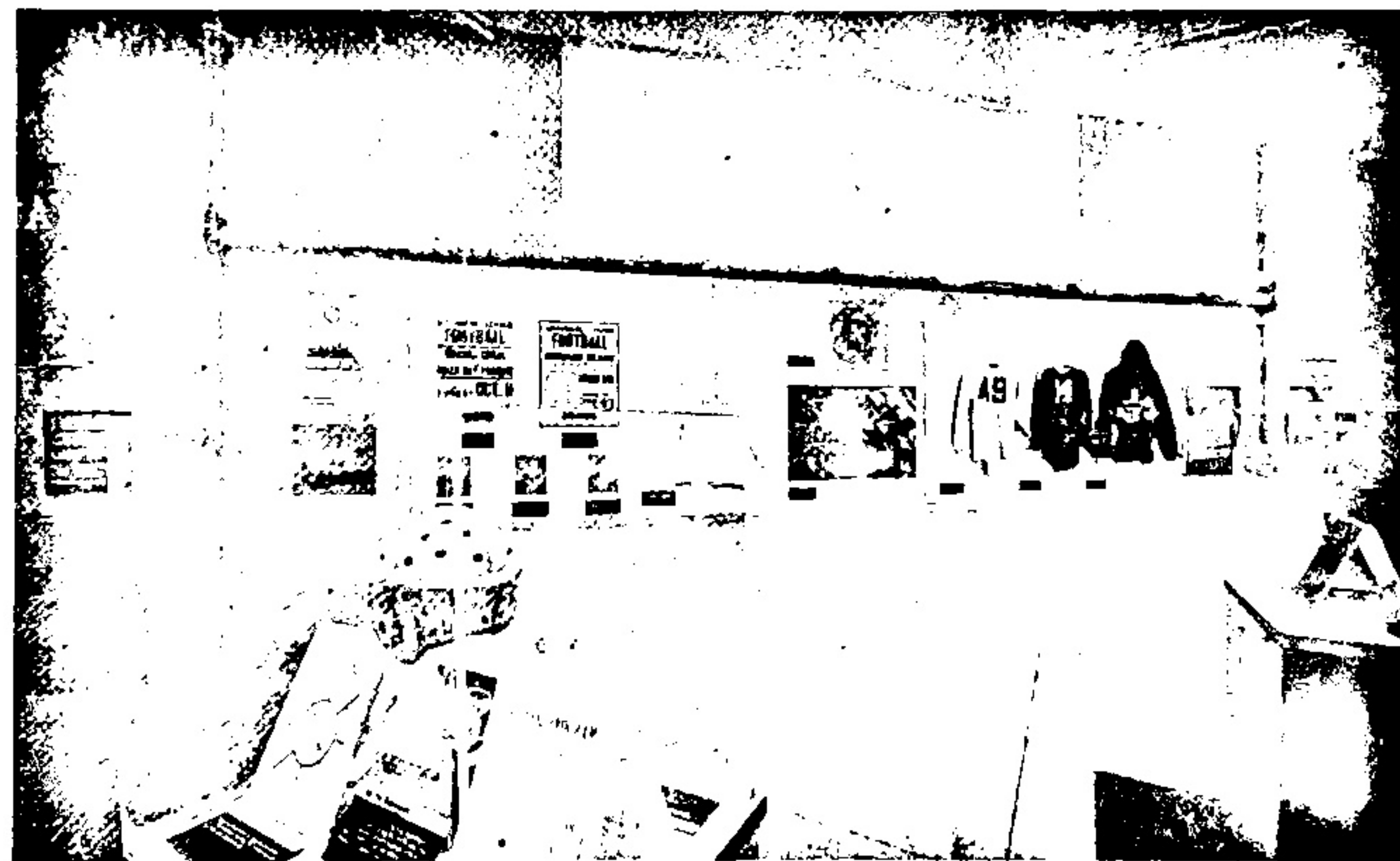
For now, however, he is just enjoying seeing his contribution admired and appreciated, finally, by his fellow Packers fans.

"This is the birth of the Packers," he said. "It's a piece of history for the community."

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Detail from a plaque near the Hagemeister Park goal post on display in the Packers Hall of Fame room at the Neville Public Museum on April 23. PHOTOS BY JIM MATTHEWS/PRESS-GAZETTE MEDIA



The Hagemeister Park goal post is on display in the Packers Hall of Fame room at the Neville Public Museum.