

**T**his piece of Green Bay Packers history was forgotten, but not gone.

A goal post believed to be from the team's original playing field, Hagemeister Park, stood in a remote area where Curly Lambeau and his teammates apparently abandoned it 80 years earlier.

Authenticating the artifact uncovered on Green Bay's east side would require a team effort, including some of the same scientists who studied the Titanic wreckage.

Even then, years would pass before most Packers fans would have a chance to see the rusted metal goal post. It remained in storage while officials with the Packers Hall of Fame struggled over how and where to present it.

But the artifact now is on display inside Neville Public Museum of Brown County as part of a yearlong exhibition by the Packers Hall of Fame.

Tom Murphy, archivist for the Hall of Fame, said the somewhat misshapen goal post offers a rare glimpse into the days when Curly Lambeau and other pioneers were almost literally building the modern game of professional football from scratch.

"That's why it's such a classic piece," Murphy said. "It's seen a lot of history."

Hagemeister Park, located where East High School now exists, was the Packers

playing field between 1919 and 1923, back when professional football in America was still in its infancy.

After years of debate and research, the authenticity of the old goal post found standing in a field

near East High School seems without question among those involved in the Packers Hall of Fame.

Herman Reckelberg, a Hall of Fame board member, recalls seeing the white metal assem-

blage in the 1940s during his days as an East High School football player. Reckelberg said he may have even used it to kick a few practice field goals, unaware of its place in Packers lore.

Now 86, Reckelberg has

weighed all the evidence and is convinced that it was one of the Packers' first goal posts.

"If that goal post could talk," he said. Referring to Lambeau and other team founders, Reckelberg added, "I'm sure those guys all had something to do with it."

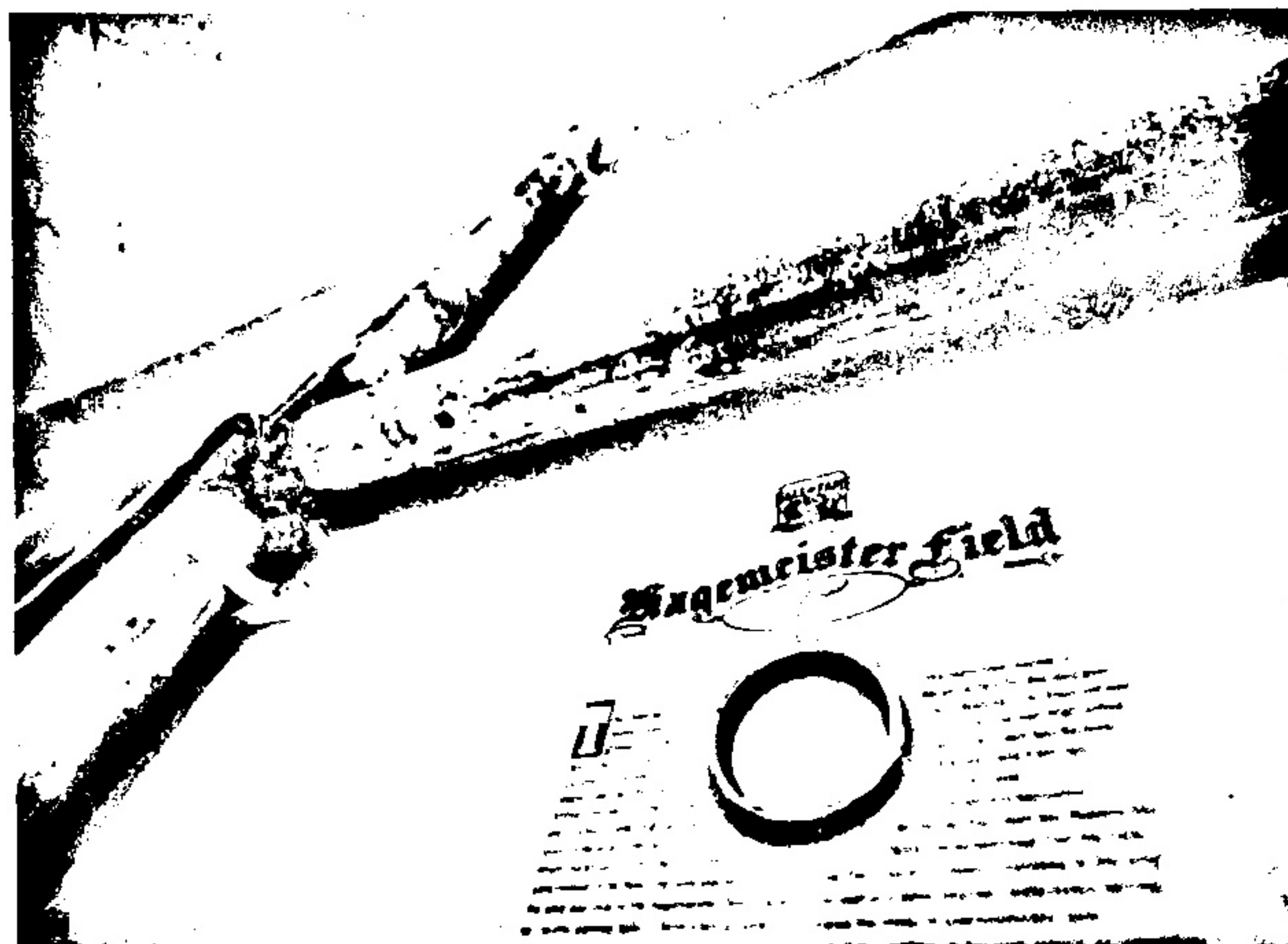
What is a bigger mystery to some observers is why the historic piece stood in plain sight for decades without anyone trying to salvage or preserve it.

Don Sipes, a long-time Packers fan and memorabilia collector, was doing historical research in 2007 when he decided to walk around where he thought Hagemeister Park had been. Among some history buffs, the precise location of the original playing field has been a matter of debate.

Sipes grew curious about an old metal goal post he noticed standing by itself in an empty field east of the high school. He calculated that a corresponding field goal on the opposite end of Hagemeister Park would have been located where the high school has stood since 1924.

To his astonishment, historic photos of the school under construction seemed to show the very same goal post in the background.

"Oh, my God, it was there," he recalls saying to himself. "Over the generations, it just



The Hagemeister Park goal post on display in the Packers Hall of Fame room at the Neville Public Museum on April 23. JIM MATTHEWS/PRESS-GAZETTE MEDIA

# UPRIGHT ON DISPLAY

## Packers' original goal post finds its place in history

By Scott Cooper Williams

Press-Gazette Media