

Aberdeen Municipal Ball Park was built in 1936 as a WPA project. A fire in 1952 caused some major damage to the grandstand. Already a home for the Northern League's Aberdeen Pheasants, the rebuilt ballpark became known as Pheasant Park and later, Johnson Field.

When the Northern League returned after the war in 1946, Aberdeen was given the franchise that was originally located in Winnepeg.

The ballpark had a view of grain mills and water towers just beyond the 1st base bleachers, had a fantastic blue collar appeal. Aberdeen's main source of income was agricultural, and Pheasant Park paid homage to this in a very real way.

The new franchise in Aberdeen, wanted the backing of Major League Baseball, and sought a franchise to associate with. The team's secretary traveled to St. Louis to meet with the Browns, complete with a bouquet of roses and chamber of commerce brochures. The courtship was a success. Aberdeen signed a long term agreement and the new St. Louis Browns franchise became a fixture in Aberdeen.

This courtship was one of the strongest in Minor League Baseball. The Aberdeen Pheasants served the St. Louis Browns, until their ballpark burned in 1953. By the time the ballpark was rebuilt in 1954, the Browns were no more. They had moved to Baltimore and become the Orioles. The relationship between the team and ownership was so strong however, that the Browns took the affiliation to Baltimore with them! Aberdeen continued to serve the Orioles for another 15 years.

From the Northern League's return to service in 1946, till the final demise in 1971, Aberdeen served the Orioles / Browns franchise continuously for a total of 26 years.... the longest and strongest affiliation in the Northern League's history. During that time, 60 men were sent to the Major Leagues... many of whom would make their mark Major League Baseball and the even the Hall of Fame.

Through thick and thin, the Aberdeen Pheasants held on in the Northern League. At a time when Minor League teams were folding across North America, (240 to be exact) the Pheasants continued to provide quality baseball. Eventually even the Northern League itself could no longer stay afloat. The league vanished in 1971. With nowhere to compete in, the Pheasants disbanded and the ballpark was demolished in 1975. A rebirth of the Pheasants took place from 1995-1997 as the independent Prairie League tried to rekindle the interest of baseball in the plains. The league wasn't strong enough however, and baseball in the new ballpark Fossum Field was again abandoned.

18 year Major League veteran Shortstop Mark Belanger played for the Pheasants in 1964, Don Larsen, Al Bumbry, Tito Francona, Andy Etchebarren and Darold Knowles were all former Pheasants. Two players however would really make their mark on Major League Baseball; one would make the Hall of Fame. In 1964 Lou Piniella would play for the Pheasants before being called up to the Major League Baltimore Orioles. During that same season, a young 18 year old made his professional debut on the Aberdeen pitcher's mound. With a 10-3 record and a ERA of only 2.51, future Hall Of Famer Jim Palmer threw his first professional pitches from this mound. After only one full pro season of Minor League Aberdeen baseball, Palmer was called up to the Major Leagues.