



In 1951 Deephaven residents Carl Hensel and Tup Way started the organization of the first Little League in Minnesota. There were four teams from the following communities: Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park and Edina. For years they played on village and school fields.

In 1955 Bennett Family Park had its start. The original property was 22 acres owned by the Ted

Bennett family. They had donated the property to the Deephaven Gun Club who operated a trap shooting range (located in far right field of Bennett #3, they shot from west to east). Harold Strot and Ray Peterson (Peterson Shoes) generated the idea for the park. In 1955 the Gun Club agreed to allow Little League to use a portion of the land for a field. By the summer of 1956 funds had been raised to fill, clear and grade the field. Sod was laid in October and backstops, fences, dugouts and a concession stand were finished in time for a June 1, 1957 opener. Mayor Bud Robb of Deephaven threw out the first pitch for that opener.

The field was named Bennett field, after the original donors of the land, and was on the current Field #4 site. The field was configured a little differently; home plate was in the right field spot and the concession stand was right behind it. In 1959 the Little League group took over supervision of Babe Ruth. The leagues were expanding and more room was needed. At this time the Gun Club was willing to sell the entire parcel of land to use for baseball fields and recreational activities. What is now field #3 was considered the Babe Ruth field in 1961.

An interesting note, in 1961 there was a warming house built at Bennett Park. The hockey and figure skating rink was created on what is now the parking lot.

In 1962, a girl's softball program started for grades 5-8, but since there were no softball fields, they were "allowed" to use the Little League field for two games a week.

In 1968, Field #2 was supposed to be a new Babe Ruth field but the cost of fill was so prohibitive that it became another Little League field. In the mid-70s fill was provided via a Minnetonka City sewer project and the current Babe Ruth field was built. At this time Girls Softball started on #3. Field #5 was built in the early 80s. As we have all guessed when it rains heavily, Bennett Park is located mainly on wetlands (maybe this is why the current Babe Ruth field is called "The Swamp").

The information in this article was garnered from conversations with Ed Robinson, one of the originals of Bennett Park, and various articles found in dresser drawers.  
The article was mostly written by Ann Bailey