

Fenway Park – a step back in baseball lore

By Kathryn Reed

BOSTON – I would have never guessed visiting Fenway Park would be a bit disappointing. As part owner of San Francisco Giants season tickets, I had tickets to the last game of the season – the one where the orange and black clinched the division.

I was in Boston that Sunday.

Instead of watching the Giants send the Padres scurrying back to San Diego to watch the remainder of the season on TV, I saw the Red Sox triumph over the dreaded, hated, vile Yankees to give Tampa Bay the division title.



Fenway Park -- a must see for any baseball fan.

Photos/Kathryn Reed

So, Oct. 3 was bittersweet for me in not being able to root for my men in person. Still, when they clinch the championship series, I'll be at one of the World Series games – so, it's all good.

Fenway – *wow*. Anyone who has seen the Green Monster (that 37-

foot, 2-inch left field wall) knows what I'm talking about. It's impressive both in stature, historical significance, and visual prominence and dominance of the ballpark.

It's one of the last parks where the scoreboard is changed manually. It's such a sought after job that parents are told to put their newborn's name on the wait list.

On our tour before the first pitch we sat in the seats above the monster that have only been there since 2003.

My niece Veronica, who graduated from Boston College in May and works in Beijing, was in town for the weekend and joined us on the tour. What a great bonus to the entire 11-day venture in New England.

We were lectured not to take any dirt as we walked onto the field. Watching the groundskeepers ready the damp field it took some self-restraint not to take a pinch of the red dirt. Of course, I didn't really know what I would do with it.

Just to walk where some of baseball's legends have stood – and even where some of today's greats were about to play – made me pause.

Ghosts of America's pastime seem to lurk everywhere. Think Cy Young, Babe Ruth, Jimmy Collins, Ted Williams, Jimmie Foxx and Carlton Fisk. They were all Red Sox.

Williams, the leftie who pulled the ball, was known for launching balls out of the park. To make it a bit easier for him to clear the bases, in 1940 the bullpen was built in right field – lessening the home run distance for the team's premier hitter by 23 feet.

Our tour guide gave us a trip through baseball and Red Sox history. With the first professional game played here April 20, 1912, it's the oldest active Major League ballpark. It wasn't front-page news at the time because the Titanic sank.

The feel of Fenway is a bit like a minor league or spring training park in the size and proximity of seats to the field. Concession stands are also old school – in design and food choices.

Tucked into an old neighborhood, the park was easily accessible by foot from our Back Bay hotel. Much like San Francisco's AT&T Park, bars and restaurants do a brisk business before and after games.

It can be hard to get tickets, though some go on sale prior to each game. I opted to ensure we'd have seats and paid well more than face value. Some things are worth it – like a once in a lifetime chance to watch the Red Sox beat the Yankees on the last day of the regular season at Fenway.

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