



The Beatles

SUFFOLK DOWNS - East Boston, Massachusetts, USA - 18th August 1966

by Harold Montgomery

It was in early June 1966 that my mother had seen an article in the paper that tour coach company Peter Pan Bus was offering tickets to see the Beatles live, just outside Boston in Suffolk County, on 18th August. The Beatle tour bus ride also included a chaperone on each bus and a ticket to the show. There would be only two buses with 45 people on each bus. The cost was \$12.50 total per ticket. With today's inflation it would be \$740.30! Since it was chaperoned and she worked very near the bus station, she went there directly to buy two tickets before they sold out. This was to be a two hour ride from my home in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Before she told anyone she had bought the tickets mom asked my best friend Daniel's mom if she would let her son go to the show. His mother did not want Daniel to go. Mom said she always thought Daniel's mom was unhappy with John's cheeky Jesus remark. So she contacted my Aunt and she was eager to take her up on a ticket for her son Paul to go and see The Beatles with me.

My mother invited my cousin Paul over for dinner. Mom made a chocolate cake with the Beatles on top for desert. We had no clue why she made a cake like this for us, but hey, it was a Beatle cake. As we were eating the cake she came back to put a ticket in front of each of us. We picked them up and just looked at her with disbelief on our faces when she said "you boys are going to see The Beatles in Boston in three months". Paul and I went mad! We couldn't believe our eyes and ears! Paul was a Paul McCartney Fan and I was for George and we thought we were the biggest fans in the world...well maybe in school at least!

We were both fifteen years old. For us to go together to Boston was as good as saying you're going on a private vacation somewhere! On the day of 18th August 1966 we met at my house and got ready to head for the bus station. Once there we saw a small crowd by the buses. One bus was being decorated by fans with a very long "Beatles Or Bust" banner on the outside! We were not on that bus, we found out we were on the second bus behind. There were more boys on that first bus, maybe half. On ours there were maybe six boys including us.

The buses left at the appointed time and excitement was in full bloom.





When the bus left town and was on the major highway to Boston the party began, and it was very noisy. The bus driver and chaperone had to keep telling us all to calm down every so often. Beatles magazines were being loaned and passed around for others to see and after a while we all started to sing Beatles songs, though some nodded off during the long non-stop ride.

Some of the girls did little squeals when they saw the road signs for Boston. When we were in sight of the Suffolk Downs Race Track the whole bus broke into the anthem..."We Love You Beatles". Finally we came to where the bus would be parked. There was a gate with a letter and a number. Ours was Gate B4 if you can believe that! I wrote it on the back of my ticket so as to remember. We were told to be back at the gate ("Memorize your gate Number") by such and such a time so you won't miss the bus. This idea of missing the bus scared us kids, but really who could forget Beatles 4?

We emptied the bus row by row, staying seated until our row was next. Once off you went to the gate B4 and showed your ticket. All our tickets were in the same area together. Our chaperone led us all in to our section and seats. On the way we passed a man selling tour programs and Beatles Banners of different types. Then there was a concession stand with food. Who

wanted food? We wanted Beatles. I couldn't help but notice a beverage dispenser that had a sign taped on it that read "Lennonaide". I later came back to get some as well as a tour book and "We LOVE You Beatles" banner after we got to our seat. From my seat I could see the stage that was built for them. It was on the actual dirt horse runway. (right)

Every time a car out in the field moved the screams became defining. In the early days 1964/65, males never said "I love the Beatles". It was "I like the Beatles" ONLY. Generally boys thought the Beatles were pretty much only for girls, which was apparent from concert pictures of that time frame. However, we guys began to smarten up in 1965 and certainly by 1966.

Being a guy and telling a girl you liked the Beatles made you hot on the dateable radar with the "birds"! By 1966 in America, males at their concerts were now a little less than 1/3 of the audience. They





wanted to be like the Beatles and many took to learning instruments and started bands. You couldn't help but love the Beatles after three years of smash hit singles and albums. Every LP was like a greatest hits in itself. The opening acts were coming on at 20:00 starting with Bobby Hebb (he just sang his current hit song in the charts 'Sunny'), then The Remains, The Cyrkle and The Ronettes (without Ronnie!) History has informed us that Ronnie Spector was pulled from the tour and replaced by her cousin because Ronnie's then boyfriend Phil Spector heard that John Lennon was lusting for her. It seemed all the opening acts just did two or three songs only and were gone. If I remember correctly The Remains were the backing band for The Ronettes.



When we knew it was the end of the opening acts the place went bonkers! Especially when the stage crew started to remove all the previous equipment from the stage. When Ringo's drum kit was then raised up onto the podium I thought the building was going to fall down. We were on the second tier of the grandstand and fans started stamping their feet thunderously. After a while we saw movement from the field heading to the stage accompanied by flash lights. A car pulled up behind the stage, empty now, but was to be the getaway car. Then from the right side of the platform The Beatles climbed the stairs and leaped onto the stage, kicking off the show with 'Rock And Roll Music'. After hearing George sing 'If I Needed Someone' I wanted to try to get closer. And I did. I wormed my way down slowly and got very close by the time 'Baby's In Black' was starting. But police eventually came down and told us all to return to our seats and we did. The Beatles performed 11 songs in total. It seemed all over in a flash! And then they were gone. I never heard so many girls crying all at once in my life as I left the venue. Truly a musical milestone.

The trip back home on the bus was nothing like the journey to the show. It was very much less hysterical and jolly. Sad it was over. Most of the chatter low and mumbled. You could hear some sniffing. Before we knew it many were sound asleep. It was very invigorating indeed. As the bus was pulling off the freeway and into Springfield we passed my street. We told the bus driver this and he let us off right there. We had just a couple of blocks to walk. Cousin Paul and I started to sing some of the songs we liked that the Beatles had played to us and 25,000 other fans. A police car came by and we suspected he thought we were drinking or something as we were so happy. We were nice to him and mentioned we just got off the bus from seeing the Beatles in concert and showed him our banner and tour booklet. To our surprise he then said "How was the show?" So we responded, saying it was the best concert ever! I remember he asked what my home address was. Knowing it was almost where we were at he said "OK You boys be cautious of people sleeping" as it was late and "go directly home!" We did just that. Paul's mother was there waiting with my mom. Before Paul left for home with his mum my mother pinned the banner to the wall and had us stand in front of it for a photograph. The whole day is forever embedded in my memory as one of the greatest days in my life.

SET LIST: *Rock And Roll Music/She's A Woman
If I Needed Someone/Day Tripper/Baby's In Black/
I Feel Fine/Yesterday/I Wanna Be Your Man/
Nowhere Man/Paperback Writer/Long Tall Sally*

