

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

1009

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

RECEIVED 2230

DEC 11 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Duncan Park Stadium

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 0 West Park Drive

City or town: Spartanburg State: SC County: Spartanburg

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

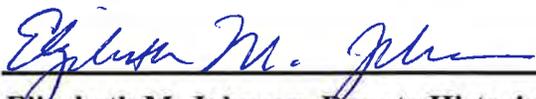
I hereby certify that this x nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

	<u>12/8/2015</u>
<b>Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy Historic Preservation Officer:</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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**Signature of commenting official:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

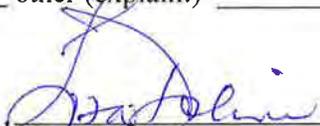
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**Title :** \_\_\_\_\_ **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

  
Signature of the Keeper

1/26/16  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District

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Site

Structure

Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE / Sports Facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE / Sports Facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER / Baseball Stadium

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: CONCRETE

Trusses and Columns: STEEL

Walls: WOOD (Weatherboard)

Roof: WOOD

Chimney: BRICK

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

Constructed from 1925 to 1926, Duncan Park Stadium is an irregular polygon athletic facility that includes a baseball field, a grandstand, separate concrete stands built into the grade of a slope along the first base (west) line, three outbuildings along the third base (north) line, and a wall around the outfield (east and south). It is located on West Park Drive in Duncan Park in Spartanburg, South Carolina. The particular location of this facility in the municipally held park was chosen because of a natural slope of the land. Because of this, the stadium sits entirely below the grade of West Park Drive which runs along the west side of the property. To the north there is a parking lot that serves the facility, to the east a wooded area of park trees, and to the south the beginning of Duncan Park Trail and additional sports facilities and practice fields.

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## Narrative Description

### Contributing

#### 1. STADIUM GRANDSTAND AND FIELD (1925-1926)

Designed by noted Spartanburg architect J. Frank Collins, the covered grandstand of wood construction with steel framing opens to the field of play in five sections. The building has concrete foundation systems, wooden weatherboard siding on all sides not facing the field, and a low sloping wood roof covered with large asphalt panels. The three middle sections of the stands are trapezoidal in plan, tapering towards the field, while the outer sections are more rectangular and are nearly three times the width of one middle section. Comparison with historic photographs suggests that the stadium retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

Field level (photo 1) of the stadium is partially below grade with a dugout for each the home and away teams in the west and north outer sections of the stadium, which are accessed from the field. A door and a large (now-covered) window opening sit behind each dugout and provide entrance into the area that was once the locker room, which now contains only a concrete slab floor, wood and steel structural beams, and concrete block walls (photos 2 and 3).

The seating area of the stands sit above the locker rooms, elevated approximately five feet above the playing field with fourteen sets of risers. The third tier and the top tier serve as pedestrian walking space. Concrete is used for stands and also for the stairs in aisles running along the center of the middle section and along the outer side of the adjacent sections (photo 4), whereas wooden stairs are used intermittently in the outer portions of the stadium where most of the stands and benches are wooden as well (photo 5).

The building is supported by a steel framing system. Twelve steel columns evenly spaced along the exterior of the building and twelve steel columns evenly spaced along the sixth tier of the stadium support a system of open steel trusses and a shed roof that slopes upward toward the playing field. The roof covers the stadium seating to the third tier.

The field of play has changed little since the stadium was built. The current dimensions are 318' from home plate to both foul posts. The left and right field power alley's measure 362' and 368' respectively, while from home plate to straight-away center is 372' (photos 6). From the 1950s until 2007 the dimensions differed from the current by just a few feet. At that time it was 315' to the foul posts, approximately 370' to straight-away center, and 365' to the right field wall (photo 7). There is a dirt warning track around the entire field, which was added in the 1980s due to safety concerns. From 1926 to 1983 grass grew all the way to the outfield wall.

#### *Seats*

Much of the existing seating has been removed for restoration and will be placed back in the stadium as part of the current renovations. The current seating includes 582 wooden seats that were installed in 1971 after they were removed were from Connie Mack Stadium (also known as

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Shibe Park) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Connie Mack Stadium was home to the Philadelphia Athletics from 1909 to 1954, when that team moved to Kansas City. The Philadelphia Phillies had shared the stadium with the Athletics since 1938 and continued to use it until it was demolished in 1970. Duncan Park was home of a Philadelphia Phillies minor league affiliate from 1963 to 1994 and received the seats because of that association. Two styles of seats were moved to Spartanburg; newer red and white iron and plastic chairs were placed in the center sections and older green wood and iron chairs were placed on either side of the newer chairs (photo 8 and Figure 1).

Historic photos show that the original seating of the stadium was similar to the current scheme, with wooden benches used in the outer sections and individual folding wood-slat chairs with cast-iron frames in the center sections (Figure 2). Initially, the stadium had three tiers of box seats not covered by the grandstand roof, with what appears to have been individual wooden folding chairs (Figure 3). By the Phillies era at Duncan Park, these box seats required an additional concrete slab on the third tier to accommodate a fourth row. Hollow metal railings separated each grouping of box seats into two sections with three chairs on each wide and a central aisle. Photos show that these wooden seats were replaced with white plastic folding chairs at that time (photos 9 and 10). New plastic and cast-iron chairs have been installed in two rows on these bottom levels as part of the current renovations (photo 11).



Figure 1- seats in Shibe Park in Philadelphia. (n.d.)

*Concourse*

Restrooms, concession stands and ticket booths line the perimeter of the top level of the grandstand (photos 12, 13, and 14). The concession stand was constructed on the first base side concourse in 1967 (photo 15). The outer sections of the concourse are half walls with the upper section open to the exterior (photos 16 and 17).

*Access*

The central corridor on the concourse level holds the historic entrance to the building and houses spaces previously used for concessions and tickets (photo 18). The current entrance, however, is located on the north side of the stadium (third base line) and is accessed from the level of the parking lot.

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Just outside of the building, through the central corridor, is a five-sectioned, poured-concrete retaining wall and a concrete footing outline of what can reasonably be assumed is the remnants of a ticket booth. No photographic evidence, however, has been found to confirm this hypothesis (photo 19).

Another set of concrete stairs leads from the south side of the West Park Drive ticket booth building, but terminates at the 1967 concession addition with no access into the building at that spot (photo 20). Given the Jim Crow laws that predate the addition, it is assumed that these stairs were to provide a “colored” entrance separate from the entrance for white patrons prior until 1965.

### *Roof Press Box*

On the east side of the central corridor, an enclosed wooden staircase provides access to the roof (photo 21). A press box sits at the roof edge in the center section directly behind home plate. The structure is slightly wider than the center roof section with irregular window placement facing the field with a door on the south façade (photo 22). Historic photographs show that the press box was originally half the size of the current structure (photo 23 and



Figure 4). Press box additions were made in 1979.

Figure 4- Historic photo showing original press box, looking northwest.  
(American Legion Little World Series, 1936)

### *Exterior Facades*

On the east side of the grandstand, the concrete block course continues from the dugout level to the north wall. Above this level, and stepped to match the rising of the stands, wooden weatherboard cover the structure. There is a single-hinged shutter opening just below the concourse level on this side. A westward ascending staircase leads toward the façade on the east side of the grandstand, an access point for spectators from the third base line (photo 24).

The northern façade consists of a concrete retaining wall mostly covered by the grade and three levels of weatherboard. The concrete retaining wall extends from the building on the east half of the façade. The first and second floors have seven irregular bays that all have openings the same size as that of the east façade except for the center bay on the first level that provides an entrance door to the locker room area (photo 25). The top level is open to the concourse level of the stadium and has seventeen bays (photo 26). An additional bay to the west houses the current main entrance with a metal double door.

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Continuing west, the sections behind home plate are above grade. Stadium offices are located in the two-story addition on this northwest facade. The second floor of the office wing was added in 1992 during the Spartanburg Phillies era and is accessed by stairs and a single door on the northwest side (photos 27 and 28). The rest of the façade is one level above grade and a metal retractable door opens to the central entrance of the concourse (photo 29). Weatherboard is used on this façade as well.

The west façade of the building, which runs along the first base line and with the 1967 concession addition to the far north of the façade, is similar to the north façade grading and features, including weatherboard siding for each of three levels. There are, however, only three bays on each of the first two levels at the southernmost end, and all are single shuttered openings. A small brick chimney protrudes just north of these bays, and the top level has ten irregularly spaced openings that are open to the concourse (photo 30).

The south façade mirrors the east façade in overall shape, but with some dissimilar features. The entire façade is weatherboard. The first level has four bays, with a door in the far west bay and the others being single shuttered openings. The second level has one western bay with side-by-side single-shuttered openings. A staircase ascends northwards to the grandstand seating on the eastern edge of the south façade (photo 31).

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## 2. TICKET BOOTH (c. 1950)

Atop the slope of the park on West Park Drive, there is a small concrete building that appears to have been a ticket booth. There is no photographic evidence that the ticket booth was original to the development of Duncan Park Stadium and likely was added after the original construction of the park (Photo 32).

A concrete block wall (c. 1950) runs from the ticket booth west down the slope along the south side of the stairs that lead to the central entrance of the grandstand. The courses of the concrete block are not level, but instead run parallel to the grade of the slope. Sections of the wall are divided by reinforced concrete columns that follow the same sloping pattern of the wall. Concrete stairs with an iron handrail on either side lead down to the central entrance behind home plate (photo 33). Another set of stairs leads down from the north side of the slope.

## 3. FOUNDATION OF FORMER STANDS (c. 1936)

There is a detached poured concrete seating area built into the hill, circa 1936, along the first base line and west side of the stadium. It rises nine levels and has no built-in seating of any kind (photo 34). Historic photos show detached bleachers along the first base line that were installed around the time of the 1936 American Legion Little World Series (Figure 5). The bleachers were removed in 1962 when they were deemed unsafe.

## Non-Contributing



Figure 7- Spartanburg Phillies era lights, looking east. (n.d.)

### A. OUTFIELD LIGHTS (1985)

Light poles line the field of play for evening games. The first lights were added to Duncan Park Stadium in 1936 (Figure 6). New lights were added in 1973 and were again replaced in 1985, which are still in place today (Figure 7).

The current light system does not contribute to the historic significance of the ballpark due to its recent replacements.

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#### B-D. THIRD BASE LINE STRUCTURES AND BUILDINGS (c. 2000)

Three free-standing modern storage and maintenance buildings dot the third base line separated from the field of play by a chain-link fence. The westernmost building has a shed roof, is made of wood and has a portico supported by square wooden posts. The next two buildings to the east are prefabricated single-wide aluminum structures (photo 35). There are also three small sets of risers behind the field chain-link fence and in front of the western-most outbuilding. A concrete wall sits behind the buildings, away from the field of play (photo 36). Historic photos also show that there were wooden risers like those on the first base line built along the third base line (Figure 8).

These buildings have no significant historical value and are not original to the ballpark, and are therefore non-contributing buildings.



Figure 8- Historic photo from 1936 American Legion Little World Series, looking east. (1936)

#### E. OUTFIELD WALL (c. 2007)

The position of the outfield wall has been generally consistent throughout the stadium's history but the wall itself has been replaced numerous times resulting in slight changes in the field dimensions. The current outfield wall was constructed in 2007 with steel sheets over steel studs (Figure 9). The original wooden outfield wall was replaced in 1950 after a storm blew it down and it was replaced with a concrete block wall. In 1995, seventy feet of the right-field wall fell and was repaired in kind (Figure 10). By the 2000s, this concrete wall was once again structurally unsound and was replaced in its entirety. A chain-link fence also runs the length of the west side of the field to the outfield wall along the first base line as well as the north side of the field along the third base line.

With its many alterations and complete replacement, the current outfield wall is a non-contributing structure of the ballpark.

#### F. SCOREBOARD (2014)

The early placement and replacement of scoreboards is unknown (Figure 11). What is known is that it was replaced in 1983 by the Spartanburg Phillies franchise and most recently in 2014 as part of the Spartanburg School District 7 renovation program (photo 37).

The current scoreboard does not contribute to the historic significance of the ballpark due to its recent replacements.

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INVENTORY

1. Stadium Grandstand and Field	(Contributing Building)	1926
2. Ticket Booth	(Contributing Building)	ca. 1950
3. Foundation of Former Stands	(Contributing Structure)	ca. 1936
A. Outfield Lights	(Non-Contributing Structure)	1985
B. Maintenance Shed #1	(Non-Contributing Building)	ca. 2000
C. Maintenance Shed #2	(Non-Contributing Building)	ca. 2000
D. Storage Building	(Non-Contributing Building)	ca. 2000
E. Outfield Wall	(Non-Contributing Structure)	2007
F. Scoreboard	(Non-Contributing Structure)	2014

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Entertainment / Recreation

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1926-1963

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1926

1936

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

J. Frank Collins

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Duncan Park Stadium, located at 0 West Park Drive in Spartanburg, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A at the local level of significance in the area of entertainment/recreation for its use as a recreation center and sports facility by the people of Spartanburg, South Carolina. Important community events were also held here, from Fourth of July celebrations and beauty pageants to a 1943 homecoming for Spartanburg native James F. Byrnes, the National Director of War Mobilization at the time and future governor of South Carolina. Although there were periods of inactivity due to deferred maintenance and lapses in league play, this facility was the pre-eminent baseball park in the state of South Carolina when it was constructed and remains an active baseball stadium to the present day. The period of significance for Duncan Park Stadium is defined as 1926-1963, a time frame that spans the thirty-seven years of constant use of the facility before the Minor League Baseball Class A affiliate for the Philadelphia Phillies took ownership of the park in 1963. Although there have been alterations to the seating and outfield wall during the life of the stadium, the grandstand, roof structure, and playing field remain intact.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation**

#### **Development of Duncan Park**

As early as 1922, plans began for the development of Duncan Park in Spartanburg, a gift to the city from the estate of Major David R. Duncan. Major Duncan served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War as part of Stonewall Jackson's corps and fought in principal battles around Richmond, Virginia. Prior to this service, Duncan had been admitted to the South Carolina bar at the age of 21 and in his post-war years was elected as a solicitor of the Seventh Judicial District. In 1875, Duncan became the president of the Spartanburg and Asheville Railroad, leading the company for four years and overseeing the completion of the line that would be the first to bridge the Blue Ridge Mountains and bring economic growth to the area.<sup>1</sup>

The heirs of Duncan bequeathed upwards of one hundred acres of land to the City of Spartanburg and the project was lauded as a major improvement to an area that had seen little development in the early twentieth century despite being dubbed the "Hub City" because of its role in the rail systems.<sup>2</sup> One impassioned *Spartanburg Herald* writer, in a 1922 article about the Duncan Park Development, put it in these words:

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<sup>1</sup> "Duncan Estate Gives 70 Acres for City Park." *Spartanburg Herald*. October 15, 1922; pg. 1.

<sup>2</sup> "Spartanburg is Rapidly Improving Advantage as Amusement Center." *Spartanburg Herald*. February 11, 1923; pg. 7.

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Southern cities should be beautiful and the outdoors of Southern cities should always be in mind, because we spend the greater part of the year in the open. The property now to be opened is largely in woodland, preserved in its natural state for generations, though close in and now skirted on the eastern side by the hard-surface road to Cedar Springs. It lies between the city and that thoroughfare, and when city streets now ending at its Western border are projected through the property, a wonderful region will be opened to homes and city development. It all means growth and growth of the highest order. It is the result of intelligent co-operation between the property owners and public agencies, and when that is the force at work the building of a city is certain.

Spartanburg, a city of great parks — the dream will come true.<sup>3</sup>

City officials enlisted the services of Dr. John Nolen, an esteemed landscape architect with a practice in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to help in the planning of the park.<sup>4</sup> The natural characteristics of the land played a large role in the placement of features of the park. The first among them was an athletic field that could be built into “grounds sloping down like an amphitheater, with a southeastern exposure.”<sup>5</sup> It was posited that this “hollowed out ravine” could provide seating for thousands of spectators and where there could possibly be several games being played at once.<sup>6</sup>

Only one field was created in the 1920s, and construction started on the Duncan Park Stadium in 1925 as one of the first amenities of Duncan Park, a place of play for the community, and a home for the Class B Minor League Spartanburg Spartans. The city commissioned prominent Spartanburg architect, J. Frank Collins, in collaboration with architect, Joseph B. Simpson, Collins’ professional partner from 1923 to 1926, to design the sports and recreation facility.<sup>7</sup>

### Minor League Baseball

The first game played in Duncan Park was between two Southern Atlantic League teams, the Spartanburg Spartans and the Macon Peaches on July 8, 1926. An estimated crowd of 2,500 fans were on hand to cheer the home team to a 5-1 victory.<sup>8</sup>

At the opening ceremonies for the stadium a few weeks later, none other than Judge Kennesaw Mountain Landis was in attendance. Judge Landis was the first Commissioner of Major League Baseball and most well-known for his heavy-handed lifetime expulsion of eight members of the Chicago White Sox team for conspiring to throw the 1919 World Series. Among the eight players involved in the conspiracy was “Shoeless” Joe Jackson, a baseball hero from Greenville, South Carolina. Over 200 people were reported to have attended the luncheon on July 28, 1926

<sup>3</sup> “The Duncan Park Development.” Spartanburg Herald. October 15, 1922; pg. 4.

<sup>4</sup> “Survey of Latest Park Suggested Will be Made.” Spartanburg Herald. October 8, 1922; pg. 11.

<sup>5</sup> “Beautiful New Park for City Is In Prospect.” Spartanburg Herald. September 21, 1922; pg. 8.

<sup>6</sup> “Duncan Estate Gives 70 Acres for City Park.”

<sup>7</sup> Aul, Katherine and Karen Goodchild, Ph.D. “Tradition & Community: The Architecture & Art of James Frank Collins,” Wofford College Community Scholars Research Project, Summer 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Lane, John and Betsy Teeter. Hub City Anthology. Holocene, 1996.

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where Judge Landis was the keynote speaker. Other distinguished guests included the president of the South Atlantic League, W. G. Brabham, and president of the National Associations of Professional Base Ball Leagues, M. H. Sexton.

In his address, Landis praised the new park with great color and admiration:

You have in your ball park something that you don't even notice; but if you had had my experience in traveling about the country, witnessing games in many parks, you would be able to appreciate the beautiful background which you have here. I know of only one in America that can compare with it.

There was no mention of the exact park to which he was comparing Duncan Park. Landis did speak of one feature of the park, the spacious outfield, that made it possible for the "greatest thrill of a ball game, the possibility of a home run inside the park," adding excitedly an account of the race, the runner, and a long drive over the fielder's head that would result in a race to get the ball to home plate. In addition to showering Duncan Park with praise, Landis took the opportunity, using Duncan Park as an example of fine ballpark construction, to issue a challenge to leaders from Columbia who were in attendance at the luncheon to dedicate a park of their own in 1927.<sup>9</sup>

The Spartanburg Spartans, who had played in the Class B Southern Atlantic League since 1919 (the team was called the Spartanburg Pioneers from 1919-1921), played at Duncan Park from its opening until 1929, and also from 1938-1940. The Class B Tri-State League Spartanburg Spartans, affiliated with the St. Louis Browns, played at Duncan Park in 1946 and became the Cleveland Indians affiliated Spartanburg Peaches in 1947. The Peaches won league championships in 1947, 1953, and 1955.<sup>10</sup>

Duncan Park was home to the Peaches until 1955, and produced several successful major league players. Most notable was 1952 team member Rocky "The Rock" Colavito who went on to play for several major league teams but who was most well-known for his years with the Cleveland Indians and leading the American League in home runs in 1959. (Photo 55)

### **Textile League Baseball at Duncan Park Stadium**

Textile League Baseball had been part of the numerous mill villages that had proliferated in the South Carolina upstate since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the earliest games on record was a 1873 matchup in Cokesbury.<sup>11</sup> The teams got little attention from those outside the mill villages, but were an important part of the paternalist power structure of mill life, where the work day was structured with bells marking the beginning of the work day at 6 a.m. and the end at 6 p.m. Recreation played a part in quelling employee dissatisfaction in such working conditions, and baseball was a favorite among many.

<sup>9</sup> "Judge Landis Says Park is Fine." Spartanburg Journal. July 28, 1926; pg. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Armonaitis, Dan. "Rich History." Spartanburg Herald-Journal. August 5, 2006; C4.

<sup>11</sup> Perry, Thomas K. *Textile League Baseball: South Carolina's Mill Teams, 1880-1955*. McFarland & Company, Inc.; Jefferson, NC. 1993. pg. 6.

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Dissatisfactions did grow in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when mill owners were being challenged for their abusive child labor practices and low wages. Nonetheless, the textile mill leagues continued to play, gaining popularity as a pastime and creating a sort of loyalty to the mill. World War I was the only force that slowed the growth of the league in those years.<sup>12</sup>

By the 1920s and as the war came to an end, the boys returned to the field. Men were being hired to play baseball, pushing around boxes during the day or walking around the grounds in the morning with hammers to fit the requirements of a mill employee. The baseball teams were a source of pride and esteem for not only the workers, but the mill administrators who dedicated new fields and bid for the best players to represent their brand.

From time to time, Textile Mill League games were played at Duncan Park Stadium for local mill teams. It was not unusual for teams from Pacolet or Spartan Mills to drop in for a game. However, most mills had their own facilities and Duncan Park Stadium was busy hosting their minor league teams or the national champion American Legion Post 28 team, but the Textile Mill Leagues were breeding grounds for amateur and professional baseball players alike and Spartanburg's proximity to so much talent in these organizations led to successful minor league rosters.



Figure 12-1936 World Champion American Legion Spartanburg Post 28 team photo. (1936)

### **American Legion Baseball at Duncan Park Stadium**

While minor league baseball was a beloved pastime in Spartanburg, the largest crowds at Duncan Park were for American Legion baseball. The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veteran's organization. The organization began its baseball program in 1925 and was the first program in the world to provide a national baseball tournament for teenagers. Despite a few years of financial hardship due to depression and poor budget management in the 1920s and 30s, American Legion

championships were and still are funded in large part by Major League Baseball as pledged by Commissioner Landis in 1928.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 19.

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American Legion Post 28 was chartered in 1933 and has called Duncan Park Stadium home for over 80 years. The height of popularity, however, came in the 1930s when Duncan Park was the site of not one but two American Legion Little World Series that featured Post 28. These contests were held in 1936 and 1938. (Figures 12 and 13)

A record setting 21,000 fans packed the grandstands and sideline bleachers for the championship game on September 5, 1936 where Spartanburg defeated Los Angeles 8-1 in the fifth game of the series. This game still holds the city record for attendance.<sup>13</sup> (Figure 14)

While the 1936 contest ended in victory for Spartanburg, the 1938 series ended with Spartanburg being defeated by a San Diego team.



Figure 15- Bob Branson warming up for a Spartanburg Sluggers game. (c. 1930)

### **Negro Textile League Baseball at Duncan Park Stadium**

One group of mill players did often play at Duncan Park, and those were the men of the Negro Textile League, in particular the Spartanburg Sluggers.

A Negro Textile League baseball team called the Spartanburg Sluggers played in the city from 1928 to 1952, operating in leagues called the Carolina Colored League and the Spartanburg County Colored League. Local news articles during these years suggest that Duncan Park Stadium served as their home field for most, if not all, of their games. The team was managed first by Spartanburg native Newton Whitmire, Sr. and later by his son. One of the biggest stars of the Sluggers was left-handed pitcher Bob Branson. He later played for a farm team in the major leagues. In fact, many other players went on to play in the major leagues.<sup>14</sup> (Figure 15)

The Negro Textile League dissolved in 1954.<sup>15</sup>

### **Exhibition Games at Duncan Park Stadium**

One year after the American Legion championship, Duncan Park Stadium was the scene of another important baseball moment for the city. The 1937 New York Yankees were making their way north from spring training and stopped to play an exhibition game at Duncan Park. Baseball legends and future Hall of Famers, Lou Gehrig and Bill Dickey, took the field to entertain the crowds. Other baseball stars were part of the traveling team, but did not play, such as Lefty Gomez, Tony Lazzeri, Red Ruffing and Joe DiMaggio.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Armonaitis.

<sup>14</sup> Conley, Linda. "When Jackie Robinson played in Spartanburg." Spartanburg Herald-Journal. April 15, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Perry, 67.

<sup>16</sup> Armonaitis.

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In October 1951, another great took the field at Duncan Park Stadium. A crowd gathered to see Jackie Robinson, the Brooklyn Dodgers star and the first black player to break the color barrier in the major leagues, along with four other black major leaguers—Sam Jethroe of the Boston Braves, Orestes Minoso of the Chicago White Sox, and Luke Easter and Larry Doby of the Cleveland Indians—joined with members of the Indianapolis Clowns of the Negro American League to take on the New York All-Stars in a barnstorming exhibition.

Other such games included a barnstorming stop for the Negro American League on May 3, 1952. This game featured the Philadelphia Stars and Indianapolis Clowns. Entertainment was central to these types of games, and the well-known King Tut, clown prince of Negro League baseball was part of the festivities. The day also included a game between the Negro Textile League Spartanburg Sluggers and the Greenville Black Spinners.<sup>17</sup>

### Other Community Activities

Duncan Park Baseball Stadium has not only been used for baseball during its ninety-year history, and was always intended to be used for community events as well as athletic competitions. Historic photos show the stadium being used for different community events such as a football game for Camp Croft in 1941 and Independence Day events in 1942 (Figures 16 and 17). Other events included

outings for “transients” on the Fourth of July, 1935. This included a softball game between the office staff and kitchen and dining room staff of “the bureau” as well as tug-of-war, relay races, a cracker-eating contest, and potato races.<sup>18</sup>



Figure 16-1941 Postcard of Duncan Park serving as home field for Camp Croft Football. (William Lynch Postcard Collection, Spartanburg County Library System)

The baseball field and stands also provided work for some local residents during the Great Depression thanks to the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In 1938, work was proposed to include sloping and sodding the banks of the park, planting shrubbery, shaping drives in and around the park stadium, and erecting approximately 1,500 feet of fence around the complex and using approximately 200 workers. The project did not see completion as funds were “inadvertently rescinded.” However, many locals were able to find jobs in the larger Duncan Park project thanks to WPA funding and the building of a lake, memorials, and buildings, as well as landscaping.

<sup>17</sup> Perry, 67.

<sup>18</sup> “Outing Planned for Transients.” *Spartanburg Herald*. July 4, 1935; pg. 3.

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### **1960s to Today**

The Spartanburg City Council received a recommendation from the Park Board Chairman, John Parrott, to demolish the wooden first and third base stands and also the wooden roof of the grandstand in January of 1962. Years of disuse created potentially hazardous conditions at the baseball stadium. The arrival of a new minor league team the following year helped to restore Duncan Park Stadium and save the stadium from further blight.

Minor league baseball returned to Duncan Park Stadium in 1963 with the Philadelphia Phillies Class A affiliate, the Spartanburg Phillies. The Phillies played in the stadium continuously until 1994, making numerous improvements to the park and providing a stepping stone for future major league stars like Ryne Sandberg, Larry Bowa, Denny Doyle, George Bell, Lonnie Smith, Juan Samuel, Jason Grimsley, and Scott Rolen.<sup>19</sup>

The Atlantic Coast League Spartanburg Alley Cats played in the stadium in 1995.

Duncan Park Stadium has also been host to many school teams throughout its nearly ninety year history, including intramural games for local schools like Spartanburg High School, and collegiate teams from Wofford College and the University of South Carolina Upstate. The Spartanburg Crickets and the Spartanburg Stingers, wooden-bat collegiate summer league teams, played at Duncan Park Stadium in the early decades of the twenty-first century.<sup>20</sup>

Most recently, the stadium is being restored through the collaborative effort of the City of Spartanburg and Spartanburg School District 7 for use as the home field for Spartanburg High School baseball teams.

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<sup>19</sup> Armonaitis.

<sup>20</sup> Nestor, Bob A. *Baseball in Greenville and Spartanburg*. Arcadia Publishing. Charleston, SC; 2003. pg. 30; Armonaitis.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

### Newspapers/Periodicals

Armonaitis, Dan. "Rich History." Spartanburg Herald-Journal. August 5, 2006; C4.

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"The Duncan Park Development." Spartanburg Herald. October 15, 1922; pg. 4.

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Lane, John and Betsy Teeter. *Hub City Anthology*. Holocene, 1996.

Nestor, Bob A. *Baseball in Greenville and Spartanburg*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003.

Perry, Thomas K. *Textile League Baseball: South Carolina's Mill Teams, 1880-1955*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1993.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** approx. 8 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.936544                      Longitude: -81.912797
2. Latitude:                                      Longitude:
3. Latitude:                                      Longitude:
4. Latitude:                                      Longitude:

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**Or**  
**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Bounded on the north and west by West Park Drive, bounded to the east by a wooded area of park trees, and to the south the beginning of Duncan Park Trail and additional sports facilities and practice fields.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is the boundary that encloses the historically significant stadium, field, and all walls and fences.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Katherine Ferguson / Marketing Manager  
organization: MacRostie Historic Advisors, LLC  
street & number: 3 Broad Street, Suite 301  
city or town: Charleston state: SC zip code: 29401  
e-mail kferguson@mac-ha.com  
telephone: 843.779.3630  
date: 9/22/15

---

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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### **Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### **Photo Log**

Name of Property: **Duncan Park Stadium**

City or Vicinity: **Spartanburg**

County: **Spartanburg**

State: **South Carolina**

Photographer: **Various**

Date Photographed: **Various**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 001

Duncan Park Stadium from outfield, looking northwest. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 002

Home team dugout, looking northwest. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 003

Home team locker rooms, looking north. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 004

Concrete stands, looking west. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 005

Wooden stands, stairs, and benches, looking north. (MPS, 2008)

Photo 006

Outfield wall from stadium, looking southeast. (Sidebottom, 2014)

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Photo 007

Outfield wall from behind the first base line, looking southeast. (MPS, 2014)

Photo 008

Connie Mack Stadium seats in Duncan Park before renovations, looking northwest.  
(MPS, 2007)

Photo 009

Spartanburg Phillies era box seats, looking west. (Date unknown)

Photo 010

Seats before removal for renovation, looking southwest. (MPS, 2007)

Photo 011

Current box seats, looking north. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 012

Concourse, looking northeast towards main entrance from parking lot. (Sidebottom,  
2014)

Photo 013

Concourse, looking west towards bathrooms and central entrance. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 014

Concourse, looking southwest towards 1979 press box. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 015

1967 concession addition, looking north. (MPS, 2013)

Photo 016

Third base concourse, looking east. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 017

First base concourse, looking west. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 018

Central concourse entrance, looking northwest. (MPS, 2013)

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Photo 019

Possible ticket or concession stands, looking north. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 020

Unused stair, looking northeast. (MPS, 2013)

Photo 021

Press box stairs, looking southwest. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 022

Press box, looking east. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 023

Press box, looking northwest. (MPS, 2014)

Photo 024

East facade, looking west. (MPS, 2014)

Photo 025

North facade, looking southeast. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 026

North facade, looking south. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 027

Addition to northwest facade, looking southwest. (MPS, 2014)

Photo 028

Addition to northwest facade as seen from the roof, looking northeast. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 029

Northwest facade, looking southeast. (MPS, 2013. Panaraoma, stitched photo.)

Photo 030

West facade, looking northeast. (MPS, 2014)

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Photo 031

South facade, looking north. (MPS, 2014)

Photo 032

Ticket booth and wall on West Park Drive, looking north. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 033

West stairs from ticket booth, looking west. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 034

First base line concrete stands, looking south. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 035

Third base line buildings and structures, looking north. (Sidebottom, 2014)

Photo 036

Third base line exterior wall, looking south. (MPS, 2014)

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Post 1985 scoreboard, looking southwest. (Date unknown)

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Historic photo showing original press box, looking northwest. (American Legion Little World Series, 1936)

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Historic photo showing wooden stands in the outfield. (c. 1936)

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Figure 6

Historic photo showing first lights in stadium, looking southeast. (1938)

Figure 7

Spartanburg Phillies era lights, looking east. (Date unknown)

Figure 8

Historic photo from 1936 American Legion Little World Series, looking east. (1936)

Figure 9

Duncan Park field, looking southeast. (Sidebottom, 2014).

Figure 10

5/18/95 Spartanburg Herald Journal article about felled wall.

Figure 11

1942 Independence Day celebration where scoreboard is visible. (Bradford Scrapbook Collection, Spartanburg County Library System)

Figure 12

1936 World Champion American Legion Spartanburg Post 28 team photo. (1936)

Figure 13

1938 World Champion runners-up American Legion Spartanburg Post 28 team. (Willis, 1938)

Figure 14

September 2, 1936 SHJ full page about the Little World Series Championship.

Figure 15

Bob Branson warming up for a Sluggers game. (Whitmire Family photos, c. 1930s)

Figure 16

1941 Postcard of Duncan Park serving as home field for Camp Croft Football. (William Lynch Postcard Collection, Spartanburg County Library System)

Figure 17

1942 Independence Day was celebrated in Spartanburg in many areas. In the foreground here are Major General Charles F. Thompson, commander of Camp Croft; Associate Justice James F. Byrnes, and Mayor Jennings L. Thompson as they viewed a pageant in Duncan Park. (Bradford Scrapbook Collection, Spartanburg County Library System)

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

# Duncan Park Baseball Stadium

Spartanburg, Spartanburg Co.

34.936544, -81.912797

Google earth

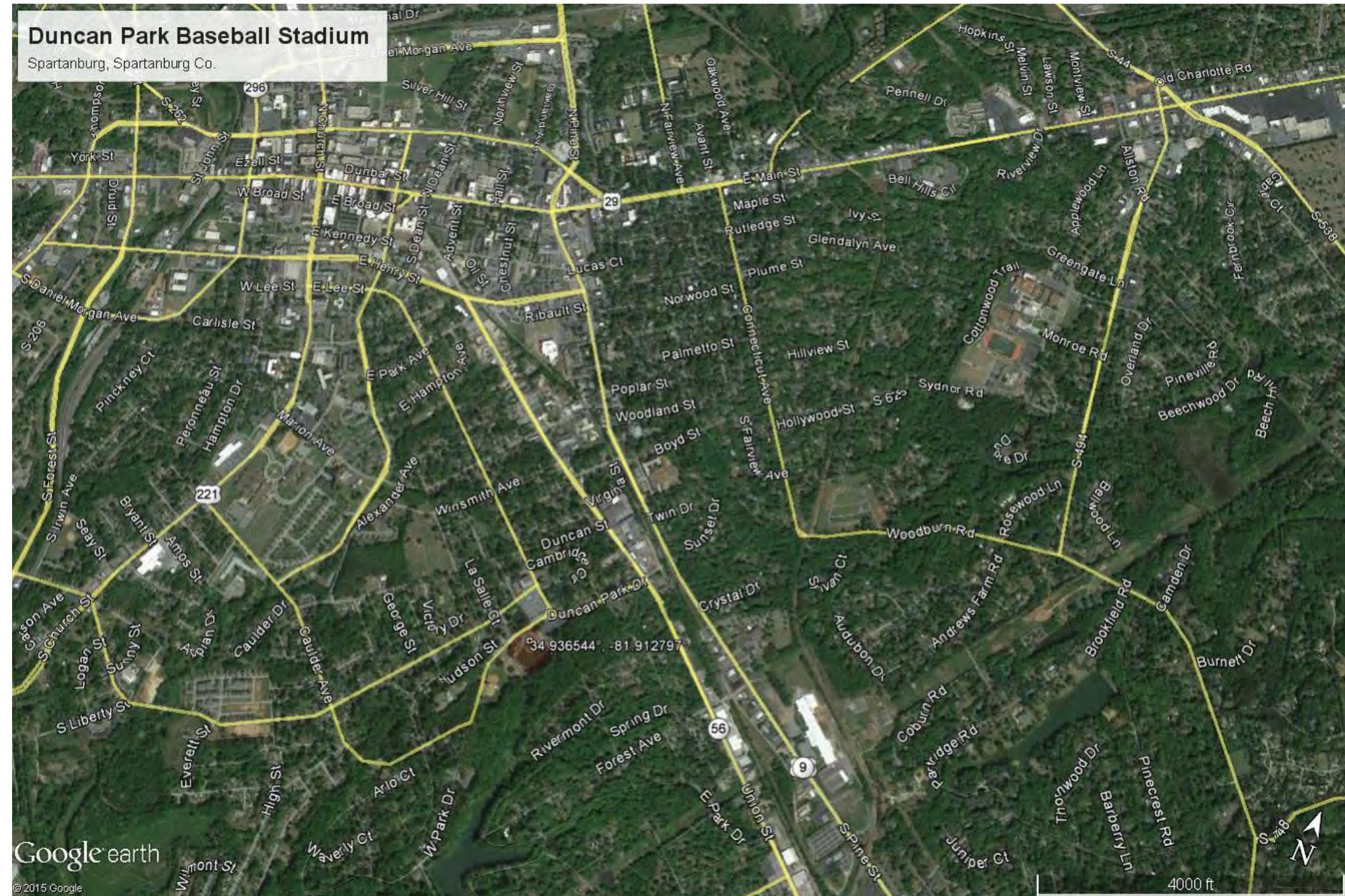
© 2015 Google

500 ft



# Duncan Park Baseball Stadium

Spartanburg, Spartanburg Co.







Wilson









Historic Duncan Park  
Home of the Vikings

AT BAT	BALL	STRIKE	OUT	RE

SPARTANBURG  
HIGH SCHOOL







TING. 85





















NO  
SMOKING

















SPARTANBURG  
HIGH SCHOOL

Home, Away, Field  
Colors of the Palmetto



BRAGG  
1-800-427-9627





















*Historic Duncan Park*  
*Home of the Vikings*



AT BAT	BALL	STRIKE	OUT	H/E
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	RUNS	HITS	ERR

**SPARTANBURG**  
**HIGH SCHOOL**



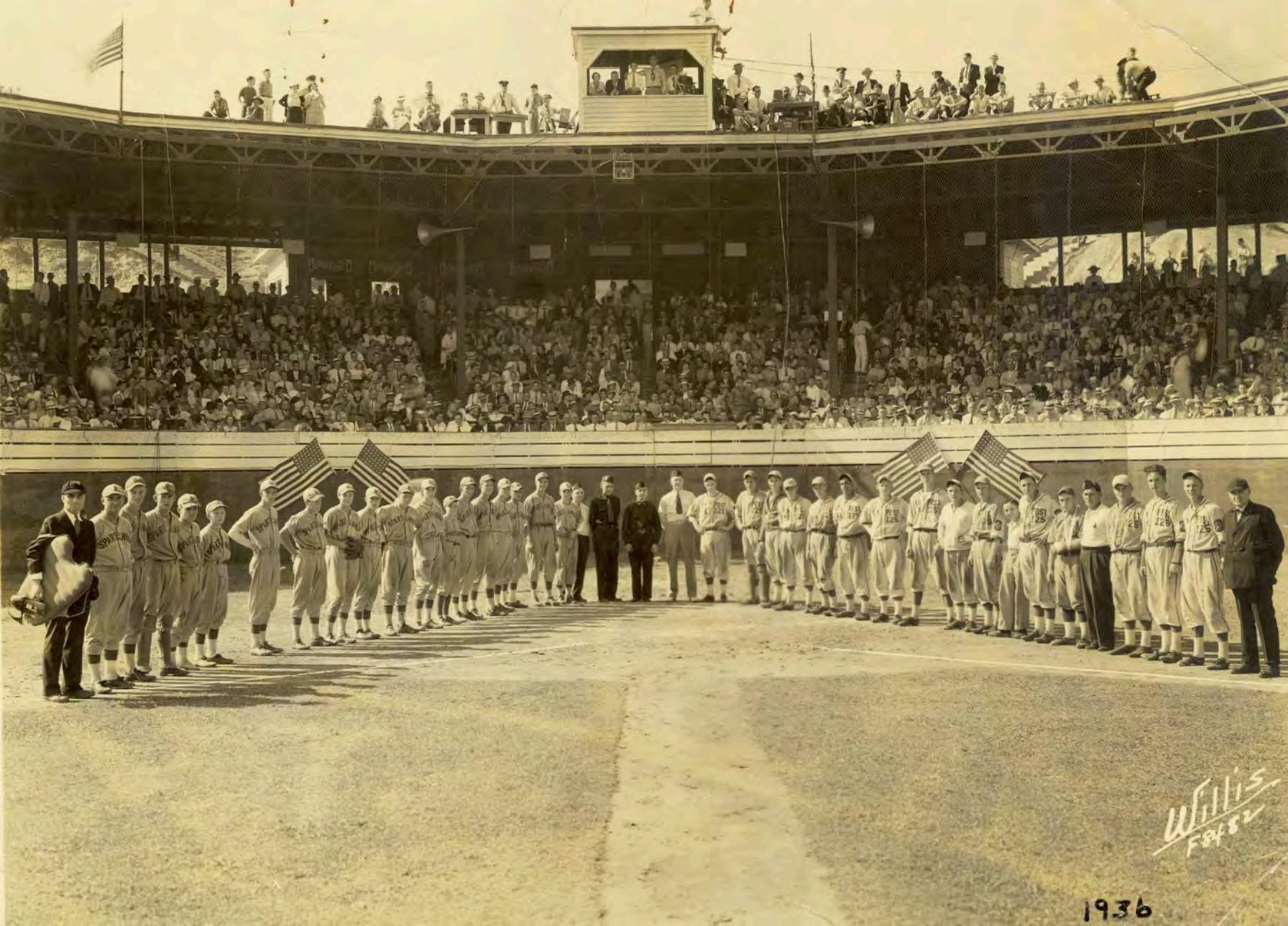
BOSTON ROOTERS AT PHILA.

3261-14









*Willis  
Fot. '36*

1936





1938







Historic Person Park  
Home of the Pioneers

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

SPARTANBURG  
HIGH SCHOOL



Mark Ford, grounds maintenance supervisor at Duncan Park, left, looks at the remains to the collapsed outfield wall at the park with Stan Jenks, top above, in foreground, and Joe Carter, partially hidden.

## Duncan Park wall comes tumbling down





1936  
World Champions  
American Legion  
Baseball









DUNCAN PARK, HOME FIELD CAMP CROFT FOOTBALL TEAM, SPARTANBURG, S. C.

