

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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.

1. Name of Property

DRAFT

Historic name: Ontario Baseball Park

Other names/site number: Jay Littleton Ball Park, John Galvin Park Baseball Field

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: SE of N Grove Ave & E 4th St intersection (NE corner John Galvin Park)

City or town: Ontario State: California County: San Bernardino

Not For Publication: Vicinity: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 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 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 local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A B C D

<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Signature of certifying official/Title:	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Date
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

<p>In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Signature of commenting official:	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Date
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> Title :	
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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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

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
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: WPA-era baseball grandstand

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: concrete; Walls, roof, roof trusses: wood; Roof supports: steel posts set in poured concrete piers; Bleachers: wood risers set in concrete pad; Playing field: earth set with manicured grass lawn

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.)

Summary Paragraph

Ontario Baseball Park is located within John Galvin Park, in the city of Ontario. Galvin Park is bounded on the north by East 4th Street, on the south by “L” Street, and on the west by Cucamonga Avenue. The ballpark was constructed in 1936-37 under a local assistance program of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Ontario Baseball Park is situated on 3.85 acres of land in the northeast area of Galvin Park, and is generally located southeast of the intersection of North Grove Avenue and East 4th Street. Two contributing resources include the grandstand and baseball field. The grandstand is a wood frame building constructed on a poured concrete foundation with concrete piers and/or footers to support vertical structural members such as the roof supports or exterior wood frame walls. The grandstand is comprised of a middle section—behind home plate—canted at a northeast-southwest orientation between the north-south and east-west sections of the spectator seating areas. There are twelve rows of bench seating set on risers for spectators to face the baseball field. Ontario Baseball Park is in good condition and has been in continual use since 1937. The property retains all aspects of historic integrity.

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Narrative Description

The entrance to the grandstand is located at the northwest corner, on the canted side of the facility. Game attendees gain access to the bleachers by walking through the hallways that go under the pressroom that is situated on the upper level of the stands. The hallways open up to a main aisle that reveals the baseball field, and a view facing towards centerfield. The main aisle runs at ground level to the east and south and provides access to the seating in the stands. Netting has been installed from the roof eaves to the top of the wood railing, between the field and aisle, to prevent baseballs from entering the seating area from the playing field.

The grandstand is comprised of bleacher seating under a gable roof with an extended rear roof slope. The covered grandstand measures approximately 133 feet long on the north-south axis and 131 feet on the east-west axis, with a canted 65-foot-long middle section. The middle section is set behind home plate, and here are located the public restrooms and snack bar on the first level, and the announcer's box on the upper level, which is accessed by a flight of wood stairs from the main aisle. According to oral history, to make room for a larger concession facility in 2005, bleacher seating located on the first level behind home base was removed, and the customer window of the snack bar was moved to face the infield.

The grandstand sections are 31 feet wide. The front façade exterior walls face north and west, and are clad with a custom-sized bead-and-board siding that appears to date from construction of the facility. The board is wider than that customarily seen on bead-and-board siding dating from the nineteenth or twentieth century. To keep costs to a minimum during construction, the local laborers may have custom planed the siding for the facility.

Using construction technology dating back hundreds of years, the grandstands and roof were designed using basic pole and truss construction methods. The wood frame was securely anchored to the ground with the use of poured-concrete footers and cast-in-place concrete piles. Concrete piers were designed with the bases sized to meet the structural needs of the roof system at that location. The framing members of the grandstands and sidewalls were secured to each other, and the vertical metal support posts, use through-bolts, also known as carriage bolts. The vertical metal posts also support the roof truss system and wood panels of the roof sheathing. The stepped bench seats would have originally been constructed with wide wood plank boards. They were replaced in 2004 with metal bench seat units that are said to have been passed along from the Ontario Speedway seating.¹

There are two dugout areas, one in front of the east-west seating gallery and the other in front of the north-south gallery. The dugouts are below ground, reached by a set of steep concrete steps and lined with poured concrete walls. A flat roof extending from the front railing of the bleachers and supported by simple round metal poles at the outer corners of the dugout, provides shade to the players in the dugout. An opening in the dugout wall, opposite the playing field, leads to a

¹ Interview with Roberto Perez, City of Ontario Assistant Public Service Director, July 20, 2015.

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poured concrete ramp that rises from the dugout to carry the players into the area underneath the bleachers where the locker rooms are situated. The narrow locker rooms and adjoining showers are located well underneath the floor of the bleachers, on the interior side of the wall, whose opposite side serves as the front façade for the building.

Extending from the east-west grandstand wing is a one-story, shed roof building constructed after 1948 according to historic aerial photographs. The building is used to hold playing field equipment and for the maintenance of the baseball field. The equipment building has a shallow pitch shed roof with exposed rafter tails and is clad with beadboard siding on its south façade and clapboard siding on its north and east façades. A pair of simple, hinged doors is situated on the equipment sheds south façade, and they provide an entrance to storage area within. Once inside the shed, there is a doorway in the west wall that provides an entrance through to the ball team locker room and manager's office.

The playing field appears to be the standard regulation dimensions for a professional ballpark with the outfield fence at 378 feet from home plate. The playing field was originally enclosed by a six-foot-tall wood plank fence. Replacement cyclone fencing is well covered with English ivy. Night game lighting fixtures and support poles, upgraded in 2005, are placed around the edges of the playing field.² A modern scoreboard designed with a vintage appearance was installed along the center field fence in 2019, and it is supported by four, vertically set steel beams.³

Alterations

As noted previously, the original wood benches for seating were removed and replaced with metal benches in 2004, and the bleachers behind home plate were removed in 2005. The original wood poles and light fixtures for the playing field have been replaced. The chain link fence around the playing field replaced the original wood-plank fence system at an unknown date, and the scoreboard was installed in 2019. The original radio towers—installed on the roof of the grandstand in order to carry live broadcasts of the games—were removed at an unknown date.

Integrity

Ontario Baseball Park has retained the physical and associative features that enable it to convey its historic significance.

Location: Ontario Baseball Park has remained in this location within Galvin Park since its 1936-1937 construction.

Design: Based on historic photographs dating to the late 1930s, it does not appear that Ontario Baseball Park has lost any significant aspects of its original design elements. Those elements include its massing, footprint, grandstand design, concrete foundation, roof structure, and support system. The landscape of the baseball field remains exactly as originally designed, with minor changes to the fencing around the perimeter of the field. The simple design has stood the test of time, and the region's harsh environment and weather.

² Robert Perez, July 20, 2015.

³ A review of historic photographs indicates this scoreboard is at least the third to be installed since 1937.

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Setting: Ontario Baseball Park’s setting has substantially changed since construction when Galvin Park and the baseball field were situated in a mostly undeveloped area of the City, surrounded by citrus groves and olive trees. To the east and south of the ballpark, residential housing has filled the surrounding acres. To the north, commercial properties line East 4th Street. To the west, although Galvin Park has been altered over the years, it is still used as a city park with wide areas of open lawns and many mature trees. Within the ballpark boundary, the setting retains the character of a ballpark from the 1930s.

Materials: Ontario Ball Park has retained key exterior materials that convey its significance. Historic photographs of the ballpark have revealed that the grandstand and playing field have maintained a high level of its original fabric. Where repairs or replacements have been made due to decay, damage, and environmental impacts, an effort was made to replace the original material with “like” material. These minor changes have not removed the ballpark’s ability to visually transport a visitor to the 1930s.

Workmanship: Ontario Baseball Park—with its associated covered grandstands, locker room, dugout, and landscape—was constructed without the benefit of power tools or sophisticated equipment. By its very design of a simple grandstand built on a concrete pad, with most of the framing exposed to view, the workmanship of the original builders is on display. The grandstand has the capacity to convey the construction techniques and design elements brought together by labor organized under a local relief program and paid for by federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds sent through the State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA) program.

Feeling: Ontario Baseball Park is unusual in that the city has taken the approach of not allowing advertisements to line the interior walls of the stadium or let other visual clues of the outside world be posted within the ballpark. This allows a visitor to truly remove themselves from the outside world and enter the 1930s, when the likes of Babe Ruth, Joe DiMaggio, Mel Ott, and Lou Gehrig played baseball in similar ballparks. Ontario Baseball Park has retained the necessary physical attributes to convey the ballpark’s period of significance.

Association: Ontario Baseball Park has retained integrity to convey its historic relationship to baseball in the 1930s. It has also maintained the physical features necessary to convey its construction by the WPA during the Great Recession.

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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.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1936-1958

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Works Progress Administration

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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.)

Ontario Baseball Park is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Entertainment/Recreation. The forerunner of the Works Progress Administration, the Federal Economic Recovery Administration recognized that subsidizing local government recreation projects created permanent and/or improved community athletic venues for its citizens and provided inexpensive entertainment for family social outings. During the Great Depression, the city desired to provide its citizens with recreational outlets that would provide healthy diversions for both athletes and spectators alike. The Ontario Baseball Park was the type of project that touched all social and economic levels of a community and worked towards improving neighborhood relations. The ballpark was constructed to the standards of a major league baseball field to attract professional teams from across the United States to spend their annual spring training in Ontario. The spring training season and exhibition games between visiting major league teams gave an economic boost to the city during the Great Depression by attracting tourists to the area. Funded and constructed by the WPA, the ballpark is an excellent example of a Depression-era program success that continues to support the recreational activities of Ontario's residents. The period of significance begins in 1936 when the Los Angeles Angels held a five-week training camp in Ontario and closes in 1958 when conflicts for use of the field by scholastic teams resulted in the professional teams having to find another location for spring training.

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

Located on a sloping plateau at the base of the 10,000-foot Mt. San Antonio, Ontario, California was named for Ontario, Canada by George Chaffey, a Canadian-born engineer who came to Riverside in 1880.⁴ He and his brother William acquired 1,000 acres of the Garcia Rancho in 1881, which they subsequently subdivided into small fruit farms. Ontario began as an agricultural colony focused primarily on fruit growing. Both the citrus and the olive industries were popular agricultural endeavors in the area.

Ontario was incorporated on December 10, 1891 and the community's agricultural endeavors continued to prosper into the twentieth century. Charles C. Graber had moved to Ontario in 1892 and began to cure olives in 1894. Graber House is still located on North 4th Street and continues to sell tree-ripened olives and olive oil from their groves in Central California.⁵ In the 1920s, the largest citrus-based business in the city was the Exchange Orange Products Company (later Sunkist Growers, Inc.), which was a subsidiary of the California Fruit Growers Exchange.

⁴ Galvin Preservation Associates. "The City of Ontario's Historic Context for the New Model Colony Area" prepared for the City of Ontario Planning Department. El Segundo, CA, 2004.

⁵ Graber Olive House, "The History of Graber Olives," accessed October 1, 2020 <http://graberolives.com>.

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In the early 1900s, the city bought forty acres of land on East 4th Street, one mile east of Euclid Avenue, for the City Water Department. The city bought the unimproved land that carried the Cucamonga Wash through the eastern part of the City from Florence Caldwell and J.F. Fredendal for \$10 an acre.⁶ *The Daily Report* newspaper noted in its March 2, 1915, edition that a plan for development of the wash had been prepared by C. A. Chandler, a landscape architect with the Armstrong Nursery Company. “The plan shows many winding driveways, a baseball park, a picnic ground, swimming pool, music grove and band-stand and other attractions.”⁷ The new park was expected by *The Daily Report* to be named Armstrong Park. Work then began on what was planned to “be one of the most beautiful parks in Southern California.”⁸

The floods of 1916 ravaged the new park, and in 1918, the city re-started the effort to improve the forty acres on the Wash. While one councilman urged the city to abandon the project and stop wasting money, Councilman Charles Graber “objected to the abandonment of the park.”⁹ Councilman Graber urged the Council to take a longer view approach to the plan to improve the land, and imagine what it would look like in the future with these words:

We are getting good trees there. The idea was to plant the park for the future. It would be a mistake to abandon the park now. All it requires is cultivation. Fifteen years from now we will have a fine forest there, one that will provide a much needed picnic and play ground. The only place the people have now is the Chaffey campus.¹⁰

John Morgan Galvin was born in 1891, and had come to Ontario, California with his sister Bessie from Bedford, Quebec, Canada, in 1901.¹¹ Galvin started working for the City in 1909, and was tasked in 1910 to oversee its municipal water service.¹² As the land on East 4th Street had initially been purchased with the dual purpose of building a water pumping station and controlling seasonal rain runoff, Galvin was also in charge of establishing the future park on the forty acres. He supervised the planting of the trees donated by John Armstrong, the laying of grass seed to create lawns for picnickers, and the landscaping of the forty acres with winding paths.

Within eight years of Councilman Graber’s prediction, the new city park on East 4th Street was ready for its inauguration. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce sponsored the opening of the park during the 4th of July festivities of 1925. The first public baseball fields had also been laid out in the new park, along with picnic grounds and a place for bands to play concerts.¹³

In October 1929, the financial complex known collectively as Wall Street suffered a major correction that became known as the Stock Market Crash, and the start of the Great Depression.

⁶ “Galvin Turns Dump Into Largest City Park,” *The Daily Report*, July 2, 1962.

⁷ “Armst[r]ong Park Plans Look Good To City Council,” *The Daily Report*, March 2, 1915.

⁸ “Plan Fine Park,” *The Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1915.

⁹ “Abandon Park But Action is Delayed,” *The Daily Report*, May 6, 1918.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Mark Johnson, “John Galvin’s personal vision created park system,” *The Daily Report*, August 4, 1971.

¹² “Galvin Turns Dump Into Largest City Park,” *The Daily Report*, July 2, 1962.

¹³ “Ontario Park Opens July 4th,” *The Daily Report*, June 12, 1925.

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The drastic fall of so many aspects of the economy in the United States caused President Herbert Hoover to institute the Emergency Relief Act (ERA) in 1932. The purpose of the ERA was to extend loans to the states to fund and operate state-run relief programs. When Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration began in 1933, the ERA was renamed the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). In California, the State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA) was created to channel the federal funds.

The City of Ontario applied for SERA funds to improve and expand the recreational facilities of the East 4th Street Park that were under the care of assistant city manager John Galvin. Galvin died in December 1934 at the age of 43 and was unable to see the building of the Ontario Baseball Park with funding from SERA and the WPA. The city renamed the park in his honor in just weeks after his death, stating "the municipal park at East Fourth Street will in the future be known officially as John Galvin Park."¹⁴

The Great Depression left many people struggling to find food, housing, and work. Sports provided an inexpensive way for people to forget their troubles for a few hours, whether they were playing the game, watching it in person, or listening to it on a radio. By the 1930s, radios had become affordable enough for many families to own or rent, and fans were able to enjoy rooting for favorite teams and players. Baseball stadiums lured spectators by offering inexpensive food, free admission for women, and contests with prizes of cash or groceries.¹⁵ Local and regional baseball across the United States had been played under lights since the late nineteenth century, and in 1935, major league ball parks finally introduced games at night to expand the ability of fans to see live games.¹⁶

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration identified the connection between providing facilities for physical activities, and venues for escaping "the monotony of industrial work and the harsh reality of urban life," as ways to ease the hardships of life during the 1930s.¹⁷ The President and his speech writers often referenced baseball metaphors when discussing New Deal programs, and he "used baseball to ward off despair and retain American pride and morale during a period of crisis."¹⁸

Ontario had become a favorite city for spring training of minor league teams in the early 1900s when the Pacific Coast League (a western Triple A baseball league) was established in California. An early ball field used by local teams in Ontario was located on East "A" Street in front of the Citrus Fruit Exchange Packing House.¹⁹ In the north part of town, a ball field had

¹⁴ "Park Named for John Galvin," *The Daily Report*, December 29, 1934.

¹⁵ Jodi Thornton-O'Connell, "Sports in the 1930s," *SportsRec*, accessed October 18, 2020 <https://www.sportsrec.com/sports-1930s-america-8736180.html>.

¹⁶ Oscar Eddleton, "Under the Lights," *Society for American Baseball Research*, accessed May 25, 2020 <https://sabr.org/>.

¹⁷ University of Richmond, Virginia Digital Lab, "Baseball Boosts Morale during Hard Times in America," accessed October 12, 2020 <https://historyengine.richmond.edu/episodes/view/4673>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Archie D. Mitchell, "Amusements: Base Ball Team" Sports-Baseball Folio, Model Colony History Room.

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also been located on Stowell Street, just south of the Atchison Topeka Santa Fe Railroad line.²⁰ A new baseball field was built in the 1920s on South Campus Avenue, and it was designed to be capable of hosting professional ball clubs wintering in Ontario.²¹ During the winter months, spring training exhibition games were played in the city by, and between, major league teams such as the Chicago White Sox and Pittsburgh Pirates. A spring training game in Ontario, between the major league Chicago Cubs and the Portland Beavers in March 1920, led *The Daily Report* newspaper to call for businesses to be closed during the game and “all who can should attend the big game.”²²

Baseball had always been a popular pastime in the City. By the time the Chaffeys established the settlement of Ontario in 1881, the game itself had spread across the United States, having been brought by train from the East Coast to the West Coast in the 1860s. The development of professional clubs, and rules for running the game at all levels of play, had been set in place by the early 1870s, so that within towns, cities, and regions, baseball teams could compete on an equal footing.²³ Men who wanted to play ball might join their employer’s team (if the company was large enough) or be part of a team made up just of local players, such as the Ontario Merchants team. “In 1914, the Citrus Belt Baseball League had municipal teams from Ontario, Upland, Cucamonga, and Etiwanda, plus Ontario Power Company and George Junior Republic [High School] of Chino.”²⁴ Two of the City’s most winning teams were the Ontario Merchants and the Hotpoint Electric Company team.²⁵

In July 1935, the City received approval from SERA officials for the construction in Galvin Park of a baseball diamond, a grandstand to seat 3,500 persons, locker rooms and other facilities.²⁶ Upon approval, the \$20,000 project was immediately funded with \$15,000, so that construction could start right away.²⁷ The City also received \$5,000 from a state unemployment bond issue for the purchase of materials, and this was used as the City’s matching funds for the project. The new baseball park was planned to be modern in every way, and that included the installation of flood lamps to light the field for games at night.²⁸

It [the new baseball field] will be located east of the wash and will be surrounded by a fence. The grandstands will flank the north and west sides of the field coming together in the corner. Entrance to the ball park will be afforded by a tunnel under

²⁰ Archie D. Mitchell, “Ontario: Entertainment” Sports-Baseball Folio, Model Colony History Room.

²¹ *The Los Angeles Times*, “Ontario All Agog Over Big Contest,” March 18, 1920.

²² *The Daily Report*, “Tomorrow Will Be An Important Day,” March 15, 1920.

²³ Buckley, Steve. “Advent of Regional Rail Service Made Baseball Possible”. Baseball Hall of Fame, accessed: October 12, 2020. <https://baseballhall.org/discover/advent-of-regional-rail-service-made-baseball-possible>

²⁴ Joe Blackstock, “1914 Baseball Stories are a ‘Real Crock,’” *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*, April 4, 2011.

²⁵ Julie Farren, “‘Hot idea’ helped build a fortune,” *The Daily Report*, July 5, 1998.

²⁶ “Ontario Plans Baseball Park,” *The Los Angeles Times*, July 8, 1935.

²⁷ “State Approves Park Project,” *The Daily Report*, July 03, 1936.

²⁸ Tim Hagerty, “Multiple cities claim to have hosted the first night game in baseball history,” *The Sporting News*, accessed May 15, 2020. <http://www.sportingnews.com/us/mlb>.

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the corner of the stands, and in the corner also will be located a press box. Lockers and showers will be located beneath the north bleachers.²⁹

The lumber for the new stadium was delivered to a crew of thirty men at John Galvin Park on January 15, 1936.³⁰ “Plans for the ball grounds call for their construction both for regular and night baseball, with adequate lighting arranged for the latter.”³¹ Ontario intentionally constructed a ballpark to attract major league baseball teams to “make this city their winter training quarters”.³² The first ballgame in the new Ontario Baseball Park was held between the semi-professional teams of the Ontario Merchants and the Los Angeles Angels of the Pacific Coast League on March 14, 1937.³³ More than 3,000 Ontarians came out to root for their home team, which ended up being defeated by the Angels with a score of 8 to 6.³⁴

During an interview with Ontario resident Ellis Bell in 1987, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the ballpark, Mr. Bell, a member of the Ontario Merchants team, stated that the Ontario Baseball Park was,

the envy of most other Southern California cities back then: a brand new baseball park. It was a big deal. There were only three close parks that we played in back then. There was Perris Hill Park over in San Bernardino, Fullerton [Amerige Park] and here.³⁵ Oh, these were great parks in their time.³⁶

From 1937, until the arrival of the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Giants baseball teams to the West Coast in 1957, the Pacific Coast Baseball League was the highest level of professional league baseball in California. The Los Angeles Angels, the farm team of the Chicago Cubs, began a five-week training stay in Ontario in July 1936.³⁷ The Angels returned to train in Ontario in 1937, while the Pittsburgh Pirates were “unlimbering the old soup bones” at the Perris Hill ballpark in San Bernardino, and the Chicago White Sox were training at Brookside Park in Pasadena.³⁸

One of the teams to train for many years at the Ontario Baseball Park was the Hollywood Stars, who were affiliated with the Pittsburgh Pirates. The Ontario Baseball Park continued to be used by major league teams of the Pacific Coast League until 1958 when conflicts for use of the field

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ “Ontario Ball Park Project Starts Today,” *The San Bernardino County Sun*, January 16, 1936.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Charles Bentley, “Memories: A high mark in area baseball history,” *The Daily Report*, March 30, 1987.

³⁴ The Los Angeles Angels of the Pacific Coast League were owned by William Wrigley, Jr. of chewing gum fame, who also owned the Chicago Cubs.

³⁵ Perris Hill Park was located at Waterman Avenue and Highland Avenue in San Bernardino until demolished in 1968, and Amerige Park is still located at South Highland and West Commonwealth Avenues in Fullerton. The stadium seating at Amerige Park has been replaced.

³⁶ Charles Bentley, “Memories: A high mark in area baseball history,” *The Daily Report*, March 30, 1987.

³⁷ “Ontario Picked by Los Angeles,” *The Pasadena Post*, July 9, 1936.

³⁸ “Bob-bing Along In Sports,” *Chino Champion*, February 19, 1937.

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by scholastic teams resulted in the professional teams having to find another location for spring training.³⁹ The last training camp for a major league team at the Ontario Baseball Park was held by the San Diego Padres, a later version of the Hollywood Stars team.⁴⁰

The Ontario Baseball Park has remained continually in use since its opening in March 1937 and is popular with all divisions of youth baseball and Little League Division baseball. Over the years, the ballpark has also hosted the United States Open Amateur Baseball Tournament, and the American Legion championship team based in Ontario.⁴¹ Due to the Ontario Baseball Park's historic appearance, it has served as the backdrop for several movies and television shows, including *A League of Their Own* (1992) and *The Babe* (1992).

The facility was renamed Jay Littleton Ball Park in 1998 in honor of the man who was involved with all aspects of little league baseball from the time he arrived in Ontario in 1954, to his passing in 2003. That same year, the City Council approved the designation of the Jay Littleton Ball Park as a Local Historic Landmark.

When the WPA was established in 1935, a yearly approach was designed to address the needs of the county that had been adversely affected by the Great Depression. The first year, priority was given to projects that were designed to improve infrastructure with new and improved roads; establish rural electric facilities; and build water retention and conveyance systems.⁴² The second year of the program, as presented in 1936, focused on providing funding to communities to support the construction of public facilities such as parks and recreational facilities, stadiums, grandstands, and bleachers, by employing local workforces.⁴³

Ontario Baseball Park was one of many baseball-related facilities constructed by the WPA in the 1930s, and appears to be one of the very few still remaining—built specifically in a community of less than 14,000 residents—to be used for local, regional, and national league baseball games.⁴⁴ Ontario Baseball Park is the only historic baseball park with the original grandstand remaining in San Bernardino County, and it may be one the only remaining baseball parks of its type in the United States.⁴⁵

The National Register listed Carson Park Baseball Stadium in Eau Claire, Wisconsin was also funded by the WPA, was to be used by professional minor league baseball teams, was completed

³⁹ "Padres Leaving Training Site at Galvin Park," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, November 23, 1957.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ "Ontario Nine Enters Playoffs in Legion Play," *The Los Angeles Times*, August 19, 1965.

⁴² Robert D. Leighninger, *Long-Range Public Investment: The Forgotten Legacy of the New Deal* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007).

⁴³ Robert D. Leighninger, "Cultural Infrastructure: The Legacy of New Deal Public Space," *Journal of Architectural Education* 49 (May 1996), 227.

⁴⁴ United States Census Bureau, "Characteristics of the Population" for Ontario, California, 608, accessed April 15, 2021 <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1940/population-volume-2/33973538v2p1ch6.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Society for American Baseball Research, Spring training database: "Spring Training Host City," accessed March 19, 2021 <https://sabr.org/spring-training-database>; "Maps and Sites: All Projects," searched *baseball*, *stadium*, and *ballpark*, accessed March 19, 2021 <https://livingnewdeal.org/>.

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in 1936, and had its debut game in May 1937. The nomination form stated that Carson Park Baseball Stadium, in 2003, “may be one of the oldest WPA ballparks in the country still in use.”⁴⁶

Ontario Baseball Park had its first officially recognized ballgame in March 1937, beating opening day in Eau Claire by two months, and while Carson Park Baseball Stadium was used by minor league farm teams, Ontario Baseball Park was utilized by the teams of the Pacific Coast League. Manned by such elite professional baseball players, the Pacific Coast League was considered a threat to become a third major league until the Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants moved to California in 1957.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ National Register of Historic Places, Carson Park Baseball Stadium, Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin, National Register #03000698. Preparers Eric J. Wheeler and Joanne Raetz Stuttgen based its place in the history of WPA ballparks upon Michael Benson’s *Ballparks of North America: A comprehensive Historical Resource to Baseball Grounds, yards, and Stadiums* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., Inc., 1989). The nomination form noted that Benson had omitted the existence of the Carson Park Baseball Stadium, and from the nomination footnote citing Benson’s text, Benson was also not aware of the existence of Ontario Baseball Park.

⁴⁷ John Cronin, “Truth in the Minor League Class Structure: The Case for the Reclassification of the Minors,” accessed April 15, 2021 Society for American Baseball Research, <https://sabr.org/journal/article/truth-in-the-minor-league-class-structure-the-case-for-the-reclassification-of-the-minors/>.

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Folio: Biography: John Galvin and Bessie Galvin

Folio: John Galvin Park

Folio: Sports: Baseball: Minor League: Los Angeles Angels

Folio: Sports: Baseball: Ontario - Early Years

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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

Acreage of Property 3.85 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.076443 Longitude: -117. 628023

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

See Sketch Map

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary follows the fencing that extends from the easternmost point of the grandstand to the southernmost point of the grandstand and encircles the baseball field. The area of the ballpark is unchanged since its construction, based upon historic aerial photographs.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: John Loomis, Principal, Thirtieth Street

Architects _____

organization: on behalf of City of Ontario, California (Diane Ayala, Senior Planner)

street & number: 303 East "B" Street

city or town: Ontario state: CA zip code: 91764

e-mail _____

DAyala@ontarioca.gov

telephone: (909) 395-2428

date: December 2020; Revised March 2021, April 2021

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: Ontario Baseball Park
City or Vicinity: Ontario
County: San Bernardino
State: California
Photographer: Thirtieth Street Architects
Date Photographed: May 5, 2020

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

- 1 of 10 Ballpark, front elevation, camera facing east
- 2 of 10 Ballpark grandstand, north elevation, camera facing southwest
- 3 of 10 Grandstand seating and infield, camera facing northwest
- 4 of 10 Pitcher's mound, outfield, and modern scoreboard, camera facing southeast
- 5 of 10 Grandstand and infield from third base line, camera facing west
- 6 of 10 East wing of grandstand and roof system, camera facing west
- 7 of 10 East wing of grandstand, and announcer's box on upper level of center section, camera facing west
- 8 of 10 Visiting Team's dugout, drinking fountain, and bat holder, camera facing southwest
- 9 of 10 Visiting Team's locker room and showers, located under the south wing of bleachers, view looking north
- 10 of 10 Ramp leading to Visiting Team's dugout from locker room, camera facing east

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

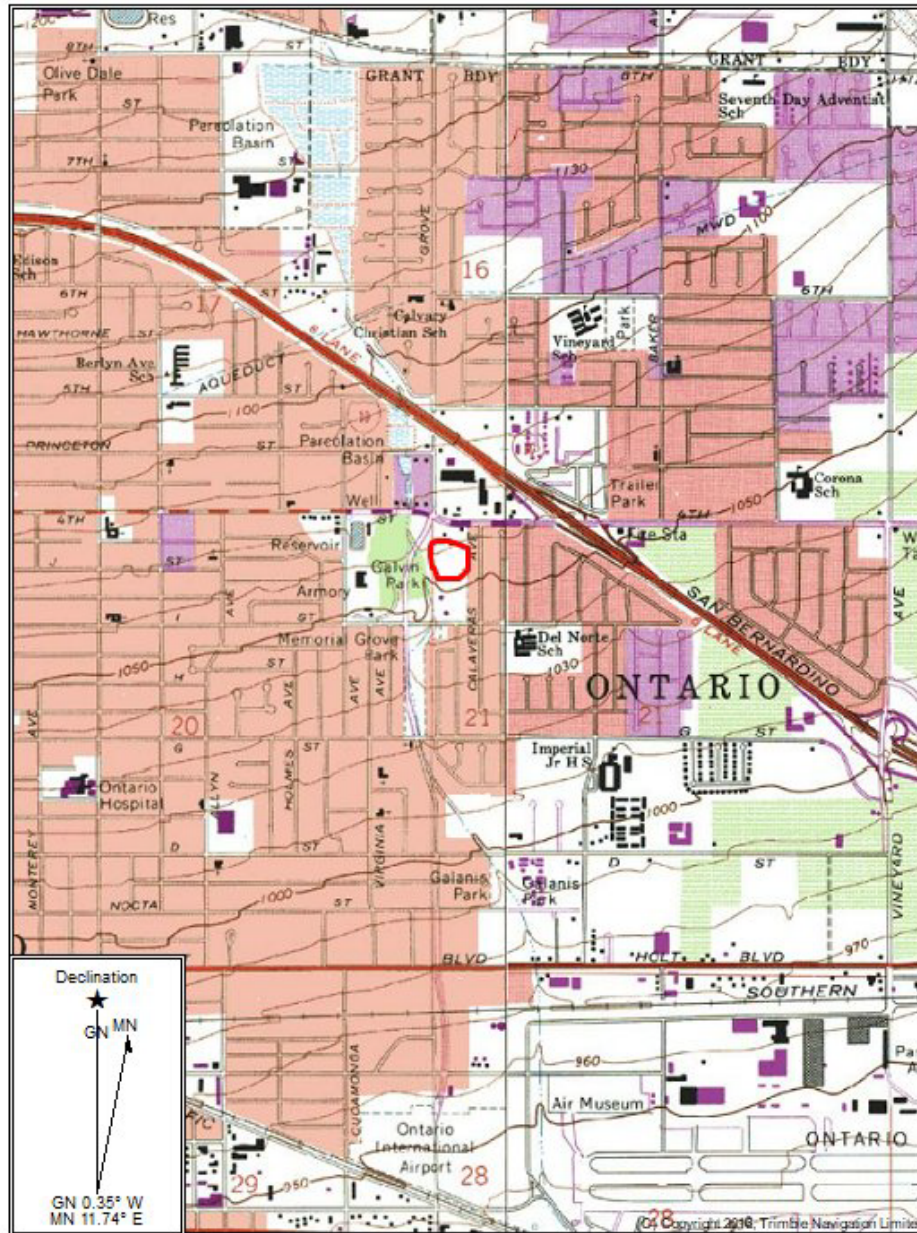
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Location Map

Latitude: 34.076443

Longitude: -117.628023



<p>SCALE 1:24000</p> <p>0 1000 2000 3000 4000 Feet</p>	<p>Ontario Baseball Park Ontario, San Bernardino County Latitude: 34.076443 Longitude: -117.628023</p>
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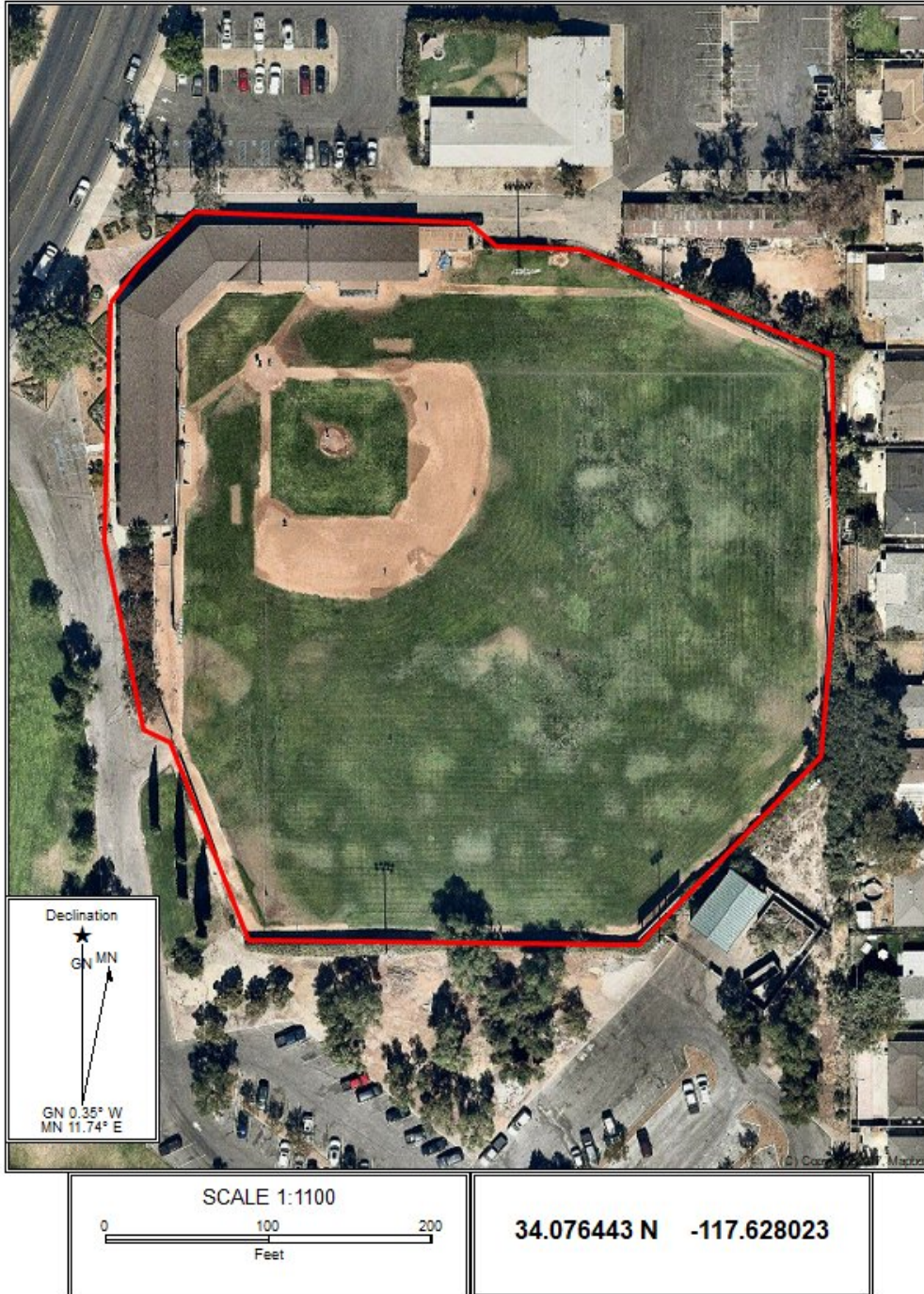
Site Map



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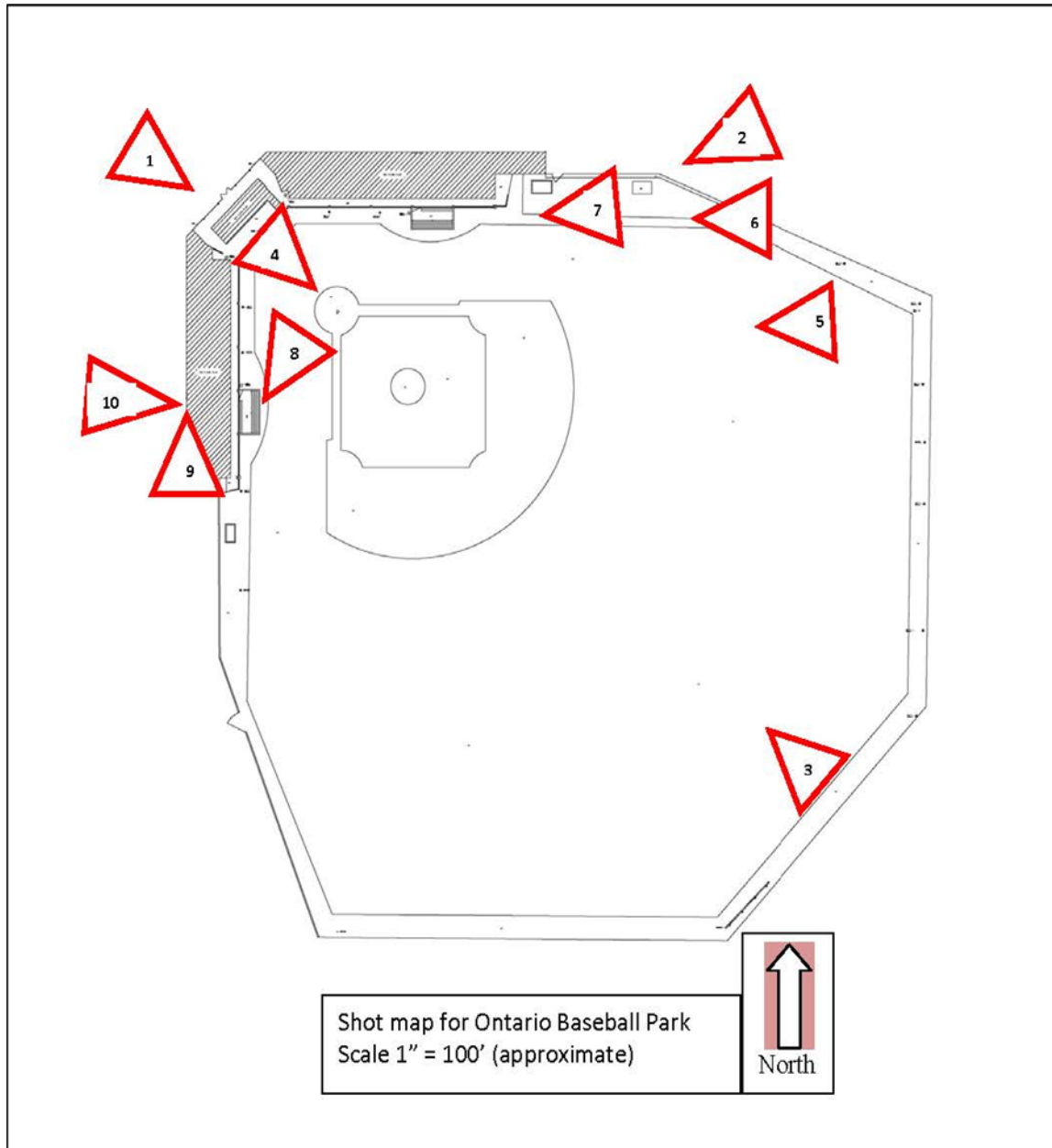
Sketch Map



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Photo Key



Base image from as-built drawing prepared for Jay Littleton Ball Park Historic Structure Report, AEC Consultants, Inc.

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Figure 1 Aerial view of John Galvin Park, 1938; Source: NETR Historic Aerials



Figure 2 Early photograph, date unknown; Source: City of Ontario Public Library; Robert E. Ellingwood Model Colony History Room



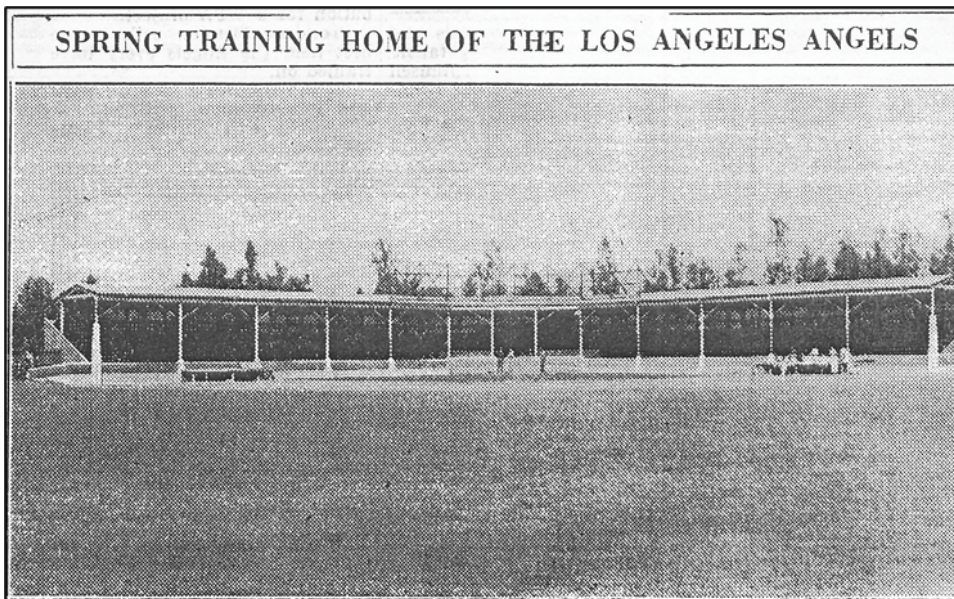
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Figure 3 View from grandstand, circa 1937; Source: City of Ontario Public Library; Robert E. Ellingwood Model Colony History Room



Figure 4 Ontario Baseball Park, 1940; Source: *The Daily Report*, March 16, 1940



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Figure 5 The Hollywood Stars training at Ontario Baseball Park, February 1946; Source: *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* Collection, Los Angeles Public Library



Figure 6 Colt League World Series at Ontario Ball Park, August 1959; Source: Ontario Colt League Program 1960, Model Colony History Room



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Photo 1 Ballpark, front elevation, camera facing east



Photo 2 Ballpark grandstand, north elevation, camera facing southwest



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Photo 3 Grandstand seating and infield, camera facing northwest



Photo 4 Pitcher's mound, outfield, and modern scoreboard, camera facing southeast



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Photo 5 Grandstand and infield from third base line, camera facing west



Photo 6 East wing of grandstand and roof system, camera facing west



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Photo 7 East wing of grandstand, and announcer's box on upper level of center section, camera facing west



Photo 8 Visiting Team's dugout, drinking fountain, and bat holder, camera facing southwest



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Photo 9 Visiting Team's locker room and showers, located under the south wing of bleachers, view looking north



Photo 10 Ramp leading to Visiting Team's dugout from locker room, camera facing east

