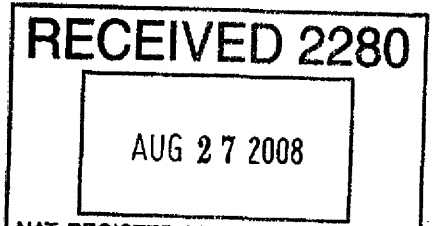


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

977

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on how to complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Eugene Civic Stadium

Other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2077 Willamette Street not for publication

city of town Eugene vicinity

State Oregon code OR county Lane code 039 zip code 97402

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 nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Deputy SHPO

8-22-08

Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

10/6/2008

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

N/A

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

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD: weatherboard

WOOD: plywood

roof: ASPHALT; WOOD

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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)

Property is:

- 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATIONCOMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENTARCHITECTURE**Period of Significance**1938-1939**Significant Dates**1938, stadium constructed1939, roof completed**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A**Cultural Affiliation****Architect/Builder**Smith, Graham B., architectWest Coast Lumberman's Association, builder**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)**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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Eugene Public Schools, District 4J

Eugene Civic Stadium
Name of Property

Lane Co., OR
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 3.75 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 10 492823 4875723
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Natalie Perrin

organization University of Oregon

date Aug. 2007; rev. July 2008

street & number 460 Monroe Street Apt. A

telephone (404) 934-9710

city or town Eugene

state Oregon zip code 97402

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name Eugene School District 4J

street & number 200 North Monroe Street

telephone (541) 687-3123

city or town Eugene

state Oregon zip code 97402

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 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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DESCRIPTION

Eugene Civic Stadium, popularly known as "Civic," is located at 2077 Willamette Street, in Eugene, Lane County, Oregon. Civic was dedicated on October 21, 1938, and hosted its first event on October 28, 1938, when the annual Eugene-Corvallis High School football skirmish was played on the original clay and sawdust field. Designed predominantly for football and baseball, the site has traditionally served as a multipurpose facility. Hosting everything from soccer to rodeo, the Eugene Civic Stadium continues to serve the community as home to the Eugene Emeralds, a minor-league baseball team, as well as the current home for local soccer league practices.

The nominated area is comprised of approximately 3.75 acres located on the east side of Willamette Street between 20th and 22nd Avenues and consists of the grandstand and field. The nominated area is a portion of tax lot #1803061108505, which is historically associated with Eugene Civic Stadium and has been continuously owned and operated by the 4J Public School District since 1938. Eugene Civic Stadium is nominated under Criterion A for its association with Works Progress Administration (WPA) activities and community development in Eugene. It is also nominated under Criterion C for its architectural style, which is indicative of depression-era ballparks constructed in the Pacific Northwest.

SETTING

To the west of the stadium, across Willamette Street, lies the College Hill residential district.¹ The district is named for Columbia College, established in 1855 by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, when the town of Eugene was two years old. Unfortunately, Columbia College survived only four years, a victim of administrative conflicts over the issues of slavery and the imminent Civil War. Those four years, however, saw the construction of two buildings, both of which were later destroyed by fire with arson as the suspected cause. Reversing its ill-fated beginnings, College Hill has been and continues to be one of the most desirable neighborhoods in Eugene. The gradual east slope of College Hill terminates at the back of the stadium seats, which roughly mimic the grade of the hill and culminate in the flat surface of the field.

The area adjacent to the grandstand to the west (east of Willamette Street), but outside of the nominated area currently houses six non-historic, temporary concession stands and a ticket booth. Similarly, the area immediately adjacent to the grandstand to the north, but outside of the nominated area, contains two non-historic ticket booths.

North of the stadium is made up primarily of a large parking lot and areas of vacant land. This area is the remnants of the 4J School District Bus Barn complex, which was relocated to a larger facility elsewhere in Eugene. There are also five other buildings north of the stadium that were constructed outside of the period of significance. To the east, across Amazon Parkway (also Pearl Street), is South Eugene High School and its accompanying athletic fields. A small commercial office complex abuts the property line to the south.

¹ College Hill is not related to the University of Oregon, which it predated by many years.

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GRANDSTAND

The wooden grandstand is an L-shaped structure designed by local Eugene architect Graham Braden Smith. Smith attended the University of Oregon from 1915 until 1919, later working for John Hunzicker in 1925. He became a partner in the firm in 1927, as did Truman E. Phillips in 1929, forming the firm of Hunzicker, Smith & Phillips. This partnership was dissolved in 1931, and Smith practiced alone for the remainder of his career. Smith was a member of the American Institute of Architects and is also known for Nyssa School at Nyssa, Oregon (built 1950), and the Guard Publishing Company building in Eugene (built 1952).²

The asymmetrical shape of the grandstand is indicative of the stadium's original intention as a multi-use facility, specifically featuring football. The main entrance is centered on the east elevation, and was designed to place a visitor directly on the 50-yard line for a football game. The design bears a marked resemblance to "Typical Design No. 109: Grandstand" as published by the Timber Engineering Company in the book *Typical Designs of Timber Structures: A Reference for Use by Architects and Engineers*.

The west elevation has a concrete foundation wall with "2 pipe weep holes spaced 12'0" on center" to accommodate for drainage from College Hill.³ The foundation construction method of the grandstand is post-on-pier, with concrete footings laid on graded earth. The solid 8- by 8-inch Douglas fir posts are of varying height, and are consistently crossed braced with 2- by 6-inch board and horizontally braced with 2- by 10-inch board, also of Douglas fir. The bracings are held in place by at least three nails at each cross bracing, at least four nails at each horizontal bracing, and reinforcing steel.

The grandstand seating was constructed of 1- by 4-inch flooring topped by 2- by 12-inch boards where the seating is covered by the roof, and ¼-inch spaced 2- by 3-inch boards topped by 2- by 12 inch boards where the seating is not covered. The seating-side of the structure was originally clad with channel rustic horizontal wood siding, which remains fully intact and in good condition beneath the seating on the south and east elevations. The walls just beneath the roofline (above and behind the seating) appear to have been initially clad in vertical wood beadboard siding, and is still intact at the roofline in the seating sections. The slope of the stadium seating is determined by the manner of construction, which consists of 2-foot 4-inch horizontal seats and 1-foot 3-inch vertical drops, for a slope of 28:15 inches, approximately 1.87.

Originally built without covering, the roof of the grandstand was completed by the beginning of the 1939 football season. Designed by the West Coast Lumberman's Association of Seattle, Washington, in August and September 1938, the wooden "transverse hip truss" roof and all of its timber connectors were manufactured by the Timber Engineering Company and installed according to their recommendations. The design for the transverse hip truss system is also featured in *Typical Designs of Timber Structures* as "Design 109A: Grandstand Roof." Split rings, pressed steel shear plates, and standard machine bolts marked "7/8 Malleable" were used in the construction of the Grandstand roof, which is finished with asphalt shingles.⁴ A tongue-in-

² Richard Ellison Ritz, *Architects of Oregon*, Portland: Lair Hill Publishing, 2002. pg. 363.

³ Blueprints on file with the 4J School District, dated 1937, as designed by architect Graham B. Smith of Eugene, Oregon for "Grandstand."

⁴ Blueprints on file with the 4J School District, dated 8-38 and 9-38, as designed by "T.K.M" of the West Coast Lumberman's Association of Seattle, Washington for "Covered Grandstand for Athletic Field."

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groove wooden beadboard siding was installed to the upper portion of the stands just beneath the roof, interspersed with horizontal louvered openings for ventilation.

The basic structure of the stadium remained unchanged until 1969, when the school district leased the facility to the Eugene Emeralds, a minor league baseball team. Modifications were made to make the stadium suitable for professional baseball, including installing new turf, adding sound-deadening materials, and doubling the stadium's lighting system, but which do not compromise the overall integrity of the original structure. It was in 1969 that two large light standards and 800 wooden, theatre-style box seats were purchased from River Island Stadium (now demolished), which had been home to the San Diego Padres. The light standards were added to the roof of the Grandstand on the east elevation.

The box seats were also added at this time, placed on risers in front of the original stands. These were not under the roof of the stadium, and as such had to be replaced in 1986 by the current "blue-box" riser seats, so called because they are made of blue plastic. This additional seating does not compromise the grandstand construction, as it is sensitively attached to the original structure and fully reversible. Public bathrooms and team locker rooms were placed in a cinderblock shed-roof addition to the north side of the grandstand in 1969, and a small, one-story, shed roof addition was also constructed on the west side of the grandstand, and is situated between the grandstand and a detached heating plant. Although these one-story shed roof additions are non-compatible additions, they are inconspicuous and do not compromise the integrity of the grandstand.

Today, the west and south elevations are clad in 8- by 4-foot plywood boards, which are believed to be the original cladding though the date of its installation is unknown. The outfield fence is comprised of the same 8- by 4-foot plywood boards. The field is often lovingly groomed for Emerald's games by the groundskeepers, mowed in elaborate checkerboard patterns. A metal, hand-turned scoreboard is still used today and is considered an icon of the stadium. As of opening day 2006, Eugene Civic Stadium was the 11th oldest minor league ballpark in the United States, and was within the top ten by opening day 2007.

ALTERATIONS

In 1969, the Eugene Emeralds, a minor league ball team, became the primary lessees of Eugene Civic Stadium. At this time, minor modifications were made to the grandstand to make the stadium more appropriate for its new use as an AAA minor league ballpark. Upgrades to the irrigation system and field were completed, and the concession area paved. Other improvements ranged from adding public restrooms and locker rooms, to new paint and fencing. A metal, hand-turned score board, which adds to the character of the park, was also installed.

It is believed that the rooftop press box was removed at this time. A new press box clad in board-and-batten siding was installed in the curve of the L-shaped grandstand seating beneath the roof covering. Two large light standards and 800 wooden, theatre-style box seats purchased from the soon-to-be-demolished River Island Stadium, which had been home to the San Diego Padres minor league team since 1936, were also installed. The light standards were added to the roof of the grandstand, and the box seats were placed on risers in front of the original stands to allow for additional seating. This seating, placed in front of the original grandstand seating on the ground, was not beneath the roof covering, and suffered significant damage through the years.

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These wooden seats were replaced in 1986 with blue plastic riser seating in the same location, which are minimally attached and non-damaging to the original fabric of the grandstand siding. Wooden platforms and ramps were added in the early 1990s on the northeast and south sides of the grandstand.

Other buildings outside of the nominated area were added to the site over the years. These include a detached heating plant constructed in 1941 to the west of the grandstand, a garage and living quarters built in 1946, and a maintenance office constructed in the early 1950s, both located northeast of the grandstand. Six concession shacks were constructed (dates unknown) on the western side of the grandstand along Willamette Street, and two additional at both the northeast and southern ends of the grandstand "L." These are non-historic, temporary structures outside of the nominated area, as are the three ticket booths, one located at the west entrance along Willamette Street, the other two directly in front of the bathroom addition on the north side. Even with the continued improvements, Eugene Civic Stadium retains integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association.

FUTURE REHABILITATION PLANS

Since 1991, the 4J Public School District has commissioned several studies of Eugene Civic Stadium, ranging from structural evaluations to ADA compliance. The scopes of the studies vary, but the general consensus is that the grandstand is in good condition, though it is in immediate need of a new roof. Seismic retrofitting of the structure has been suggested, specifically attaching the large timber framing members and roof supports to their concrete footings. At this time, the footings and timbers are not connected, which could cause the timbers to slip in the event of an earthquake.

In addition, the current function of the facility as a professional minor league ballpark comes with certain minimum standards that require compliance, ranging from the "candles" of light on the field during a night game to the quality of the locker rooms. The current lights and locker room facilities are dated and unsuitable to a professional minor league team. In addition, umpire changing areas, offices, and storage areas have been enclosed under the grandstand over the years.

Though these enclosures do not affect the integrity of the grandstand itself, the result is hardly suitable to accommodate the necessary functions. The grandstand was built as just that, an outdoor recreational facility that was only limitedly meant to house offices or living spaces. If the Eugene Emeralds are to continue to play at Eugene Civic Stadium, major upgrades to the site will be required to fully bring the facility up to current codes and standards.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

Located in Lane County, Eugene Civic Stadium is the only known example of a Depression Era ballpark left in the state of Oregon. Eugene Civic Stadium was built in 1938 on the east side of Willamette Street in Eugene, between 20th and 22nd Avenues. Built as a cooperative between the Eugene Chamber of Commerce, Eugene Public School District No. 4, and the Works Progress Administration (WPA), Civic Stadium is significant to the development of the nation's favorite pastime, and is one of the oldest extant ballparks in the United States.

Continuously used as a municipal athletic facility since its inception, Eugene Civic Stadium meets National Register Criterion A for its initial and continued contribution to the entertainment and recreational needs of Eugene and the surrounding communities in the Pacific Northwest. The stadium also meets Criterion A for its distinctive characteristics of community planning and development, which brought the government and community together during the Depression Era. Eugene Civic Stadium is also eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for its architecture, being typical of Depression Era stadiums constructed throughout the Pacific Northwest. Civic Stadium bears a marked resemblance to the Grandstand design illustrated by the Timber Engineering Company in the book *Typical Designs of Timber Structures: A Reference for Use by Architects and Engineers* under the heading of "Typical Design No. 109: Grandstand." Eugene Civic Stadium retains excellent integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, location, feeling and association. The period of significance begins with its initial construction date of 1938 and ends in 1939 when the roof was constructed.

THE WPA AND EUGENE CIVIC STADIUM

The 4J Public School District has been the sole proprietor of Eugene Civic Stadium since its construction in 1938. The land where Civic Stadium is located, known as the Amazon tract, was deeded to the school district in 1938 with the understanding that the property was "to be used as a recreation area for School District and for the municipality."¹ Area businesses provided many of the necessary materials, and a regional campaign spearheaded by the Eugene City School District and the local community raised additional money for the stadium, enabling the project to break ground in 1938. The labor for the construction of the stadium was donated by the Works Project Administration (WPA).

The Great Depression of the 1930s resulted in massive unemployment throughout the country. Initiated by President F.D. Roosevelt as a relief measure to combat the effects of the Depression, the WPA provided jobs to accomplished laborers yielding public projects that utilized the skills of the nation by 1935. The program was designed to provide work for the unemployed and to aid in subsidizing costs associated with new construction or repairs of public works projects. Essentially, the federal program enabled large scale projects on small scale budgets, donating time and labor to communities across the country for nearly a decade. By the time the

¹ Historical Data Relative To Civic Stadium: Minutes from District Meeting 1937-1970. Eugene Public Schools, School District 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon. Prepared by Lawrence Perkins, December 16, 1970.

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program was disbanded in June 1943, it had employed over 8.5 million people and completed well over one million projects.

In Lane County, Oregon, the WPA completed numerous public improvement projects, including distributing hot lunches to needy children, improving roads and sanitation systems, and rebinding books. In 1935, the WPA made major repairs to Eugene City Hall. In 1936, the WPA was involved in landscaping portions of the University of Oregon campus and making improvements to Skinner Butte and Hendricks Parks.

Nearly all of the WPA building projects in Lane County were done in coordination with the schools, including high school gymnasiums for School Districts #12 and #133 in 1938, an addition to the Architecture and Allied Arts Building at the University of Oregon in 1939, and a music building for School District 4J in 1940. By far the largest civic improvement project completed by the WPA in Lane County, however, was Civic Stadium, with a total of over \$37,000 appropriated for the project in 1938.²

By 1937 there was a growing need for an athletic field in Eugene, both for the community and schools. On December 3, 1937, the *Eugene Register-Guard* printed the first article referencing the "Big Amazon Park Project." By December 8, 1937, a committee had been formed by the Eugene Chamber of Commerce and plans were being formulated for a new athletic field to be built through the cooperation of the Chamber Committee, the Eugene Public School Board, and the Eugene City Council. By December 24, 1937, the WPA was reported to be interested in the development and building of the recreation center.

On January 11, 1938, the *Register-Guard* presented the facts regarding the financial plans for the new athletic field. The city council was asked to turn over the land known as the Amazon tract, which was held for \$6,000 in back taxes. The school board was asked to contribute \$6,000, and the committee guaranteed to raise another \$6,000 so the first year work could be completed. The WPA was set to contribute the labor. The \$12,000 contributed by the school board and the committee would be enough to grade the field and build the covered grandstand, which would seat 4,000 people.

On January 26, 1938, the *Register-Guard* reported the "Park Project is Threatened by Deadlock." The concern of who would pay the \$6,000 in back tax assessments, the city or the school board, seemed to spell the end of the project. Without the deed from the city, the school board was concerned that they would not be able to secure the WPA for the project. The controversy lasted months, until it was decided to put the vote to the community.

On Friday, May 20, 1938, Eugene citizens went to the polls to vote on the issue to levy a one-half mill tax to repay the debt of \$6,000 in outstanding liens to the property. Voters approved the project by an almost 2-1 margin, enabling the proposed athletic field to move forward. The title to the Amazon tract was deeded over to

² Index to Reference Cards for Work Projects Administration Files, 1938. Library of Congress, Microform T935, Roll #11, Lane County Project File.

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Eugene Public School District 4J on June 13, 1938 to "be used as a recreation area for the School District and for the municipality."³

Eugene Civic Stadium would never have been constructed without the display of outstanding public support it received and the cooperation of the numerous civic agencies involved. This unique cohesion of community development and city planning illustrates the camaraderie apparent in WPA projects built throughout the country during the Depression Era. Essentially, the stadium helped bring both the government and community together during these difficult times.

On May 15, 1938, just prior to the special election, the *Eugene Register-Guard* presented a plan to the public for the proposed development of the Amazon tract area. The proposed site would include a football and baseball field and grandstand, track field, swimming pool, tennis courts, shuffle board and Ping-Pong courts.⁴ The plan was to begin on the football and baseball field first, with the other areas being developed later.

Work began on June 21, 1938, with Jay F. Oldham contracted to grade the land.⁵ Graham Smith, a local of Eugene, was named architect for the grandstand, the plans of which were approved in July. Smith, along with the manpower of the WPA, utilized local old growth Douglas fir exclusively in the construction of the grandstand. The work was completed in mid-September, and a dedication ceremony featuring the Eugene High School marching band was held on October 22, 1938.⁶

The first event at Civic Stadium, the annual rivalry football match between Eugene High and Corvallis High, was held on October 28, 1938. The grandstand still did not have a roof, and both players and fans were rain-soaked by the end of the game. The match, played on the clay and sawdust field, ended in a 0-0 tie.⁷

By the 1939 football season, floodlights and the grandstand roof had been erected at Civic Stadium. The roof was designed by the West Coast Lumberman's Association of Seattle, Washington, and utilizes the same local, old growth Douglas fir that can be found in the grandstand construction. Plans for the other parts of the athletic complex never materialized and the land was developed into South Eugene High School.

Eugene Civic Stadium was primarily home to high school football, baseball and soccer games between 1938 and 1969. The stadium was designed as a multi-use facility, and converted easily for various types of sporting events. Eugene Civic Stadium has been home to numerous high school ball games, graduations, 4th of July celebrations and even rodeos throughout the years, and continues to serve as a multi-purpose facility hosting baseball and soccer events.

³ Historical Data Relative To Civic Stadium: Minutes from District Meeting 1937-1970. Eugene Public Schools, School District 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon. Prepared by Lawrence Perkins, December 16, 1970

⁴ Eugene Register Guard, Sunday, May 15, 1938, p. 14.

⁵ Historical Data Relative To Civic Stadium: Minutes from District Meeting 1937-1970. Eugene Public Schools, School District 4J, Lane County, Eugene, Oregon. Prepared by Lawrence Perkins, December 16, 1970

⁶ Eugene Register-Guard, 23 October, 1938, p. 1.

⁷ Eugene Register-Guard, 29 October, 1938.

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In 1941 a heating plant, a small ancillary building with an 880 gallon water tank, was added to the site, which initially acted as the sole source for hot water at the stadium, and serviced the locker and bath rooms by utilizing sawdust to run the boiler.⁸ Another building followed in 1946 that served as a repair garage for the school district's bus depot and living quarters. With the stadium operating both Saturday night and Sunday afternoon for hardball games and at least twice a week for softball, the groundskeeper was on duty 24 hours. Recognizing that this was a full time job, the school district built two apartments above the garage, one for the groundskeeper and his family and the other likely for bus drivers or the manager for the bus barn.⁹ Other permanent and temporary buildings, including ticket booths and concessions stands, have also been added to the site since the 1960s and 1970s.

In 1969, Civic Stadium became home to Eugene's own minor league baseball team, the Emeralds. Upgraded to the Class AAA Pacific Coast League, the Eugene Emeralds required a larger facility than they currently had, and sought the assistance of the Eugene School District when plans to build a new stadium were unsuccessful. Baseball had not been played at Civic Stadium in over twenty years, but the team was granted a three-year lease to use and improve the stadium. Currently, the Eugene Emeralds are ranked as one of the most popular teams of the Northwest League, having drawn no less than 100,000 fans per year since 1985. As of opening day 2006, Eugene Civic Stadium was the 11th Oldest Minor League Ballpark in the United States, and was within the top ten by opening day 2007.¹⁰ It is the third oldest minor league stadium in use west of the Rocky Mountains.¹¹ Civic Stadium is a place where a community enjoys America's favorite pastime every summer, and is a part of Eugene's living history.

SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY

Civic Stadium is nominated under National Register Criterion A for its initial and continued contribution to the entertainment and recreational needs of Eugene and for its distinctive characteristics of community planning, which brought the government and community together during the Depression Era. Since its original design plan was released to the public in 1938, Eugene Civic Stadium has been regarded as a signature athletic facility for municipal use. Owned continuously by the Eugene Public School District 4J, the initial function of the stadium as a municipal recreation facility is still observed today as host to the Eugene Emeralds, as well as various local and high school baseball and soccer teams.

The site was developed in conjunction with the WPA, the Chamber of Commerce, Eugene School District No. 4, and the public at large. This illustration of community camaraderie is representative of Depression Era

⁸ The building, through structurally unaltered, has not served its initial function since the water tank was removed, and today is utilized as a storage facility for the site.

⁹ The initial groundskeeper was William "Grady" Lewis, a WPA foreman for the Eugene Civic Stadium project. When the stadium was completed Lewis stayed on and ran the facility. Lewis' son, Graydon Lewis remembers life as a boy at Civic. Living in a nearby house prior to the construction of the living quarters, Graydon helped his mother clean the stadium on Sunday mornings while his father dug and marked the sand field. Graydon also remembers the stadium as a playground for him and his friends, and knew everything under the grandstand including places to find change dropped during the games. Though Graydon never lived in the living quarters (he joined the Navy at this time), he remembers it as "a fine apartment" for his family.

¹⁰ Minor League Baseball, Oldest Minor League Ballparks List, provided by the Eugene Emeralds.

¹¹ Civic Stadium Assessment, as produced for the class Introduction to Historic Preservation, University of Oregon AAPP 411/511, December 11, 1997, p. 10.

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projects built by the WPA in the United States in the late 1930s. This durable, useful structure constructed of local materials by local craftsmen with local funds illustrates the ability of multiple institutions to work together on a local level. The involvement of the WPA demonstrates how federal programs can work with individual communities to establish a public facility that has remained a continuous piece of America's living history.

In addition, Eugene Civic Stadium is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as being typical of stadiums built during the Depression Era in the Pacific Northwest. In 1930, the Timber Engineering Company published the book *Typical Designs of Timber Structures: A Reference for Use by Architects and Engineers*. Under the heading of "Typical Design No. 109: Grandstand" is illustrated a prototype for a municipal grandstand and its accompanying transverse hip truss roof. Both the roof and the grandstand are nearly identical in form and structure to Eugene Civic Stadium.

Stadiums like Eugene Civic Stadium were built in conjunction with local organizations, such as the West Coast Lumberman's Association, throughout the Pacific Northwest. Unfortunately, these beautiful wooden grandstands have fallen victim to progress and neglect, and many have been demolished to make room for more modern facilities. Eugene Civic Stadium is the only wooden grandstand of this type remaining in Oregon, and one of only two known remaining in the Pacific Northwest (the other is Olympic Stadium, located in Hoquiam, Washington).

Overall, Eugene Civic Stadium retains excellent integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, location, feeling and association. While the neighborhood has undergone massive development over the last eighty years, the site once known as the Amazon tract is still surrounded by neighborhoods and is used as a municipal recreation facility. South Eugene High School, with its own athletic fields, has been constructed due west of Eugene Civic Stadium on a portion of the land initially laid out for the athletic facility. The rest of the land has been developed into Amazon Park, a city park featuring soccer and football fields, as well as jogging and biking trails and a dog park.

Eugene Civic Stadium also retains integrity of materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. Little has been done to alter the timber frame construction that exists under the grandstand. The old growth Douglas fir has needed little maintenance over the years and remains in excellent condition. The quality of construction is also tested every summer, when thousands of fans fill the seats, stomping and roaring to cheer on the Eugene Emeralds. Integrity of workmanship is also retained, specifically in regards to its unique method of construction utilizing local, old growth Douglas fir, local designers and architects, and local labor during construction. Additionally, the stadium has retained its designed use as a multi-purpose recreational facility, and is still utilized in its intended fashion as an athletic park hosting baseball, both local teams as well as the Eugene Emeralds, and soccer.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Eugene Civic Stadium can be compared with three different categories of properties: 1) other stadiums in the Pacific Northwest; 2) other WPA-built stadiums in the United States; and 3) all other minor league ballparks in the United States.

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Overall, Eugene Civic Stadium bears a marked resemblance to Olympic Stadium of Hoquiam, Washington, built in 1938. Olympic Stadium is roughly U-shaped and larger in size, with a seating capacity of around 10,000 people (Civic seats approximately 6,000 people in the grandstand). Olympic Stadium was listed in the National Register in 2006, features the same wooden post-on-pier construction, and was also constructed in conjunction with the WPA. Both parks are likely drawn from the same plates of the book *Typical Designs for Timber Structures*. Olympic Stadium retains its historic integrity, although the facility is not currently in use.

Another comparable property is National Register-listed Jay Littleton Park, located in Ontario, California. This facility is listed as the only known comparable property for Olympic Stadium in that stadium's National Register nomination. Built between 1935 and 1937, the wooden grandstand is also roughly U-shaped and seats 3,500 fans. The facility was constructed for baseball only, and was the location for filming parts of the movie *The Babe*. Like Eugene Civic Stadium, Jay Littleton Park features an all-wooden grandstand.

PGE Park, located in Portland, Oregon, is another multi-purpose facility located in the Pacific Northwest. A recent \$38.5 million renovation in 2000-2001 helped make PGE Park one of the finest stadiums in both the Pacific Coast Minor League Baseball League and the United Soccer League. PGE Park is home to the Portland Beavers AAA baseball team and the Portland Timbers, a member of the United Soccer Leagues First Division. PGE Park was originally built in 1926, but has undergone extensive alterations over the years, including the recent renovation which debuted to the public on April 30, 2001.¹² Though the park advertises "Old Time Feel, State of the Art Features," the past and recent renovations have severely compromised the historical integrity of the structure.

The second basis for comparison is on a national scale, with other ballparks constructed in conjunction with the WPA. While dozens of stadiums were built in partnership with local organizations by the WPA during the Depression Era, analyzing them for the scope of this nomination is not feasible. A few notable examples include Ray Winder Field, constructed in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1932; Recreation Park, constructed in Montpelier, Vermont in 1940; and Phil Welch Stadium, constructed in St. Joseph, Missouri also in 1940. Historic integrity on these three parks has not been determined. In addition, none of them appear to be constructed in the same manner, with large scale timbers, as Eugene Civic Stadium.

The third basis for comparison is to look at other minor league ballparks in the United States, since Eugene Civic Stadium is currently hosting the Eugene Emeralds baseball team. As of opening day 2006, Eugene Civic Stadium was the 11th oldest minor league ballpark in the United States. However, with the Arkansas Travelers relocating to a new field, Civic Stadium was within the top ten oldest stadiums by opening day 2007.¹³

CONCLUSION

Eugene Civic Stadium is significant on a local level as a continuously functioning municipal athletic facility built in conjunction with the WPA. Civic Stadium meets National Register Criterion A for its initial and continued

¹² "Old Time Feel, State of the Art Features," PGE Park Website, available from <http://www.pgepark.com/stadium/about/>; Internet, accessed November 17, 2007.

¹³ Minor League Teams, Statistics and Websites, Courtesy of the Eugene Emeralds, Minor League Baseball, January 2007.

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contribution to the entertainment and recreational needs of Eugene and the surrounding communities. The stadium also meets Criterion A for its distinctive characteristics of community planning and development. In addition, Eugene Civic Stadium meets National Register Criterion C for its architecture, which was typical of the designs of ballparks built in association with the Timber Engineering Company throughout the Pacific Northwest. The design known as "Typical Design No. 109: Grandstand" is now exceedingly rare. Eugene Civic Stadium is nearly perfectly intact and is one of only two known remaining stadiums of this type.

Eugene Civic Stadium has been continuously owned and operated by the Eugene Public School District 4J since the land was deeded from the city in 1938. It has continuously served as a multi-purpose athletic facility for the municipality, and is a part of the living history of both Eugene and the nation. The sight of the hand turned score board, the feel of the old wooden grandstand, and the smell of the grass of the field transport people back to a time when war and financial woes could be escaped from, if only for a moment, at the ballpark.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries incorporate the footprint of the stadium and field. From the southwest corner of the intersection of 20th Avenue and Oak Street, travel approximately 250 feet due south to a point, then approximately 65 feet due east to the northeastern most corner of the original grandstand, which is the Point of Beginning (POB) for the area being nominated. From the POB, the boundary line runs approximately 70 feet to the east and then turns south for approximately 75 feet to the field. The boundary line then runs approximately 300 feet in an easterly direction along the field to the northeastern most corner of the field. From the northeast corner of the field, the boundary runs approximately 335 feet in a southwardly direction to the southeastern most corner of the field, then runs in a westerly direction approximately 340 feet to the southwestern most corner of the field. Turning north, the boundary line runs approximately 80 feet north to the southeastern most corner of the grandstand, then 60 feet west to the southwestern most corner of the grandstand. Turning north, the boundary runs along the grandstand approximately 300 feet, then approximately 75 feet at an angle to the northeast to follow the bend in the grandstand. Turning north, the boundary line runs approximately 20 feet, then east for approximately 88 feet, and then south for approximately 20 feet. Turning due east, the boundary line runs approximately 12 feet back to the POB.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Comprised of a portion of tax lot #1803061108505, the boundaries make up the 3.75 acres that include the structure that has historically been part of Eugene Civic Stadium during the period of significance and that maintains historic integrity.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Address: Eugene Civic Stadium
2077 Willamette Street
Eugene, Lane County, Oregon

Photographer: Natalie Perrin, nomination preparer, 1320 B St., Springfield, OR 97477

Date: May 2007

Ink and Paper: Photographs reproduced from film negatives

Location of Negatives: Film negatives held by nomination preparer

- 1 of 16: Exterior View: Grandstand, southeast facade, view looking northwest.
- 2 of 16: Exterior View: Grandstand, southeast facade, view looking northwest.
- 3 of 16: Exterior View: Grandstand siding, south facade, looking north.
- 4 of 16: Interior View: Beneath the Grandstand, facing west.
- 5 of 16: Exterior View: Grandstand, east southeast facade, facing west.
- 6 of 16: Exterior View: Grandstand, view of north facade, looking south. The north facade features the original vertical board siding.
- 7 of 16: Exterior View: Grandstand, view of roof and seating facing northeast. The solid Douglas fir post rising from the ground supports the wooden transverse hip truss roof.
- 8 of 16: Exterior View: Grandstand, view of upper seating facing south. The walls are punctuated by louvered openings for ventilation.
- 9 of 16: Exterior View: Grandstand, detail of the bead board siding on the east facade.
- 10 of 16: Exterior View: Grandstand, west facade, looking east.
- 11 of 16: Exterior View: Grandstand, south facade, looking north.
- 12 of 16: Exterior View: Field, facing south.
- 13 of 16: Exterior View: Eugene Civic Stadium, view facing southeast.
- 14 of 16: Exterior View: Eugene Civic Stadium, southern-most entrance on the west facade, looking east.

Eugene Civic Stadium

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- 15 of 16: Exterior View: Grandstand, east facade. The southern-most entrance as viewed from the field.
- 16 of 16: Exterior View: Grandstand, view facing west. This view looking up from beneath the seating of the Grandstand illustrates the vast quantity of Douglas fir that went into the construction of the stadium. Note the solid Douglas fir post rising over 40 feet high, visible on the left.

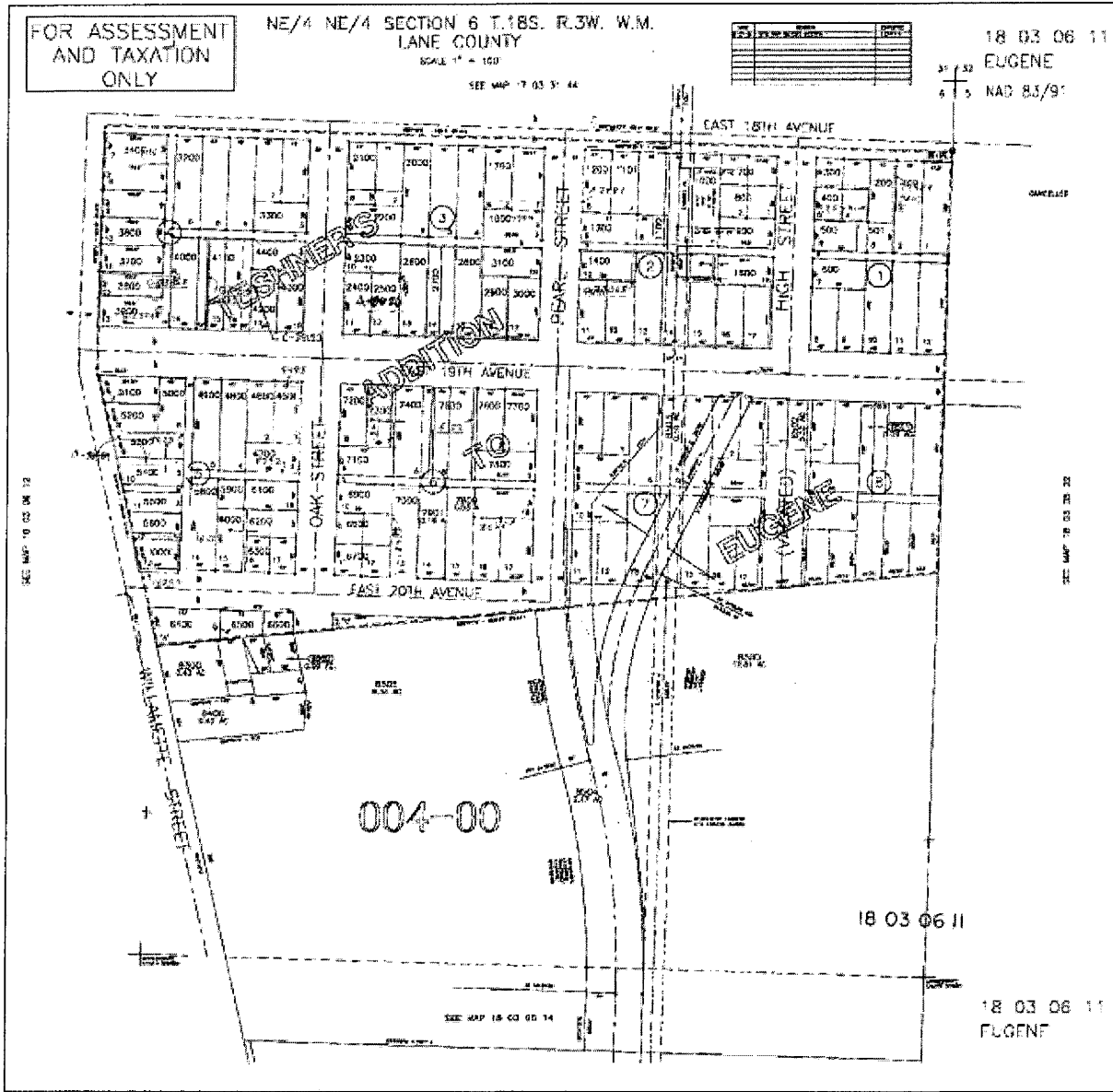


Figure 1: Lane County Assessor's Map. Eugene Civic Stadium, owned by Eugene School District 4J, is the parcel labeled 004-00. Courtesy of Lane County Deeds and Records.

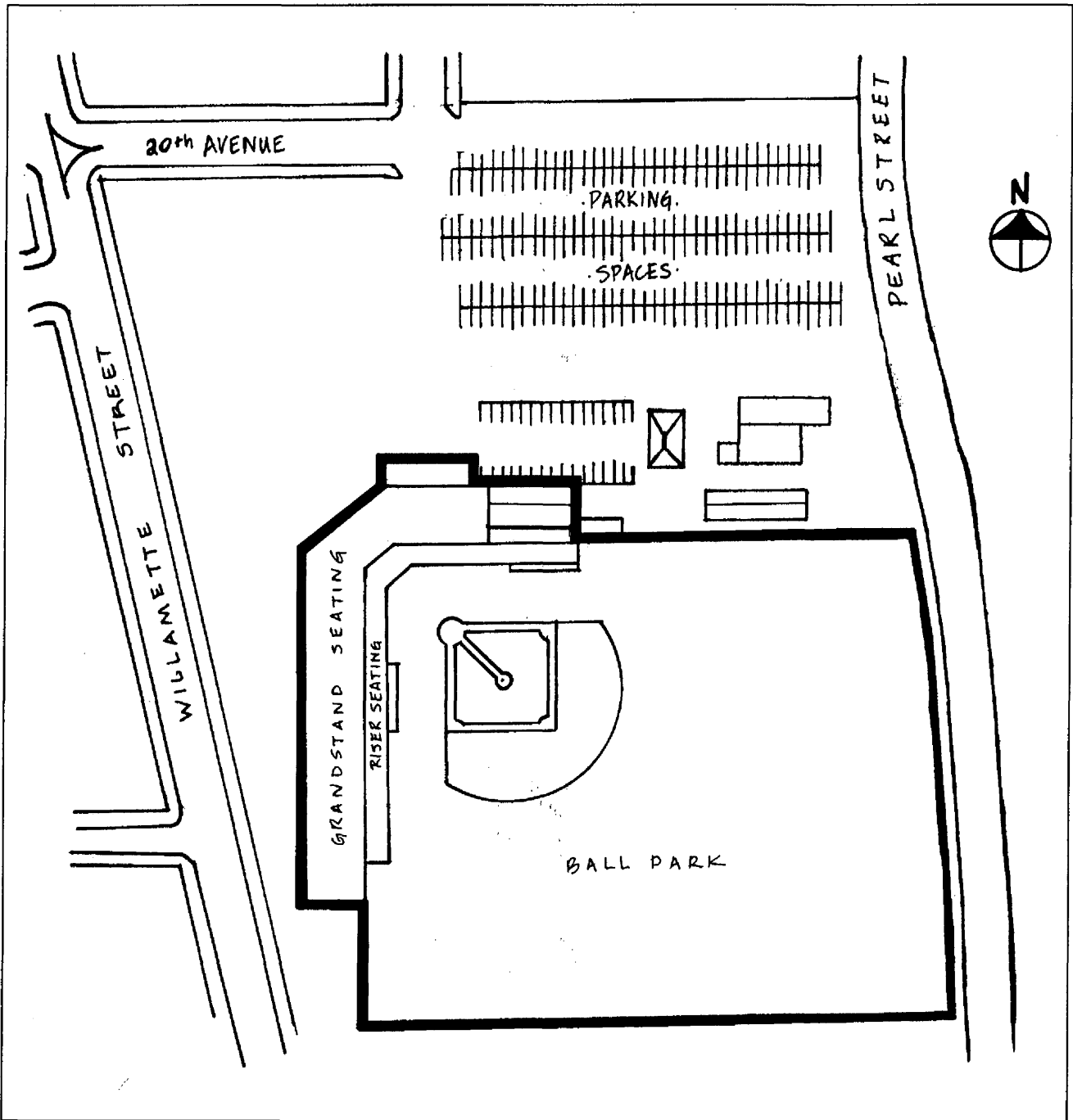


Figure 2: Current site map of Eugene Civic Stadium, Eugene, Lane County, Oregon. Prepared by Natalie Perrin, January, 2007. Not to scale. Note thick, black line correspondences to the Verbal Boundary Description.

-DP-

D E E D

64067

The City of Eugene, a
Municipal Corporation)
to
School District No. 4)

Filed for Record Sep 1, 1938; 1:10 o'clock P. M.

W. B. Dillard, County Clerk
By Eva L. Duckworth, Deputy (No Stamps)

WHEREAS, heretofore the Common Council of the City of Eugene passed a Resolution submitting to the electors of the City a proposal that the Council be permitted, authorized and directed to levy a tax not exceeding one-half of one mill upon all the property in the City for the purpose of raising sufficient money to pay off the liens on the South Willamette Street property, and that the property then be deeded to School District No. 4 of Lane County, to be used as a recreation area for the School District and for the municipality, and

WHEREAS, such proceedings were had under the initiative and referendum act that an election was held and the electors declared by a large majority their approval of the proposal, and

WHEREAS, the Mayor of the City proclaimed the result of the election and thereafter there was passed by the Common Council and approved by the Mayor Ordinance No. 8639, directing the City Engineer to prepare a description of the property and authorizing the Mayor and Recorder of the City to make, execute and deliver to School District No. 4 of Lane County, Oregon, a deed of conveyance to said School District No. 4 of Lane County, Oregon.

Now, Therefore

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That the CITY OF EUGENE, a municipal corporation, organized under the laws of the State of Oregon in consideration of the sum of One Dollar to it paid by the purchaser, has bargained and sold, and by these presents does grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the purchaser, School District No. 4 of Lane County, Oregon, its successors and assigns, all the following bounded and described real property, situated in the County of Lane, State of Oregon, to-wit:

Beginning at the East line of Claim No. 47, Township 18 South Range 3 West of the Willamette Meridian, 18.34 chains South of the Southeast corner of Section 31, Township 17 South Range 3 West, Willamette Meridian, run thence South along the East line of said claim, 10.04 chains; thence West 17.29 chains to the East line of Willamette Street, in Eugene, Lane County, Oregon; thence Northwesterly along said East line of Willamette Street to a point 1277 feet South 82° 54' West of the Beginning, thence North 82° 54' East 1277 feet to the beginning, all in Eugene, Lane County, Oregon.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, the above described and granted premises unto the said School District No. 4 of Lane County, Oregon, its successors and assigns forever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the City of Eugene, pursuant to an Ordinance passed by the Common Council, has caused these presents to be signed by its Mayor and Recorder and its Corporate Seal to be hereunto affixed this 13th day of June, A.D., 1938.

THE CITY OF EUGENE, a municipal Corporation

By Elisha Large

Mayor

SEAL OF CITY OF EUGENE

LANE CO., OREGON

By C. M. Bryan

Recorder

Figure 3: Copy of the original deed, on file with Lane County Deeds and Records. Recorded September 1, 1938. Courtesy of Lane County Deeds and Records.

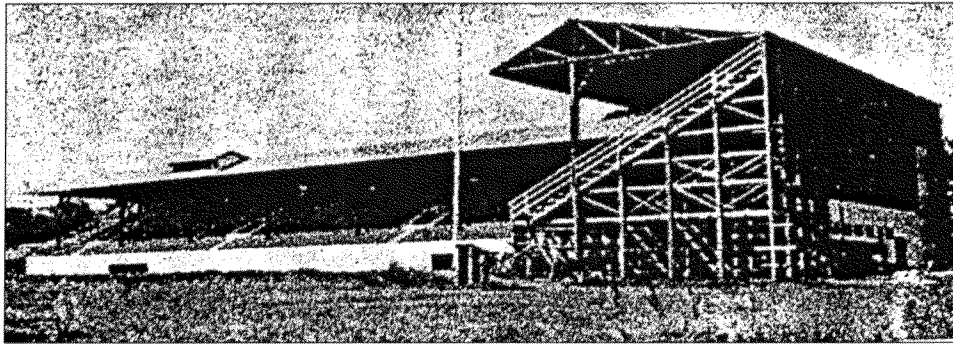


Figure 4: "Typical Design No. 109: Grandstand." *Typical Designs of Timber Structures: A Reference for Use by Architects and Engineers*. Seattle: Timber Engineering Company, 1930.

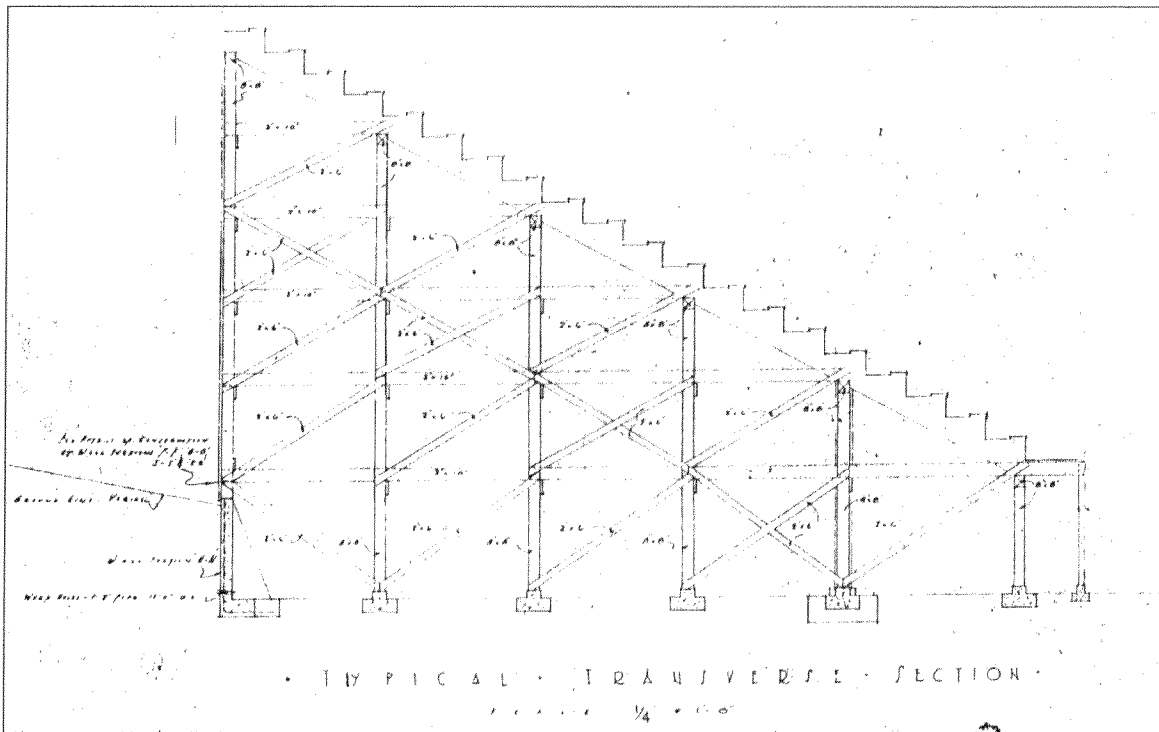


Figure 5: Blueprint of Eugene Civic Stadium. This "Typical Transverse Section" illustrates the construction method of the Grandstand. Courtesy of the Eugene School District 4J.

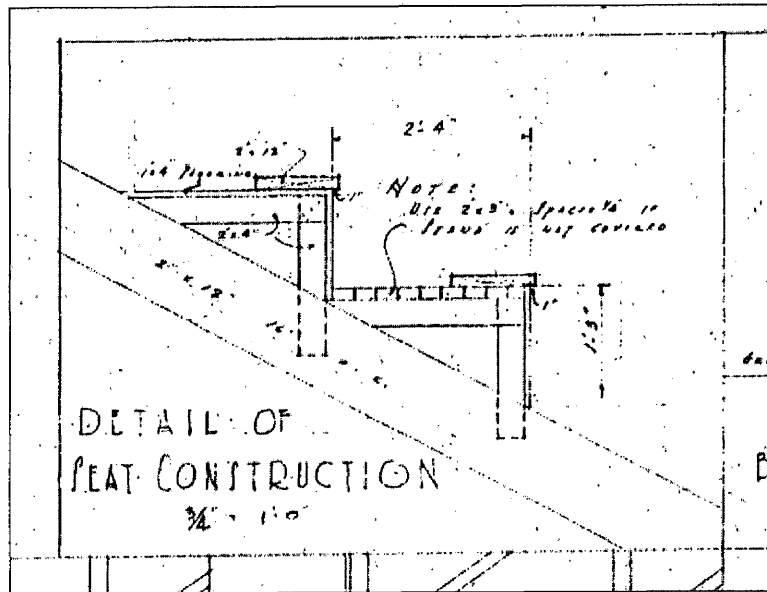


Figure 6: Blueprint of Eugene Civic Stadium. This "Detail of Seat Construction" illustrates the construction method of the Grandstand. Courtesy of the Eugene School District 4J.

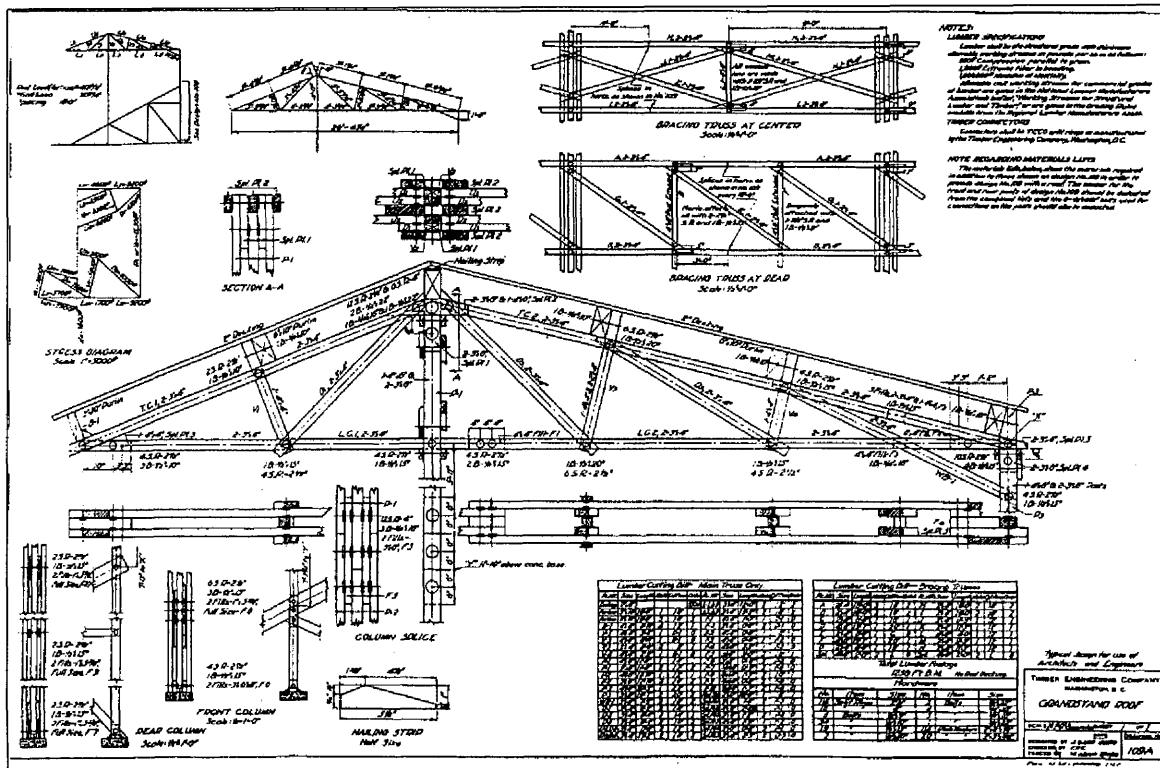


Figure 7: "Typical Design No. 109A: Grandstand Roof." *Typical Designs of Timber Structures: A Reference for Use by Architects and Engineers*. Seattle: Timber Engineering Company, 1930.

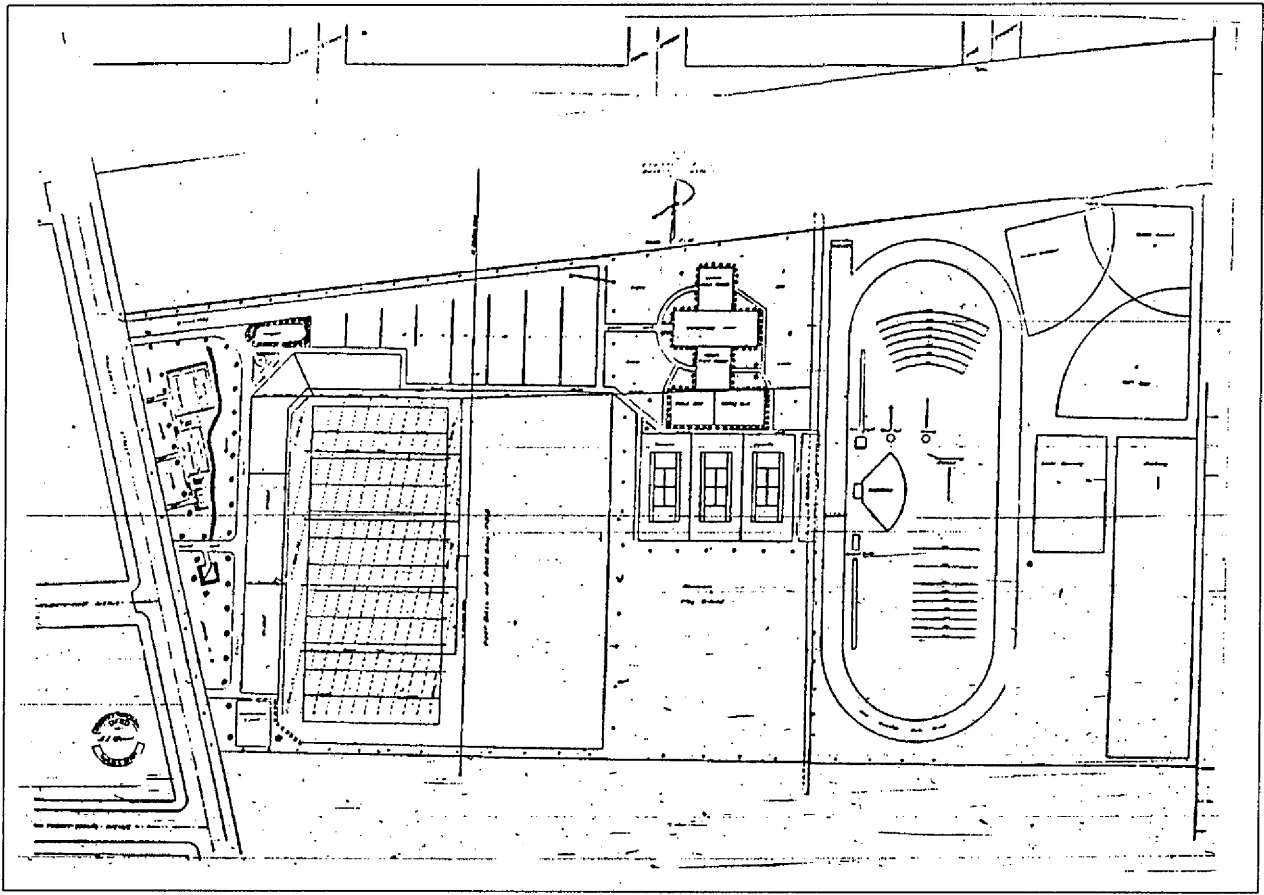


Figure 8: Proposed athletic facility as printed in the *Eugene Register-Guard* on May 15, 1938.

Eugene Athletic Center
FIELD FUND
Voluntary Contribution

Name _____

Address _____ Amount _____

Make out all checks to C. R. Mamerud, treasurer Eugene Athletic Field Fund. Mail to Register-Guard, Eugene, Ore.

Figure 9: Coupon as printed in the *Eugene Register-Guard*, first appearing on June 9, 1938, as part of a fundraiser for the Eugene Athletic Center.

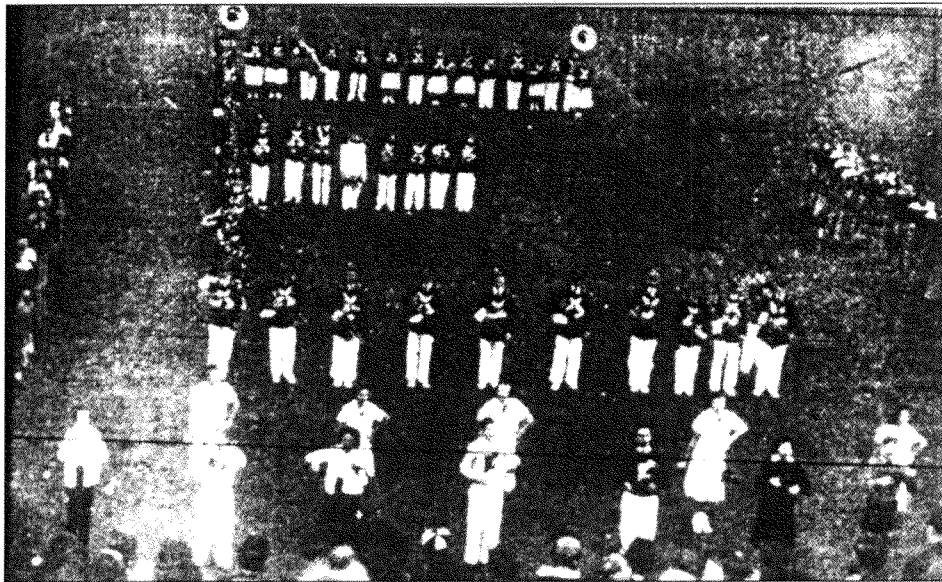


Figure 10: Picture of October 22, 1938 Athletic Field dedication as printed on the front page of the *Eugene Register-Guard* on October 23, 1938. The Marching Band is making a letter "E" for Eugene High School.

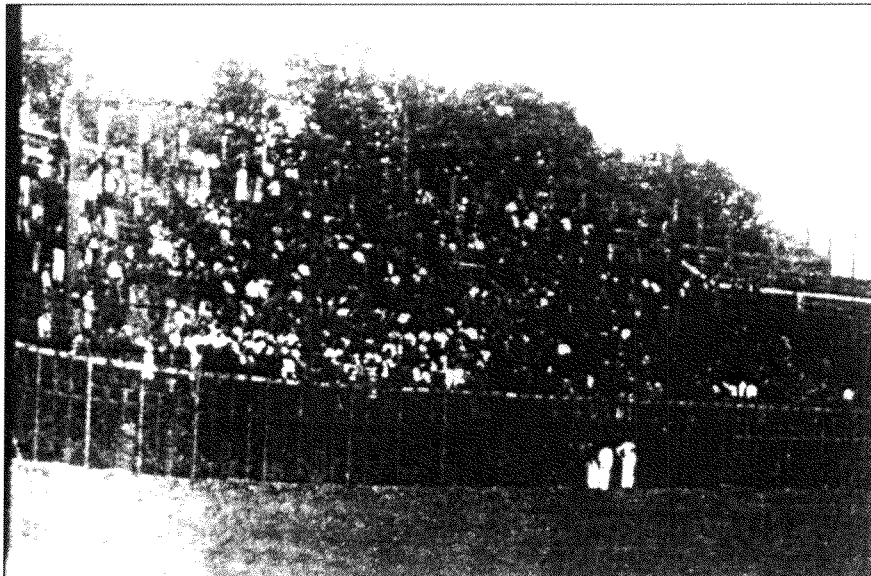


Figure 11: Picture of October 22, 1938 Athletic Field dedication as printed on the front page of the *Eugene Register-Guard* on October 23, 1938. The grandstand was still without a roof at this time.

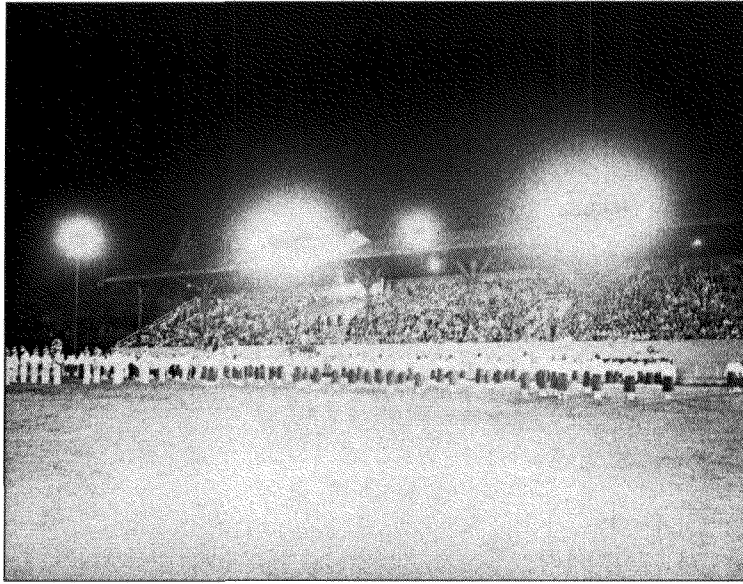


Figure 12: Eugene Civic Stadium, circa 1950. This photo shows a full house at the stadium, while a marching band takes the field. Courtesy of the Lane County Historical Museum.



Figure 13: Eugene Civic Stadium, circa 1950. Note the lines on the field (for football) and the central entrance on the 50-yard line. This photo also shows a press box on the roof of the Grandstand, which is believed to have been removed during the 1969 conversion of the stadium to a baseball facility for the Eugene Emeralds. Courtesy of the Lane County Historical Museum.

Oldest Minor League Ballparks in the United States

Rank	Club	Location	League	Park Name	Year Open	WPA?
1.	Vermont Lake Monsters	Winooski, VT	New York-Penn	Centennial Field	1922	
2.	Williamsport Crosscutters	Williamsport, PA	New York-Penn	Bowman Field	1923	
3.	Portland Beavers	Portland, OR	Pacific Coast	PGE Park	1926	
T4.	Daytona Cubs	Daytona, FL	Florida State	Jackie Robinson Ballpark	1930	
T4.	Hagerstown Suns	Hagerstown, MD	South Atlantic	Municipal Stadium	1930	
6.	Swing of the Quad Cities	Davenport, IA	Midwest	John O'Donnell Stadium	1931	
7.	Arkansas Travelers	Little Rock, AK	Texas	Ray Winder Field	1932	
8.	Wichita Wranglers	Wichita, TX	Texas	Lawrence-Dumont Stadium	1934	
9.	Pulaski Blue Jays	Pulaski, VA	Appalachian	Calfee Park	1935	
10.	Clinton Lumberkings	Clinton, IA	Midwest	Alliant Energy Field	1937	✓
11.	Eugene Emeralds	Eugene, OR	Northwest	Civic Stadium	1938	✓

Figure 14: As of Opening Day 2006, Eugene Civic Stadium was the 11th oldest minor league ballpark in the United States. However, with the Arkansas Travelers relocating to a new field in 2007, Civic Stadium is now in the top ten. Table compiled by Natalie Perrin, based on information courtesy of Minor League Baseball provided by the Eugene Emeralds.