



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**  
**news releases**

**March 11, 2013**

**Contact:** Lawrence Hajna (609) 984-1795  
Lawrence Ragonese (609) 292-2994

**CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR PATERSON'S HINCHLIFFE STADIUM**

**TRENTON** – The Christie Administration today announced that Paterson's Hinchliffe Stadium, home to Negro League baseball during the Great Depression and World War II, has been named a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

"This designation, the highest the federal government can bestow on a historic site, is a great honor to the city of Paterson and to the baseball greats who played at Hinchliffe Stadium," Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin said. "This distinctive stadium serves as an important reminder to an era when institutionalized segregation was prevalent throughout America – and to the great strides our society has made since those days."

Opened in 1932 on a dramatic escarpment overlooking the Great Falls of the Passaic River, the concrete, open-air stadium is one of only two surviving Negro Baseball League home fields in the Mid-Atlantic Region. It is also one of only a handful of such stadiums remaining in the nation.

National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. The program, established in 1935, is administered by the National Park Service on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior. Currently there are 2,540 designated National Historic Landmarks. The stadium is already on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.

In elevating the stadium's status to National Historic Landmark, the Department of the Interior noted that Hinchliffe is an "exceptional example of a Negro league baseball stadium in 20th-century segregated America. The stadium served as home field for teams such as the New York Black Yankees and the New York Cubans during a period when the institutionalized practice of 'separate but equal' facilities was the accepted norm. Eleven current members of the National Baseball Hall of Fame played at Hinchliffe Stadium."

Negro League greats such as Josh Gibson, Oscar Charleston, the legendary Leroy "Satchel" Paige, and Paterson native Larry Doby, who helped break baseball's color barrier, all played at Hinchliffe Stadium.

"We are fortunate to have a chance to protect this special place before it is too late," said DEP Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources Richard

Boornazian. "The DEP will continue to work with local officials, the Friends of Hinchliffe Stadium, and all of the stadium's supporters to develop plans that will ensure the long-term preservation of this facility that means so much to the history of our nation."

Recognizing its historic significance, the DEP's Historic Preservation Office in 2010 named Connolly and Hickey Historical Architects, who worked with subcontractors Paula Reed and Associates and Larry Hogan, to conduct a detailed investigation of the site. The investigation included a comprehensive examination of the role the stadium played in the Negro Baseball League and its architectural significance today.

Also known as "City" Stadium, Hinchliffe was built with public funds at the start of the Great Depression. It was meant as a sports haven for a generation of working-class kids struggling through hard times in a city dependent on industry. The stadium was named for Paterson Mayor John Hinchliffe, who worked toward its construction.

In 1933, the New York Black Yankees tried out Hinchliffe Stadium as their home field. That year, the stadium hosted the Colored Championship of the Nation, the Negro League Equivalent of the World Series.

The next year, the New York Black Yankees made the stadium their home field and played there every year except 1938 until 1945. The New York Cubans, also of the Negro League, also played there.

The stadium later became an important venue for boxing, auto racing and professional football.

Paterson's schools took ownership in the early 1960s, enlarging the facility and undertaking a number of repairs and improvements.

Throughout its history, Hinchliffe served as a venue for War Bond rallies that drew celebrities such as the comedy tandem of Abbott and Costello, hosted the classic inter-city rivalry Eastside-Central high school football games, was the setting for major track and field events, and was the scene of many concerts and fireworks shows.

Although the stadium continued to be used into the 1990s, it fell into disrepair and was closed at the end of the 1996-1997 school year.