

The Atlanta Crackers

The Atlanta Crackers were Minor League Baseball teams based in Atlanta, Georgia, between 1901 and 1965. The Crackers were Atlanta's home team until the Atlanta Braves moved from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1966.

Atlanta played its first Southern Association game (against the Nashville Baseball Club) on Saturday, April 26, 1902 (Memorial Day) in Piedmont Park before a crowd of around 3,500. For 60 years (until 1961), the Crackers were part of the Class AA Southern Association, a period during which they won more games than any other Association team, earning the nickname the "Yankees of the Minors". In 1962, the Association disbanded. Then, the former Miami Marlins, a Class AAA International League team that had spent 1961 playing in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Charleston, West Virginia, moved to Atlanta and adopted the Crackers name. The franchise was relocated to Richmond, Virginia, as the Richmond Braves after the arrival of the Atlanta Braves in 1966.

The Crackers played in Ponce de Leon Park from 1907 until a fire on September 9, 1923, destroyed the all-wood stadium. Spiller Field (a stadium later also called Ponce de Leon Park), became their home starting in the 1924 season; it was named in honor of a wealthy businessman who paid for the new concrete-and-steel stadium. That new park was unusual because it was constructed around a magnolia tree that became part of center field. Balls landing in the tree remained in play, until Earl Mann took over the team in 1947 and had the outfield wall moved in about fifty feet. The Crackers played their last season in the newly built Atlanta Stadium (later known as Atlanta–Fulton County Stadium) in 1965.

The Crackers were independent of major league farm systems until 1950. They then became a AA affiliate of the Boston Braves/Milwaukee Braves (1950–58) and Los Angeles Dodgers (1959–61) during the last decade of the Southern Association's existence. As an International League team, they were the top affiliate of the St. Louis Cardinals (1962–63), Minnesota Twins (1964) and the Braves again (1965).

While now sometimes used as a derogatory term for a white southerner that promotes racism, the name was also used as a term of pride by some white southerners to indicate one that is descended from those original settlers of the area.

As in several other cities, Atlanta's local Negro league team was named after the local White league team: the Atlanta Black Crackers joined the Negro Southern League in 1920, and existed until the early 1950s. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlanta_Crackers]

