

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Section number _____ Page _____

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 13000484

Date Listed: 7-11-2013

Property Name: Durkee, Joseph H., Athletic Field

County: Duval

State: FL

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

7/11/2013
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 5: Category of Property

The category is hereby changed to be only BUILDING(S)

The grandstands comprise a building with the accompanying baseball field as an equal element.

The State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



484

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 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 Durkee, Joseph H., Athletic Field
other names/site number Barrs Field; Small, J.P., Memorial Stadium, see continuation sheet

2. Location

street & number 1701 Myrtle Avenue N/A not for publication
city or town Jacksonville N/A vicinity
state FLORIDA code FL county Duval code 031 zip code 32209

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

Barbara C. Mattick/DSHPO 5/23/2013
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
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 the 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
 See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

Jim Fullin
Signature of the Keeper

7/11/2013
Date of Action

Joseph H. Durkee Athletic Field
Name of Property

Duval County, FL
County and State

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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

(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)

masonry vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls BRICK

roof METAL

other N/A

Narrative Description

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

Joseph H. Durkee Athletic Field
Name of Property

Duval County, FL
County and State

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

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 36) 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Ethnic Heritage: Black
- Entertainment/Recreation
- Architecture
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1912-1964

Significant Dates

1912
1935

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Marsh & Saxelbye, Architects
Jacobs, S.S., Company, Builder

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

Joseph H. Durkee Athletic Field
Name of Property

Duval County, FL
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10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	4	3	5	1	3	0	3	3	5	7	3	7	4
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

See continuation sheet

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 Andrew Waber/Historic Sites Specialist; Joel McEachin/City Planner Manager

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 2013

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Jacksonville

street & number 220 East Bay Street Room 1208 telephone (904) 255-7835

city or town Jacksonville state FL zip code 32202

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 amend 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. 470 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, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 1 Page 1 DURKEE, JOSEPH H., ATHLETIC FIELD
JACKSONVILLE, DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA
NAME OF PROPERTY

NAME OF PROPERTY

Barrs Field
Myrtle Avenue Ball Park
Jacksonville Baseball Park
James P. Small Memorial Park

Since its construction, this resource has gone by a number of different names. From 1912 to 1926, it was known as Barrs Field. The City of Jacksonville acquired the field in 1926 and renamed it Joseph H. Durkee Athletic Field. The park also went unofficially by the names of Myrtle Avenue Ball Park and Jacksonville Ball Park at various points in its existence. In 1980, the park was renamed J.P. Small Park after being reopened as a community field. Although its original name and current name are different, the official name being used with the nomination is Joseph H. Durkee Athletic Field. The current appearance of the ballpark, with its 1930s era grandstand, most closely reflects the early period under city ownership, when it was under that name.

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Section number 7 Page 2

DURKEE, JOSEPH H., ATHLETIC FIELD
JACKSONVILLE, DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

Joseph H. Durkee Athletic Field, located at the corner of Myrtle Avenue and West 8th Street in Jacksonville, Florida, was the first municipal field owned by the City of Jacksonville. The city still owns the facility. The field itself has seen almost continuous use since the construction of the original Barrs Field in 1912. The brick masonry Vernacular grandstand, which was constructed in 1935 and expanded in 1937, still retains much of its 1930s appearance. The grandstand has a V-shaped layout, with a metal pent roof and metal bleachers accessed primarily by two lobbies. Perhaps the most unusual feature of this stadium is the fact that the press box and home plate are aligned off-center. The press box and home plate were centered on the original 1935 portion of the stadium, which was expanded a couple of years later to accommodate the large African American crowds being brought in by Negro League teams. The press box is suspended from the roof and accessed by a catwalk. The field is a conventional baseball field with two concrete block dugouts located along the first and third base lines. A chain link fence extends from the ends of the masonry stadium and surrounds the field, with a simple scoreboard and a playground located behind the outfield fence. On the southwest side of the ballpark, at the corner of West 7th Street and Myrtle Avenue, is a noncontributing brick and metal sign with the words "J.P. Small Park" and a noncontributing statue of Buck O'Neil, a former Negro League baseball player.

SETTING

Jacksonville, Florida, is a city of over a million people located in northeast Florida near the mouth of the St. Johns River. The city of Jacksonville and Duval County have a consolidated government. As a result, the city limits stretch across the entire length of Duval County with the exception of Baldwin to the west and the beaches communities to the east. Durkee Field, now known as James P. Small Park, is located in the Durkeeville community, which is a historic black neighborhood located just to the west of downtown Jacksonville. The Durkeeville community encompasses an area roughly stretching from Interstate 95 on the east, Edward Waters College on the west, West 13th Street to the north, and Kings Road to the south. Myrtle Avenue serves as the main thoroughfare of the community. The ballpark takes up a whole block between West 8th Street, Wilcox Street, West 7th Street, and Myrtle Avenue. The immediate area around the ballpark is residential in nature with the exception of a small shopping center adjacent to the ballpark across West 7th Street to the south.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Grandstand Exterior

The most prominent feature of the ballpark is the historic brick masonry grandstand located on the southwest corner of the park (Photo 1). The V-shaped grandstand has two portions, a larger portion running roughly northwest to southeast along West 7th Street, and a smaller portion running at a sharper northeast to southwest

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angle roughly along Myrtle Avenue. The main entrance to the park, which is through the lobby of the original 1935 portion of the grandstand, features a set of three arched double doors separated by brick pilasters and flanked by two arched ticket windows (Photo 2). Above each of the entrances are large fixed three-light fanlights topped by a brick keystone. On the 1937 portion, the main entrance is a single arched double door entryway similar in appearance to the entryways along the main portion of the grandstand (Photo 3). There are also several simple brick pilasters flanking the side of each entryway on both portions.

Besides the arched ticket windows, fenestration on the grandstand includes sets of two 6/6 sash windows with brick sills separated by full-length brick pilasters (Photo 4). On the south side of the 1937 portion, there are two sets of three fixed six-light ribbon windows, one on each side of a simple unadorned metal double door secondary entrance (Photo 3). A smaller set of three fixed four-light ribbon windows is set above this entrance. On the east end of the original 1935 portion of the grandstand is a large bay window and simple metal door protected by a shed roof extension similar in style and appearance to the primary roof (Photo 5). The door leads to a storage room.

Also evident from the exterior of the grandstand is an overhanging section that makes a narrow platform at the top of the bleachers, which was probably designed to accommodate additional seats (Photos 1-4). Metal handrails protect the overhanging section at the top as well as the sides and front of the grandstand. Six steel I-beams project above the grandstand to support the roof trusses and sheathing, which basically forms a large shallow shed roof framed on the exterior by a pent roof that overhangs the grandstand. Hanging from the trusses of the eastern section of the grandstand is a rectangular open press box accessible by an elevated catwalk from the back section of the bleachers (Photo 6). The placement and design of the press box, which has walls constructed of wood paneling, is consistent with the original 1935 design. The base of the western section of the grandstand has a concrete dugout for the visiting team that was part of the original 1937 addition (Photo 7). The home team was served by a separate detached dugout on the east side of the grandstand that was not included in the original design.

Grandstand Interior

The grandstand has two lobbies, with the main lobby located in the main southeast portion. The main lobby still features the original painted brick walls with some interior partition walls that house ticket offices, office spaces, public restrooms, and locker rooms (Photos 8-9). The flooring is poured concrete and the underside of the bleachers as well as the grandstand supports are visible from the lobby. There are two sets of two bay windows, one on each side of the lobby, with metal counters. There are also drinking fountains on each side of the lobby. The lobby opens up to a set of concrete steps that provide access to the seating area of the stadium (Photo 10).

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The second lobby, located in the 1937 addition, served as the entryway for African American patrons and baseball players and provided access to the segregated seating area located on the northwest side of the grandstand. On the east side of the lobby was a large storage room, while a separate locker room for African American players was located on the west side. Separate public restroom facilities were accessed from the exterior of the west side behind the detached masonry privacy wall. A long narrow hallway was constructed to provide access from the visiting team's locker room to the dugout, as well as a shorter more direct hallway to the locker room originally reserved for African American teams.

Field

The field, which has been in continuous use since the construction of the original Barrs Field in 1912, is unusual in its off-center position in relation to the grandstand (Photos 11-12). Home plate is actually centered on the larger original 1935 section of the grandstand. The dugout along the third base line (Photo 7), which was used by visiting teams, is historic, while the home team dugout along the first base line (Photo 13) was added later. There are bullpens located adjacent to both dugouts (Photos 14-15). The field is completely enclosed by a chain link fence. The home run fence extends across the north and west sides of the field along Wilcox and West 8th streets. It is higher along the foul poles located along the first and third base lines (Photo 16). There is also a conventional scoreboard and lighting behind the home run fence. Illuminating the field are lighting poles which are next to the dugouts and behind the homerun fence.

Noncontributing Resources

A number of resources, located either on the park property or immediately outside of it, do not contribute to Durkee Field. Immediately in front of the main entrance to the park is a large brick and metal sign bearing the words "J.P. Small Park" in metal supported by four square brick columns (Photo 17). The walkway leading into the main entrance runs under this sign. At the corner of Myrtle Avenue and West 7th Street is a paved brick pavilion with a couple benches and a c. 2006 bronze statue of former Negro League star Buck O'Neil (Photo 18). The inscription at the base of the statue dedicates it to O'Neil and all of the Negro League teams who had played at the stadium, including the Jacksonville Red Caps. At the far end of the first base line, near the intersection of West 7th and Wilcox streets, is a mobile home and storage shed that is used by the property manager for the upkeep of the field (Photo 19). At the intersection of Wilcox and West 8th streets is a small electrical substation. At the intersection of Myrtle Avenue and West 8th Street adjacent to the field is a small play park and picnic table shelter (Photo 20).

Alterations

The grandstand and ballpark has undergone a number of alterations since the grandstand was first constructed in 1935. In 1937, a major addition made to the grandstand along the Myrtle Avenue side of the field; this is a

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historic alteration. The addition was made to accommodate the influx of African American patrons drawn by the Negro League teams who played there, including the Jacksonville Red Caps. At one time, there were bleachers located behind right field that have since been removed. The dugout along the first base side, which is used by home teams, was added at a later date, while the third base dugout is historic. Behind both dugouts are pitching bullpens and batting cages that are non-historic and do not contribute to the nomination.

The ballpark and grandstand underwent a major renovation in 1980, when the seating and roofing of the grandstand were replaced and improvements made to the dugouts and field. At one time, the ball field had an unusual design, with the dirt from the base paths along the first and third base lines extending past home plate and intersecting again in an unusual circular formation (Photo 21). This pattern has since been planted over with sod. Several of the windows along the grandstand exterior have brick masonry infill and the original wooden vertical plank doors have been replaced with metal flush doors (Photo 22). Commemorative plaques rededicating the building in 1980 and 2006 have been placed between the historic ticket windows. Partition walls have been added within some of the interior rooms (Photo 23). A small museum exhibit is in the historic storage room located to the west of the main lobby in the main portion of the grandstand (Photos 24-25). Despite these changes, the grandstand and ballpark retains a high degree of integrity. The roof and seating areas of the grandstand are consistent with its historic appearance and modifications made to the field do not detract from its integrity. Although some partition walls have been added to the interior of the grandstand, the main public corridors of both lobbies remain unchanged.

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SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

Joseph H. Durkee Athletic Field, now known as James P. Small Memorial Park, is being nominated its significance at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Black and Entertainment/Recreation, and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The field itself, originally known as Barrs Field, has been in active use primarily as a baseball and football field since the construction of the original stadium in 1912. In addition to serving as the spring training headquarters for several Major League Baseball teams and the home of the Jacksonville minor league teams, the field also served as the site of the first football game between the University of Florida and the University of Georgia in 1915. Barr's Field became the first municipal field in Jacksonville when the city agreed to acquire it in the 1920s. The present brick stadium, which was renamed Durkee Field shortly after its construction in 1935, is significant for its connections to the African American community, serving as the home of the American Negro League Jacksonville Red Caps and the historically black Edward Waters College football team. It was also the host field of the short-lived Flower Bowl, a New Year's Day college football bowl game played by two historically black colleges.

The stadium is significant under Criterion C as a surviving example of the work of the architectural firm of Marsh and Saxelbye, which was known for designing several prominent buildings in the Jacksonville area. Durkee Field is the best preserved example of a sporting venue completed by the firm. Among their notable works are the National Register listed Title and Trust Company of Florida Building (NR 1990); the Groover-Stewart Drug Company (NR 1992); Buckman and Ulmer Building (NR 1988); and the South Atlantic Investment Corporation Building (NR 1988).

HISTORIC CONTEXT

History of Northwest Jacksonville

Located on a narrow bend of the St. Johns River, the Jacksonville area was once an important fording point used by Indians, Spanish explorers, and British colonists. During the Second Spanish period (1784-1821), the area, then known as Cows Ford, was the site of several large land grants. Little development occurred until after the United States acquired Florida from Spain in 1821. Shortly after American acquisition, the settlement was renamed Jacksonville in honor of General Andrew Jackson, the military governor of Florida and future president of the United States who never actually visited the city. Isaiah D. Hart, who emigrated from the St. Mary's River area, surveyed and laid out the town of Jacksonville in 1822.

Much of the area northwest of Downtown Jacksonville was originally part of a Spanish land grant to Charles F. Sibbald of Philadelphia. In 1816, Jose Coppinger, the Spanish Governor of East Florida, granted Sibbald a tract composed of 16,000 acres of timberland between the Trout River and Six Mile Creek. In exchange for the grant, Sibbald, who resided in Fernandina, was required to construct a sawmill on the property. Due to political

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unrest in East Florida, Sibbald was not able to start construction of his sawmill until 1819. Constructed by John Seymour Pickett, this first sawmill was destroyed by fire before being completed. However, in 1828, Sibbald established the first steam powered-sawmill in Florida at Panama, which was located at the mouth of the Trout River. Reflecting an investment of approximately \$30,000, Sibbald's mill had thirty saws able to cut ten to fifteen thousand feet of lumber in a twelve-hour period. Timber for the mill came from trees cut from Sibbald's large tract.¹ Although the vast properties of Sibbald were eventually subdivided and sold, most of the area stayed rural and undeveloped until after the Civil War. In 1821, John Seymour Pickett, who came to Florida in 1803 from South Carolina, petitioned and was granted from the United States Government 640 acres of Sibbald's tract, which was platted in 1884 by the estate of James A. Pickett, son of John Seymour Pickett.²

Much of the historical development of the neighborhoods located immediately to the northwest of Downtown Jacksonville such as Durkeeville (Mid-Westside), Grand Park, and Royal Terrace can be traced to the development of an earlier resort and racetrack located at the Moncrief Springs. After the Civil War, Peter Jones, Republican Mayor of Jacksonville during much of the 1870's, acquired property around Moncrief Springs, located off Moncrief Road near the intersection of present-day West 45th Street, with the intent of developing a resort for the many tourists visiting Jacksonville during the winter.³

History of Baseball in Jacksonville

Although organized baseball was being played in Florida as early as the 1870's, Jacksonville was credited as being the "the strongest Florida hotbed of baseball activity in the late 1880's."⁴ In addition to having numerous black and white teams during this period, the city also had the distinction of hosting the first major league exhibition game in the State of Florida in 1888, as well as hosting the first spring training site. Although professional teams were having spring training as early as 1870, when the Chicago White Stockings and the Cincinnati Reds held training in New Orleans, various teams have followed the railroad to other southern cities, including Atlanta, Savannah, Macon, Charlotte, and eventually Jacksonville by 1895. However, in the preceding years and afterwards, many of the professional teams would barnstorm across the South during the offseason to play other major league teams or against local teams hastily organized for the occasion. Over 1,200 spectators in Jacksonville attended the first professional game in Florida when the New York Giants played the Washington Nationals on March 21, 1888. Won by the Giants 6-2 and 10-2, the games, which were sponsored by the Jacksonville Baseball Association, were played on a recently cleared field near the site of the

¹ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3; Work Projects Administration, Historical Records Survey, Spanish Land Grants in Florida, Volume V, Confirmed Claims, S-V (Tallahassee, Florida: State Library Board, May 1941), pp. 75-81.

² Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Kevin M. McCarthy, Baseball in Florida (Sarasota, Florida: Pineapple Press, Inc., 1996), p. 83.

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elaborate Subtropical Exposition located at Waterworks Park in Springfield. Although secured with a wooden fence, the ballpark had no grandstand, forcing the spectators to circle the field with their buggies and wagons.⁵

During the last quarter of the 19th century, numerous local teams were sponsored over the years, starting as early as 1874 with the Jacksonville Lees, named in honor of Confederate General Robert E. Lee. During that period, the Jacksonville Lees may well have played at the baseball field that was part of Peter Jones' Moncrief Springs resort. Some of these early local teams were associated with certain businesses or professions such as the Jacksonville Boot and Shoe Baseball Club. Other 19th century teams in Jacksonville included the Jacksonville Citizens (1887) followed by the Jacksonville Mystics, who played the Savannah Oglethorpes in 1893. These teams played against surrounding communities such as Palatka, Fernandina Beach, Lake City, and Savannah, as well as against touring professional and semi-professional teams. By 1883, the city had a black team, the Athletics, who were invited that year by the national Colored Baseball Association to play in a tournament in Savannah. In 1891, Jacksonville hosted the first annual convention of the Southern League of Colored Baseball, which included a series of games to decide the state championship. However, the major local black team of the 1890's was the Roman Cities, who included as pitcher the noted African American writer, composer, diplomat, educator, and civil rights leader James Weldon Johnson (1871-1934).⁶ As a member of a younger team known as the Domestics, Johnson learned to pitch a curveball from one of the members of the Cuban Giants, a professional black team from New York that originated from waiters at the Ponce de Leon Hotel in St. Augustine.⁷

The first spring training in Florida for a Major League team occurred when the New York Giants trained for several weeks in Jacksonville preceding the 1895 season. Over the next several years, the Giants were followed by the Philadelphia Athletics that trained at Phoenix Park northeast of Springfield in 1903, the Cincinnati Reds in 1905, the Boston Braves in 1906, the Brooklyn Dodgers from 1907 to 1909, the Philadelphia Athletics from 1914 to 1918, the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1918, the New York Yankees and Brooklyn Dodgers from 1919 to 1920. The last Major League spring training held in Jacksonville was by the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1922 after which most of the teams had relocated further south.⁸ Before 1907, these professional teams, as well as local teams, probably practiced and played at the field off North Main Street adjacent to the site of the Subtropical Expositions at Phoenix Park, or at the Moncrief Springs resort. However, probably in association with the

⁵ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3; McCarthy, p. 8; Florida Times-Union, Northside News, June 10, 1995, p.3.; Florida Times-Union/Jacksonville Journal, February 28, 1988, C-8.

⁶ McCarthy, pp. 7-9, 83; James Weldon Johnson, Along this Way, The Autobiography of James Weldon Johnson (First Da Capo Press Edition, 2000), pp. 36-39.

⁷ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3.

⁸ McCarthy, pp. 221-223.

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opening of Dixieland Park in 1907, whiskey distributor Randolph Rose built a new field in South Jacksonville known as Rose Field.⁹

In November of 1911, while on a barnstorming trip to Cuba, the New York Giants, under manager and Baseball Hall-of-Famer John McGraw (1873-1934), stopped in Jacksonville to play a local team organized by pool hall owner Dominic Mullaney, manager of the Jacksonville Nine. Over 1,500 spectators watched the Giants with star player Ty Cobb defeat the locals 3-0. Interestingly, Cobb, a native of Royston, Georgia, had preceded the team to Jacksonville in order to play the male lead in the drama, "The College Widow," which was featured at the Duval Theatre. Because of the difficulties and delays in ferrying the hundreds of spectators across the St. Johns River to Rose Field, public interest and support was heightened for a first class baseball field on the north side of the river.¹⁰

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Barrs Field Era (1911-1926)

By December of 1911, Amander W. Barrs, owner of the Dixieland Park and member of the Jacksonville League Baseball Company, announced that they had control of four large parcels of land northwest of Downtown Jacksonville for the purpose of constructing a new baseball park. Billed as being only one block from the Davis Street car line and thus only ten minutes from downtown, the new park would feature a 200-foot grandstand with a clubhouse underneath containing lockers, rubbing boards, as well as cold and hot showers. In addition, the new park would have a special parking area for automobiles separate from the horse-drawn carriages and wagons.¹¹ Called Barrs Field, this new facility was the start of organized baseball, both on the amateur and professional level, being played at the southeast corner of North Myrtle Avenue and West Eighth Street, now occupied by the James P. Small Memorial Stadium.¹²

The parcels that were assembled to become the site of Barrs Field were under the ownership of Dr. Jay H. Durkee, the son of Joseph Harvey Durkee. A native of Oneida County, New York, Captain Joseph Harvey Durkee (1837-1905), a decorated Union veteran who was awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor for his action and injuries received at the battle of Chancellorsville, moved to Jacksonville in December of 1865 to serve as disbursing officer and superintendent of schools under the Freedmen's Bureau. Eventually settling in

⁹ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3; Florida Times-Union, April 23, 2000, B-1.

¹⁰ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3; McCarthy, p. 15; Florida Times-Union, November 11, 1990, G-3.

¹¹ Florida Times-Union, December 6, 1911, p. 10.

¹² Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3.

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the St. Nicholas area of South Jacksonville, Joseph H. Durkee, who was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1879, went on to hold several political offices, including Duval County Sheriff, State Senator, United States Marshall for the northern district of Florida, as well as master of chancery of the United States courts. Joseph H. Durkee also became a successful business leader, serving as receiver of the Florida Central Railroad and the Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railway, as well as serving as first vice president of the National Bank of Jacksonville (later Barnett National Bank).¹³ Born in 1870, Dr. Jay Harvey Durkee, the son of Joseph H. Durkee, received his medical degree from Columbia College, and returned to Jacksonville in 1898 where he established a successful practice. Members of the Durkee family opened several subdivisions in the immediate area, as well as provided the property for the construction of the Durkeeville Public Housing Project in the 1930s.¹⁴

A native of Jacksonville, Amander William Barrs (1854-1934) had a long career in real estate, stocks, and bonds, and was associated in business at different times with W. R. Hunter, Telfair Stockton, James W. Fitzgerald, and Harrison W. Clark. The son of Jacksonville pioneers Ethelred and Abigail Shattuck Barrs who came to the area in 1850, Amander Barrs went on to have a distinguished record of public service that included serving as the Duval County Treasurer and member of the Duval County School Board. During the tragic yellow fever epidemic of 1888, A. W. Barrs served as a founding member of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association (JASA), established for the purpose of preventing the spread of the deadly disease while providing relief to those suffering from destitution caused by the epidemic. Barrs was a long time supporter of the sport of baseball in Jacksonville as evidenced by his serving as president in 1886 of the first regular baseball club in the city.¹⁵

In 1904, Jacksonville had become a charter member of the new South Atlantic League, a Class-A circuit commonly referred to as the Sally League that included such cities as Macon, Augusta, Columbia, Savannah, and Charleston.¹⁶ This minor league team went by different names over the years, including the Jacksonville Jays (1904-07), the Jacksonville Scouts (1908-10), and the Jacksonville Tarpons (1911-17).¹⁷ The Jacksonville Tarpons christened the new Barrs Field on April 18, 1912, with a 4-1 win over the Savannah team in the first game of the season, which was attended by Governor Albert W. Gilchrist and Jacksonville Mayor William S. Jordan.¹⁸ In 1921 and 1922, the Jacksonville minor league team, again known as the Scouts and later the

¹³ H.G. Cutler, History of Florida Past and Present, Historical and Biographical (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1923), pp. 253-54.

¹⁴ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3.

¹⁵ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3; Florida Times Union, June 7, 1934, p. 1; Martin, pp. 226-27; Davis, pp. 174-75; Webb, p. 129; Gold, pp. 314-321.

¹⁶ Davis, p. 231.

¹⁷ McCarthy, pp. 131-133.

¹⁸ Florida Times-Union, April 19, 1912, p. 7.

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Indians, played in the Florida State League before disbanding to reorganize in 1926 as the Jacksonville Tars associated with the Southern League. The team's new name, which was selected from over four hundred entries solicited by the *Florida Times-Union*, probably reflected the city's importance as a port for shipping naval stores produced from turpentine camps scattered throughout the extensive pine forests of north Florida. Being out of baseball for four years, the Jacksonville Tars played in the Class B Southern League, which included the likes of Montgomery, Albany, Columbus, Savannah, and St. Augustine, before advancing back to the Sally League in 1936.¹⁹

In 1915 and 1916, Barrs Field was the site of spring training by the Philadelphia Athletics under legendary manager Connie Mack, who interestingly had played as catcher for the Washington Nationals in their 1888 exhibition game against the New York Giants in Jacksonville (Photo 26). The Athletics had won the American League pennant in 1914 and appeared in four of the previous five World Series leading up to 1915. After the 1914 season, however, a number of key players were poached by the short-lived Federal League. As a result, the 1915 and 1916 Athletics teams were among the worst in Major League history, with the 1916 Athletics team setting an American League record for lowest winning percentage that still stands. Speaking highly of the City as "the greatest training camp in the United States," Mack's Athletics returned in 1917, but chose to train at Rose Field on the south side.²⁰ The Pittsburgh Pirates would hold their spring training at Barrs Field the following year, in 1918. This Pirates team featured Casey Stengel and Bill McKechnie, who would both later earn greater fame as managers in the Major Leagues.

In 1919, 1920, and 1922, the Brooklyn Dodgers, also known as the Brooklyn Robins at the time, used Barrs Field as their spring training headquarters. The New York Yankees also held spring training in Jacksonville in 1919 and 1920, using Rose Field on the south side of Jacksonville. The 1919 spring training would be the first Yankee spring training held in the state of Florida. The beginning of the 1920 season saw much interest drawn to Jacksonville. The Yankees had just acquired Babe Ruth from the Boston Red Sox for what was then the most amount of money ever paid for a player (\$100,000). The team rose to national prominence that year as Babe Ruth would go on to hit 54 home runs. The Robins/Dodgers, led by Hall of Fame manager Wilbert Robinson, would go on to win the National League pennant in 1920. After playing each other for two weeks at both fields, the two teams ended the training in Jacksonville with a double-hitter at Rose Field on March 28, attended by over 4,800 spectators who saw the defending World Series champion Cincinnati Reds play the Yankees, and the Dodgers go up against the Washington Senators and pitcher Walter Johnson. The 1922 Dodgers spring training would be the last held at Barrs Field.²¹

¹⁹ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3; McCarthy, pp. 131; *The Florida Times Union*, May 2, 1999, B-1.

²⁰ *The Florida Times Union*, *Westside News*, April 3, 1996, W-5; May 2, 1999, B-1.

²¹ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3; *The Florida Times Union*, March 16, 1997, B-3.

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Football at Barrs Field

Prior to the construction of Fairfield Stadium (later the Gator Bowl Stadium) in 1925, Barrs Field served as the host field for a number of college football games. Between 1912 and 1925, Barrs Field hosted more University of Florida (UF) football games than any other field or stadium outside of Gainesville, Florida, where UF is located. In the 1910s and 1920s, UF, lacking the necessary stadium and transportation to handle the surplus crowds for major games, played at least one game a year or more (except in 1918) at Barrs Field. The first game played at Barrs Field took place on October 16, 1912, between the University of Florida and a Georgia Tech team coached by John Heisman, the namesake for the Heisman Trophy. Barrs Field also served as the location for the first football game between UF and Auburn University held in the state of Florida. The game, played on October 10, 1914, was the third meeting between the two teams in a regional rivalry that has been played on an annual basis since 1927.²²

Perhaps the most notable football game played at Barrs Field was the first undisputed game played between the University of Florida and the University of Georgia, which was held on November 6, 1915.²³ The game, which was a 37-0 Georgia blowout, drew the largest crowd ever to watch a football game in Jacksonville at that time. The two teams would meet sporadically over the next several years, with their meeting becoming an annual event starting in 1926. The Florida-Georgia Game, which has been held annually in Jacksonville since 1933 with only a few interruptions, has since emerged as a major regional event drawing tens of thousands of people from both Florida and Georgia every year. The success of these games and the increased popularity of both high school and college football convinced the city officials of the need for a dedicated football stadium, which culminated in the construction of what would later be known as the Gator Bowl Stadium in 1925.²⁴

First Durkee Field (1926-1935)

The reestablishment of minor league baseball in Jacksonville, which began with the organization of the Jacksonville Tars in 1926, also coincided with a movement by the City of Jacksonville to acquire Barrs Field to serve not only the professional teams but also local amateur and youth teams. In that year, the City signed a binder with the owners, Dr. Jay H. Durkee and his wife, Sarah A. Durkee, to acquire the park. Part of the sale agreement required the renaming of the field as the Joseph H. Durkee Athletic Field, but at times it was also called the Myrtle Avenue Ball Park.²⁵ Since the property was not officially transferred to the City until the fall of 1932, Durkee Field came close to being sold for unpaid taxes in 1930. The Circuit Court, however, ruled that

²² Laurence H. Woltz, "Great Gridiron Battle Today," Florida Times-Union, October 26, 1912; Florida Times-Union, "Auburn Eleven Defeated the University of Florida," October 11, 1914.

²³ The University of Georgia claims a game played against one of UF's predecessor institutions in 1904 as the first game while UF claims the 1915 game as the first.

²⁴ Roy L. Bishop, "University of Georgia Secured an Easy Victory Over Eleven of Florida," Florida Times-Union, November 7, 1915.

²⁵ Florida Times-Union, March 13, 1999, A-2; March 14, 1994, A-9; The Jacksonville Journal, March 13, 1926.

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the property was public due to the 1926 binder.²⁶ Consistent with the February 1, 1926, agreement, and acting through the Playground and Recreation Board, the City paid \$48,000 for the field in 1932.²⁷

Under manager "Big" Rube Marquard, a former professional player who was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, the Jacksonville Tars started playing Sunday games at Durkee Field in 1929 after local voters approved a referendum lifting the prohibition on Sunday games. In previous years, organized baseball groups skirted the Sunday prohibition by presenting "baseball exhibitions."²⁸ Among the notable players who played for the Tars during this period was Baseball Hall of Fame catcher Al Lopez. In 1931, Durkee Field hosted another visit by Babe Ruth and the New York Yankees, which also included Lou Gehrig and Tony Lazzeri. With the Tars inactive for a five-year period between 1930 and 1936, this barnstorming game, won by the Yankees 10-5, was played against a semi-professional team organized by department store owner Halle Cohen.²⁹ Durkee Field also had the distinction of having the first night game played in Jacksonville in 1933 when the Cohen Brothers Department Store team, again under Halle Cohen, took on the House of David. A traveling team from Benton Harbor, Michigan, the House of David, composed of religiously devout players that did not shave, eat meat, or drink liquor, brought portable lights to illuminate the field.³⁰

In an effort to convince the Baltimore Orioles to have their spring training in Jacksonville, the City Council in January of 1934, appropriated approximately \$3,000 to improve the existing grandstand and facilities at Durkee Field. However, before this work was initiated, in April 1934 a fire of unknown origin destroyed the old grandstand.³¹

New Durkee Field (1935-1955)

The City began making plans to rebuild the park, and by early January of 1935 issued a building permit for the construction of an approximately 50' x 100' steel and brick baseball grandstand. Costing an estimated \$23,000, this grandstand was designed by the prolific Jacksonville architectural partnership of Marsh & Saxelbye and constructed by the S.S. Jacobs Company with W.W. Green serving as structural engineer.³² The inaugural game at the "new" Durkee Field was an exhibition game played on March 25, 1935, between Connie Mack's

²⁶ Duval County Court House, Deed Book 668, p. 11, 1932.

²⁷ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3.

²⁸ Florida Times-Union, June 27, 1993.

²⁹ Florida Times-Union, River City News, Westside, May 11, 1996, w-3.

³⁰ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3; Florida Times Union, River City News, March 6, 1996.

³¹ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3; The Jacksonville Journal, January 24, 1934, p. 5: April 30, 1934, p. 13.

³² Jacksonville Building Permit Record, #10, January 9, 1935.

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Philadelphia Athletics and Bill Terry's New York Giants.³³ With the reestablishment of the Jacksonville Tars as part of the South Atlantic League in 1936, the City initiated plans to expand Durkee Field. In 1937, the City contracted again with Marsh & Saxelbye and the S.S. Jacobs Company to design and construct an approximately 80' x 56' steel and brick addition to the west side of the original grandstand.³⁴ With the completion of the 1937 addition, Durkee Field acquired the general appearance and size evident today.³⁵

Negro League Baseball at Durkee Field

With the growing popularity of black baseball, the 1937 addition to Durkee Field was completed mainly to accommodate seating and provide separate facilities for African American spectators and players. As a result of Jim Crow laws that established state-sanctioned segregation, the sponsorship of black teams became a thriving business that brought professional baseball to thousands of African American fans. From 1920, when the Negro National League was first organized, until the last Negro League teams folded in the early 1960's, over 4,000 men played in the Negro Leagues. At various times, the Negro Leagues were organized into six different leagues, including the Negro National League, the Eastern Colored League, the American Negro League, the East-West League, the Negro Southern League, and the Negro American League.³⁶ Jacksonville was represented in the Negro Leagues by the Red Caps, a team organized and owned by the Jacksonville Terminal Company that operated the Jacksonville Terminal Station. Originally composed of porters who worked at the terminal, the Red Caps, utilizing Durkee Field as their home base, played other African American teams from Atlanta, Macon, Tampa, Miami, and Palm Beach, as well as other Negro League teams that had spring training in the area or were barnstorming the state.³⁷

Initially associated with the minor league Southern Negro League in 1920, the Red Caps joined the Negro American League in 1938 and relocated to Cleveland the following season in 1939, before coming back to Jacksonville for the 1941 and 1942 seasons. As a member of the Negro American League, they were a major Negro League franchise, drawing some of the top black teams in the United States to Jacksonville, most notably the Kansas City Monarchs and Birmingham Black Barons. Some of the players over the years that were part of the Jacksonville Red Caps included Herman Bell, Howard "Duke" Cleveland, Felix "Chin" Evans, James W.

³³ The Jacksonville Journal, March 25, 1935, p. 10.

³⁴ The Jacksonville Journal, February 25, 1936 p. 1; February 27, 1936, p. 5.
Jacksonville Building Permit #75, February 2, 1937.

³⁵ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3.

³⁶ McCarthy, pp. 83-85; Florida Times-Union, April 13, 2001, A-1.

³⁷ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3; McCarthy, pp. 83-85.
Kimberly N. Martin, "Black Diamond", Folio Weekly, October 13, 1998, pp. 16-18.

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Everett, Sr., Albert "Cool Papa" Frazier, Philip Homes, Mint Jones, Felix McLaurin, Flute Mitchell, Willie "Baby" Ray, Joel Roal, Lacy Thomas, Henry "Flash" Turner, and Parnell "Red" Woods.³⁸

Edward Waters College Football (c. 1928-1964)

From c. 1928-1964, Durkee Field served as the home field for the Edward Waters College football team. Edward Waters College (EWC) is a small historically black private college founded in 1866 in Jacksonville by the African Methodist Episcopal Church. It is the oldest historically black institution of higher learning in the state of Florida and has been in continuous operation since 1883. The primary focus of EWC has historically been to serve as a seminary for the African Methodist Episcopal church. The college has played football since at least 1915, discontinuing the football program after the 1967 season before restarting it in 2001. Although a member of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) from 1929-1935, which was a major black college conference, for most of its history, EWC competed primarily against smaller black colleges in the Southeastern Athletic Conference (SEAC).³⁹

One of the earliest known black college football games hosted at what was then the old Durkee Field was held in 1928 between the EWC Tigers and Bethune-Cookman College. While Florida A&M would eventually surpass EWC, from the late 1920s and into the early 1930s EWC had one of the best black college football teams in the state of Florida. The Tigers were part of an informal four-team Florida Conference along with Florida A&M, Bethune-Cookman, and Florida Normal. The Austin Trophy, which was awarded annually to the winner of the Florida Conference, was retired in 1930 after EWC became the first three-time winner. Two notable alumni of EWC's football program were Buck O'Neil, a renowned Negro League player who played for both the football and baseball teams in the early 1930s, and Jim "Cannonball" Butler, the only EWC alumnus to play in the National Football League. Butler led EWC to perhaps its best season in 1964, leading the team to a 10-0 season, including a 142-0 win over Friendship College (Rock Hill, South Carolina) at Durkee Field in their home finale, in what turned out to be the last college football game played there. The Tigers led the nation in scoring that year and finished ranked number two in the country among black colleges. Another member of that team was Nat Glover, who would later go on to become the sheriff of Jacksonville in 1995 and president of EWC. By 1965, EWC had moved to the Gator Bowl and the old Wolfson Park, where they continued to play until financial losses forced the college to discontinue its football program in 1967.⁴⁰

³⁸ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3; Martin, p. 18; McCarthy, pp. 92-95; Herman Mason, African-American Life in Jacksonville (Dover, New Hampshire: Arcadia Publishing, 1997), p 114.

³⁹ Teneshia L. Wright, "Football Review," Florida Times-Union, September 5, 2001.

⁴⁰ Wright, "Football Review"; Florida Star, "EWC Takes 8th Victory, Record 142 Points Scored," November 28, 1964.

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The Flower Bowl (1943-1948)

Durkee Field served as the host of the Flower Bowl, which was a New Years Day bowl game that featured two historically black college football teams. Predating the Gator Bowl by three years, the Flower Bowl was the earliest annual college bowl game held in Jacksonville. The first game, held January 1, 1942, at Wilder Park, was against Johnson C. Smith University from Charlotte, North Carolina, and Lane College (Jackson, Tennessee). Johnson C. Smith won the inaugural game by a score of 13-0. The second Flower Bowl, a 14-6 victory by North Carolina A&T (Greensboro, North Carolina) over Southern University (Baton Rouge, Louisiana) on New Year's Day, 1943, was the first bowl game held at Durkee Field. Like the Negro League games, the Flower Bowl games were open to both black and white patrons but in segregated seating. The Flower Bowl proved to be short-lived. The last game was held in 1948 between Bethune-Cookman College and Lane College at Durkee Field. Over 3,000 people showed up to watch the game, which was a 6-0 victory for Bethune-Cookman. The following year, Bethune-Cookman was slated to play Florida A&M in the Flower Bowl but the game never materialized.⁴¹

Jacksonville Bears Football (1944-1948)

During the 1940s, professional football, much like other major professional sports leagues at the time, was segregated. As a result, there were very few opportunities available for black football players beyond college. Throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s, a number of black professional football teams sprang up across the country. In Jacksonville, the all-black semi-professional Jacksonville Bears football team was founded by Joseph L. Grant and George Harris in 1944. Playing out of Durkee Field, the Bears played against a number of black teams in the area before folding after the 1948 season. Another team known as the Jacksonville Bears, also a professional football team, was founded in 1962 and played in the Florida Football League. While this team played at the Gator Bowl, they held tryouts and practices out of Durkee Field.⁴²

Minor League Baseball at Durkee Field (1938-1954)

By 1938, the Jacksonville Tars, under the ownership of Crowther and Jimmie Boyd, became a farm team of the New York Giants (Photo 27). Once he acquired the team in 1952, Samuel Wolfson signed a new contract making the Tars a farm team for the Milwaukee Braves and hired former major league player Ben Geraghty (1912-1963) as manager.⁴³ In 1953, the Jacksonville Braves, along with the Savannah team, were the first teams in the South Atlantic (Sally) League to break the color line when Wolfson hired three African American players, Henry "Hank" Aaron, Horace Garner, and Felix Mantilla. The attendance at games skyrocketed as the

⁴¹ Florida Times-Union, "Two Leading Negro Teams Battle Today," January 1, 1942; Florida Times-Union, "North Carolina Gridders Win From Southern in Flower Bowl," January 2, 1943; San Antonio Express, "Bowl Game Results," January 2, 1948.

⁴² Tia Mitchell, "Grant Owned All-Black Semi-Pro Football Team," Florida Times-Union, October 19, 2003.

⁴³ Florida Times-Union, March 28, 1993, C-4; McCarthy, p. 113.

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presence of these three players drew the curious as well as many African American fans to Durkee Field. Although withstanding a full season of verbal abuse generated by racial hatred, as well as being forced to seek accommodations in private homes, 19-year old Aaron went on to have a successful season, hitting 22 homeruns and achieving a batting average of .362. After being named the Most Valuable Player in the league and leading the Jacksonville Braves to the Sally League pennant, Aaron was promoted to the Milwaukee Braves in 1954. Once in the majors, Henry "Hank" Aaron went on to baseball fame by breaking Babe Ruth's career home run record by hitting his 715th homerun on April 8, 1974, and ended his career with a total of 755 homeruns. A native of Puerto Rico, Felix Mantilla also played in the majors first for the Braves and later for the New York Mets, Boston Red Sox, and ending his career with the Houston Astros in 1966.⁴⁴

The end of Durkee Field as the center for professional baseball in Jacksonville began in 1954 when the Jacksonville Braves owner, Samuel Wolfson, secured a new site for a park in East Jacksonville adjacent to the municipal stadium (Gator Bowl). Costing approximately \$500,000, the new field, later renamed in honor of Samuel Wolfson, opened on March 16, 1955, with an exhibition game between the Washington Senators and the Cincinnati Reds.⁴⁵

Durkee Field during the Civil Rights Era (1950s-1960s)

During the Civil Rights era, Durkee Field was an important staging ground in local political rallies and protests. In August 1956, a large rally was held at Durkee Field in protest of the local Democratic Party's removal of Ernest Jackson as their candidate for justice of the peace. Jackson became the first African American to be nominated in Jacksonville in over 40 years when he defeated the incumbent Sarah Bryan earlier that year in the local primary. The removal of Jackson by the Democratic Committee was seen as racially motivated and attracted national attention for the brazenness of the action. After losing an appeal to the state supreme court, Jackson tried running as a write-in candidate in the general election but lost. Another political rally hosted at Durkee Field was during the city council elections of 1959, when Jackson and Samuel Bruce campaigned to become the first African Americans elected to city council since 1907. This event, which occurred on April 14, 1959, attracted notoriety for a cross burning that took place on the day before the rally. The 1956 and 1959 elections, although technically defeats, were important events in the local civil rights movement. The success of voter registration campaigns and the realization of the voting power of the black community forced local politicians to take notice.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark; LM-03-3; McCarthy, pp.97-99; Florida Times-Union, July 22, 1994, D-9; April 14, 1991, E-1; Jacksonville Advocate, April 1, 1985, p.1.

⁴⁵ Florida Times-Union, March 28, 1993, C-4.

⁴⁶ Florida Star, "Mass Meetings Show There is Need for Broader Organization Here," September 1, 1956; Florida Star, "Cross Burning Near Church Seen as Plan to Scare Voters," April 18, 1959; Abel A. Bartley, Keeping the Faith: Race, Politics and Social Development in Jacksonville (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000), 47-55.

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Durkee Field also hosted a number of other community gatherings. For several years, Durkee Field hosted the annual Easter Sunrise Service. This was an event sponsored by the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, which was comprised of members from multiple black Christian denominations within the city. Used by various amateur and youth teams as well as venue for outdoor events, old Durkee Field continued to languish until its poor condition from age and lack of proper maintenance fostered discussion in the City about demolishing the grandstand by the late 1970s.⁴⁷

James P. Small Park

Through the efforts of City Councilwoman Sallye B. Mathis, Durkee Field was not only saved from the wrecking ball, but also received a substantial upgrade in 1980 that included new aluminum seats, new grandstand roof, improved dugouts and new sod in the outfield. In anticipation of a significantly improved recreational facility to serve her district, Mathis sponsored a resolution approved by the City Council in January of 1980 renaming Durkee Field in honor of James P. Small. A lifelong resident of Jacksonville, James P. "Bubbling" Small served as educator and football coach at the historically black Stanton High School for 33 years, winning nine city football championships and with a career record of 312 victories, 76 loses, and 18 ties. Commonly recognized in Jacksonville as the dean of black high school coaches, Small organized the Florida Interscholastic Athletic Association, and in 1951 was awarded Big 12 Florida Conference Coach of the Year. With the death of Councilwoman Mathis in July of 1982, the work to renovate James P. Small Memorial Stadium was continued by her successor, Councilwoman E. Denise Lee, and was officially reopened and dedicated March 20, 1985.⁴⁸ In addition to serving as a community ballpark, Small Park is the home of the Edward Waters College baseball team.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Marsh & Saxelbye

The design of the 1935 grandstand, as well as its 1937 addition, exemplify the architectural diversity of one of Jacksonville's most prolific and successful architectural partnerships, Marsh & Saxelbye. A native of Jacksonville, William Mulford Marsh (1889 - 1946) began his architectural practice there around 1912. Prior to joining in partnership with Harold Saxelbye in 1919, Marsh designed several Prairie Style buildings in

⁴⁷ Florida Star, "Sunrise Service Scheduled for Ball Park Sunday," April 20, 1957; Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3

⁴⁸ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark: LM-03-3; City Council Resolution 79-1299-430, Adopted January 22, 1980; Florida Times-Union, March 21, 1985, B-1; Jacksonville Advocate, April 1, 1985, p. 1.

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SIGNIFICANCE

Jacksonville. Born in Hull, England, Harold Frederick Saxelbye (1885 - 1964) went to New York to practice architecture in 1904. In 1913, he moved to Jacksonville to design the Mason Hotel (Mayflower). After a brief association with architects Talley & Summer, Saxelbye entered a partnership with Marsh that lasted twenty-seven years. During that period between 1919 and 1946, Marsh & Saxelbye was the most prolific architectural firm in Jacksonville, especially during the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s. The firm is noted for many excellent commercial, institutional, and residential designs in Jacksonville and throughout the state.⁴⁹

In addition to Durkee Field, Marsh and Saxelbye were also active in the design of other notable local sporting venues. They worked on the 1945 redesign of the Gator Bowl Stadium and the original Wolfson Park (1954) in Jacksonville as well as Bragg Memorial Stadium (1957) in Tallahassee, which is the home of the Florida A&M University football team. Durkee Field is the best preserved among these sporting venues, as the others were either extensively remodeled or demolished.

Many of the elaborate residential designs found in San Marco, San Jose Estates, Avondale and Ortega are attributed to Marsh & Saxelbye. Other noted commercial and institutional designs by Marsh & Saxelbye include the Levy Building, 135 West Adams Street (1927); Hildebrandt Building, 300 West Adams Street (1926-27); Taliaferro Memorial Building, 256 East Church Street (1923-24); Title & Trust Company of Florida, 200 East Forsyth Street (1928-29); Hamby Building, 325 West Forsyth Street (1925); Greenleaf & Crosby Building, 208 North Laura Street (1927); Atlantic National Bank Annex, 118 West Adams Street (1925-26); Olmstead Motor Company Building, 802 North Laura Street (1927-28); Old Jacksonville Police Headquarters, 711 North Liberty Street (1926); Groover-Stewart Drug Company Building, 25 North Market Street (1925); Buckman & Ulmer Building, 29-33 West Monroe Street (1925); South Atlantic Investment Building, 37-41 West Monroe Street (1925); the Western Union Building, North Laura Street (1930 - 31); U.S. Post Office & Courthouse, 311 West Monroe Street, in association with Paul P. Cret of Philadelphia and James D. Wetmore of Washington D.C. (1932-33); Crane Company Building, 1007 West Bay Street (1930); and First Church of Christ Scientist, 1116 North Laura Street (1921).⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Jacksonville Planning and Development Department, Designation Application and Report for Proposed Designation of James P. Small Park as a city of Jacksonville Landmark.

⁵⁰ Ibid.; Wood, pp. 11-12.

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_____. Grand Park, 2-59 (1906), & East Grand Park, 2-51 (1907).
- _____. Moncrief Park, 6-8(1914) and Speedway Park, 3-32 (1990).

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JACKSONVILLE, DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Parcel number 053302-0000 as recorded in the office of the Duval County Property Appraiser.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encompasses the area historically associated with the Joseph H. Durkee Athletic Field, now known as James P. Small Memorial Park.

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Section number _____ Photos _____ Page 1 DURKEE, JOSEPH H., ATHLETIC FIELD
JACKSONVILLE, DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Joseph H. Durkee Field
2. Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida
3. Andrew Waber
4. July 2012
5. 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida
6. View of facade from the corner of Myrtle Avenue and West 7th Street, facing northeast
7. Photo 1 of 27

Numbers 1-5 are the same for the following photographs, except where noted:

6. View of main entrance to grandstand from across West 7th Street, facing northeast
7. Photo 2 of 27

6. View of historic 1937 grandstand addition from across Myrtle Avenue, facing northeast
7. Photo 3 of 27

6. View of east section of grandstand facade from West 7th Avenue, facing north
7. Photo 4 of 27

6. View of east elevation of grandstand, facing west
7. Photo 5 of 27

6. View of grandstand press box, facing southeast
7. Photo 6 of 27

6. View of historic visiting team dugout, facing southwest
7. Photo 7 of 27

6. View of northwest side of main lobby, facing northwest
7. Photo 8 of 27

6. View of southeast side of main lobby, facing southeast
7. Photo 9 of 27

6. View of steps leading from main lobby into the seating area, facing northeast
7. Photo 10 of 27

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LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

3. Eric and Wendy Pastore
4. c. 2010
5. <http://www.digitalballparks.com/Southern/Jacksonville18.html>
6. View of baseball diamond from center field, facing southwest
7. Photo 11 of 28

6. View of baseball field from center of grandstand, facing northeast
7. Photo 12 of 27

6. View of non-historic home team dugout, facing southeast
7. Photo 13 of 27

6. View of home team bullpen, facing southwest
7. Photo 14 of 27

6. View of visiting team bullpen from grandstand, facing north
7. Photo 15 of 27

6. View of right field home run fence and scoreboard, facing north
7. Photo 16 of 27

6. View of brick entryway sign, facing northeast
7. Photo 17 of 27

6. View of seating plaza and Buck O'Neil statue at corner of Myrtle Avenue and West 7th Street, facing north
7. Photo 18 of 27

6. View of security office and storage shed at corner of Wilcox and West 7th streets, facing southeast
7. Photo 19 of 27

6. View of left field with playground behind home run fence, facing northeast
7. Photo 20 of 27

3. Unknown photographer
4. c. 1939
6. Historic view of baseball field from grandstand, facing northeast
7. Photo 21 of 27

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Section number Photos Page 3 DURKEE, JOSEPH H., ATHLETIC FIELD
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LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

6. View of arched ticket windows to the northwest of main entrance, facing north
7. Photo 22 of 27

6. View of interior spaces of northwest side of the main lobby, facing northwest
7. Photo 23 of 27

3. Daryl Joseph
4. February 2013
5. City of Jacksonville Parks and Recreation Department
6. View of museum exhibit, facing
7. Photo 24 of 27

3. Daryl Joseph
4. February 2013
5. City of Jacksonville Parks and Recreation Department
6. View of museum exhibit, facing
7. Photo 25 of 27

3. Unknown photographer
4. c. 1916
6. Historic view of Philadelphia Athletics baseball team during spring training at Barrs Field
7. Photo 26 of 27

3. Jack Spotswood
4. c. 1950
6. Historic view of the Jacksonville Tars baseball team at Durkee Field, with grandstand in background
7. Photo 27 of 27

Joseph H. Durkee Athletic Field
Jacksonville, Duval County, FL



Google earth



Zone: 17 Easting: 435130 Northing: 3357374

West 8th Street

MYRTLE AVENUE

WILCOX STREET

7th Street West

Playground

Historic Boundary

Electrical Substation

Home Run Fence (N/C)

J. P. SMALL PARK
(DURKEE FIELD)

Bullpen

Dugout

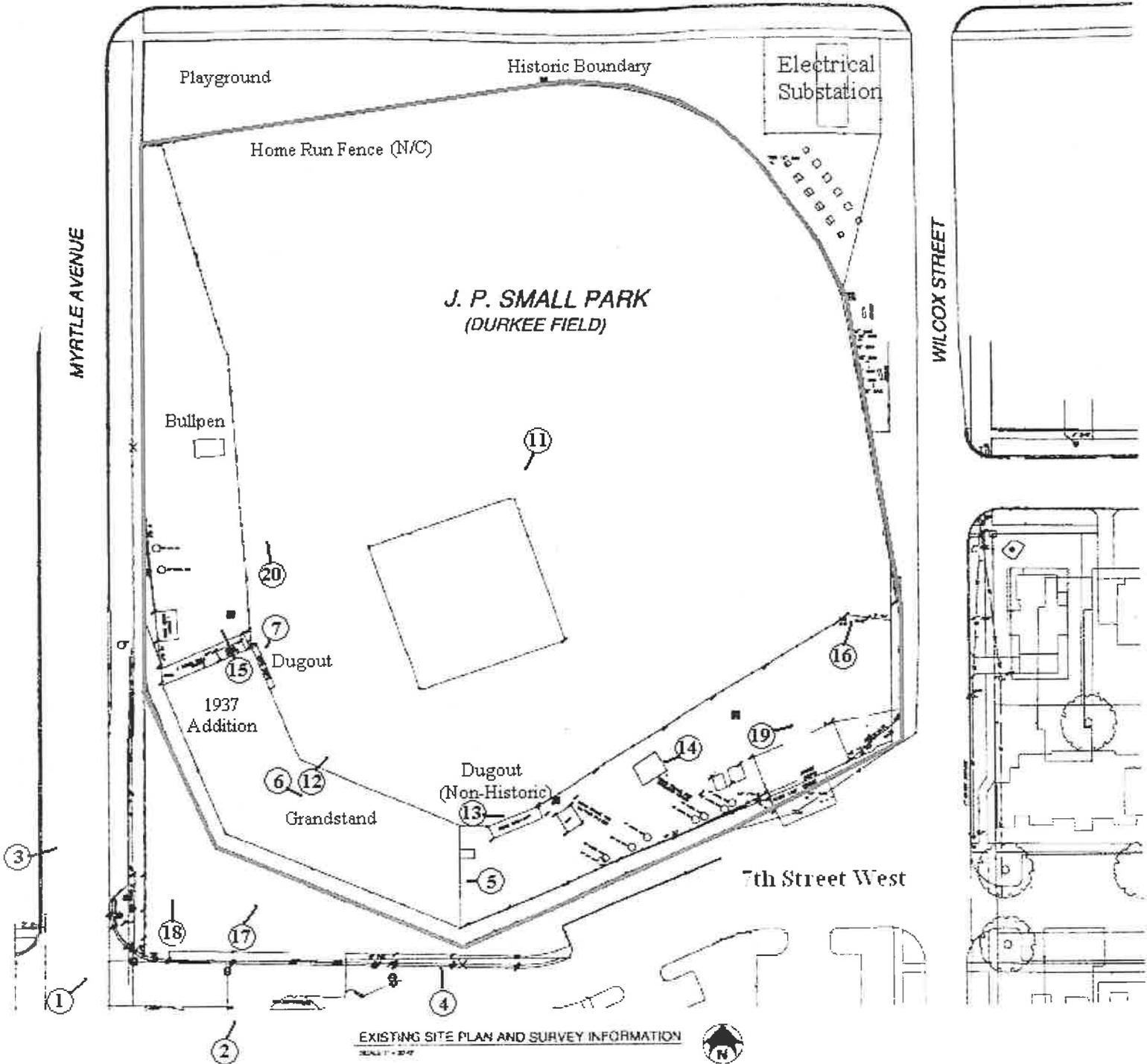
1937 Addition

Grandstand

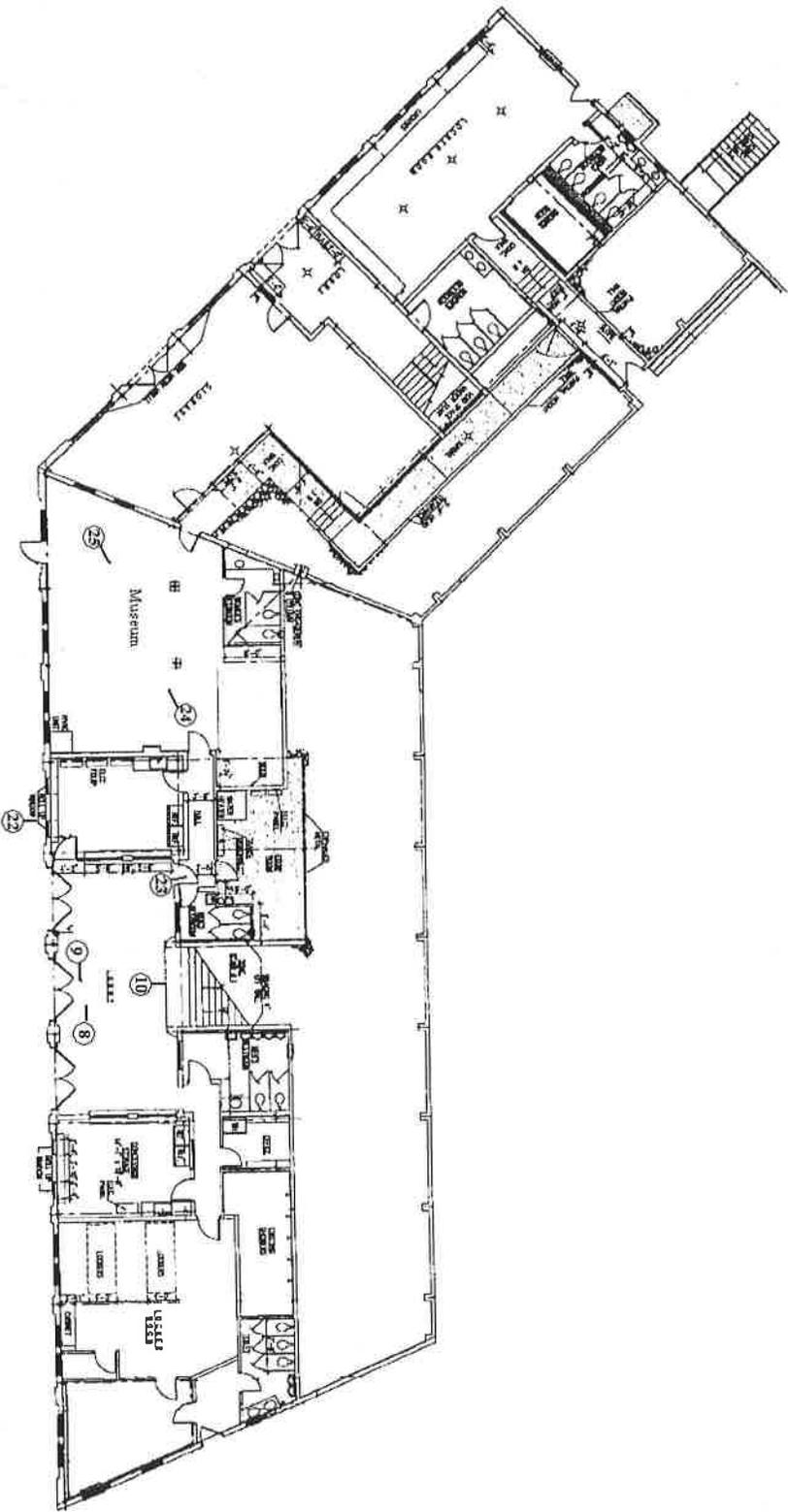
Dugout
(Non-Historic)

EXISTING SITE PLAN AND SURVEY INFORMATION

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"



JOSEPH H. DURKEE FIELD
 Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida



1 EXISTING INTERIOR FLOOR PLAN



B E R G M A N N
 ASSOCIATES
 Registered Architects/Engineers
 10000 North 15th Avenue, Suite 200
 Jacksonville, Florida 32211
 PH 904.751.1000
 FX 904.751.1001



8 Photo Number

EXISTING INTERIOR FLOOR PLAN





J.P. SMALL PARTS





ATL PARK























ATLANTH HALL BIRDS OUT INNING
TOP
BOTTOM
BEST
PEOPLE

PROVES THIS ABOVE

THE BIRD OF AIR 24
500-5000



J.P. SMALL PARK



HEADING FOR HOME
J. FERRARI MEMORIAL PARK
DEDICATED: 2005
REDEDICATED: 2006







James P. Small Park

Rededicated 2006

John Peyton, Mayor, City of Jacksonville
Councilwoman Gwen Yates, City Council, District 8

A joint project of the City of Jacksonville Department of
Parks, Recreation and Entertainment, and the Durkeeville
Historical Society

1701





A BALLPARK
The Heart of a Community



The Negro Leagues



African
Baseball Teams



Development





a Ball.

comes to
sonville

Barrs Field

Base
Ball
Jacksonville
vs
Savannah
2.30
Barrs Field





Sperry & Hooper
J. H. Sperry