

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 CROCKER FIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number River Street not for publication

city or town Fitchburg vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Worcester code 027 zip code 01420

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Brona Simon
Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Massachusetts Historical Commission

May 4, 2001
Date

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

Edson H. Beall

6/14/01

Crocker Field
Name of Property

Worcester, MA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	4	building
3	2	sites
3	0	structures
4	3	objects
14	9	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)

EDUCATION: education related

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility/

Playing field/stadium/field house

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE: sports facility/

Playing fields/stadium/field house

EDUCATION: education related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

CLASSICAL REVIVAL

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls terra cotta stuccoed

roof STONE/slate CONCRETE ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

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

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1Crocker Field Historic District
Fitchburg (Worcester), MA**The Location and Setting of Crocker Field**

Crocker Field is a municipally-owned athletic complex situated on an approximately 5.5 acre site near downtown Fitchburg, Massachusetts. Located in northern Worcester County, Fitchburg is a regionally significant industrial city with a population of more than 40,000. Although the city is characterized by its hilly terrain, Crocker Field is located on flat alluvial land on the west bank of the Nashua River.

The area immediately around Crocker Field consists of 19th and 20th century industrial and commercial buildings and a few 19th century dwellings. Main Street and downtown Fitchburg are located one street south of Crocker Field. There, in an urban setting that extends along both sides of Main Street, is the city's institutional and commercial center, which includes high quality examples of architecture of the mid-late 19th century through the late 20th century.

Designed and used for athletic purposes, the Crocker Field complex is bounded by Circle Street on the south, Broad Street on the west, River Street (Massachusetts Route 31) on the north, and the Nashua River on the east. Incorporated into the site are a football field, a baseball field, a rubberized asphalt oval for races, a runway for jumping, and an asphalt tennis court. Also included are five major buildings or structures -- a covered stadium, an uncovered stadium, an athletic field house, a ticket booth, and a concession stand -- and two wooden sheds and a wooden ticket booth. The complex is surrounded on the north, south, and west sides by a wrought iron fence on a concrete base with concrete gateposts and iron gates. Fences of concrete and granite enclose the field along the river side.

Although the stadiums and playing areas of the complex are situated on level ground, the lot rises slightly at the northwest and southeast perimeters. These higher areas of ground were achieved intentionally by the landscape architects. At the north end, for privacy from a main thoroughfare, the ground is a few feet higher than the playing fields and is planted with evergreens and other plantings to shield the field from the street (see far end of field shown in Photo # 7). At the south end, the higher ground supports the Field House terrace, which overlooks the tennis court to its north and the playing fields to the northwest (Photo # 6).

Enclosures and Gates

The site is enclosed on the south, west and north by a wrought iron fence that rests on a concrete base and is accented at regular intervals by Classical style square-section concrete posts (Photos # 3 & 4). Linden trees are planted immediately inside this fence as an additional boundary marker along the south and west sides of the field (Photos # 3 & 4) and at the northwest corner.

The southwest corner of the field is enclosed by the high pilastered wall of the covered stadium,

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rather than by a fence. Forming a broad curve at the intersection of Circle and Broad Streets (Photos 1 & 2), it rises directly from the sidewalk. On the far side of the sidewalk at the curve of the intersection are planted several linden trees to carry the line of trees from Circle Street to Broad Street and to soften the effect of the wall.

The riverside perimeter of the field is enclosed by concrete walls at the north and south ends. At the north end, the concrete wall is treated as pilasters and unframed panels (Photo # 8) and stands about six feet high. At the south end the wall is about four feet in height, and takes a simple battered form. This battered section continues behind the tennis court and along the side of the Field House to the Circle Street bridge. It is largely hidden from view. Lining the center section of the river perimeter is a wall of large, roughly cut stone blocks. At the north end of this wall it is only one stone high, about two feet in height. The longest portion of the stone wall is two stones high and is about four feet in height. This section is planted with a row of evergreen trees in front of it (visible in Photo # 8).

Public access to Crocker Field is through two large gateways, one on Circle Street and one on Broad Street. The Circle Street entrance is the major entrance (Photo # 1). Its tall concrete gateposts are topped with finials, while those at the Broad Street entrance are not (Photos # 2 & 3). The pairs of wrought iron gates at the Circle Street entrance are also more elaborate in their design than those at the Broad Street gateway. The original Olmsted plans of the field call the Broad Street entrance "Entrance No. 2" or the "Exit or Service Gate". Smaller concrete gateposts and a wrought iron gate mark the entrance to the Field House from the Crescent Street sidewalk (Photos # 4 & 5). There are other openings in the fence around the field that are not marked by concrete gateposts and are, therefore, less visible. Two smaller pedestrian entrances are located on the south side of the field just west of the Field House. Another enters the field just north of the north end of the uncovered stadium on the west side. A fourth gate, wider than these two, is situated at the east end of the north side of the field. Facing River Street, it was built as both a pedestrian and a vehicle entrance. It corresponds to a sidewalk for pedestrians, but it also served originally as an entrance for vehicles transporting materials to and from the Storage Yard (no longer existing) that was added to the field along the river's edge at the north end of the field in 1924.

The Structures and Buildings of Crocker Field

Crocker Field stadiums and original buildings are generally Classical Revival in style and are of concrete and terracotta construction finished in stucco. The stucco finish offers both visual unity and a sense of substance and durability to the complex. Yet, there are subtle differences in the stucco finish among the component parts which lend both individuality and refinement to the buildings. For example, correspondence in the Olmsted files shows that the rough cast texture used on the Field House was intentionally less fine than that used on the stadium.

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Tooling of selected parts of the buildings and of the cement portions of the fences originally offered additional touches of refinement to the overall character of the complex. A letter in the Olmsted files, dated November 1, 1917, describes the finish treatment of concrete fence posts: the posts, caps, and base caps were to be bush hammered and the bases were to be picked. This special detailing of concrete elements is a reflection of the attention to detail that was integral to this entire project. It is also consonant with the early 20th century, a period when concrete was still a relatively recent substitute for stone and was thereby considered deserving of the same kinds of finish treatment given to stone. Much of the effect of this handwork has eroded as the surface of the concrete has worn away. Nonetheless, the edges of the bases and caps of the posts retain a sharpness that appears to be the result of this careful attention to detail.

Gate House Ticket Booth

A picturesque component of the Circle Street entrance gate is a small, one-story, rectangular, stucco-covered ticket booth with a hip roof (Photos # 1 & 10). With its narrow end attached to the northernmost gatepost, it has a round-arched, iron-grilled ticket window facing on Circle Street and another on the end facing the field. The door is located at the center of the long side of the building facing the entrance walk. It appears that the edges of the ticket windows were originally given a special finish. Years of paint and repairs have dimmed the effect, which is still visible in a slightly upraised area that borders the edge of the window

Note: Two other, less conspicuous, ticket windows of the same round-arched design are located in the base of the covered stadium. One is found at the east end on the Circle Street side near the main entrance and another on the south side of the Broad Street entrance (Photos # 1 & 2).

Stadiums

The stadiums are two adjoining but visually distinct structures (Photo # 9). The baseball stadium is the southernmost of the two. It is covered with a concrete roof, while the football stadium to its northwest is uncovered. Together they seat about 2,800 persons. Treated on their outer walls with a pilaster-panel motif and Classical style coping (Photos 1, 2 & 3), they are of stucco-sheathed reinforced concrete and terracotta block construction. Terracotta provides the curtain wall enclosure to the concrete skeletons of the stadiums. This enclosure provides usable space underneath the banked seating. Today these enclosed areas house restrooms and storage space. Classical style, concrete, curved brackets support seating planks in each stadium. Wood seat planks survive in the covered stadium, while 1970s metal seat planks have replaced the original wood ones in the uncovered stadium.

The covered stadium is a major visual feature of the Crocker Field complex. Its dominance is due in part to the fact that it wraps around the curve of the intersection of Circle and Broad streets. In addition, it is slightly higher than the uncovered stadium and is made more dominant by its shed roof, which, supported on iron columns, repeats the curve of the stands that it shelters.

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The uncovered stadium, extending northwest along Broad Street, is rectilinear in its plan and is treated with less ornamental detail. At the center rear of the uncovered stadium are two ca. 1940s press boxes (Photo # 9) of wood construction, sheathed in clapboard-like aluminum siding. They are scheduled for replacement in the Fall of 1999.

Field House

The architectural elaborateness, refinement of detailing, and substantial character of the materials of the field house make it an outstanding element of the Crocker Field complex (Photos # 4, 5, 6, 10). This one-story, hip-roofed, Classical Revival/Picturesque style building contains locker rooms, training rooms, offices, and an assembly room. The building and its entrance gates are well maintained, although their appearance is somewhat marred by graffiti.

The building is set close to Circle Street but is separated from it by the wrought iron fence that surrounds the Crocker Field complex planted with privet hedge and Boston Ivy. The Field House is essentially rectangular in plan and is arranged asymmetrically. It is of concrete and terracotta-block construction covered in stucco and rests on a concrete foundation that is half above grade on the Circle Street side and the east and west ends. The hip roof is covered with slate and has skirt-curved eaves. Features contributing to the distinctive silhouette of the building are the hip roof, gables on the long facades, and a large stuccoed chimney. The chimney serves as a fireplace flue and also provides interior ventilation. Original 16 pane, bottom-hinged, inward-opening windows have been replaced with Kal-wall inserts. Some other windows have been closed with glass block infill. Some 6/6 sash still survive at the basement level.

The dominant feature of the main facade is the imposing, off-center, gabled main entrance (Photos # 5). Set at the center of the only gable on the street facade, this doorway is framed with carved Classical style trim, which appears to be of limestone. It consists of paneled pilasters rising to scroll brackets, which support a cornice cap. On a stone panel within the door frame, set immediately above the door, is carved the inscription:

FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ATHLETIC GROUNDS

Immediately above the door frame, also of the same material, is a window flanked by scroll trim and capped with a segmented-arched pediment. Together these two elements form a single, strongly vertical, visual unit that is of northern European Baroque inspiration. Access from the street to this entrance is through Classical style concrete gate posts situated in front of it. This doorway opens into the assembly room, the main public room in the building.

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The focus of the north side (rear) of the building (Photos # 6 & 10) is a gabled section, which corresponds to the gable on the main facade and which houses the cathedral-ceilinged Assembly Room. At the center of this gabled section is a large, high, round-arched window flanked by lower rectangular doorways on either side. These doors provide access from the Assembly Room onto an ample terrace, surrounded by a solid, low, concrete wall, which overlooks the tennis court to the north. At the northwest corner of the terrace is a high flight of stairs that makes a dramatic descent down to the playing fields below.

The main public room of the fieldhouse is the Assembly Room (Photo # 11). It is noteworthy for the excellent state of preservation of its original cathedral ceiling, dark-stained oak wainscoting, fireplace, and furnishings. Windsor chairs and a Renaissance Revival style table seen in an early photograph (Illustration # 5B) of the room are still in use here. In this room is housed an unusually complete and historically important collection of Fitchburg Public School photographs, trophies, and sports memorabilia dating from 1918 to the present.

Concession Stand

The concession stand, built about 1990, was designed to blend in with existing buildings in the complex (Photo # 10). It is a stucco-covered, one-story, rectangular wood-frame building with a hip roof covered with asphalt shingle. Along the western side is a long window from which customers are served. At the center of the north end is an arched window that repeats the arched ticket windows in the adjoining ticket booth.

Sheds

Two wood storage sheds of recent vintage stand north of the uncovered football stadium. They have shed roofs and are of no particular architectural style or distinction. The one closest to the end of the stadium is of plywood and is sometimes used as a second concession stand. The other one has a board and batten of wood and particleboard exterior.

Wood Ticket Booth

West of the vehicle entrance in the River Street fence is a small late-20th century board and batten ticket booth of plywood and wood with a shed roof. It has a ticket window on the north side that corresponds with a ticket grill formed in the ironwork of the fence.

Lighting

Four light towers were erected in 1988 to provide illumination for evening and night games. These were built and installed by the Musco company in Maine. Erection of these towers enabled the complex to be used for longer hours and the high school to schedule nighttime football games.

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Fitchburg (Worcester), MAMonuments

Several plaques and monuments have been erected on the grounds of Crocker Field.

Crocker Field Plaque

A bronze plaque is mounted on the east end of the baseball stadium. It is assumed that this plaque was mounted here at the time of the completion of the Crocker Field complex in 1918. It is inscribed:

CROCKER FIELD
THE GIFT OF ALVAH CROCKER
TO THE CITIZENS OF FITCHBURG

Alvah Crocker Monument

The earliest monument was erected in 1933 by the Fitchburg High School Athletic Association. Dedicated to the memory of Alvah Crocker, who gave the field to the city, it is located at the northern end of the field. It consists of a bronze plaque mounted on a small boulder that rests low to the ground and is viewed from above.

War Memorial Monument

Located at the northern end of the field near the north gate (Photo # 8) is a monument donated by the Class of 1940 and dedicated to the men and women of Fitchburg High School who "answered their nation's call to arms," serving in the different branches of the military, and as civilians. It is made of two rectangular blocks of dressed unpolished granite, resting on a single low rectangular base. One is taller than the other. Both have slanted tops on which are incised inscriptions. Included on the face of the smaller block is an additional dedication in memory of Robert A. Wentworth, Class President of the Class of 1940, who died at Iwo Jima in 1945. The monument stands about 3 1/2-4 feet high.

Billy Mundie Monument

A low, rectangular marker of unpolished granite, with an incised inscription and a polished border, was given in memory of Billy Mundie (1942-1958) by the Class of 1959. Resting nearly flush with the ground, it sits beneath a red maple tree at the left of the sidewalk that leads from the field to the steps of the Field House terrace.

Fitchburg High School Class of 1923 Sundial Monument

The limestone water fountain included in the 1924 expansion of Crocker Field was converted to a sundial in 1978 by the placement of a polished granite slab atop the fountain basin. An incised inscription recalls the happy hours spent at Crocker Field and gives thanks to Coach Amriott and Alvah Crocker. On the slab was originally mounted a projecting piece (now missing) intended to cast a shadow on incised markings that indicate the hours of the day.

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Fitchburg (Worcester), MACrocker Field Lighting Monument

A monument commemorating the gifts of donors to the project to light Crocker Field in 1988 stands between the Circle Street Ticket Booth and the Concession Stand. A dedication and the names of major donors are incised on the face of a polished granite plaque mounted in a concrete monument that stands about four feet high.

Red Raiders/ Crocker Field Plaque

An unpolished rectangular granite plaque is mounted flush with wall on the exterior of the baseball stadium, west of the main entrance to Crocker Field (visible in Photo # 1). Incised on the plaque and accented in red are the head of a Viking and an inscription that reads:

CROCKER FIELD
HOME OF THE RED RAIDERS
FITCHBURG HIGH SCHOOL
CLASS OF 1988

Landscaping and Changes to the Field Over Time

The entire Crocker Field complex was designed by landscape architects, so, the siting and arrangement of all of its major elements can be considered to be part of the landscape and of the landscaping plan. All of the buildings on the site, except the ca.1990 concession stand, two late 20th century wooden storage sheds, and a late 20th century wooden ticket booth are part of the original 1918 complex. The site of the existing tennis court is also original.

Several changes over time have occurred within the playing field area. Seasonal exchanges of space within the playing field area has been traditional throughout the history of Crocker Field. Since the baseball diamond and the football field occupy some of the same piece of ground, the playing field area is marked with lines for one or the other, according to the season. However, other more permanent changes have also occurred over time. For example, the short sprint section of the original running track was extended in 1924 when the grounds of the complex were expanded northward to River Street. At that time, also, a 1918 tennis court that had stood between the football stadium and the Broad Street fence was removed and two new tennis courts and a storage yard enclosed within a concrete wall were added on newly acquired land north of the original field. Compare Illustrations # 1 & 2 with Illustration # 3 for the changes that were made in 1924. Because of poor ground conditions in the spring, the baseball diamond was moved from its original 1918 position, directly in front of the baseball stadium, to its present location further east. Comparison of old photographs indicates that this move occurred between 1935 and 1940. The running track was enlarged and slightly reconfigured in 1988. At the same time, its surface was changed from cinders to a rubberized asphalt surface. This track extension required the removal of the two 1924 tennis courts and the 1924 storage yard and its walls. The

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short sprint track was extended northward at this time. The position of the former limestone drinking fountain, by then converted to a sundial monument, was also moved a short distance west to the opposite side of the concrete walk that runs along the west side of the short sprint track. The position of tracks for jumping, which had been located since 1918 east of the running track immediately in front of the football stadium, were moved as part of this project to the east side of the track near the river perimeter of the field.

In its broadest concept, the present landscaping follows the original plans for the site made by Olmsted Brothers at the time of the construction of the complex in 1918 and later by the same firm when the lot was expanded northward in 1924 (see Illustrations # 2 & 3). However, much of the sense of the field as a comfortable and cared-for private enclosure and much of its earlier abundance of green has been lost. The number of plantings has diminished over time as plants have matured, as they have been lost to weather damage, or as changes have been made to the field. Many of the mature plantings have grown very large in size. No thorough updating of the landscaping has been carried out to renew or restore the earlier planned designs.

A careful inventory of individual plants existing within the complex today will be necessary to determine precisely how closely the actual plant varieties and their placement in the present planting scheme follow the 1917 and 1924 plans. This is possible because the planting lists and plans made by the Olmsted firm still exist (see Illustrations # 2, & 3, and accompanying planting lists, 2A & 3A). However, major elements of the original planting scheme, clearly, still play an important role in the appearance of Crocker Field today. The most significant survival of Crocker Field's original plantings is a line of linden trees that marks the edge of the lot on Circle and Broad streets (Photos # 1, 2, 3, 4). Several of the original trees in this row at the north end of Broad Street and around the corner on River Street were badly damaged in 1989 and were replaced with new trees a short time later. These new linden trees (visible on the left of Photo # 3), of course, are much smaller than the mature original ones further to the south.

Privet hedges that are planted on the inside of the fences to provide greater privacy were prescribed in 1924 plans by Olmsted, as well. Although originally maintained as full-sized hedges (see Illustration # 8 E), many now appear nearly as if they were vines, providing only a thin screen on the fences. This limited growth seems to have been caused by the increased amount of shade produced by the now mature linden trees nearby. Trees at the west end of the field house are all that survive of the original planting scheme for that area. Only one of the plantings indicated for the area around the steps from the field to the Field House terrace survive. Some of the change in the amount of planting in this area can be attributed to the fact that the trees are now mature and occupy more space and provide greater shade than originally. A more important loss is that of a row of poplars that was originally planted along the outer wall of the football stand to soften its effect (see Illustration # 6B). Study of old photographs shows that these trees were removed sometime between 1946 and 1963. The removal of these trees may

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also have been related to their crowding by the linden trees along the fence nearby. The 1918 planting plan (Illustration # 2) calls for the planting of Boston Ivy on the outer walls of both the baseball and football stadiums and on the Field House. No ivy is allowed to grow at any of these locations today. However, some Boston Ivy can still be found growing on the Field House fence.

When Crocker Field was expanded northward to River Street in 1924 a concrete wall, marking the original northern boundary, and a row of poplar trees in front of it were removed (see Illustration # 8 A & B). In addition to the construction of tennis courts and a storage yard, the plan for the expanded area included the planting of numerous evergreen trees and extensive planting along the newly erected sections of wrought iron fence (see Illustrations # 3, 9B & D, 10 A & D, 11B). The planting of this area, together with the intentional rise in the terrain at this end of the complex, acted to screen the field from River Street. The wire or link fence of the tennis courts was planted with hedges around it to hide the courts and to provide more green at this end of the field (see Illustrations # 3, 12 & 13). Today, some of the original plan survives in this section of the field, despite 1988 changes and the additional loss of plantings in this area due to a microburst at about the same time. A once extensively planted area that stood south of the former enclosed storage yard no longer exists.

A concrete sidewalk located east of the present running track and a concrete retaining wall northwest of it are part of the original 1924 plan. Plantings are still found at the northwest corner of the field and along the north edges of the retaining wall and the sidewalk. Yet, despite replanting efforts following the track extension and the storm damage, the landscaping at this end of the field is much more sparse, less carefully planned, and allows less privacy than before.

An important contribution to the current landscaping of Crocker Field is a row of spruce trees, the gift of the Class of 1965, that extends along a major portion of the stone wall on the river perimeter of the field north of the tennis court (Photo # 8). The 1918 Olmsted landscaping plan (Illustration # 3) shows little planting in this area, calling for only Boston Ivy and Hall's Honeysuckle on the stone wall. A 1922 photograph of the field shows a few small trees and some bushes standing in front of the stone wall at the river's edge (see Illustration # 8 C). They may have been plants that were already growing there when Crocker Field was built. This seems to be true also of a row of large, mature trees (possibly elms) that are seen in the photograph growing on the river side of the stone wall. It may be that the present line of trees was planted after the tall trees on the river side of the stone wall were lost to age, disease, or natural disaster.

Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are recorded in the district or in the general area (within one mile), it is possible that sites are present. Prehistoric sites in Worcester County, especially in its northern region, are underreported. Amateur artifact collecting in this area can be documented for more

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Fitchburg (Worcester), MA

than 100 years; however, the number of sites recorded and published reports of excavations, surveys, and other studies by both amateurs and professionals is small. Levels of archaeological research for neighboring regions along the coastal plain to the east and the Connecticut River to the west are considerably higher. Environmental characteristics for the district represent locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, distance to wetlands) that are favorable indicators for many types of prehistoric sites. The district includes a well drained, level to moderately sloping alluvial terrace within 1000 feet of wetlands. The district lies on a bend in the Nashua River, a major tributary of the Merrimack River. Historic construction of probable late 19th or early 20th century residences in the area and Crocker Field have probably adversely affected the integrity of any prehistoric resources that may have been present near the original ground surface. Construction of Crocker Field included the removal of any buildings that were present, further removal of the topsoil, grading of the ground surface below the level of the topsoil and the addition of new loam. The site, however, is part of the Nashua River floodplain and may contain deeply buried and stratified prehistoric deposits. Given the above information and the size of the district (5.5 acres), a low to moderate potential exists for the recovery of prehistoric resources in the Crocker Field Historic District.

A low to moderate potential also exists for the recovery of historic archaeological resources within the district. No historic landuse has been identified for the Crocker Field area prior to the late 19th century. The area is shown as a vacant lot on the 1870 Worcester County Atlas. Structural evidence may survive from a wooden building shown on the 1895 Fitchburg Atlas near what is now Broad Street about halfway between Castle and River Streets. Similar archaeological evidence might also survive from seven buildings removed from the area when the field was extended northward to River Street in 1924. The buildings, mostly dwellings, included five structures made from wood and two of brick. Some buildings may have been related to manufacturing interests in the area. In general, however, the remains of any buildings in the area or historic sites were probably destroyed during preparation of the area for building and actual construction of the athletic facilities. Archaeological evidence of basement areas from dwellings might survive depending on the extent of grading. Ownership is unknown for the structures that predate development of Crocker Field. Given the above information, a low to moderate potential exists for the recovery of significant historic archaeological resources in the district.

(end)

Crocker Field

Name of Property

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 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

(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 # _____

Worcester

County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1918-1951

Significant Dates

1918 DEDICATION OF COMPLEX

1924 COMPLETION OF ADDITION

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/a

Architect/Builder

Landscape architects Olmsted Brothers; Percival

Gallagher, project manager

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Fitchburg (Worcester), MASignificance of Crocker Field

Crocker Field meets National Register Criteria A and C at the local level. Under Criterion A it is significant for its more than eighty years of continuous service as the major athletic field for the Fitchburg Public Schools. The complex is also significant for the decisive role it played in stimulating the establishment of a physical education program in the city's public schools. Outside of the specific programs of the schools, Crocker Field has served as the site of district and regional athletic competitions and professional sports exhibition events, which have added to its importance as a major local and regional landmark. Under Criterion C, Crocker Field is significant as a well-preserved example of the architectural and landscape work of the office of the important American landscape architectural firm, Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts.

Crocker Field and the Establishment of a Comprehensive Physical Education Program in the Fitchburg Public Schools

Dedicated on June 21, 1918, Crocker Field was a gift to the City of Fitchburg by Alvah T. Crocker, president and treasurer of Crocker, Burbank & Company, a local paper manufacturer. In a letter to the mayor dated January 1, 1917, Crocker stated the reasons for his donation:

In my opinion the public schools of the city require an adequate field in which the different out-of-door sports and contests, which count so much in the physical and moral development of our boys, can be held. The importance of thorough training in baseball, football and other athletic sports is well recognized...and will be of great benefit to our public spirit and civic unity.

At this time physical education programs in American public schools were still a relatively new idea. Organized sports, themselves, were somewhat new as well. Before about the second quarter of the 19th century, sports in the modern sense, with fixed rules, record keeping, and equality of entry, did not exist. But after the Civil War, organized sports began to take a major role in American life. Influential writers called for vigorous exercise for American youth.

Organized sports, including baseball and football, grew to take an increasingly important role in American society during the second half of the 19th century. Sports were seen not only as good for personal health, but they were also promoted as a way of building character. It was believed that participation in sports taught independence, self-reliance, courage, and discipline -- all qualities that were required in the growing and competitive world of big business in this flourishing capitalist society. Sports were also seen as a wholesome activity that provided a way to keep youth off of the streets, to Americanize immigrant children, and to keep workingmen with free time out of bars and billiard halls.

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During World War I the United States military inaugurated an extensive program of physical education and sports to condition recruits, giving legitimacy to the positive aspects of sports. Encouraged by this example and recognizing the importance of physical training and the value of organized play, public schools throughout the country adopted physical education and athletic programs following the war. It was within this philosophical setting that Crocker Field was built.

The importance of the gift of Crocker Field was noted in the City of Fitchburg School Report of 1917:

At this particular time of our national life when public thought has been focused upon the meaning and value of physical health, as a basis for civil, social, industrial, mental and physical, and hygienic soundness and progress, this gift comes with striking suggestiveness to the administrative officials.

The same report credited Alvah Crocker's gift of Crocker Field to the city as the stimulus to its progressive stance with regard to physical education and to its adoption of a physical education program in the Fitchburg schools before many other Massachusetts communities. At this time, physical education programs in Massachusetts public school were entirely at the discretion of the local school boards. There was no law requiring towns and cities to include physical education in the curricula of their schools. As a result of his gift the city quickly established a full scale physical education program in its schools, from the primary level through high school.

The 1917 school report also noted the timeliness of the gift in relationship to statewide efforts to encourage physical education in the public schools:

The opportuneness of this great gift may be seen by the...proposal now before the state legislature entitled

"AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE APPOINTMENT BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF A DIRECTOR OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TO HAVE SUPERVISION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS."

This report makes it clear that the gift of Crocker Field was directly responsible for the city's decision to adopt a physical education program in its schools no matter what state regulations were passed.

A definite outline of physical education is planned for our community from the lower grades up through the high school regardless of whether the proposed legislation goes into effect or not. Our opportunity is here. Our purpose is clear. Our obligations are distinct, and our gratitude for the opportunity to assume these obligations is not easily measured.

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Within only a few years after the dedication of Crocker Field, the city had a thorough program in effect. This was achieved with the further encouragement of the passage of the Massachusetts Compulsory Physical Education Act of 1921 -- "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR PHYSICAL TRAINING FOR PUPILS IN THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF THE COMMONWEALTH".

The Fitchburg school report of 1918 outlined the values taught through athletics and the role Crocker Field played in the city's physical education program in the schools:

There are certain moral and educational qualities, especially in the athletic phase of physical training, that may be valuably incorporated into the character and consciousness of pupils particularly in the upper grammar grades and high school years. Among these are physical and moral courage, the acquisition of will power and the determination to accomplish and carry through in face of impressive obstacles. In addition, self-control, self-reliance, the ability to co-operate with others, respect for the rights of others, self-sacrifice the submission of the will to another or the group, and many other such strengthening qualities can be cultivated by individual and group competitive exercises. This fruitful field of body and character development is now opened to us by the possession of the magnificent Crocker Field, the influence of which must expand in each succeeding year and work an effective improvement in the physical health and the civic spirit of the city in the long years to come.

Captions for photographs of Crocker Field published in the Fitchburg school reports of 1917, 1918, and 1922 further illustrate the School Department's view of the role of the complex and the value of physical education in the schools. One caption called the field "A Laboratory of Healthy Citizenship." Another named it "the starting point of good citizenship." The caption for a photograph showing a girls' exercise class being held at the field was, "Laying the Foundations of Individual and Community Health." A photograph of the Crocker Field entrance gate was entitled: "The Gateway to Virile Americanism."

The 1917 school report explained how the country's participation in World War I had heightened public awareness of the value of physical education:

The amazing number of young men who have been rejected by examining boards has given a decided stimulus to examination of an educational system which could send those boys forth into the world intellectually equipped to do a satisfactory work, but physically unfit to maintain some of the simplest forms of physical exercise and activity of daily life.

The Physical Education Program of the Fitchburg Public Schools During the Early Years of Crocker Field

The early educational philosophy surrounding the planning and building of the Crocker Field
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complex appears to have been oriented specifically toward boys and toward the importance of sports in the promotion of manly ideals. Most of the school athletic activities held here do appear to have been for boys, at the high school (and possibly also junior high school) level. Yet, girls athletic programs were also held at the field, probably from the very time of its opening. A photograph was published in the 1918 school report showing a girls' calisthenics class being held there. The program for girls seems to have included formal gymnastics and interclass games. The 1922 school report noted:

More interest than ever has been shown by the girls in the competitive interclass field hockey, basketball, and track activities. In the near future it will be necessary for the department to conduct inter-scholastic contests for the girls in their athletic activities."

However in 1923 it was reported:

Athletics for girls have never received enough attention. It is essential that girls as well as boys, should have the opportunity to derive the benefits which come through participation in vigorous athletic activities. Our girls should as soon as proper accommodations are available, be provided the same opportunities our boys now enjoy.

The accommodations being referred to were a gymnasium where girls' physical education classes could be held. There was not gymnasium space for a full girls' program because available gymnasium space at a new junior high school was apparently given over to junior high and high school boys' programs as a first priority. The need for additional gymnasiums for the city's schools, primary through high school, was recognized at this time as necessary not only to provide a complete physical education program for girls but also to allow the city to meet fully the requirements of the new Massachusetts Compulsory Physical Education law (1921).

By 1924 a physical education program had been inaugurated in all but the first three grades of the Fitchburg schools. Plans were under way to extend the program to those grades, as well. At that time, the fundamental aims of the physical education department for the high school and junior high school levels of the city's schools were:

- 1) gymnastics, calisthenics, drill, apparatus work, tactics, games and dances (apparently for both girls and boys)
- 2) general athletics for all boys and girls in the formation of inter-room and inter-class athletics and for boys only, organized inter-scholastic competitive athletics in football, basketball, baseball, and track

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While it is clear that the organized inter-scholastic competitive athletics for boys were held at Crocker Field, current research has not shown exactly which of the other programs in the high school and junior high school curriculum were also held there at that time.

The Site for Crocker Field

The site chosen for the city's new Crocker Field athletic complex was a four-and-one-half acre parcel of land along a bend in the Nashua River at the junction of River and Circle streets. This site is shown on the 1870 Worcester County Atlas map of Fitchburg as a vacant lot. No owner is given. The 1895 Fitchburg atlas shows it as an open lot with a single unidentified wooden building standing near what is now Broad Street about half way between Circle and River streets. Again, no owner is given. The 1898 Worcester County Atlas map of Fitchburg shows this lot as the property of the Parkhill Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of fine gingham and zephyrs. Although the company is no longer in operation, the mill complex still stands opposite Crocker Field near the intersection of Circle and Broad streets. By the time this lot was selected as the site of Crocker Field, it had already been used for sporting events for some time and was known as the "Circle Street baseball field".

The first Fitchburg High School football team was organized in 1894. Current research has not shown where the high school team practiced or played their games before the opening of Crocker Field. However, a framed 1911 photograph hanging in the Assembly Room of the Field House at Crocker Field shows a group of Fitchburg High School football players on what is believed to be this same field before Alvah Crocker gave it as a gift to the city.

Alvah T. Crocker

The donor of Crocker Field was Alvah Tufts Crocker (1858-1931), who is also known as Alvah Crocker, II (see copy of portrait photograph, Illustration # 14). The grandson of Alvah Crocker and the son of Charles T. Crocker (1833-1911), he was an 1879 graduate of Harvard University. From 1910 to 1931 he was the president and treasurer of Crocker, Burbank & Company, an important Fitchburg paper company. Established in 1851, the company was originally the partnership of Mr. Crocker's grandfather, Alvah Crocker, and Gardner S. Burbank. Alvah T. Crocker's father, Charles T. Crocker, succeeded his own father in the business. In turn, Alvah T. and his brother, Charles T. Crocker, Jr., became the third generation to operate the family business.

A history of Crocker, Burbank & Company describes Alvah T. Crocker as "the financial genius who carried Crocker, Burbank through the years of its greatest prosperity." It also notes his "unfailing generosity and civic leadership." Civic leadership was a trait for which the earlier generations of the Crocker family were also known. For example, his grandfather was responsible for leading efforts to bring the railroad to Fitchburg in 1845.

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Paper manufacturing was one of Fitchburg's major industries, together with textiles, machinery, firearms, and other metal products. During the early 20th century, Crocker, Burbank & Company was probably the most important of the city's several paper manufacturers. In 1912 the company owned eight mills, employed 700 people, and had one of the largest payrolls in the city. Specializing in high grade papers, it enjoyed a wide reputation for the quality of its book, card, and Bristol papers.

The rapid growth and expansion of the company during the early years of the 20th century were linked to its relationship with the Curtis Publishing Company of Philadelphia. Crocker, Burbank supplied the paper for Curtis' widely popular magazines, the monthly Ladies' Home Journal and the weekly Saturday Evening Post. Each magazine had a circulation of about 1,600,000 by the 1910's.

Alvah Crocker and his brother were instrumental in establishing a long-term relationship with Curtis. They convinced elder members of their firm to take the risk of extending credit to Curtis before its publications had attained the resounding success that they were to achieve and to sustain for over fifty years. Out of gratitude for this trust, Curtis gave its continued business to Crocker, Burbank over a period of many years. It was Curtis' demand for paper that was chiefly responsible for the great success and continual growth of Crocker, Burbank during the early 20th century.

The Planning of the Crocker Field Complex

As planners for the project, Alvah Crocker hired Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts. Olmsted was to design an athletic complex incorporating a baseball diamond, a football field, two tennis courts, a running track, and a field house. The first plans were drawn late in 1916. Current research has not identified the architect for the buildings on the site. Landscape architect Percival Gallagher was in charge of the planning and execution of the initial 1916-1918 Crocker Field project, yet, it is not clear whether or not he was also the architect for the Crocker Field buildings. Neither is it known how the Olmsted office typically handled the architectural components of their projects.

Alvah Crocker wanted excellent, durable, and handsome facilities for the children of Fitchburg and his chief concern was to provide his city with the best athletic complex possible. A 1917 newspaper article announcing the gift, stated that Crocker "has simply instructed the architects to lay out the best field they can design, and when it is built he will pay the bills." Although study of the correspondence for the project shows that this statement was an exaggeration of fact, it does largely express Crocker's intent. To protect his investment and to insure the long-term maintenance of the field, the donor also provided a trust fund of \$38,000.

The quality and durability of the complex was an important aspect of the plan right from the beginning, as the same newspaper article noted:

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One of the uppermost thoughts, in the minds of both Mr. Crocker and the architects, is to provide a field so substantial in its construction that its upkeep expense will be practically nothing for years to come. The materials will be carefully selected, and reinforced construction of the strongest known types will be applied to the stands and buildings.

The truth of this statement is borne out in Olmsted's records for the job, which show that the best and most durable materials were used wherever the cost was not prohibitive. One example of the substitution of one material for another in order to save on cost is the use of terracotta blocks instead of concrete for the curtain walls of the stadiums. Although the terracotta was cheaper, it was considered to be a very durable material requiring little maintenance over time.

Olmsted Brothers and Percival Gallagher

Olmsted Brothers was the partnership of John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920) and Frederick Law Olmsted (1870-1957), Jr., successors to the noted landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, the "father of American landscape architecture." John Charles Olmsted was Olmsted's nephew/stepson and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. was his son. Active between 1898 and 1961, the firm continued to operate under the same name even after the death of John Charles Olmsted in 1920 and the retirement of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. in 1949. Olmsted's sons were successors to their father's highly successful landscape architecture practice. The brothers took on several associates as partners after 1906. Percival Gallagher, who was in charge of the Crocker Field project, was one of these.

Percival Gallagher (1874-1934) graduated from Harvard University in 1894 and was associated with the Olmsted firm at two separate periods between 1906 and his death at age sixty in 1934. During an interim period he was a partner in the firm of Pray & Gallagher. During his association with Olmsted Brothers, he played an important part in the planning of the Essex, Union, and Passaic County park systems in New Jersey and the landscape of the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial Exposition. He was also in charge of work undertaken by the firm at Phillips Andover Academy in Andover, Massachusetts.

One of the best known landscape architecture firms in the country during the early 20th century when Crocker Field was designed, the firm of Olmsted Brothers was responsible for landscape designs not only in Massachusetts and New England, but all over the country. Their work included projects of all types -- from parks and playgrounds, to college and school campuses, subdivisions and suburban communities, to church grounds, country clubs, resorts and hotels, industrial complexes, and private estates.

The records of the Olmsted firm from 1857 to 1950 indicate that, between the Olmsted Brothers and their predecessors, the firm drew up plans for as many as 650 public parks and recreation

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areas. The National Association for Olmsted Parks' Master List of Design Projects by the Olmsted Firm 1857-1950, includes a number of projects called "Field" (as in "Crocker Field"). Dated between the 1890's and 1925, most were located in Massachusetts. Although it is not clear how many of these projects were actually executed, this list suggests that the firm may have been responsible for the designs of several completed athletic or baseball fields.

The master list of Olmsted projects cited above indicates that the firm had done landscape designs in Fitchburg possibly as early as 1889. Projects include landscape designs for the dwelling of A. T. Cross in 1889 and for Charles A. Cross in 1892-1893. The Olmsted firm also worked for Alvah Crocker himself before they were commissioned to design Crocker Field. Crocker's estate, The Knoll, in Fitchburg is listed as an Olmsted project with on-going designs carried out between 1892 and 1925. A planting list filed together with the Crocker Field project at the Olmsted archives indicates that in 1923 the firm did plantings for "Cottages on Nichols Road" owned by Crocker. Olmsted is also listed as having prepared designs for West Fitchburg Park in Fitchburg in 1912 and for the Fitchburg Sewage Filtration Plant in that same year. Current research has not discovered any further information about any of these other Fitchburg projects.

Too little research has yet been done on the work of Olmsted Brothers to say exactly what their landscape philosophy was, in general, or, more specifically, what it was for ball fields and athletic complexes. However, the example of Crocker Field suggests that the firm may have adhered closely to the philosophy of the original Olmsted.

The approach of Frederick Law Olmsted was to create a simple organic landscape plan based upon the principles of subordination and separation. With the goal of creating a functional but pleasing landscape, he subordinated individual elements to the overall design and separated conflicting uses from one another. No individual plant, building, or piece of sculpture was to be viewed solely for its own beauty or interest. Instead, he believed that a powerful scenic effect could be achieved only by the subordination of all parts to create a single unified plan and statement. The separation of uses gave each an environment appropriate to its character and purpose. These different environments were then integrated into an overall plan. The result was a landscape that was satisfying to its various users and which was richer for the contributions of the disparate elements. In keeping with the Romantic taste of the second half of the 19th century, he preferred asymmetrical, naturalistic plans and a simple and pleasing rural effect.

Despite the quiet elegance, substantial character, and varying sizes of Crocker Field's field house, stadiums, ticket booth, concession stand, and fences, their simplicity and the similarity of their design and materials lets no one of them wrest undue attention from the others. The plantings that are interspersed among the buildings and about the grounds of the complex soften the harsh effects of concrete, stucco, or iron, while enveloping the open playing fields in a cloak

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of greenery. All of the parts work together to create a unified and pleasing setting, both from outside and in.

While team sports that attract large crowds, football, baseball, and track, are given the major portion of the Crocker Field complex, separate settings were provided for the individual sport of tennis. The tennis courts were placed in more intimate settings on the quieter perimeter of the lot, enclosed in high, hedge- or vine-covered fences to give them the privacy and tranquillity required by the game.

Despite the early 20th century trend toward axial, geometrical landscape designs, corresponding to the popular Classical Revival architecture of the day, the landscape of Crocker Field still reflects the Romantic taste of the elder Olmsted. Romantic elements of the design are the non-axial, asymmetrical arrangement of the complex and the curved paths and the sinuous form of the planted areas as they were originally designed

Models for the Project

Olmsted records for the Crocker Field job indicate that models for the project from the very earliest stages of planning were the athletic field at Worcester Academy, a private preparatory school in nearby Worcester, Massachusetts, and the much larger Soldiers' Field athletic field and stadium at Harvard University. Worcester Academy may have been the work of the Olmsted office, since that institution is listed as one of their clients. Yet, no dates or other details of the Olmsted-Worcester Academy relationship have been discovered in current research. Further study is necessary to understand what elements of the Worcester Academy complex contributed to the design of Crocker Field. However, the influence of Soldiers' Field stadium is clear. The curved form of Soldiers' Field stadium, its Classical style, and the use of concrete as the building material were major influences on the design for Crocker Field, despite the much smaller size and scale of the Fitchburg complex. Soldiers' Field was widely recognized at the time not only because it was the first college stadium to be built in the United States but also because it was a pioneering example of the use of reinforced concrete for large structures. The U-shaped Soldiers' Field stadium, designed by the Boston architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White and built in 1903, was modeled after ancient Greek stadia and Roman arenas.

Architectural Style

The overall architectural style of the buildings and stadiums of Crocker Field can be said to be a version of the Classical Revival style. During the early 20th century, this style was widely popular in the United States for commercial and institutional buildings and even for town houses and country estates. It was first made popular by the grand and imposing Classically-inspired buildings of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago and held sway as a predominant American style well into the mid-20th century. In its more formal expressions, it was typically rendered in limestone (or concrete created to look like limestone), took the form of Renaissance or Baroque palaces (highly ornamented with Classical motifs), and was symmetrical in design.

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The expression of the Classical Revival style used for Crocker Field is less highly ornamented and less formal. The tone for Crocker Field is set by the Field House, which can be distinguished more precisely as Picturesque/Classical in style. With elements derived from picturesque English village architecture and from the Classicism of the Renaissance and Baroque styles, this trend in early 20th century architecture was an outgrowth of the Queen Anne style. It was made popular by English architects of the period, such as Sir Edwin Lutyens. Characteristic of the Picturesque/Classical style is the generally simple overall treatment, the high-pitched roofs, picturesque irregularity of arrangement, touches of Classical detailing and trim, and the use of a stucco finish.

The more relaxed feeling of the Field House is carried over through the rest of the buildings and structures of the complex. This is achieved by the use of the stucco finish for the stadiums and for the other buildings. The forms and ornament used for these components of the complex are Classical, yet a more casual approach is seen in the asymmetrical (not typically Classical) arrangement of the stadiums and in the non-axial placement of the buildings on the grounds. The Olmsted office must have found the Picturesque/Classical style for the Field House and a less rigidly Classical expression of the Classical Revival style for the other buildings and structures more appropriate than a full-blown Classical Revival treatment. The substantial and stylish, but subdued, appearance created here may have seemed better suited to a sports complex than the elaborate formality of the Classical Revival. Less commanding of attention, buildings in this style also lent themselves more easily to integration into a landscaped whole. Plantings of trees and vines around the major buildings and structures of the complex were intended to blend them into the surroundings and to provide a picturesque and comfortable setting.

Photographs taken by the Olmsted firm in 1918 at the time of the completion of the project show the complex as it appeared at that time (see Illustrations 4, 5, 6 & 7). More nearly the intended effect of the buildings and structures within the landscape can be seen in a 1922 panoramic photograph (Illustration # 8), which shows it after plantings were a little more mature.

Addition to the Field

The original Crocker Field project was completed in 1918, yet as early as 1921 discussions were underway between Alvah Crocker and Olmsted Brothers regarding a possible expansion of the complex. Crocker decided in May of 1921 not to proceed at that time with the project for financial reasons. Nonetheless, by August of the following year he was again talking with Olmsted's Percival Gallagher about resuming planning for the expansion. The plan was to extend the field northward all the way to River Street, an effort that required the removal of seven buildings from the site. Mostly dwellings, five of the removed buildings were of wood and two of brick. In October Crocker agreed with the contractors Wiley & Foss to do the work at a cost of approximately \$36,376. The project was to include tennis courts, a hockey field, a storage yard, the extension of the short-sprint running track, and the installation of a monumental

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drinking fountain. Also included was the removal of the earlier fence at the north end of the field and the construction along River Street of a new iron and concrete fence to match the existing fence around the remainder of the property.

The new lot was cleared, stripped, and graded to provide a surface in keeping with the existing field. New topsoil was added. A quick inspection of Olmsted plans suggests that this work did not involve extensive earth removal but that it involved both the removal and addition of earth. Drains were installed and water pipes were extended. A retaining wall was built at the northeast corner of the new tennis courts. Another one was built a short distance northwest of the tennis courts. Concrete curbs and walks were installed and the area was landscaped. Olmsted staff involved in the plans and execution of the project included Percival Gallagher and W. L. Phillips. Photographs made in 1924 by the Olmsted firm at the time of the completion of the project give an idea of the appearance of the area included in the expansion (see Illustrations # 9, 10 & 11).

The Role of Crocker Field in the Fitchburg Community and the Region: Past, Present, and Future

Since its construction Crocker Field has been in continuous service as the major athletic field in Fitchburg. Crocker Field is used seven days a week during the school year for physical education classes, interscholastic sports events, and for other activities of the Fitchburg Public Schools. Crocker Field is the site of high school and middle school varsity sports. For the elementary schools, intramural and interscholastic competitions in soccer and relay races are held at the field. Students who attend schools too far from the field to walk are taken by bus to scheduled school sports activities being held at Crocker Field. The field is within a five-mile radius of all present Fitchburg Public Schools.

When the city's new high school building is completed, soon, Crocker Field will continue to be used, although some playing fields are to be included with the new school. High school varsity football and track will still be held at Crocker Field. A baseball field located on the grounds of the new high school will be used for varsity baseball, while junior varsity and freshman baseball will continue to be held at Crocker Field. All physical education classes for a new school that will occupy the old high school building will hold its physical education classes and varsity sports at the field.

In addition to serving as a site for athletic events for the city's schools, the field is the traditional site for the Fitchburg High School graduation. Outside of the specific programs of the schools, Crocker Field serves, and has served for many years in the past, as the site of district and regional athletic competitions and professional sports exhibition events. These events have added to its importance as a major local and regional landmark. Because of the superiority of the Crocker Field complex, it also serves as the site for regional athletic competitions. The annual Fitchburg vs. Leominster high school football game, a Thanksgiving tradition for generations, is played at

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the field. District high school championships in track and field are also traditionally held here. Some of the earliest Special Olympics competitions were held at Crocker Field. Over many years, exhibition events held at the field have brought nationally famous athletes, such as Babe Ruth, to Fitchburg and to the region. Bernardi Bowl, located at St. Bernard's School, a parochial school, is the only football field in Fitchburg other than the one at Crocker Field.

Preservation Concerns

The structures that make up Crocker Field, have held up well and have required few major repairs over time because they were well-built and were of high quality to start with and because they have always been well maintained. However, now that the complex has been in operation for over eighty years, age is beginning to take its toll. The need is growing urgent for major repairs.

Having played an important role in the lives of so many Fitchburg citizens for several generations, Crocker Field is outstandingly an object of community pride. There is strong sentiment among the local citizenry for the preservation of this local landmark. The City of Fitchburg, the Fitchburg Public Schools, and interested citizens are working together to establish a plan and to raise funds for major masonry repairs and for landscaping that will allow the complex to continue its historic role. It is hoped that grants and public fundraising will provide the funds necessary to restore Crocker Field for future generations to use and enjoy.

Archaeological Significance

Since patterns of prehistoric occupation in Fitchburg are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Prehistoric sites in this area can be important by contributing information to our understanding of the role and importance of upland/interior sites within local/regional Native American subsistence and settlement systems. Prehistoric sites in the district may contribute information that indicates the importance of sites in the Nashua River drainage to sites within the larger Merrimack River system. Prehistoric sites in this area could be part of a larger, possibly seasonal settlement network of sites based along the Nashua River, the Merrimack River or part of a specialized adaptation to local environments in the uplands and Worcester Plateau locale. Many subsistence and settlement theories indicate prehistoric socio/political/economic boundaries are based within riverine basins. Prehistoric sites in the district may enable a test of various theories relating to riverine adaptations and the importance of ranked streams within the same overall drainage.

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to document historic structures removed for construction of Crocker Field and poorly documented today. Additional documentary research combined with archaeological survey and testing can help identify the

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owners, location, date of construction and function of the seven or eight buildings that were demolished and activities that may have occurred on each property. Current evidence indicates most buildings were limited to residential use. Historical and archaeological research may identify other functional uses of the buildings possibly related to industrial/manufacturing activities in the area. In general, however, research significance of historic archaeological resources in the area is probably limited as a result of poor integrity and the recent period of potential remains.

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Atlas of the City of Fitchburg, Massachusetts. New York: D. L. Miller & Company, 1895.
Atlas of Worcester County, Massachusetts. Springfield: L. J. Richards, 1898.

City and State Documents

Fitchburg City Documents, School Reports, 1917, 1918, 1922, 1923, 1924
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Acts: 1881, Chapter 193; 1921, Chapter 360

Percival Gallagher and Olmsted Brothers

Beveridge, Charles E. and others, compilers. The Master List of the Design Projects Of the Olmsted Firm, 1857-1950. Boston: National Association for Olmsted Parks and Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks, 1987.

Shettleworth, Earle G., compiler. "Percival Gallagher" in "Brief Biographies of American Architects Who Died Between 1897 and 1947". Transcribed from American Art Annual and Who's Who in American Art, 1897-1947. www.upenn.edu/sah/aame/bioint.html

"The Family Tree of The Olmsted Firms" (photocopy of page from unknown source). Olmsted Biographical Files, Job # 359, Percival Gallagher. Courtesy National Park Service, Frederic Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

Plans and Correspondence

Olmsted Brothers Correspondence, Job # 6439, microfilm, Library of Congress, 1916-1950's.

Olmsted Brothers Plans, Job # 6439, Olmsted National Historic Site, Brookline, Massachusetts

Crocker Field Plans, Fitchburg School Department, Crocker Field, Field House, Fitchburg

Alvah T. Crocker and Crocker, Burbank & Company

"Crocker, Burbank & Company" in Fitchburg: A Quality City, Manufacturing and Mercantile Review. Fitchburg: Fitchburg Sentinel, 1912.

Wheelwright, William B. and Kean, Sumner. The Lengthened Shadow of One Man. Fitchburg: Crocker, Burbank & Company Ass'n, 1957.

Sports History

Charleton, James H. "Harvard Stadium National Register Nomination", 1978. Files Massachusetts Historical Commission.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Crocker Field Historic District
Fitchburg (Worcester), MA

Section number 9 Page 2

Goldstein, Warren. "Sports in the Twentieth Century" in MacMillan Compendium: American Social History. New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1993.

Gorn, Elliott J. "Sports Through the Nineteenth Century" in MacMillan Compendium: American Social History. New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1993.

Historic Photographs

Olmsted Brothers Photographs, Olmsted Job # 6439, National Park Service, Olmsted National Historic Site, Brookline, Massachusetts.

Crocker Field Photographs, Fitchburg School Department, Field House, Crocker Field, Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

Crocker Field Photographs, Fitchburg Historical Society, Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

1988 Tom Shea Photographs of Alterations to North End of Field, personal collection of Tom Shea, groundskeeper, Crocker Field, Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

Interviews

S. Ceccacci with Tom Shea, Crocker Field groundskeeper, Fitchburg School Department, Fitchburg, Massachusetts,
August 19, 1999.

S. Ceccacci with Doug Grutchfield, Fitchburg Public Schools Athletic Department, May 18, 2000.

Clippings

"Alvah Crocker Makes Princely Gift to City", Fitchburg Sentinel, January 2, 1917, p. 1

"Crocker Field, Dedication, Friday, June 21, 1918", dedication program

"Sketch Showing Plans for Crocker Field Extension", Fitchburg Sentinel, November 8, 1922.

"Purpose, Meaning of Crocker Field Gift", unidentified newspaper clipping April 11, 1959.

(end)

Crocker Field
Name of Property

Worcester, MA
County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property 5.5 Acres

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 19	269500	4719530		3.		
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
2.			4.			
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
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 Susan McD. Ceccacci, consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date May 2001
street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Fitchburg School Department
street & number 376 South Street telephone 978-345-3227
city or town Fitchburg state MA zip code 01420

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Crocker Field Historic District
Fitchburg (Worcester), MA

Section number 10 Page 1

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of Crocker Field are delimited by Circle Street on the south, Broad Street on the west, River Street on the north and the Nashua River on the east. The property is the same as shown on the City of Fitchburg Assessors' Map 29, Lot 5.

(end)

Boundary Justification

The boundaries given for Crocker Field are the same now as they were when the field was enlarged from its original 1918 boundaries in the early 1920's. The area enclosed within these boundaries are the historic limits of the field.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetCrocker Field Historic District
Fitchburg (Worcester), MASection number photo Page 1

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Susan Ceccacci

Negatives: at Fitchburg Public Schools

Photos marked * date from August, 1999; photos marked ** date from January 1998

1. Main entrance gate, ticket booth at right, baseball stadium at left. *
2. Baseball stadium and linden trees, Broad St. entrance gate with ticket window. *
3. West perimeter of field with Broad St. gate. View looking north on Broad St. *
4. Field house and field house gate. Looking west from Circle Street. *
5. Field house main entrance, looking north. **
6. Rear of field house with terrace stairs, tennis court, looking southeast. **
7. Running track and football field seen from baseball stadium, looking north. *
8. Eastern perimeter of field with concrete wall, war memorial, seasonal bleachers, looking south. *
9. Baseball stadium at left, football stadium with running track, looking west. *
10. Southern perimeter of field with field house on left, looking south. **
11. Interior, assembly room of field house, looking south east. **

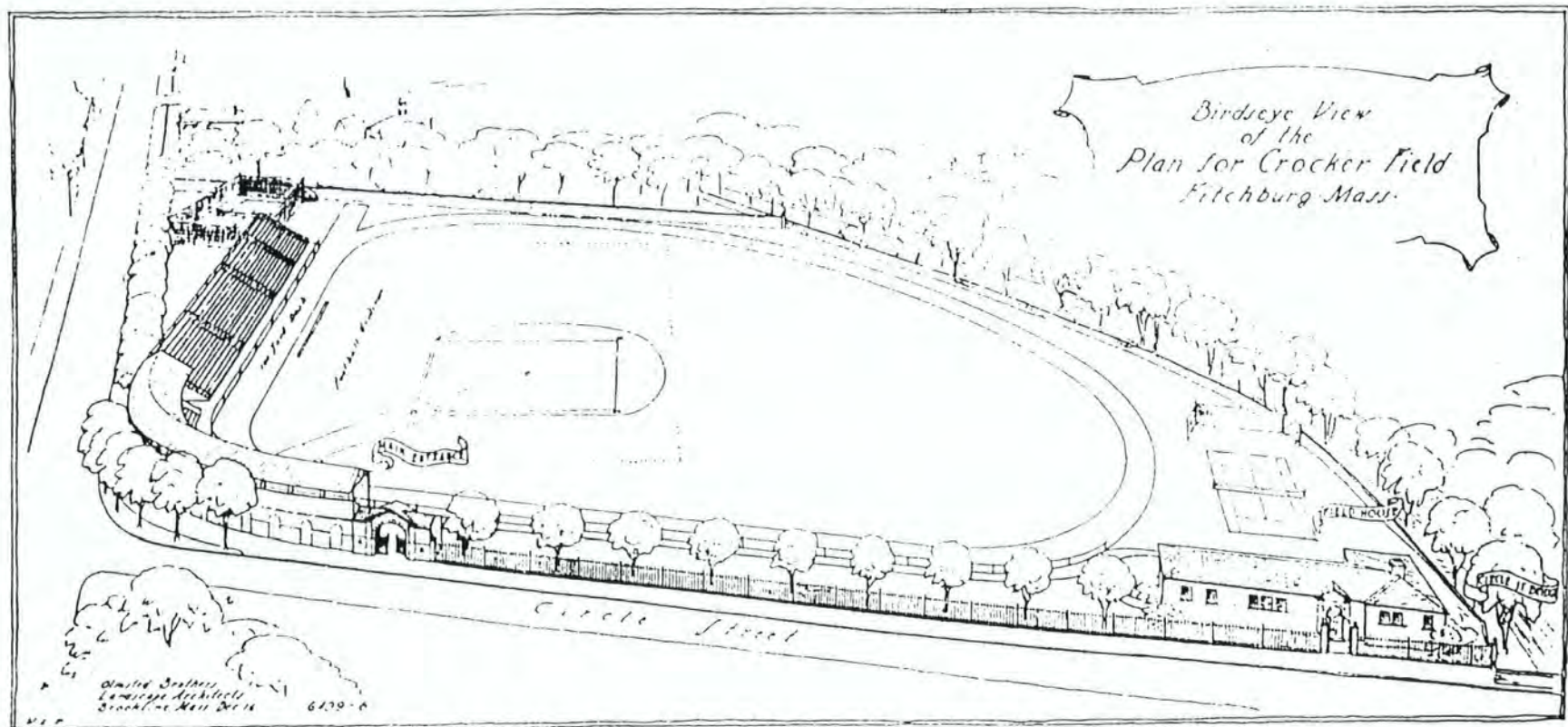
ILLUSTRATIONS

12. 1916 drawing of proposed complex
- 1A. Blueprints, 1917
13. Planting plan, revised 1918
- 2A. Olmsted Brothers planting order list
- 2B. 1987 topographical plan prior to enlargement of track.
14. 1923 planting plan, Crocker Field extension.
- 3A. Olmsted Brothers planting order list, 1923
- 3B. Alterations to running track and field events, 1988
 - a. 1918 Olmsted photographs of Crocker Field
- 8A-E. 1922 panorama, Grammar School Physical Education Demonstration
 - b. 1924 Olmsted photographs, Crocker Field
15. 1988 panorama view of north end of field
16. 1988 views of tennis courts prior to removal
17. Alvah Crocker

(end)

DISTRICT DATA SHEET, CROCKER FIELD, FITCHBURG, MA

MHC#	Historic Name	Date	Style	Type	Material	Resource/Status
243	Fences/Gates & Railing	1918, 1924	Classical Rev.	landscape	iron/concrete	S/C
	Boundary walls	1918, 1924	astylistic	landscape	granite, concrete	S/C
	Ticket booth	1918	Classical Rev.	sports facility	stucco	B/C
	Ticket booth	late 20 th c.?	astylistic	sports facility	wood	B/NC
	Concession stand	c. 1990 ?	Classical Rev.	sports facility	stucco	B/NC
	Covered stadium	1918	Classical Rev.	sports facility	concrete/terra cotta	B/C
	Uncovered stadium	1918	Classical Rev.	sports facility	concrete/terra cotta	B/C
	Field House	1918	Classical Rev./ Picturesque	sports facility	concrete/terra cotta	B/C
	Storage shed	late 20 th c.	astylistic	sports facility	wood	B/NC
	Storage shed/concession stand	late 20 th c.	astylistic	sports facility	wood	B/NC
	Fountain/Sundial	1924; 1978	Classical	monument	limestone/granite	O/C
	Retaining Wall	1924	astylistic	landscape	concrete	S/C
	Tennis Court	1918		sports facility	asphalt	SI/C
	Football field	1988 (slight relocation from 1918 location)				
				sports facility	grass	SI/C
	Baseball diamond	1935-1940		sports facility	grass	SI/C
	Light poles	1988		sports facility	metal	O/C
	Jumping pit	1988		sports facility	sand	SI/NC
	Semi-Circular court	1988		sports facility	asphalt	SI/NC
	Crocker monument	1933		monument	granite/bronze	O/C
	War Mem. Monument	c. 1950		monument	granite	O/C
	Billy Mundie Monum.	c. 1959		monument	granite	O/NC
	Field Lighting Monum.	c. 1988		monument	granite	O/NC
	Fitchburg Raiders Plaque	1988		monument	granite	O/NC



1916 DRAWING OF PROPOSED COMPLEX

ILLUSTRATION 1

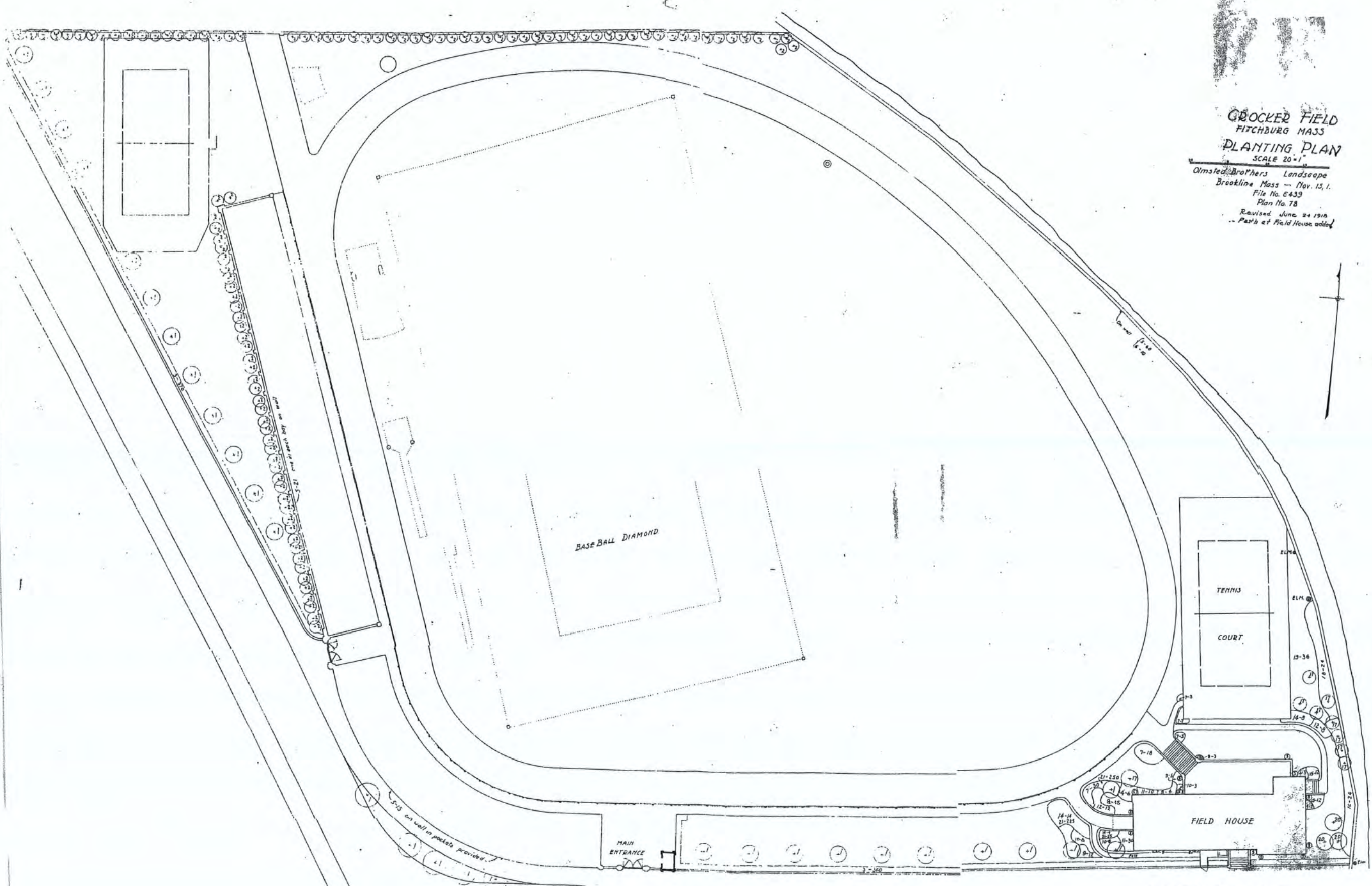
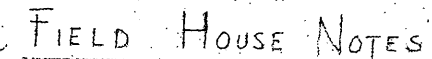


ILLUSTRATION 2

PLAN FEB. 1923
SCALE 1" = 50'
Alvah Crocker to City of Fitchburg Nov. 27, 1917
Total area included between street line and
river wall = 6.489 Acres



REPAIR TRIM AS NECESSARY.
REPAIR DAMAGED DOOR SILETS AND OVERHAUL BUTTER.
BASEMENT STAIRS WALL ERODED FROM WEATHER.
REPAIRS NEEDED TO LINTEL EXTERIOR DOOR COACHES ROOM
LOCATION GAR. CHUTE ROOF - REMOVE & CLOSE UP.
TERRACE WALL HAS PULLED AWAY FROM MAIN FIELD HOUSE
REMOVE & REBUILD.
REPAIR OR REPLACE ALL WINDOW TRIM & SASH
AS REQUIRED.

LOCATION OF SPALLED CONCRETE FIREPROOFING
POTENTIAL HAZARD TO PASSENGERS. REPAIR
REPAIR & REHABILITATE CONCRETE COVER
AS NECESSARY.

FIELD NOTES - ANONG - 10/25/73
- W. J. TIERBURN 10/25/73

CROCKER FIELD FITCHBURG, MASS.	
LOCATION	PLAN D-1
THE THOMPSON & LIGHTNER CO., INC. BROOKLINE - MASS.	
DES. - AND. EKP -	12-15-73 SCALE 1" = 51'

ILLUSTRATION 1A

File No. _____
Date of List _____
No. of Plan. 70 _____
By Frt. _____
By Ex. _____
Plants to arrive _____
Estimated Cost, \$ _____
Transport'n. _____ %
Total _____
Proposed Appropriation 9550

Amelia

Planting Order List for

Send Notice to L. L. Watmore
Crocker Field Station

Authorized.....*me. h. d.*

No. and Abbr.	Scientific and Popular Name	Am'ts forwarded	Quan.	Total Quan.	Bill Ck.	Size and Condition	Where from	Price	By	Cost	Estimates and Notes
1	<i>Tilia vulgaris</i> European Tree L.			29	✓	2 1/2"	Am'ts	5 00		14 50	
2	<i>Lombardy Poplar</i>			113	✓	12-14"	Am'ts	70		79 10	
3	<i>Ligustrum Amurensis</i> Amur Privet			730	✓	4-5'	Am'ts	15		108 50	
4	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> Common Privet			12	✓	4-5'		18		2 16	
5	<i>Ampelopsis Vitis</i> Boston Ivy			115	✓	3-yr.		15		17 25	
6	<i>Lonicera Hatteriana</i> Hall's Honeysuckle			10	✓	3-yr.		12		1 20	
7	<i>Berberis Thunbergii</i> Japanese Barberry			65	✓	18-24"		15		9 75	
8	<i>Floribunda</i> Kilburn's Golden Honeysuckle			5	✓	3-4'		12		6 00	
9	<i>Spirea Van Houttei</i> Bridal Wreath			35	✓	3-4'		15		5 25	
11	<i>Viburnum Lentum</i> Wayfaring Tree			18	✓	3-4'		15		2 70	
11	<i>Symphoricarpos racemosa</i> Snowberry			40	✓	2-3'		15		6 00	
12	<i>Rosa rugosa</i> Caroline's Rose			20	✓	2 1/2-3'		22		4 40	
13	<i>Philadelphus</i> Not used					4-5'		20		5 00	
14	<i>Lonicera Japonica</i> Bush Honeysuckle			26	✓	3-4'		20		5 20	
15	<i>Ligustrum Nitzschii</i> Fragrant Privet			44	✓	2 1/2-3'		18		7 92	
16	<i>Sambucus Canadensis</i> American Elder			24	✓	1 1/2-2'		12		2 88	
17	<i>Corylus americana</i>			9	✓	6-7'		76		6 76	
18	<i>Viburnum opulus</i> High-bush Cranberry			24	✓	3-4'		15		3 60	
19	<i>Rhamnus cuneata</i>			36	✓	3-4'		15		5 40	
22	<i>Cornus alba</i>					2-3'		12			
20	<i>Taxus canadensis</i> Common Hemlock			3	✓	4-5'		3 00		9 00	
21	<i>Koeleria paniculata</i> Panicum										

389
418

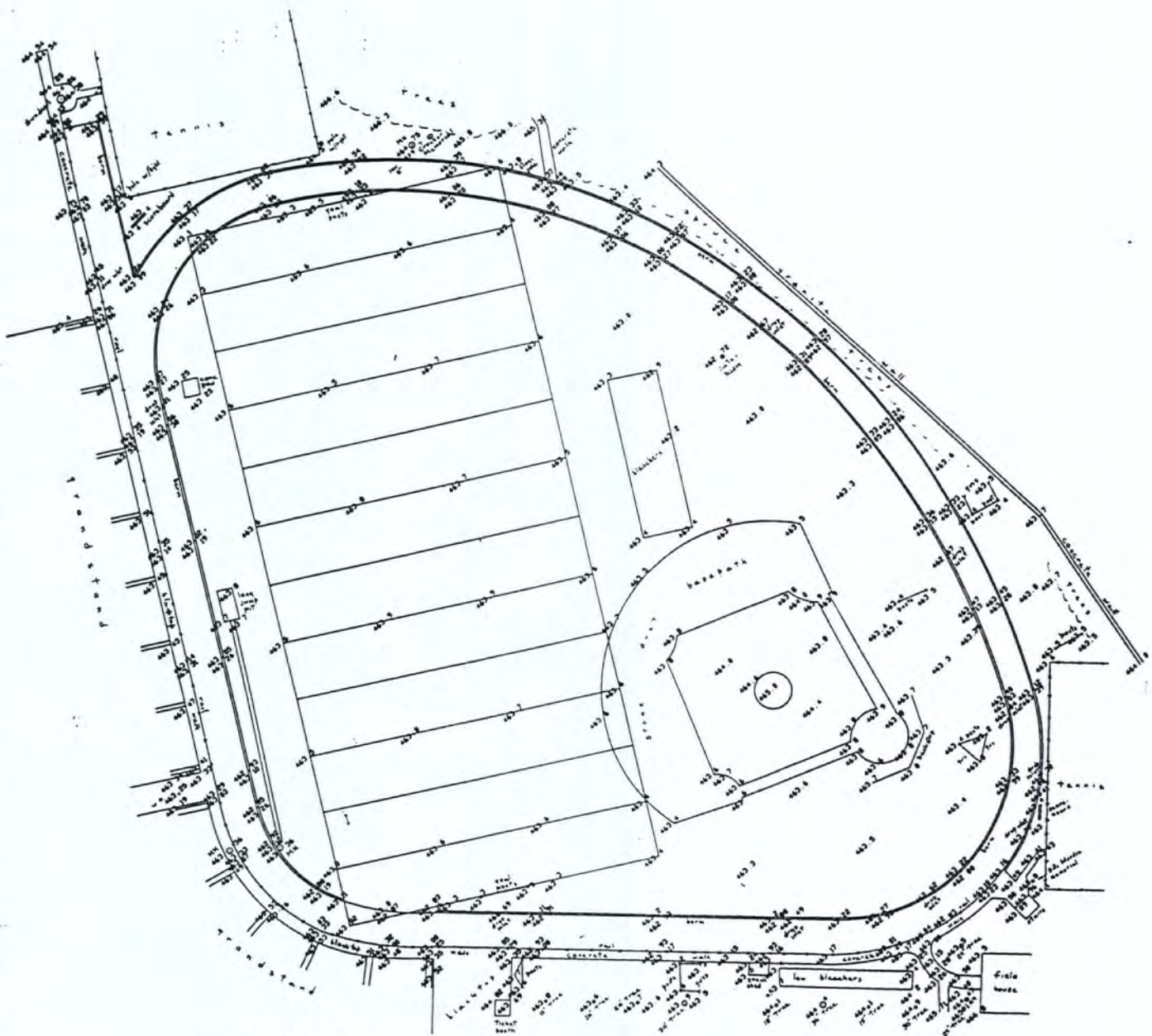
Amounts

2000-3-3-1916

Credit: Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National

Credit: Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

ILLUSTRATION 2A



CROCKER FIELD
 TOPOGRAPHIC PLAN PRIOR TO ENLARGEMENT OF TRACK
 OCTOBER 20, 1987
 WILLIAM R. BINGHAM & ASSOCIATES, ENGINEERS & SURVEYORS
 LEOMINSTER, MASSACHUSETTS

ILLUSTRATION 2 B

2M-8-122-5

File No. 643
 Date of List
 No. of Study
 No. of Plan 13
 Bu. Frt.
 Bu. Ex.
 Plants to arrive
 Estimated Cost, \$
 Transportation %
 Total
 Proposed Appropriation

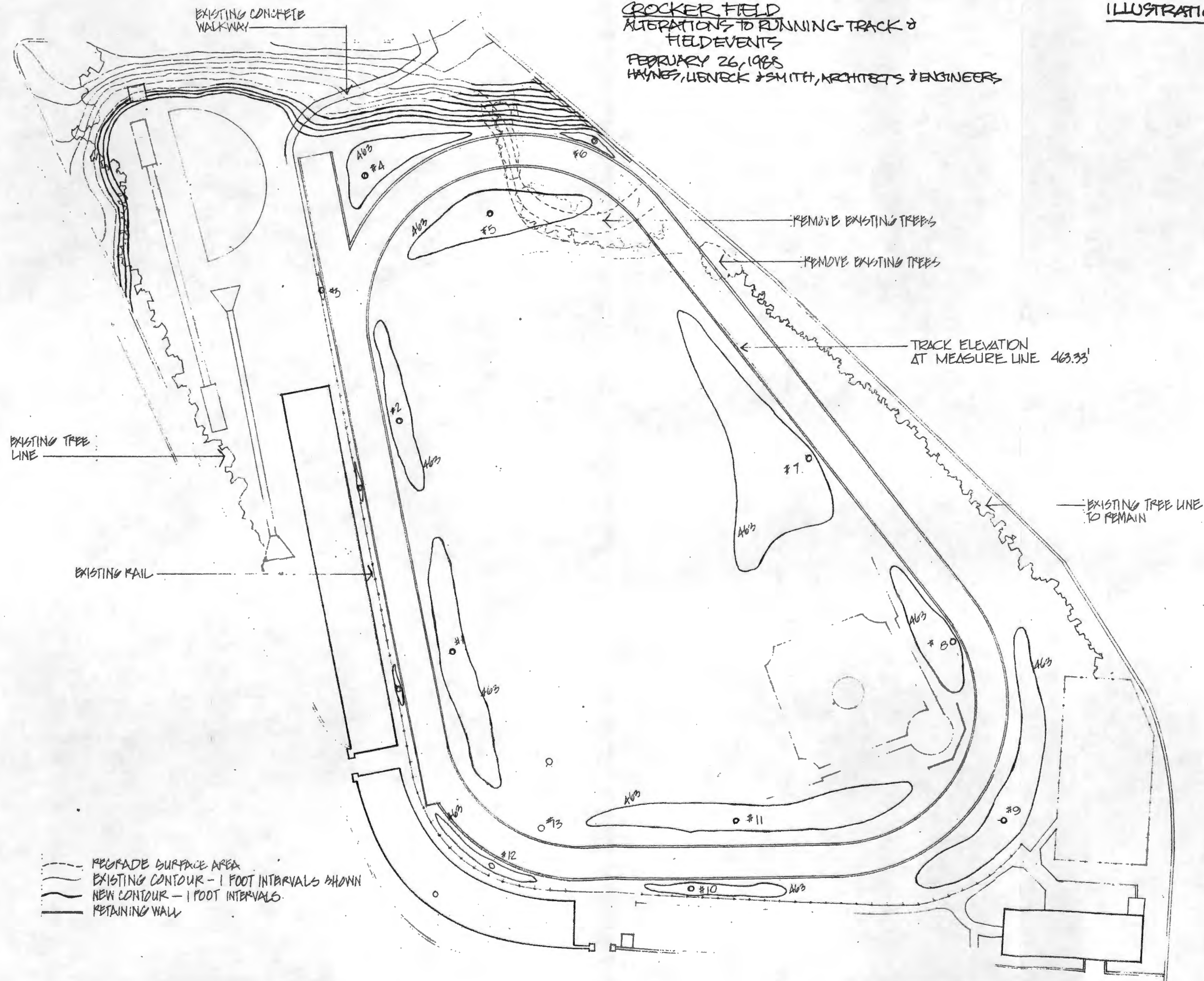
This record is not to be taken from Office
 Title of Work (in brief)
Planting for
Field Extension
 Authorized

OLMSTED BROTHERS (2)
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
 Planting Order List for
Crocker Field
 Send Notice to

No. and Abbr.	Scientific and Popular Name	Spec's	Quan.	Total Quan.	Bill Ck	Size and Condition	Where from	Price	By	Cost	Estimates and Notes
17	<i>Cornus foeniculata</i> Gray Dogwood		20	✓							
	<i>Eleagnus argentea</i> Russian Olive		15	✓							
18	<i>Betula rubra</i> River Birch		5	5 1/4		8-10		2 - ea 10 -		25 - 35	
19	<i>Lonicera morrowi</i> Bush Honeysuckle		5	✓						6-1-1-1-1	
20	<i>Crataegus cordata</i> Washington Thorn		6	✓		8-10 8x8	From 3 - ea 18 -			33 - 35	
21	<i>Spirea vanhouttei</i> Van Houttei Spirea		10	✓		4-5	" 4.50 x 4.50			10 -	
22	<i>Betula papyrifera</i>		5	5 1/4		8-10	"	2 - 10 -		55	
23	2 Bed 110 Plants		2 1/2	120				6 - x 102 -		120 - 55	
	<i>Symphoricarpos racemosa</i> Snowberry			50 ✓							
	<i>Andromeda pulcherrima</i> Silvery Andromeda			50							
	<i>Diarrhena penduliflora</i> Bush Clover			50							
	<i>Rosa rugosa alba</i>			50							
24	<i>Rosa multiflora</i> Japanese Rose		5	10 ✓		3-4'	From 5 - x 5 -			10 -	
25	5 Beds 120 Plants		5	120			"	6 - x 72 -		10 - 39 - 29 - 10 - 55	
	<i>Larix laricina</i> Larch			50 ✓							
	<i>Sparganium angustifolium</i> Sparganium			50 ✓							
	<i>Eurotia alata</i> Spiraea			20 ✓							

Please Credit: National Park Service
 Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

CROCKER FIELD
ALTERATIONS TO RUNNING TRACK &
FIELD EVENTS
FEBRUARY 26, 1988
HAYNES, LIENCK & SMITH, ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS



1918 OLIVESTED PHOTOGRAPHS - CROCKER FIELD



MAIN GATE

FIELD HOUSE & CIRCLE STREET



(COURTESY NPS, F. L. OLIVESTED NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE)



MAIN GATE A

FIELD HOUSE, REAR VIEW FROM TENNIS COURT



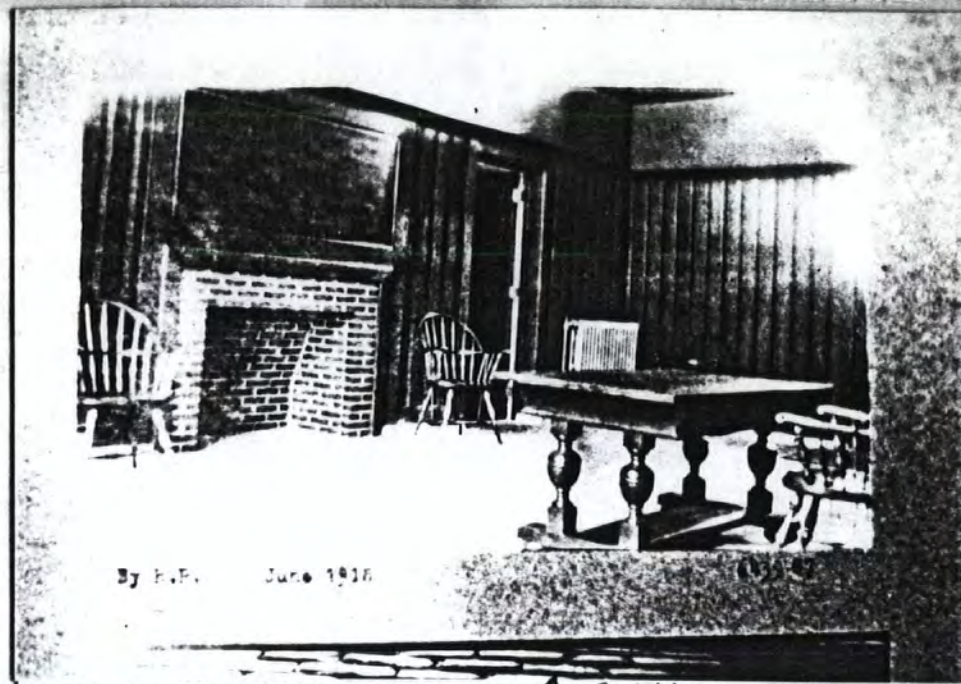
ILLUSTRATION 4

1918 OLNSTED PHOTOGRAPHS - CROCKER FIELD

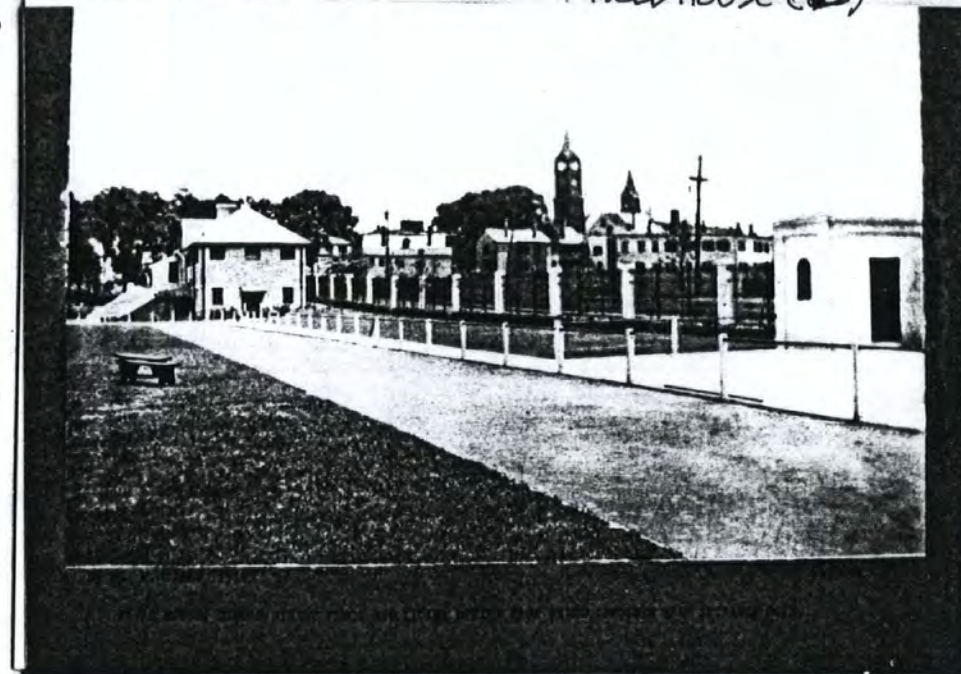
(COURTESY NPS, F.L. OLNSTED NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE)



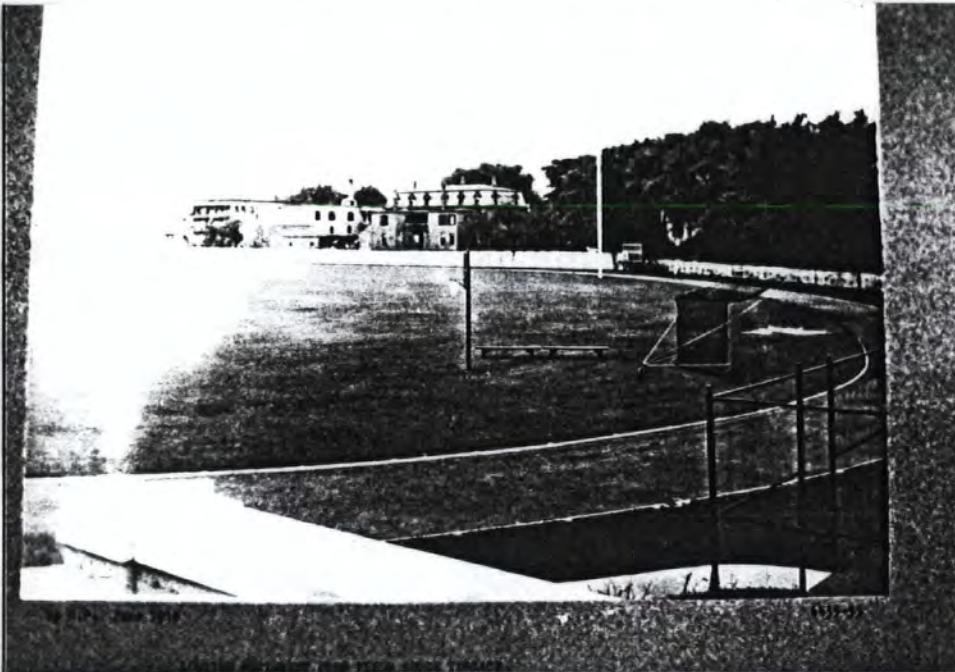
FIELD HOUSE & PLANTINGS, REAR & W. END, FIELD LOOKING SE



FIELD HOUSE ASSEMBLY ROOM S. END OF TRACK & FIELD HOUSE (C)

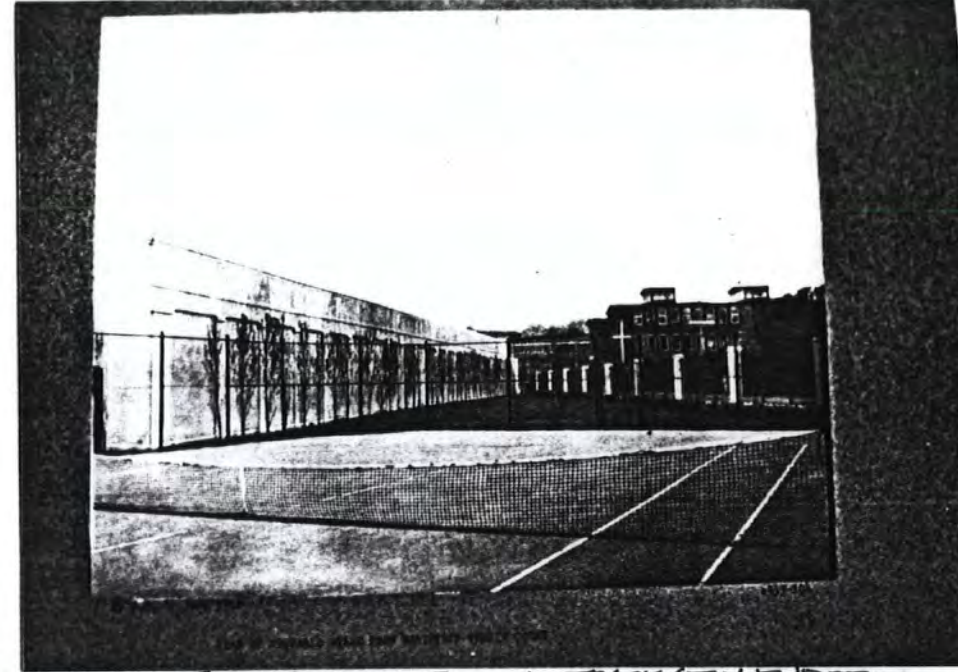


ILLUSTRATIONS



A

B

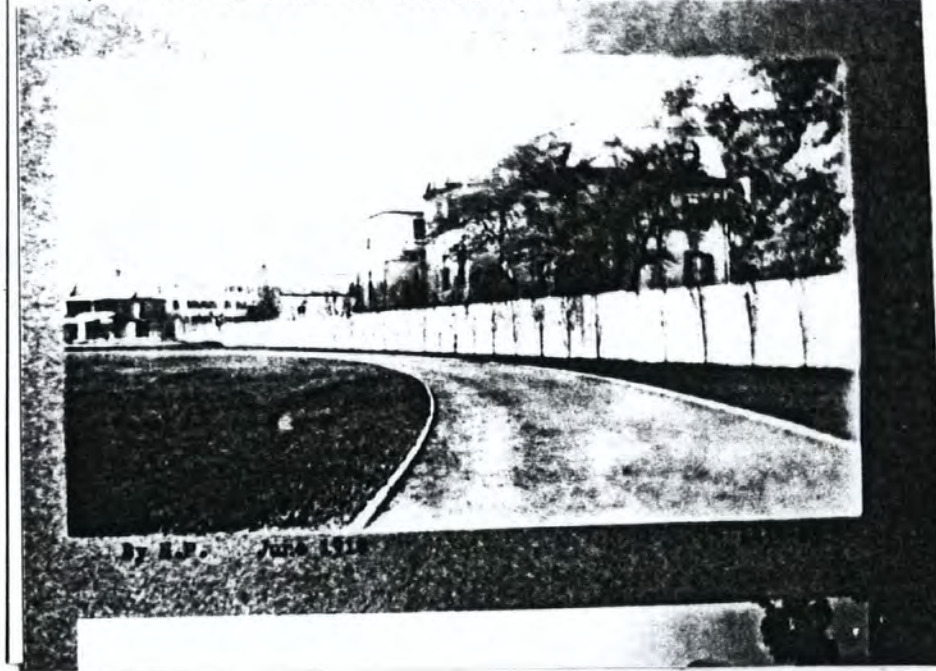
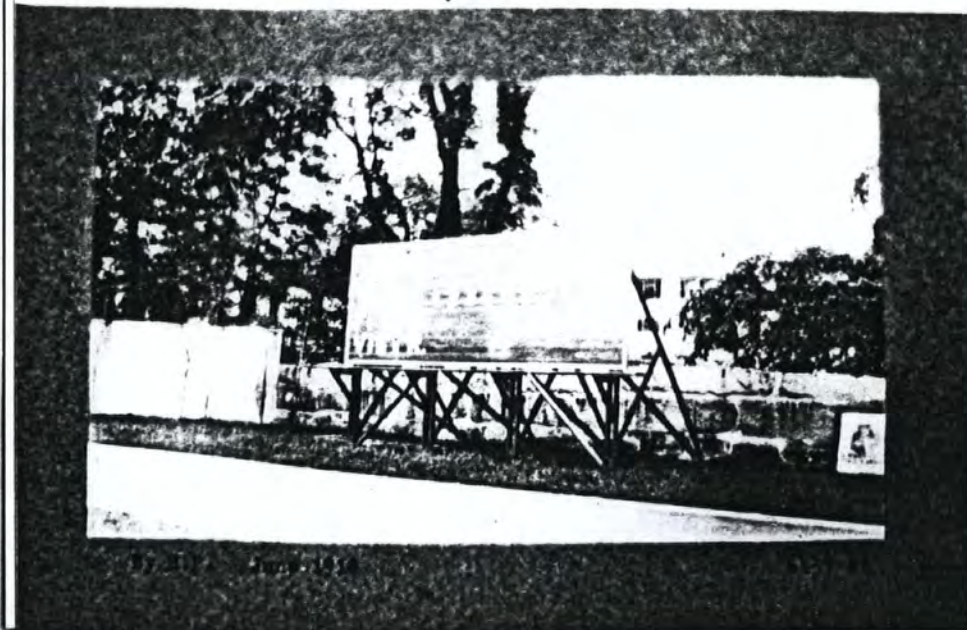


FOOTBALL STADIUM EXTERIOR
SEEN FROM TENNIS COURT LOOKING

TRACK AT N END OF
FIELD

C

D

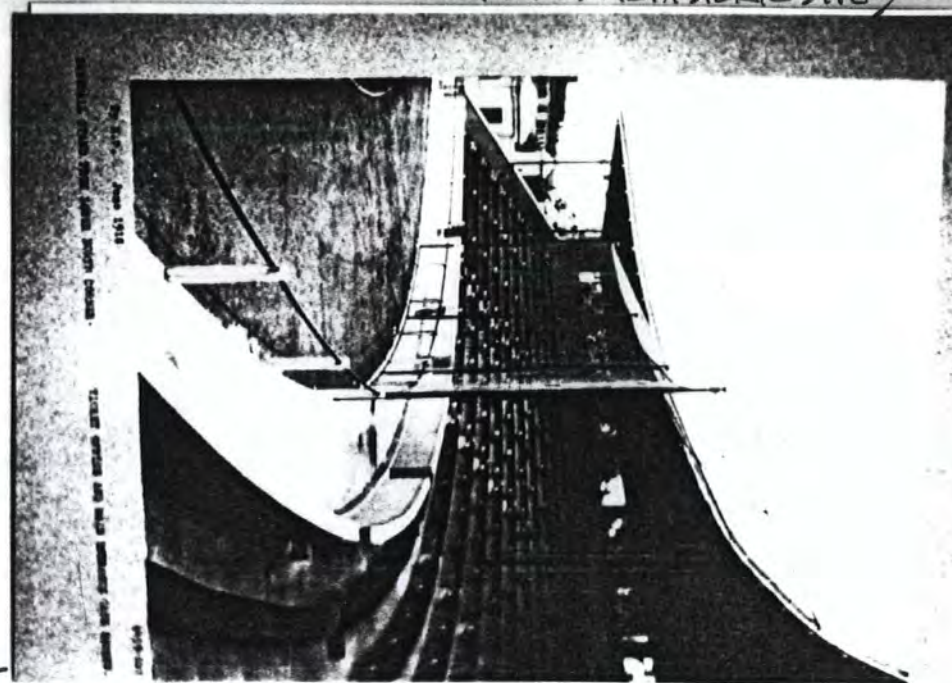


A

B



BROAD STREET LOOKING N WITH BASEBALL & FOOTBALL STADIUMS ON R.



TRACK IN FRONT OF BASEBALL STADIUM

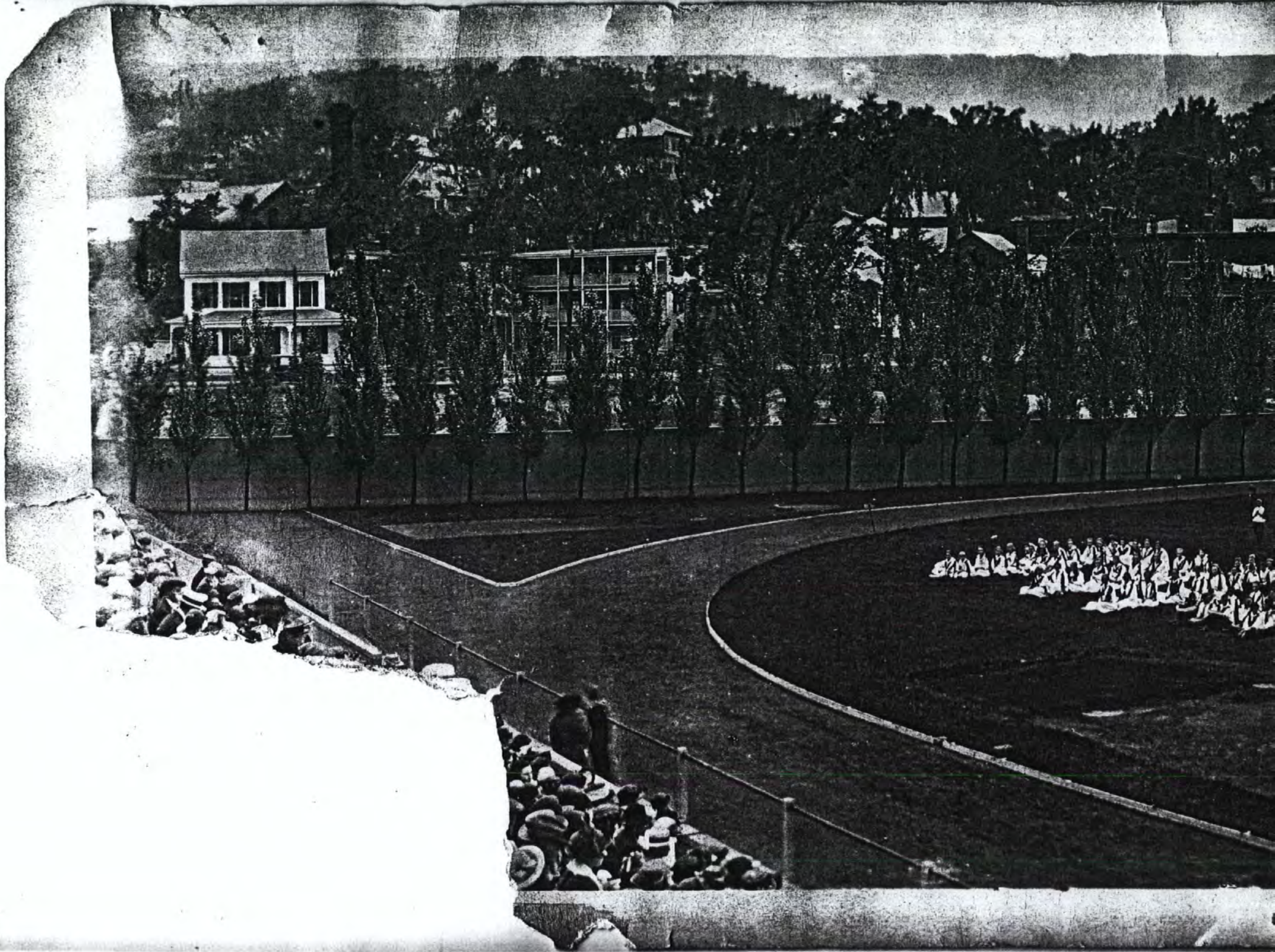
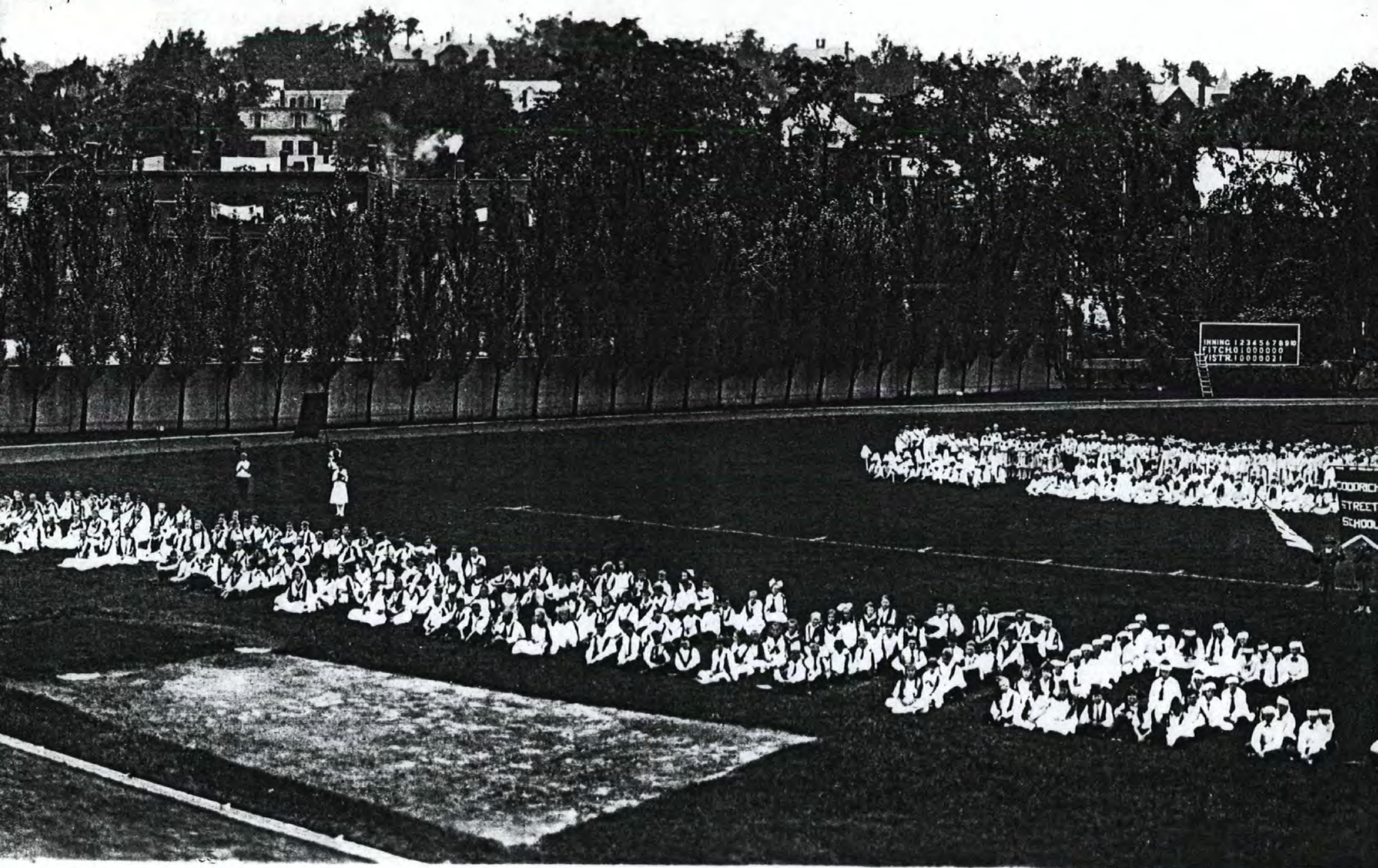
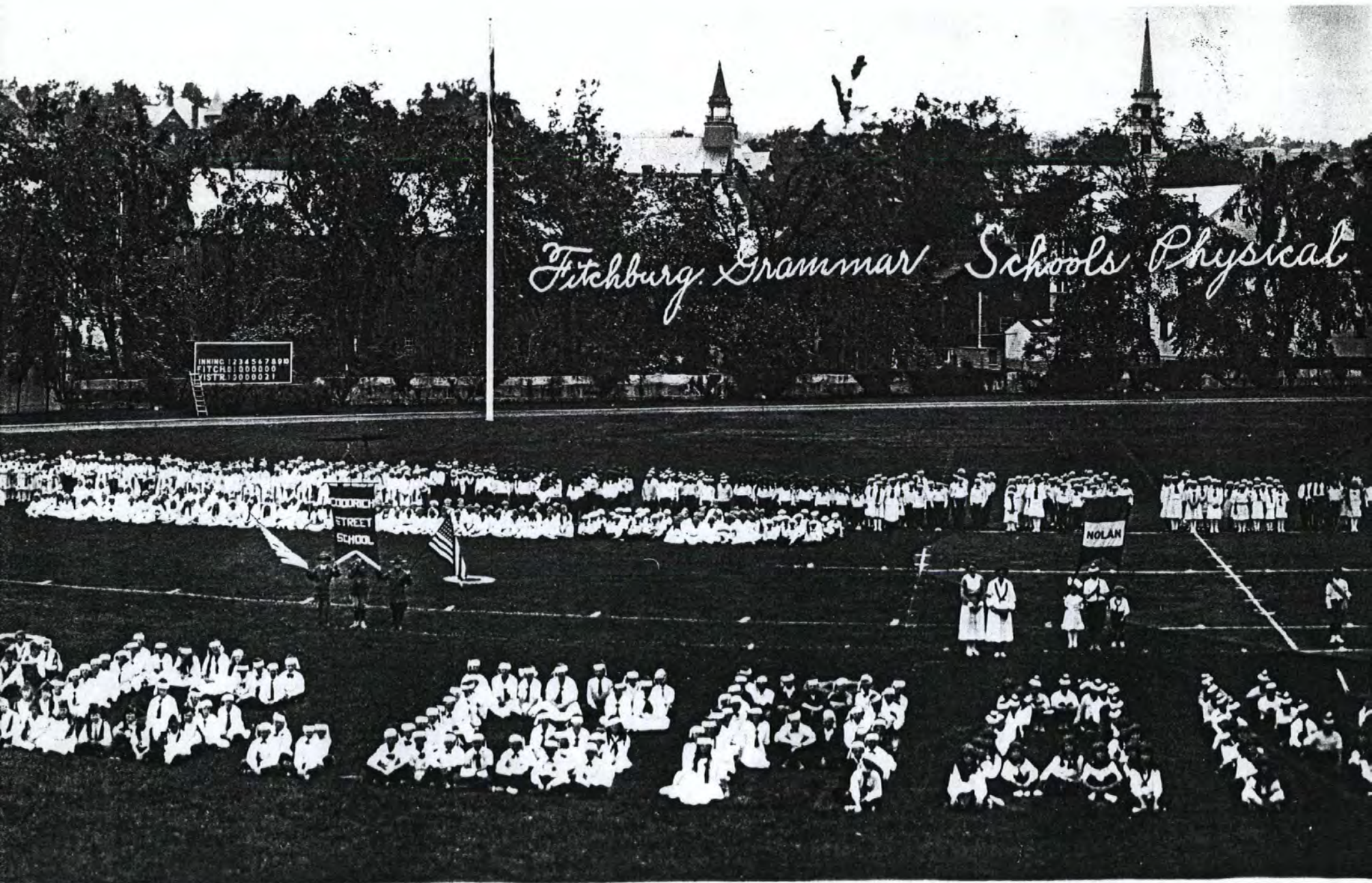


ILLUSTRATION 8 A



INNING 1234567890
FITCH 01000000
VISTR 10000021

WOODRICH
STREET
SCHOOL



Fitchburg Grammar Schools Physical

INNING 1234567890
FITCHB1000000
VISTR10000021

WOODRICH
STREET
SCHOOL

NOLAN

Physical Demonstration 1922



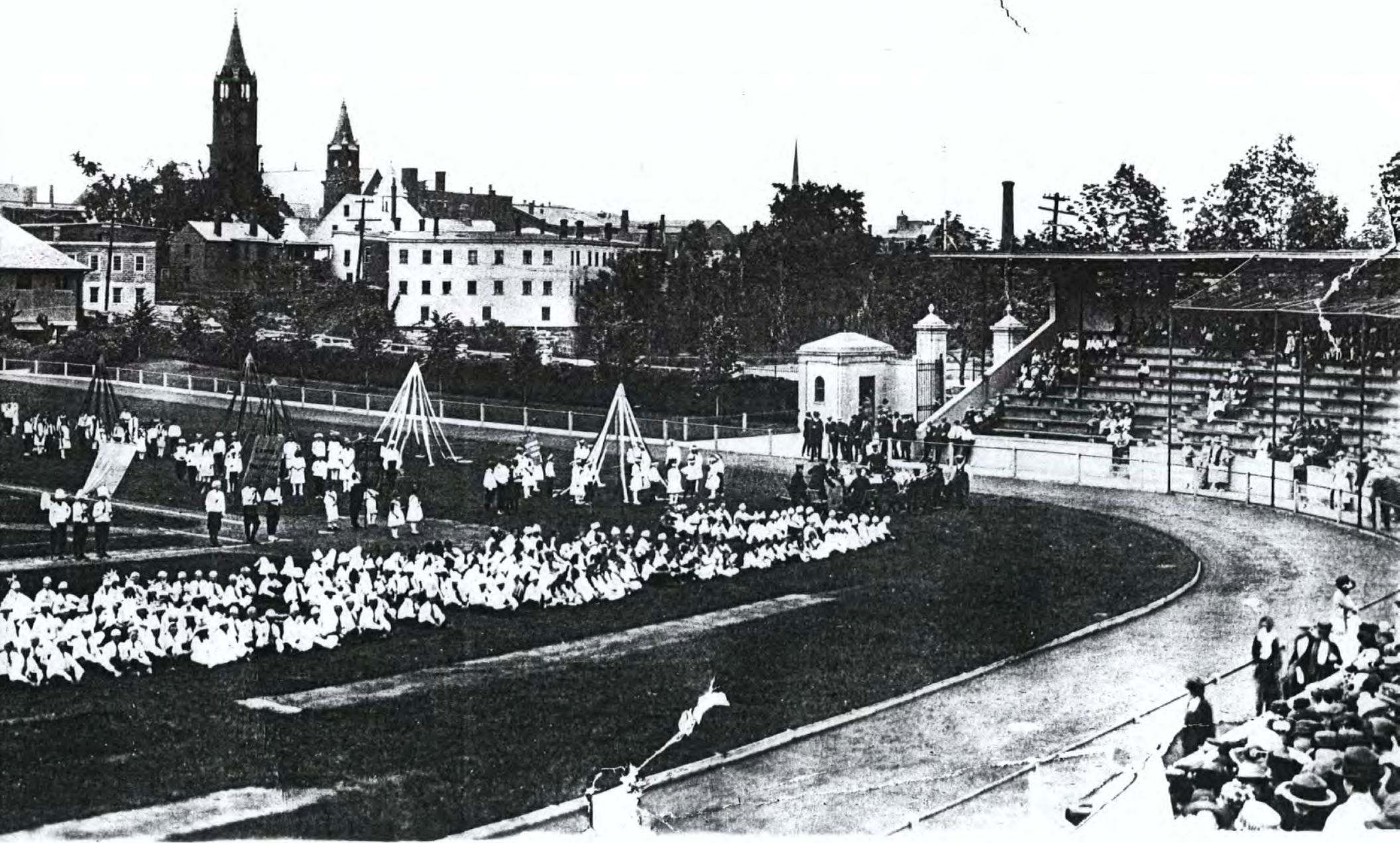
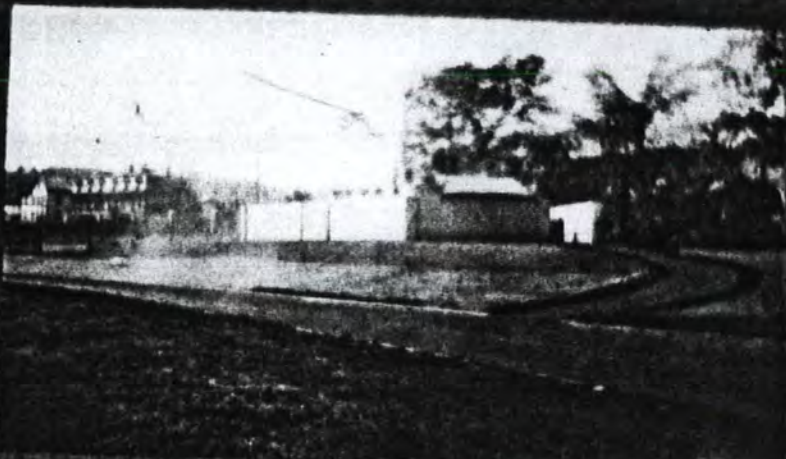
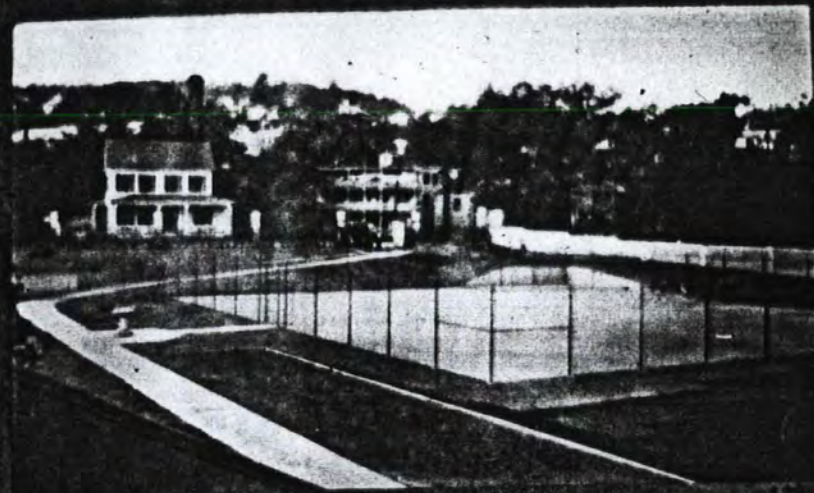


ILLUSTRATION 8 E



STORAGE
YARD VIEW
LOOKING NW

NEW TENNIS
COURTS +
DRINKING
FOUNTAIN
WITH STORAGE
YARD WALL
ON RIGHT IN
BACKGROUND,
VIEW LOOKING
NE



A B

C D

TENNIS COURTS
+ STORAGE
YARD, VIEW
LOOKING NE

NW CORNER
OF CROCKER
FIELD SEEN
FROM SHORT
SPRINT TRACK
VIEW LOOKING
NW



ILLUSTRATION 9

1924 OLUMSTED PHOTOGRAPHS - CROCKER FIELD EXPANSION

(COURTESY NPS, F.L. OLUMSTED NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE)



NEW TENNIS COURT & DRINKING FOUNTAIN, LOOKING N

N END OF EXPANDED FIELD



NEW TENNIS COURT LOOKING N
SHORT SPRINT TRACK ON LEFT

TRACK AT N END OF EXPANDED FIELD



1924 OLMSTED PHOTOGRAPHS - CROCKER FIELD EXPANSION (COURTESY NPS, F. LOWMYER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE)



1924-1925
F. LOWMYER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

A

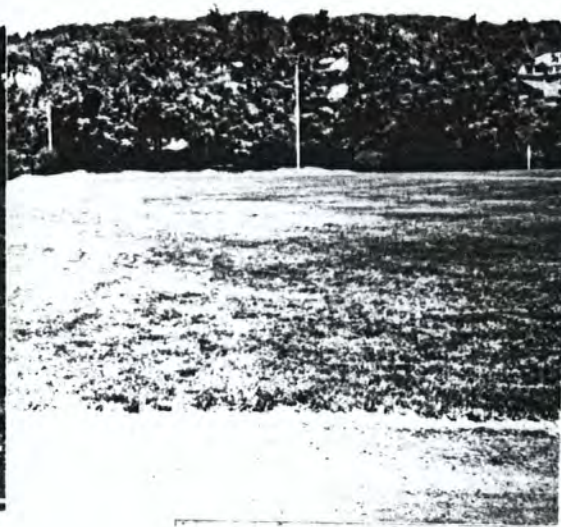
THIS IS POSSIBLY A VIEW OF SIDEWALK FROM RUNNING TRACK TO STORAGE YARD, VIEW LOOKING NORTH



1924

B

NW CORNER OF CROCKER FIELD WITH CONCRETE RETAINING WALL, VIEW LOOKING WEST



CROCKER FIELD, PITTSBURG, MA.
 PANORAMIC VIEW OF NORTH END OF FIELD, 1988
 BEFORE EXTENSION OF TRACK &
 REMOVAL OF TENNIS COURTS & STORAGE
 AREA

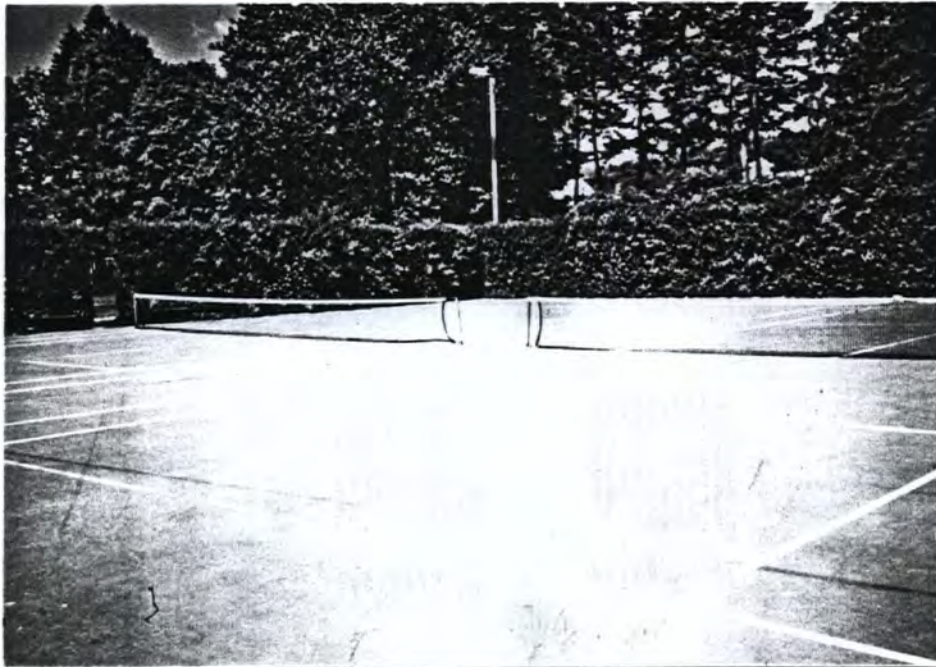
CROCKER FIELD

FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS
1988

BEFORE REMOVAL OF TENNIS COURTS



TENNIS COURTS ENCLOSED IN FENCE COVERED WITH HEDGE



INTERIOR VIEW OF TENNIS COURTS LOOKING NORTH

ILLUSTRATION 13



MR. ALVAH CROCKER

ILLUSTRATION 14

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Crocker Field Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 5/07/01 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/23/01
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/08/01 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/22/01
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 01000651

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 6-14-01 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

RECEIVED 2280
OCT 28 2011
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

01000651
OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

Crocker Field Historic District
Fitchburg (Worcester) MA

Section number 10 Page 1

The coordinates originally provided for the Crocker Field Historic District were 19 269500 4719520. The correct location is 0.67 miles due south of this point at **19 269500 4718430** (North American Datum 1927).

Corrected April 2009



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY Crocker Field Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 10/28/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/13/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 01000651

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT _____DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Additional Documentation Approved

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER

DISCIPLINE

TELEPHONE

DATE

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



CROCKER FIELD
FITCHBURG (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTOGRAPHER : S. CECCACCI

DATE : AUGUST 1999

NEGATIVE : FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VIEW : MAIN ENTRANCE GATE, TICKET BOOTH (RIGHT), BASEBALL STADIUM + LINDEN TREES (LEFT)

PHOTO # 1



CROCKER FIELD

FITCHBURG (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTOGRAPHER: S. CECCACCI

DATE: AUGUST 1999

NEGATIVE: FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VIEW: BASEBALL STADIUM & LINDEN TREES (RIGHT), BROAD STREET ENTRANCE GATE (LEFT)
(WITH TICKET WINDOW)

PHOTO #2



CROCKER FIELD
FITCHBURG (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTOGRAPHER: S. CECACCI

DATE: AUGUST 1999

NEGATIVE: FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

~~VIEW: RED HOUSE MAIN FACADE & FENCE/GATE (RIGHT)~~

~~VIEW OF NORTH SIDE OF CIRCLE STREET FROM CIRCLE STREET, LOOKING WEST~~

~~PHOTO #~~

~~BASEBALL STADIUM~~

VIEW: WEST PERIMETER OF FIELD WITH BROAD STREET GATE (RIGHT), FOOTBALL STADIUM (CENTER RIGHT),
FENCE & UNIDENT TREES (LEFT & CENTER LEFT)

VIEW FROM BROAD STREET LOOKING NORTH

PHOTO # 3



CROCKER FIELD
FITCHBURG (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTOGRAPHER: S. CECCACCI

DATE: AUGUST 1999

NEGATIVE: FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VIEW: SOUTHERN PERIMETER OF FIELD, NORTH SIDE OF CIRCLE STREET, WITH
FIELD HOUSE & FIELD HOUSE GATE ON RIGHT
FENCE & FACTORY BUILDING ON LEFT
VIEW LOOKING WEST FROM CIRCLE STREET

PHOTO # 4



CROCKER FIELD
FITCHBURG (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTOGRAPHER: S. CECCACCI

DATE: JANUARY 1998

NEGATIVE: FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VIEW: FIELD HOUSE MAIN ENTRANCE → GATES SEEN FROM CROCKER
STREET LOOKING NORTH

PHOTO # 5



GROCKER FIELD
FITCHBURG (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTOGRAPHER: S. CECCACCI

DATE: JANUARY 1998

NEGATIVE: FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VIEW: REAR (NORTH SIDE) OF FIELD HOUSE WITH TERRACE & TERRACE STAIRS
TENNIS COURT (LEFT)

VIEW FROM RUNNING TRACK LOOKING SE

PHOTO # 6



CROCKER FIELD
FITCHBURG (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTOGRAPHER: S. CECCACCI

DATE: AUGUST 1999

NEGATIVE: FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VIEW: RUNNING TRACK + FOOTBALL FIELD SEEN FROM BASEBALL STADIUM

VIEW LOOKING NORTH WITH FOOTBALL STADIUM ON LEFT

PHOTO # 7



CROCKER FIELD
FITCHBURG (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTOGRAPHER: S. CECCACCI

DATE: AUGUST 1999

NEGATIVE: FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VIEW: EASTERN PERIMETER OF FIELD WITH CONCRETE WALL & SPRUCE TREES (LEFT & CENTER
LEFT)
SEEN FROM NE CORNER LOOKING SOUTH
WAR MEMORIAL MONUMENT (FAR LEFT)
SEASONAL BLEACHERS (FAR RIGHT)

PHOTO # 8



CROCKER FIELD
FITCHBURG (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTOGRAPHER: S. CECCACCI

DATE: AUGUST 1999

NEGATIVE: FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VIEW: BASEBALL STADIUM (LEFT), FOOTBALL STADIUM (RIGHT) WITH RUNNING TRACK
SEEN FROM SIDEWALK AT FOOT OF FIELD HOUSE STAIRS LOOKING WEST

PHOTO # 9



CROCKER FIELD
FITCHBURG (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTOGRAPHER: S. CECCACCI

DATE: JANUARY 1998

NEGATIVE: FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VIEW: SOUTHERN PERIMETER OF FIELD WITH FIELD HOUSE ON LEFT & CONCESSION STAND,
TICKET BOOTH, MAIN GATE & BASEBALL STADIUM ON RIGHT

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH FROM RUNNING TRACK WITH FOOTBALL FIELD IN MIDDLE
GROUND.

PHOTO # 10



CROCKER FIELD

FITCHBURG (WORCESTER CO.) MA

PHOTOGRAPHER: S. CECCACCI

DATE: JANUARY 1998

NEGATIVE: FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

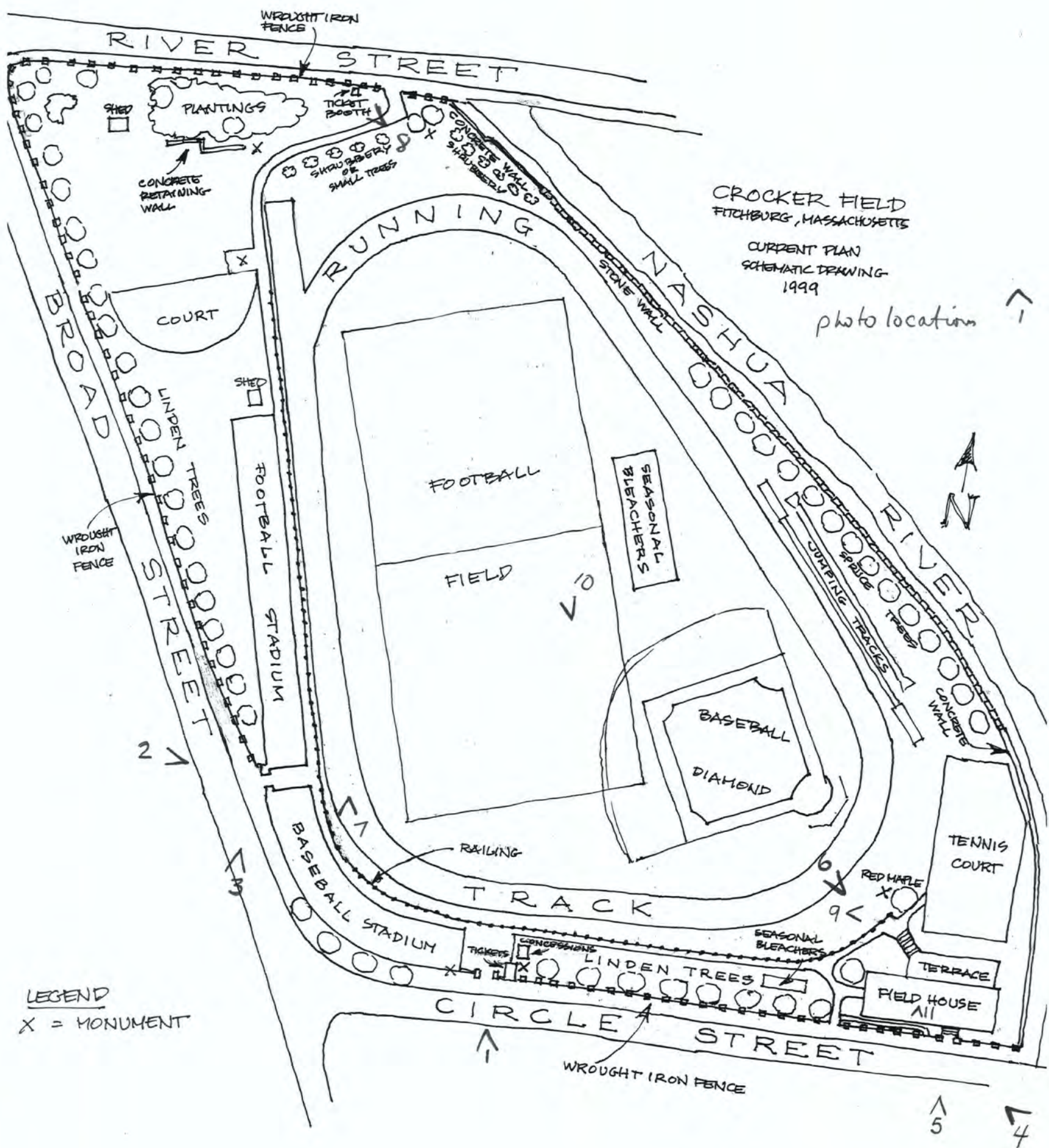
VIEW: ASSEMBLY ROOM, FIELD HOUSE,
WITH SPORTS MEMORABILIA &
ORIGINAL TABLE, CHAIR & INTERIOR
TRIM

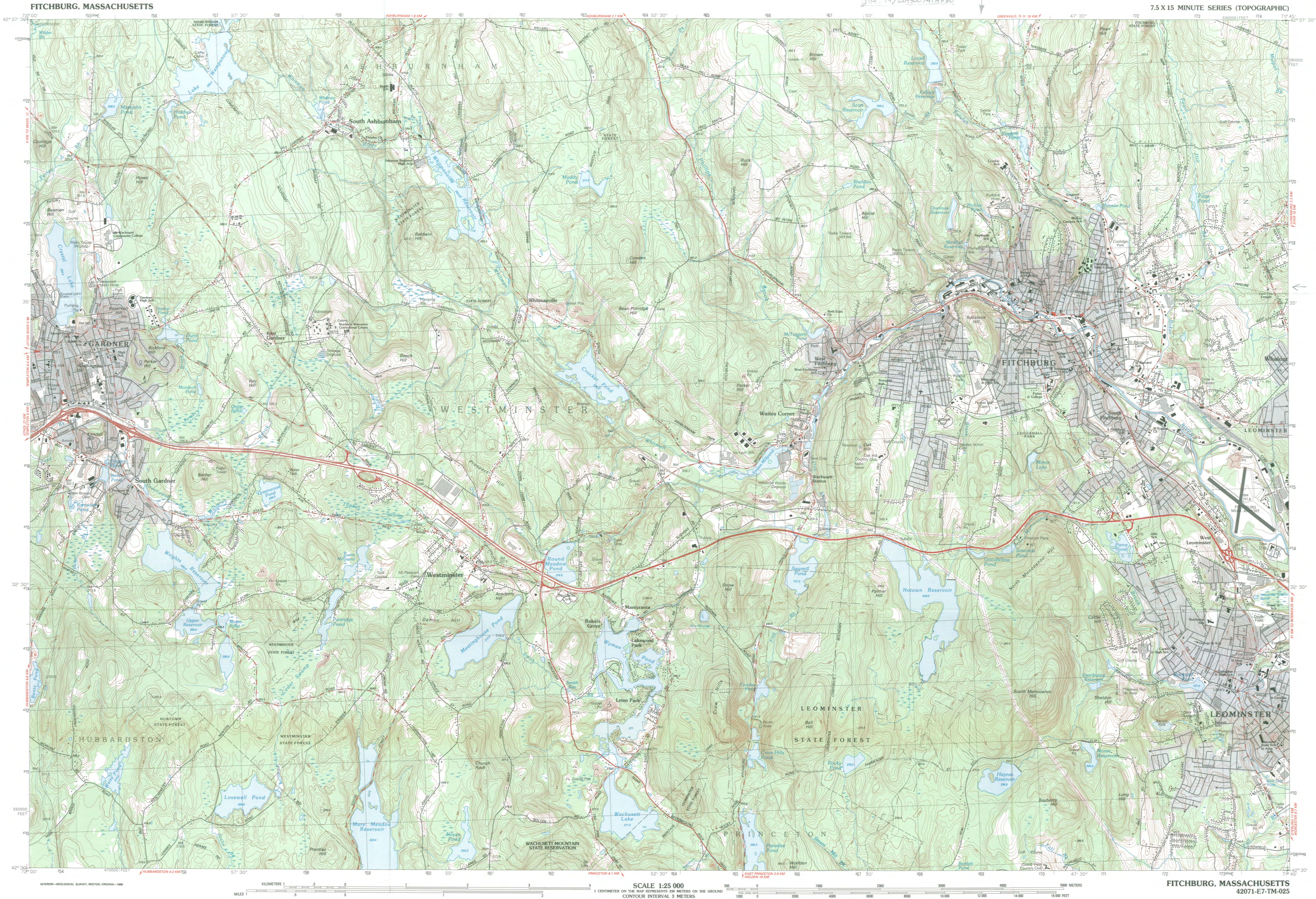
VIEW LOOKING SE FROM NORTH
WALL OF ROOM

PHOTO # 11

9030411-11

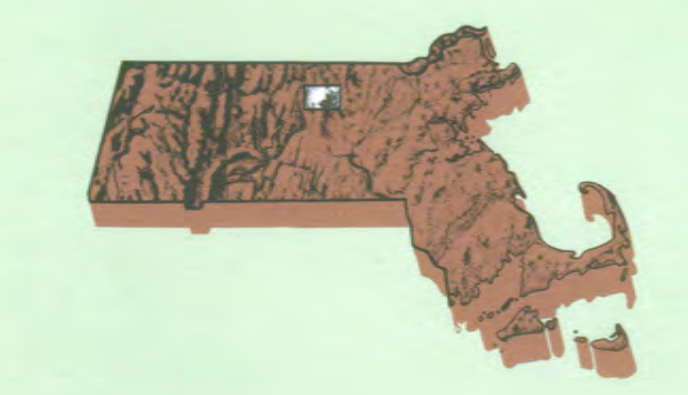
ROLL I - 17





Fitchburg MASSACHUSETTS

1:25 000-scale metric
topographic map



- 7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE
SHOWING
- Contours and elevations in meters
 - Highways, roads and other manmade structures
 - Water features
 - Woodland areas
 - Geographic names



1988

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works
Control by USGS, NOS-NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts agencies
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1980. Field checked 1981. Map edited 1988
Supersedes Fitchburg 1969 and Gardner 1970 1:25,000-scale maps
Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 19
Universal Transverse Mercator
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, maintained zone 1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 6 meters south and 39 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map
Gray tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM	ADJOINING MAPS			
Meters	Feet		1	2	3	
1	3.2808		1	2	3	
2	6.5617		4	5	6	
3	9.8425					
4	13.1234					
5	16.4042					
6	19.6850					
7	22.9659					
8	26.2467					
9	29.5276					
10	32.8084					
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808		UTM grid convergence (G) and 1983 magnetic declination (M) at center of map Diagram is approximate	1	2	3	
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048			4	5	6	
			6	7	8	

1 Winchendon

2 Ashburnham

3 Townsend

4 Abbeville

5 Ayer

6 Barre

7 Swanton

8 Hudson

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

Topographic Map Symbols

- Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road, trail
Route marker: Interstate; U. S. State
Railroad: standard gauge; narrow gauge
Bridge, drawbridge
Footbridge, overpass, underpass
Built-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown
House; barn; church; school; large structure
Boundary:
National, with monument
State
County, parish
Civil township, precinct, district
Incorporated city, village, town
National or State reservation; small park
Land grant with monument; found section corner
U. S. public lands survey: range, township, section
Range, township, section line: location approximate
Fence or field line
Power transmission line, located tower
Dam; dam with lock
Cemetery; grave
Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument
Wellhead; water well; spring
Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave
Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation
Contour: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression
Distorted surface: strip mine, lava, sand
Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate
Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream
Rapid, large and small; lake, large and small
Swamp; marsh
Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation
Woodland; scattered trees
Savanna; mangrove
Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request

FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

376 South Street
Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420
978.345.3220 Telephone
978.348.2305 Fax



DR. PHILIP M. FALLON, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

THOMAS J. LAMEY
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

October 22, 1999

Ms. Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

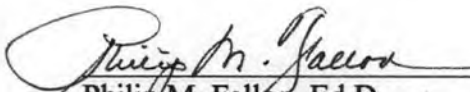
Dear Ms. Friedberg:

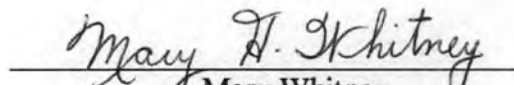
Thank you for your letter of October 5 indicating that once the file is complete you will be able to schedule the Crocker Field nomination for presentation to the State Review Board of the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the National Park Service/National Register program.

The city of Fitchburg strongly supports the nomination of Crocker Field and encourages the Massachusetts Historical Commission to expedite the nomination process. Although the school district has done an excellent job in maintaining Crocker Field, over the years extensive repairs needed to be completed and funds often have not been available. Without the support of the community and particularly the Friends of Crocker Field group, many of the repairs would not have been possible. The National Register status would be of tremendous help in qualifying for funding especially for the Massachusetts Preservation Projects fund grant.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding the nomination of Fitchburg's Crocker Field.

Sincerely,


Philip M. Fallon, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools


Mary Whitney
Mayor of Fitchburg

C: Stephen Svolis, Fitchburg Historical Commission

NR pg 4 BF
RECEIVED

OCT 28 1999

MASS. HIST. COMM

THOMAS SUGRUE
BUSINESS MANAGER

NR file ✓ BF
November 3, 1999

Ms. Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125

RECEIVED

NOV 04 1999

MASS. HIST. COMM

Re: Crocker Field, Fitchburg, MA 01420

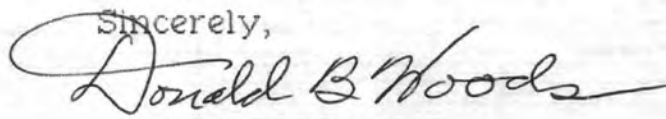
Dear Ms. Friedberg:

I have just finished reading a copy of the detailed report prepared by Susan Ceccacci along with a letter signed by Dr. Philip M. Fallon, Superintendent of Schools and Mayor Mary H. Whitney indicating our beloved Crocker Field complex will be nominated for presentation to the State Review Board of the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the National Park Service/National Register program. As unofficial chairman of a volunteer citizens group known as the Crocker Field Committee, it warms my heart knowing that things are progressing towards a complete restoration of this magnificent stadium.

Over the past seven years our committee has worked tirelessly in obtaining funds from various sources to complete badly needed repairs. We have also been fortunate to have one among us, Lenny Laakso, who is a structural engineer. His tireless energy and attention to detail has enabled us to at least make a dent in the work that needs to be done. To complete the restoration, however, we need National Register Status in order to qualify for funding.

We look forward to a positive response from you in supporting our nomination, especially in view of the good faith work already accomplished and the positive report from Susan Ceccacci.

Sincerely,



Donald B. Woods

cc: Philip M. Fallon, Ed.D.
Mayor Mary H. Whitney



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

May 4, 2001

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Crocker Field Complex, Fitchburg (Worcester), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Two letters of support have been received.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

cc: Susan Ceccacci, consultant
Mary Whitney, Mayor, City of Fitchburg
Philip M. Fallon, Superintendent of Schools
Steven Svolis, Fitchburg Historical Committee
Donald B. Woods
Kate Martin, Fitchburg School Department
David Streb, Fitchburg Planning Board

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
(617) 727-8470 • Fax: (617) 727-5128
www.state.ma.us/sec/mhc



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

October 20, 2011

Mr. J. Paul Loether
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Re: Additional Documentation (Technical corrections of UTM's)

In the process of mapping National Register nominations for our GIS database, we have identified errors in UTM coordinates for 23 properties. The errors vary from a few hundred feet to hundreds of miles, often due to transposition of numbers.

As recommended by Edson Beall, we are enclosing a continuation sheet for each of the nominations. Please let me know if you need more information in order to correct your records.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosures