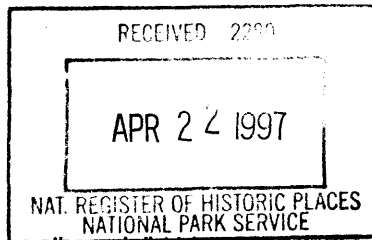


**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**



458

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 HENLEY FIELD BALL PARK

other names/site number FMSF# 8PO3598

**2. Location**

street & number 1125 North Florida Avenue N/A  not for publication

city or town Lakeland N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Polk code 105 zip code 33805

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*[Signature]* 4/15/97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

*[Signature]* 5/23/97  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Edson R. Beall

Henley Field Ball Park  
Name of Property

Polk Co., FL  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	5	buildings
1	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	5	total

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

"N/A"

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE: sports facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE: sports facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Mediterranean Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STUCCO, CONCRETE

walls STUCCO, CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

other CAST STONE

**Narrative Description**

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1925-1947

**Significant Dates**

1925

1927

**Significant Person**

Henley, Clare

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Talley, W.B. & W.D./Gerbrich, W.D., Co. (grandstand)

Trauger, H.B., builder (wall)

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of Repository

# \_\_\_\_\_

Henley Field Ball Park  
Name of Property

Polk Co., FL  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approx. 5.2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	4	0	6	0	0	0	3	1	0	3	6	8	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa L. Parks/Robert O. Jones, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 1997

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name City of Lakeland

street & number 228 S. Massachusetts Avenue telephone 941/499-6011

city or town Lakeland state FL zip code 33801

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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HENLEY FIELD BALL PARK, LAKELAND,  
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA

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**SUMMARY**

Henley Field Ball Park is located at 1125 North Florida Avenue in the City of Lakeland, Florida, near the intersection of two major thoroughfares, US Highway 98 and US Highway 92. The Grandstand's main facade faces northwest and is in the Mediterranean Revival style. The Grandstand and field were built in 1925. A decorative concrete perimeter wall, defining the boundary of the ball park and this nomination, was built in 1927. Five non-contributing buildings, not built within the historic period, are a part of the ball park.

**SETTING**

Immediately to the west of Henley Field Ball Park is a major thoroughfare, U.S. 98, (North Florida Avenue) running north/south. West of this road is a residential neighborhood. To the north and east of the Ball Park, the city owns property which has remained in recreational uses. Immediately to the north of the Ball Park is the Bryant Football Stadium, built in 1941. Immediately to the east of the Ball Park is "Adair Park," which includes passive recreational open space as well as practice baseball fields. The residential East First Street, runs east/west, along the southern boundary of the Ball Park. One street to the south of East First Street is the major thoroughfare, US Highway 92, (Memorial Boulevard). It runs east/west and is commercially used.

**CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

**Grandstand**

The building is a central block with two like-sized wings, connected at 45 degree angles, on either end. The Grandstand has open-air seating on the south/southeast side with a wrap-around structure on the (northwest) main facade, north, and west facades. Viewed from the south, the grandstand is an unadorned,

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masonry bleacher with a shed roof supported by steel "I" beam columns (Photo #1). The exterior, however, has a textured stucco finish with decorative elements made of cast stone (Photo #2). The centrally located main entrance bay projects less than two feet forward of the main wall, and contains an arched portal, flanked by twisted ten inch concrete columns with modified Corinthian capitals (Photos #3-5). The surround is of cast stone quoins and keystone, with a recessed arched face, detailed with a diamond pattern, and egg and dart trim. Further recessed in the arch and directly above the entrance is a cast stone relief with two crossed bats and balls and catcher's mask set against a "diamond field" (Photo #6). On either side of the entrance are cast iron flag holders. An iron gate with alternating square and twisted bars occupies the center of the entrance. The top of the gate is scrolled at the hinged sides.

Flanking the entrance on either side are two ticket booth windows with shed roof awnings supported by sculpted support brackets (Photo #7). The booth windows are double hung sash, 9/1, with original square steel bars over the lower sash. Housings for original lighting fixtures between the paired ticket windows remain. The top of the entrance bay has four merlons with pent roofs between them. An open space between the top of the wall and edge of the roof is filled with open mesh steel wire. Six windows along the northeast main wall, and three on the northwest main wall have jalousie glass. Beside the three windows is an infilled arched opening which was the ball park's first concession stand.

The masonry construction allowed for usable space under the grandstand, and rest rooms and ticket booths are accessed from doors just within the entrance (Photo #8). Space under the bleacher wings was open, but concrete block infill encloses the western wing, and large wooden doors fill the eastern wing, and provide shelter for maintenance materials (Photos #9&10).

Upon entering the main arch, the pitcher's mound is visible straight ahead. On the right and left are rest rooms which have an outer arched vestibule. Immediately beyond the west side vestibule, proceeding up the ramp, is a "window" which is now boarded, but appears to have been for program distribution or

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sales (Photo #11). Along the east wall of the ramp is a bronze plaque presented in 1952 to Clare Henley, in honor of the dedication of the field in his name which occurred in 1942 (Photo #12).

The bleacher seats within the grandstand are composed of ten inch concrete risers, and the seats are wooden boards (Photo #13). Bays of Bethlehem steel columns intersecting with eighteen inch "I"-beams support the roof over the open-air seating. The wooden shed roof slopes away from the field, and is covered with asphalt shingles. Separating seating from the playing field is a heavy wire mesh. The mesh is extended above the Grandstand to approximately twenty feet, with a wide net stretched across the top, drawn from the sides of the stand (Photo #14). On the northwest facade at the top of the Grandstand, a door with wire mesh infill is visible. This door had been created to allow access to the press box which had once occupied space on the top of the Grandstand. Access was via a stair which was external to the Grandstand, placed on the front northwest facade. Originally constructed in 1940 and rebuilt in 1946, the unused press box was removed circa 1985, due to its unsafe condition.

**Ball Field Perimeter Wall**

The concrete wall was built in 1927 (Photo #15). The wall is divided into ten foot sections with panel insets and square piers separating the individual sections. The wall, eight feet in height at the piers, is along all sides of the ball field. The northern portion of the wall is interrupted by the Club House and concessions stand. A gated opening was created in the southwest corner during segregation for a separate ticket booth for African-American patrons.

**Ball Field Configuration**

The approximate size of the site is 510' north-south by 440' east-west, or 5.15 acres (2.08 hectares) (Photo #16). Henley Field has remained in its current configuration since its arrangement in 1925. Home plate is in the northwest corner with

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the Grandstand behind it, oriented toward the southeast. The site is bounded on the west, south and east by the concrete wall. The northern boundary is marked by the wall and by the Club House and concessions building occurring along this section of the wall (Photo #17).

A chain link fence within the perimeter wall determines the size of the regulation playing field.

**NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

**Club House/Locker Room**

The existing locker room was built in 1959 (Photo #18). The 1959 locker room is of concrete block construction with a concrete floor and an open floor plan, larger than the original locker room. The hip roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles. Open wooden lockers with shelving and hanging rods are raised from the floor and line the north, west and south walls. The east wall is occupied by showers and bathrooms. Windows have been boarded. Original "dish" shaped metal ceiling light fixtures remain. A small room or office is accessible from the northwest corner of the main room. The new locker room replaced the original 'Club House' which was designed and built with the Grandstand.

**Concessions Stand**

The Concessions Stand was built in 1952 (Photo #19). The building is concrete block with a flat built-up roof with a wide overhang. The concession stand was designed to serve both Henley Field and Bryant Stadium. Accordingly, the stand was built with serving windows in the south elevation facing the ball field, and on the west and north elevations facing Bryant Stadium.

**Right Field Storage Building (Formerly Concessions Building)**

To the south of the right field mid point is a small concrete block building with a garage styled lift-up door on the east facade and a single double hung sash window on the north



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facade (Photo #20). The built-up roof is flat. Originally it was constructed for African-American patrons who were restricted to bleacher seats (now removed) which were located beside right field. It is thought to date to the early 1950's. Presumably, it was constructed around the time the main concession stand was built in 1952.

**Dugouts**

There are two dugouts to the east and west of the Grandstand beside the first and third base line (Photo #14). These dugouts were constructed in 1993. The dugouts are three sided concrete block buildings. Metal pole supports create three bays. Seating is a set of free-standing benches. The built-up roof is flat. The original dugouts had been in front of the Grandstand and were below grade. They were separated from the patrons by the wire mesh.

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
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POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA**Section number 8 Page 1**SUMMARY**

Henley Field Ball Park is significant at the State level under Criteria A, B, and C, in the areas of Entertainment/Recreation, Commerce, Architecture, and for its association with Clare Henley who promoted Lakeland's affiliation with professional baseball. By 1929, ten of the sixteen national professional baseball teams conducted spring training in Florida cities. This was good business for the hosting city, and good promotion for the State of Florida. Local pharmacist Henley encouraged the city of Lakeland to build the ball field, and persuaded the Cleveland Indians, and later the Detroit Tigers, to train in Lakeland. The main facade of the Grandstand was designed in the Mediterranean Revival style of architecture, a style that was very popular for public buildings constructed in the 1920s. Henley Park is in excellent condition, is currently used, and is one of the few historic spring training ball fields remaining in the state.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

The 1880's discovery and mining of phosphate in central Florida, including Polk County, resulted in expanded prospecting. The cultivation of oranges, too, became a new agricultural base as did the promotion of Florida as a tourists' destination. These new developments paralleled the development of Lakeland. Located in Polk County, the community of Lakeland began its development in the 1880's. Polk County, had significant acreage which was under ownership of the state government. In 1881, with the selling of 4,000,000 acres of land to Hamilton Disston, a wealthy saw manufacturer from Philadelphia, the heavy debt of the state's Internal Improvement fund was relieved. In that same year a wealthy manufacturer from Louisville, Kentucky, Abraham G. Munn, purchased several thousand acres of southern Florida from the trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of Florida. His son, Morris G. Munn, was sent to locate the lands. An eighty

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acre tract of land among the many lakes was selected as a town-site and was later surveyed and platted by a second son, Samuel Munn. This site was to become the City of Lakeland.

Abraham Munn guaranteed the Seaboard Air Line railroad significant concessions to ensure a train stop was brought to Lakeland. In addition to the provision of right-of-way and several acres for terminals and tracks, at his own expense Munn constructed a station which was more typical of those in larger communities. The completed mainline of the South Florida Railroad (later Plant System) from Tampa to Sanford, running through Lakeland, was opened to the public on February 11, 1884. This was the beginning of Lakeland's importance as a railroad town and contributed significantly to its development. The same month in 1884, Abraham Munn organized the Lakeland Improvement Company for the laying out and sale of town lots. Growth was rapid and Lakeland became incorporated within one year on January 1, 1885. By 1893, Lakeland had become an important shipping and rail yard site, exporting phosphate and citrus.

Growth brought demands for public services. The city was progressive in providing electricity, water, telephones, school improvements, fire protection and hospital services. While the state of Florida was expanding its roadways in the 1920s, Polk County led the South in road construction from 1914 through 1920. The American Automobile Association stated that Polk County was the only United States county which connected every town within its boundary. Lakeland established its first tourist headquarters in 1916. The Chamber of Commerce and aggressive organized businesses promoted the area to the world.

During 1924, bond issues were passed in Lakeland, much of it to pay for construction of municipal buildings. In the latter part of 1925, the building boom slowed, and by 1926 it was evident that the speculative buying craze was over. Lakeland suffered the decline of the boom, but continued with its civic improvements which had been previously bonded. By 1928, when the improvements were completed, Lakeland had modern public services. Constructed as the easterly entrance into the city, the Lake Mirror Promenade (NR 1983) was completed that year.

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During the 1930's Lakeland became the spring training grounds for the Detroit Tigers, and Frank Lloyd Wright began his architectural designs for the campus of Florida Southern College. Public works projects funded under the Works Progress Administration were undertaken and the City began to revitalize. During the years of World War II, Lakeland and other central Florida cities were serving as training grounds for military operations. In 1940, what was later to be known as the Lodwick School of Aeronautics was established to serve as a primary pilot training school in Lakeland. With the establishment of the Drane Field Air Force Base, the City hosted thousands of airmen. In 1945, Lakeland's population was 31,461, but with the closing of defense installations following the war, the population decreased to 30,851 by 1950.

During the period 1923 to 1940, both American and National League teams trained in Florida. Out-of-state minor league teams as well as Florida's own minor league, the Florida State League, were active in Florida. In 1923, seven major league teams were training in Florida, according to Al Lang, then president of the Florida State League. These included the Cleveland Indians, Cincinnati Reds, Philadelphia Phillies, Brooklyn Dodgers, St. Louis Cardinals and the Boston Braves. By 1929 ten of the sixteen major league teams were holding spring training in Florida. The number of teams present in the area allowed them to establish games among themselves, giving birth to the "Grapefruit League."

The following chart shows cities that were major training hosts. Other communities which recruited teams included Sanford, Plant City, Winter Haven, Avon Park, and West Palm Beach. These communities had periodic success attracting teams from other communities only to lose them within a few years to another Florida city. In the mid to late 1930s, Lake Wales, Daytona Beach, Sebring, DeLand, Bartow, Haines City, and Arcadia all hosted a major league team, usually for a year.

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FLORIDA CITY	TEAM	YEARS
LAKELAND	Cleveland Indians Pittsburgh Pirates Detroit Tigers	1923-1927 1928 1934-present
ST. PETERSBURG	Boston Browns New York Yankees, Boston Bees, St. Louis Cardinals	1923-1935 1935-1940
CLEARWATER	Brooklyn Dodgers	1923-1933 & 1936-1940
LEESBURG	Philadelphia Phillies	1923-1940
ORLANDO	Cincinnati Reds Brooklyn Dodgers Washington Senators	1923-1930 1934-1935 1936-1940
TAMPA	Washington Senators Detroit Tigers Cincinnati Reds	1928-1929 1930-1931 1931-1940
BRADENTON	St. Louis Browns Boston Red Sox St. Louis Cardinals	1923 1928-1929 1931-1940
SARASOTA	New York Giants Boston Red Sox	1926 1933-1939
FT. MYERS	Philadelphia Athletics	1927-1936

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The recruitment of baseball clubs to Florida for spring training was first pursued by Al Lang, who convinced the St. Louis Browns to come to St. Petersburg, Florida, to train in 1914. It was his belief that hosting baseball clubs during the spring would bring valuable publicity to the host city. In 1915, Lakeland's own Clare Henley had recruited the Louisville Colonels as the first professional team to train in Lakeland.

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All these teams collectively had a significant financial impact on the state during the early years, and served as the basis for the continuing relationships between Florida and the major league teams. Their impact on communities could be measured by the number of cities which would construct new stadiums or upgrade existing stadiums in order to recruit and retain these teams.

The Lakeland Chamber of Commerce, led by T.J. Appleyard, and Lakeland Baseball Association president Clare Henley were able to recruit the Cleveland Indians to train at Lakeland's Adair Field in the spring of 1923. Acquiring the team had immediate economic benefits to the City, with the Thelma Hotel serving as headquarters for the organization as well as accommodations for the players. The hotel was said to have taken in \$11,000 within the first six weeks alone, and an estimated \$30,000 was spent during their seasonal stay. The only cost to the City at the time was \$500 for showers "and other conveniences" at the ballpark. At the time, baseball fans and visitors claimed Adair Field to be superior to the other five parks in the State, and one of the finest in the South.

The Cleveland Indians indicated they would consider returning to Lakeland for spring training, contingent upon the City's willingness to make improvements to the ball park. Henley began discussions with the City of Lakeland about constructing a "real stadium of concrete." On April 28, 1924, the City Commission of Lakeland, Florida, voted to hold a referendum on an \$87,000 bond issue for purchase and Improvement of Park (Adair Field) to be known as "The Athletic Field."

In 1925, Baseball Commissioner Judge Landis attended a Chamber of Commerce banquet on the eve of the dedication of Lakeland's new ball park (renamed Henley Field Ball Park in 1942) and stated that the presence of so many baseball teams in Florida in March had the newspapers in the country "screaming 'Florida' everyday to 100,000,000 people 30 days a month." He went on to say, "every time a Northerner reads something about Lakeland, he thinks it is the best place in the world at this time of year."

In 1927, the Cleveland Indians drew poor attendance, affected by Florida's economic downturn. In addition to the

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economy, other factors led to their departure from Lakeland that year. Lakeland's city manager had mismanaged funds, and the Indians were sold in the off-season. The Indian's new management decided to change their spring training home. During the Indians' time in Lakeland, the Athletic Field fans saw some of baseball's greats, Tris Speaker and George Uhle, play.

In that same year, the Chamber of Commerce recruited the Pittsburgh Pirates as an interim team just one month after the Indians left. Henley, President of the Lakeland Baseball Club, was not financially in a position to maintain a team in the Florida State League that season and offered to transfer the franchise of the local team to the City. The City declined, but continued to invest in Athletic Field.

In 1933, the Detroit Tigers began looking for a new spring training home. They had eight different sites in thirty years. Once again, the Lakeland Chamber of Commerce along with Clare Henley and his baseball contacts began pursuing the Tigers. If the field could be improved, the team agreed to locate in Lakeland. Money was sought through the Florida Emergency Relief Administration, an arm of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal - Federal Civil Works Administration, and was used to pay the wages of 50 men to regrade, clay and turf the ball park. Neil Conway, the long-time head of grounds for the Detroit Tigers was brought to Florida to oversee the project. In 1934, Lakeland entered into a contract with the Detroit Tigers to serve as spring training headquarters.

The sports editor of the Detroit News wrote in 1938 of the exceptional training environment afforded the players in Lakeland, and he noted it was "one of the few playing fields in the country without an advertisement marring the landscape." He claimed it to be the largest, best baseball field, with the best equipped clubhouse. This sentiment was repeated by Walter Briggs, owner of the Detroit Tigers. At the end of the 1939 spring training season, Briggs stated his team would be returning to Lakeland. He noted that Athletic Field offered "the finest training facilities in the state." The relationship begun in 1934 with the Detroit Tigers is still on-going and is the longest

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in major league history between a team and a spring training host city.

Spring training did not gross great sums for some of the teams, especially during the Depression. The Tigers grossed just under \$2,500 in Lakeland in 1934, splitting that amount with visiting clubs. Even with barnstorming, clubs often ended the spring training season with a shortfall. But the local economy gained by their presence. The Tampa Tribune estimated in 1934 that each big league club and its people would spend between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Detroit Tiger players staying at the Lakeland Terrace Hotel were estimated to spend \$500 for rooms, in addition to other residential accommodations. Service industries and restaurants all benefited with the influx of over 750 players, plus club officials, reporters, families, and fans. And the publicity sent back North throughout spring training was continuous and positive. Even the Lakeland Ledger was directly involved, posting outside its building the team scores as they occurred by inning. During the 1934 spring training season, the Tigers won 101 victories, a record not beaten until 1968. During this historical period for baseball, some of the many greats who played for the Detroit Tigers at Henley Field included Hall of Famers Mickey Cochrane, Charlie Gehringer, Hank Greenberg, Goose Goslin, and A.J. Kaline.

From the 1920's through the 1940's, Henley Field was used by the African-Americans of the community. Jesse Richardson, an African-American owner of the Lakeland Tigers, and Florida Cubans Baseball Clubs in the Florida State Negro League, played his teams at Henley Field. During the 1940's the Negro Leagues had teams from central Florida cities. During their own games, the African Americans occupied the Grandstand. But during all other games, they occupied two sets of bleachers which were set up on right field. One of these bleachers was covered. There was a separate set of bathrooms and concessions building in right field to serve the African-American patrons. A separate entrance was set-up in the southwest corner of the perimeter wall.

One of Lakeland's own African-American athletes who played professionally was Jimmy Hill. His career spanned 1938 to 1950. Standing 5'5", he pitched for the Albany Black Sox, the Newark



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Eagles, Raleigh Grays, and a Florida minor league team, the Homestead Grays. The highlight of his career was in 1941, when he pitched hitless relief in the East-West All-Star classic, and later defeated Satchel Paige in the North-South All-Star game at the end of the season. He was discovered while pitching batting practice for the Detroit Tigers in spring training. He joined the Florida State (Minor) League when baseball was desegregated. Ted Richardson and Jim Proctor were probably the first African Americans to be invited to professional baseball spring training at Henley Field. They were purchased by the Detroit Tigers from Indianapolis-Negro American League.

The Detroit Tiger team spring training continues today in Lakeland. Henley Park remained the spring training home of the Tigers until 1966 when the City of Lakeland built a new baseball field, Joker Marchant Stadium, a mile north of the historic field. The field remains the home playing field for Florida Southern College, an original user of the field. Other college, high school, city and regional leagues continue to use the park.

Today, there are only a few of the original ball fields and parks which reflect the early history of Florida baseball. Lakeland's Henley Field is an excellent facility, and one of the oldest examples of the early influence of baseball on Florida's communities and the state.

**CLARE HENLEY**

Clare Henley, for whom Henley Field Ball Park is named, was born in Apopka, Florida, in 1888. His grandfather, Dr. Samuel F. Henley of Ripley, Tennessee, was a physician during the Civil War. His father, Dr. Leonard F. Henley was one of Lakeland's first permanent physicians, serving as a pharmacist as well. After completing school at Stetson College, Henley began, but did not complete, studies at the Atlanta Medical College. While in Atlanta, Clare Henley served as pitcher for the Georgia Institute of Technology's baseball team; though not a student at that college, it was permissible to play for the team. He met his future wife, Sallielue V. Battle, at this time. He enrolled in the Atlanta School of Pharmacy, became a pharmacist, and returned

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to practice in Lakeland. Upon his father's death in 1917, Henley assumed operation of his father's pharmacy, and opened four more in Lakeland, and one in Tampa.

In 1908, at age 22, he began traveling, pursuing his baseball interests. He developed many connections within the business through which he helped recruit the Louisville Colonels to Lakeland for training in 1915. They were the first professional team to play in Lakeland. He was instrumental in attracting the Cleveland Indians who trained in Lakeland from 1923 to 1927. Henley began his own baseball clubs, including the baseball franchise called the Lakeland Highlanders which were a part of the Florida State League. During his ownership, the Highlanders won three pennants.

While owning the Lakeland Highlanders, Henley encouraged the City of Lakeland to purchase a 70 acre site from Dr. Pike Adair. This property, which already was the site of baseball games, was purchased in 1924. The acquisition of the site and the promise to construct a grandstand resulted in the recruitment of the Cleveland Indians for spring training, and in providing a good field in which Henley's team could play. In 1927, Clare Henley was President of a team called the Lakeland Baseball Club, but due to the decline in the economy the team was disbanded. In 1934, he helped recruit the Detroit Tigers, which have trained in Lakeland ever since.

On March 4, 1942, the City Commission passed a resolution to dedicate and rename the ball field, the Clare Henley Ball Park. A 1947 article in the national publication, "Sporting News," written by H.G. Saisinger of the Detroit News, wrote that Henley was "the man who has done most for baseball in this section of Florida," and referred to Henley as the "virtual 'father' of Lakeland baseball." On August 15, 1952, a commemoration plaque was placed in the grandstand. Clare Henley died on July 20, 1955 at the age of 69. In tribute to him, City Hall was closed for 30 minutes during the funeral.

The Henley Field Ball Park is significant for its association with Clare Henley. Henley was a pharmacist and family man, but his love and promotion of baseball is how he is remembered by the public.

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**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

Mediterranean Revival Style generally refers to a style derived from a combination of architectural elements borrowed from countries and cultures surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, primarily Spain and Italy. The roots twentieth century Spanish and other Mediterranean influenced architecture in Florida can be traced to hotels in St. Augustine developed by Henry Flagler during the 1880s. Because of Florida's climate and Spanish history, the style was considered suitable for the state. The style of architecture was widely adopted during the Florida Land Boom in the 1920s. General characteristics include stucco walls, often decorated with sculptural cartouches, tile, and terra cotta. Roofs are usually clay tile, and often have parapets. Decorative iron work, spiral columns, fan lights, and arcades are common.

During 1924, bonds were issued for construction of municipal buildings built in the Mediterranean Revival style. These included a new city hall, auditorium, public library, fire/police station, and public hospital. Also that year, was the dedication of the National Home of the United Carpenters and Joiners of America, a complex in the Spanish Mission style on 1,950 acres to the north of the City. In Lakeland, commercial, religious, and residential buildings were also constructed in the Mediterranean Style during the twenties.

**Architect, Wilbur Bert Talley**

Wilbur Bert Talley was the designer for the Clair Henley Field Grandstand as well as most of the prominent buildings erected in Lakeland at the turn-of-the-century. He was one of Florida's leading architects. Born in 1871 in Carthage, Missouri, his father was one of Lakeland's early pioneers. Talley was involved in architectural work in Lakeland between 1900 and 1906, at which time he opened offices in Jacksonville

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where he remained for sixteen years and grew in prominence, designing plans and supervising the building of the Duval County Court House and the Duval County Armory, among many other businesses and apartment houses. He also designed the Flagler and Palm Beach County Courthouses, as well as approximately twenty-two schools throughout the state. In 1922, he returned to Lakeland to practice with his brother, W.D. Talley.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Grandstand and Club House was designed by Lakeland architects' W.B. and W.D. Talley, and constructed by W. D. Gerbrich Company for \$28,950. Its high style, Mediterranean Revival architectural elements are unusual for a utilitarian ball park. These elements included barrel-tile pent roofs, an arched main entrance with egg and dart trim, twisted columns with capitals, and cast stone sculptural relief symbolizing baseball. The Mediterranean Revival style ball park was consistent with the style chosen for other local public buildings in Lakeland built during the same period.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Polk County Deed Book #2155 page 269, parcel #07-28-24-000000-043010. The property is located at 1125 North Florida Avenue, Lakeland, Florida: Township 28S, Range 24E, Section 7. The approximate size of the ball park is 510'x 440' or 5.15 acres (2.08 hectares), and is represented on the accompanying scaled map. Henley Field Ball Park is a portion of the property known as Adair Park.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The historic resources associated with the Henley Field Ball Park are encompassed by the boundary which coincides with the exterior of the Grandstand, perimeter wall, and the north sides of two buildings which interrupt the wall along the north side.



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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

1. Henley Field Ball Park 1125 North Florida Avenue
2. Lakeland, Polk County, Florida
3. L. L. Parks
4. 1995
5. City of Lakeland, Community Development Department
6. View of Grandstand interior, camera facing northwest
7. Photograph 1 of 20

Items 1 through 5 above pertain to all photographs listed below, unless otherwise indicated.

6. View of northwest corner (front) entrance to Grandstand, camera facing southeast.
7. Photograph 2 of 20
  
6. View of front (northwest) entrance, camera facing southeast
7. Photograph 3 of 20
  
6. View of column at main (northwest) entrance
7. Photograph 4 of 20
  
6. View of column capital
7. Photograph 5 of 20
  
6. View of cast stone detail above main entrance, camera facing southeast
7. Photograph 6 of 20
  
6. View of ticket windows, camera facing southeast
7. Photograph 7 of 20
  
6. View of vestibule off main entrance ramp, camera facing west
7. Photograph 8 of 20

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6. View of west elevation of Grandstand, camera facing southeast
7. Photograph 9 of 20
  
6. View of north elevation of Grandstand at east end, camera facing south
7. Photograph 10 of 20
  
6. View of interior of Grandstand entrance and ramp, camera facing northwest
7. Photograph 11 of 20
  
6. View of dedication plaque on east side of main entrance ramp, camera facing east
7. Photograph 12 of 20
  
6. View of Grandstand interior, camera facing west
7. Photograph 13 of 20
  
6. View Grandstand and net, camera facing north
7. Photograph 14 of 20
  
6. View of west section of Perimeter Wall, camera facing southwest
7. Photograph 15 of 20
  
6. View of Ball Field and perimeter wall, camera facing southeast
7. Photograph 16 of 20
  
6. View of left field and ancillary buildings, camera facing northeast
7. Photograph 17 of 20
  
6. View of south and west elevation of Club House, camera facing east
7. Photograph 18 of 20

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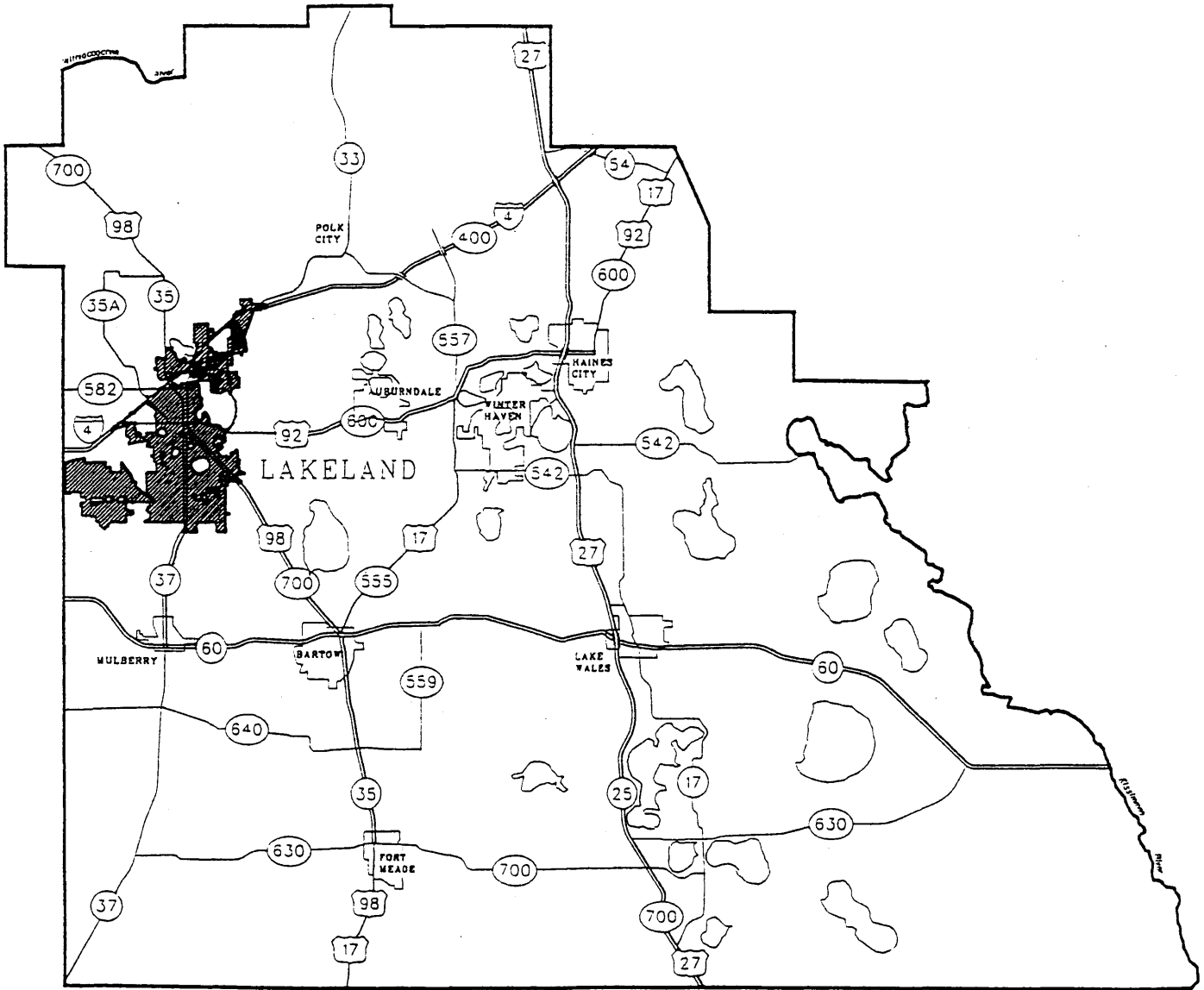
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8. View of concessions building south elevation, camera facing northeast
7. Photograph 19 of 20
6. View of storage (former African American concessions) building, front east and north elevation, camera facing southwest
7. Photograph 20 of 20

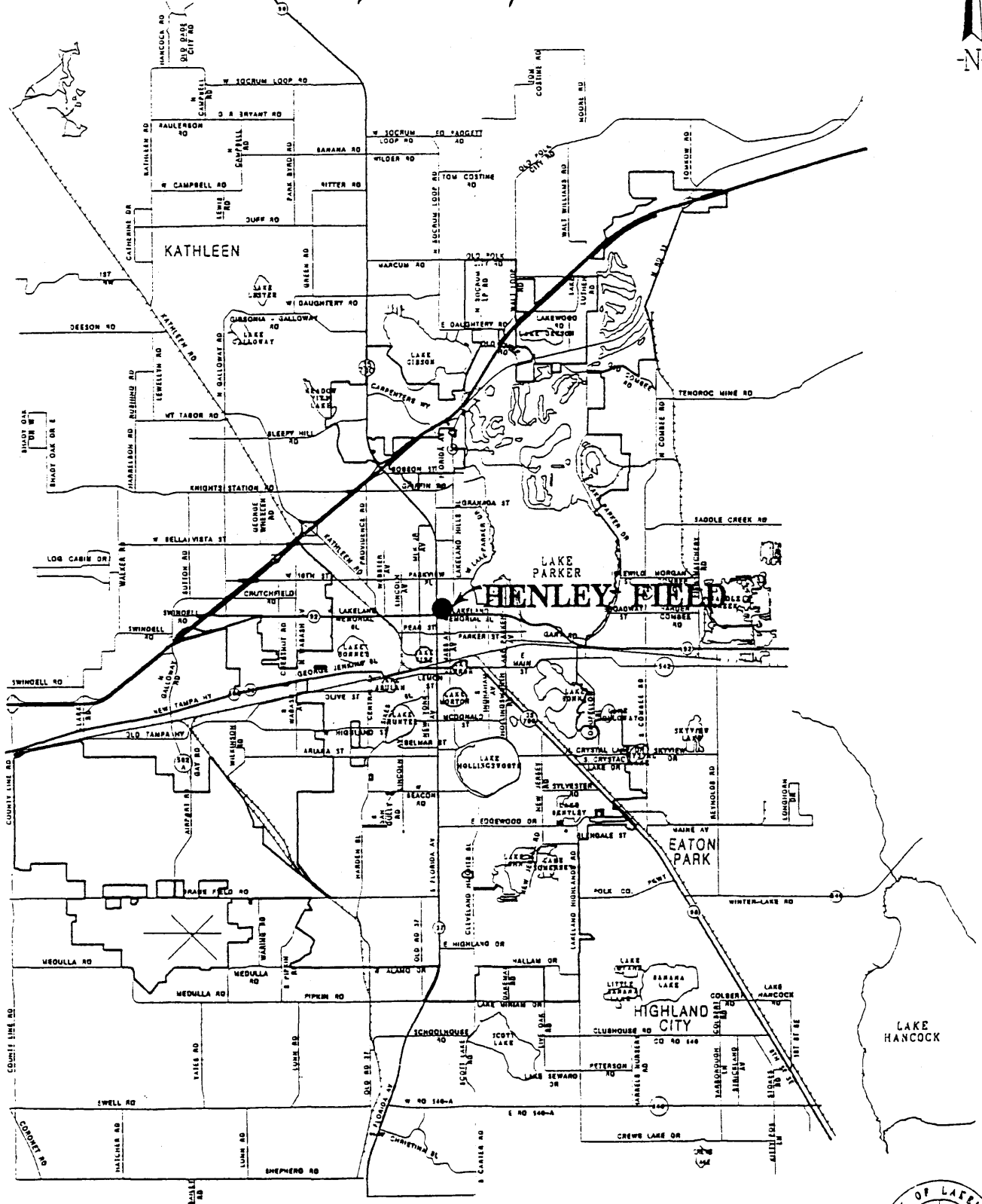
# LOCATIONAL MAP CITY OF LAKELAND



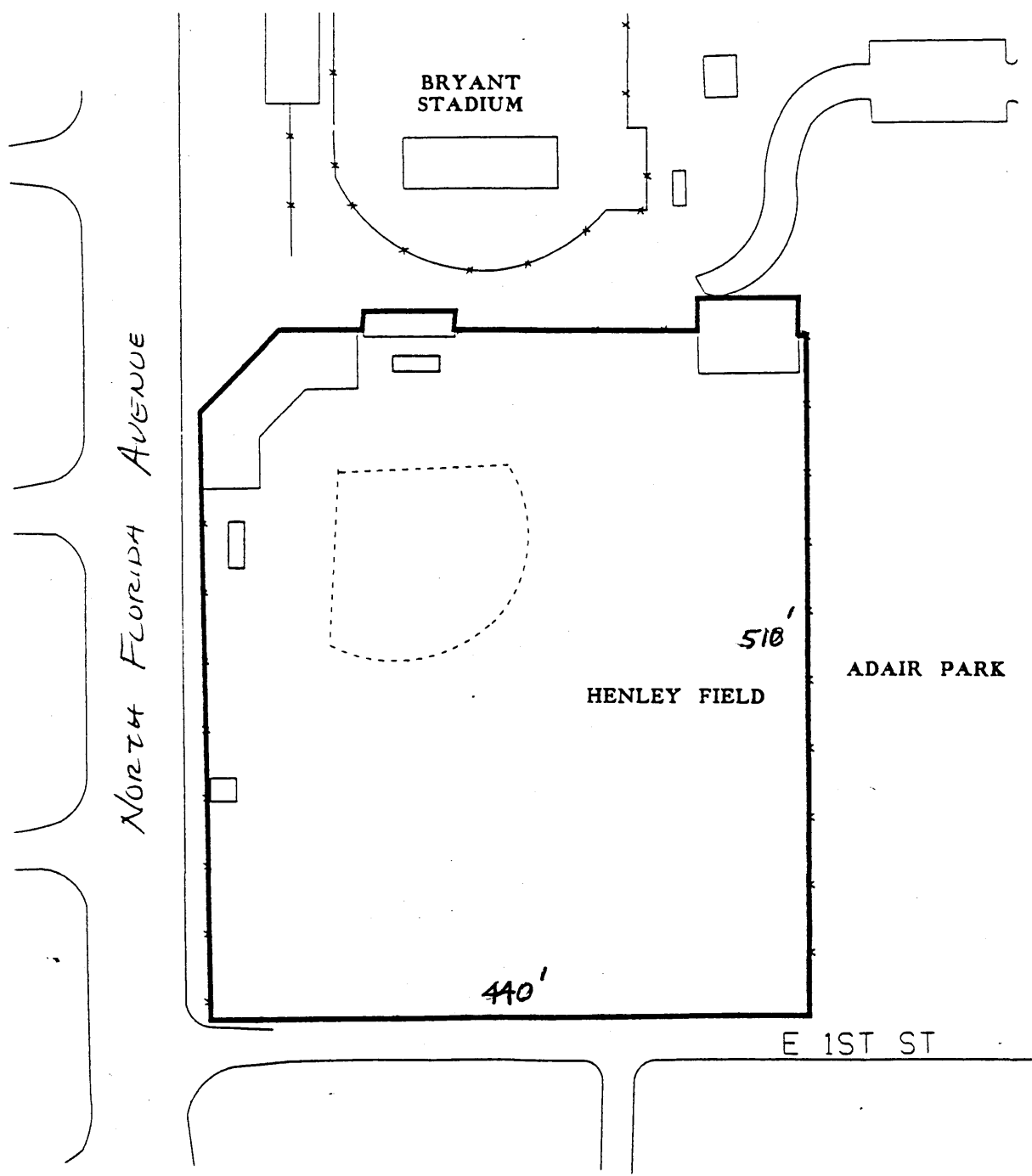
POLK COUNTY



# LOCATIONAL MAP HENLEY FIELD BALL PARK LAKELAND, POLK CO., FL

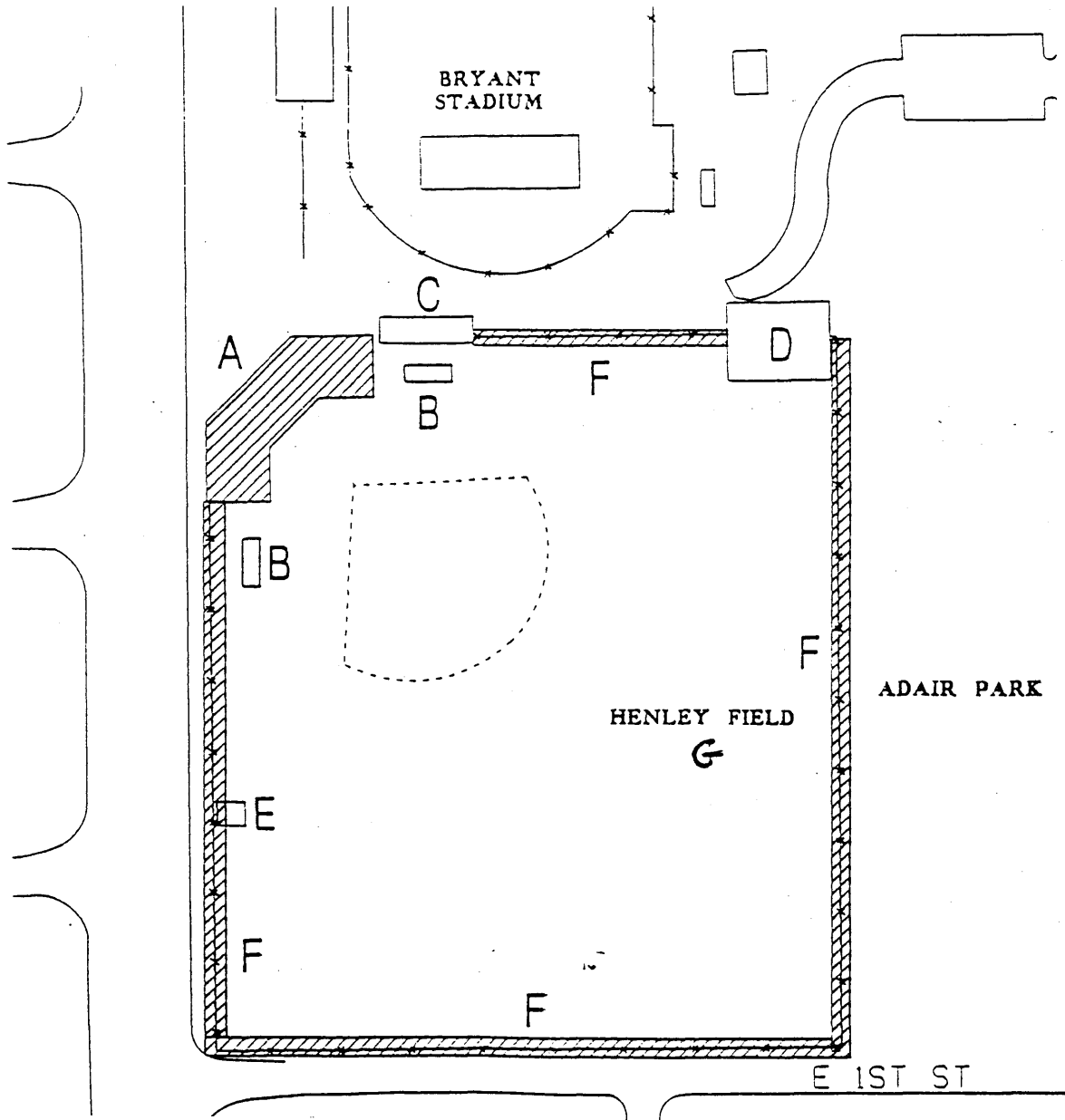


# HENLEY FIELD BALL PARK BOUNDARY MAP



# HENLEY FIELD BALL PARK CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES MAP

LAKELAND, POLK CO., FL



**CONTRIBUTING**

- A Grandstand (building)
- F Wall (structure)
- G Henley Field (site)

**NON CONTRIBUTING**

- B Dug Outs (building)
- C Concessions (building)
- D Club House (building)
- E Storage (building)



# HENLEY FIELD BALL PARK BOUNDARY MAP & PHOTOGRAPHIC DIAGRAM

←○= PHOTO DIRECTION



LAKELAND, POLK CO., FL

