

MOBILE'S HISTORIC BASEBALL PARKS

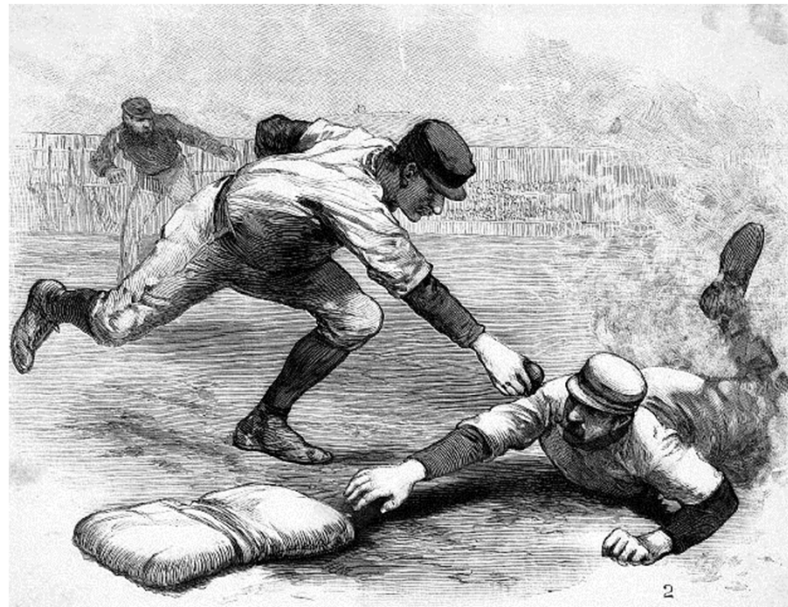
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INTRODUCTION

Baseball has been played in Mobile since the game was first played on the campus of Spring Hill College in 1860. Many amateur clubs were organized and, eventually, professional baseball teams were formed. What follows is a brief overview of the venues throughout the city where professional baseball was played.



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FRASCATI PARK

1886 – 1895

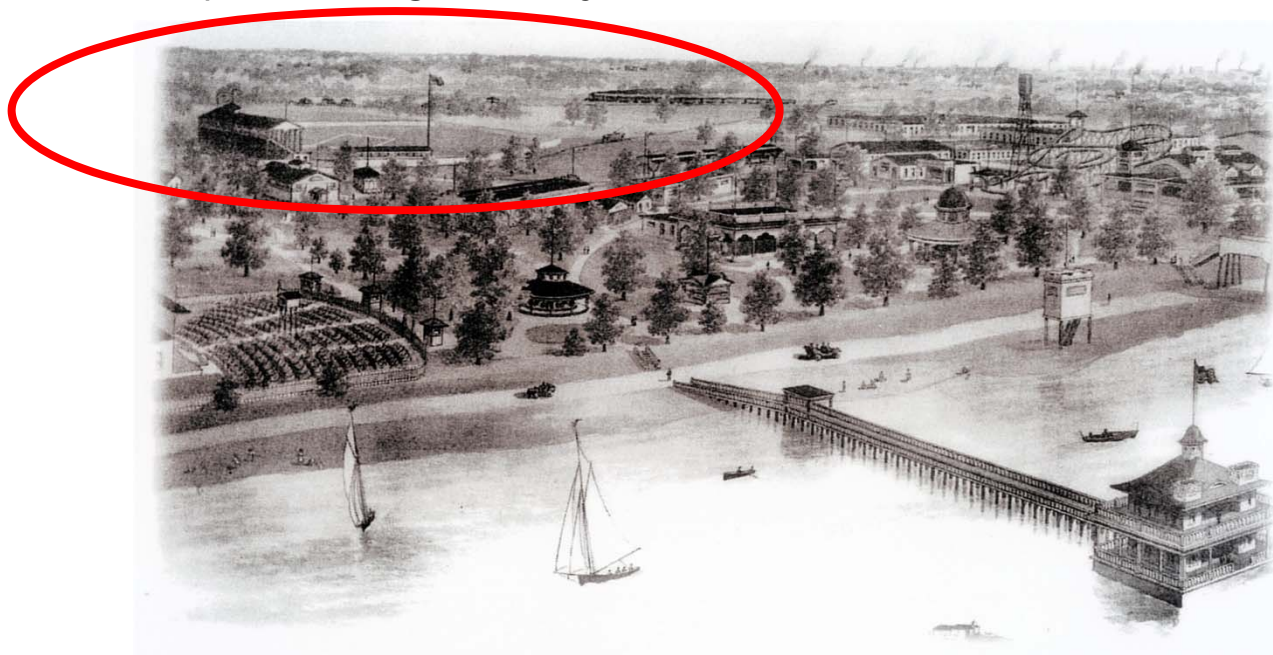
- Mobile's first professional baseball park was Frascati Park, located near Baker and Yeend Street between McDuffie Island and Brookley Field near the Mobile waterfront. This site served as professional baseball's home park from the time when the game first dawned in Mobile in 1886 until 1895.
- The first season saw two Mobile teams – the Mobile Club and the Acid Iron Earths – call Frascati Park home. Both teams were in a league called the Gulf Baseball League. By 1887 Mobile had a team in the original old Southern League and they too played at Frascati.
- Southern League teams for Mobile followed in 1889, 1892, 1893, 1894, and 1895 which was the last professional season at Frascati Park.
- The park had been named for a town in Italy, south of Rome, known for gorgeous villas and gardens. The original plan for the Mobile site was for a 15-acre park with the same Italian charm. Over the years the waterfront's character changed from recreation to industrial.
- Today the old Frascati Park site is occupied by the FSI, Inc. rail car service center. No information as to seating capacity or field dimensions has survived to this day and time.

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MONROE PARK

1896 – 1926

- Monroe Park was the next site that served as a home for professional baseball in Mobile. It was originally created by the owners of the city's street car service in the late 1800's.
- Physically it is located near where Broad Street meets Interstate 10 and lies between the interstate highway and Mobile Bay, just north of Brookley Field. In its heyday it housed a movie theatre, bandstand, yacht club, carousel, roller coaster, picnic grounds and a baseball park among its many attractions.

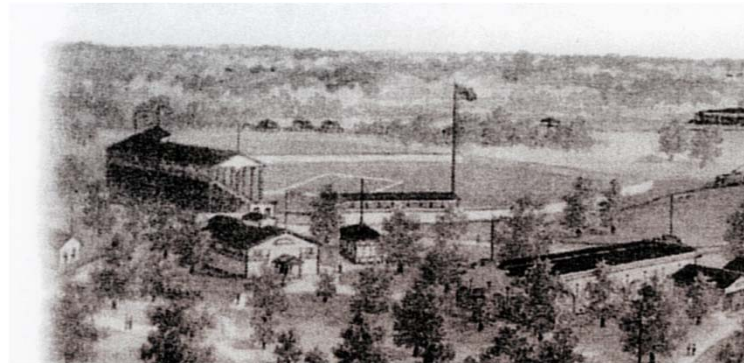


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MONROE PARK

1896 – 1926

- A succession of fierce hurricanes in 1906, 1916, and 1926 whittled away at these old structures, destroying its piers, the roller coaster, the baseball grandstand and other attractions at the park.



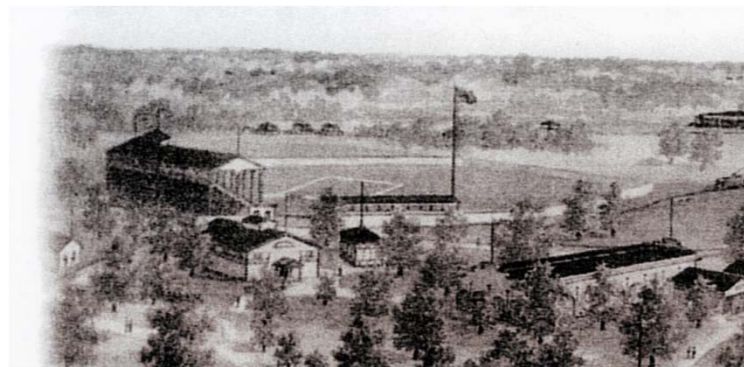
- Its baseball park was home to professional baseball in Mobile from 1896 to 1926 and included:
 - Southern League teams in 1896, 1898, and the pennant winning 1899 Mobile Blackbirds
 - Southern Interstate League team in 1903
 - Cotton States League teams in 1905, and pennant winning clubs in 1906 and 1907
 - Southern Association teams from 1908 through 1926

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MONROE PARK

1896 – 1926

- Monroe Park's baseball park had a seating capacity of 5,000 in 1910 which was increased to 6,500 in 1912 and again to 6,900 in 1920. In 1921 it was again expanded to seat 8,000, but by 1923 seating had actually decreased to 5,500. In its last season in 1926 its capacity had once again grown to 6,500. The grandstand seated 3,700 and the remainder was bleacher seating.



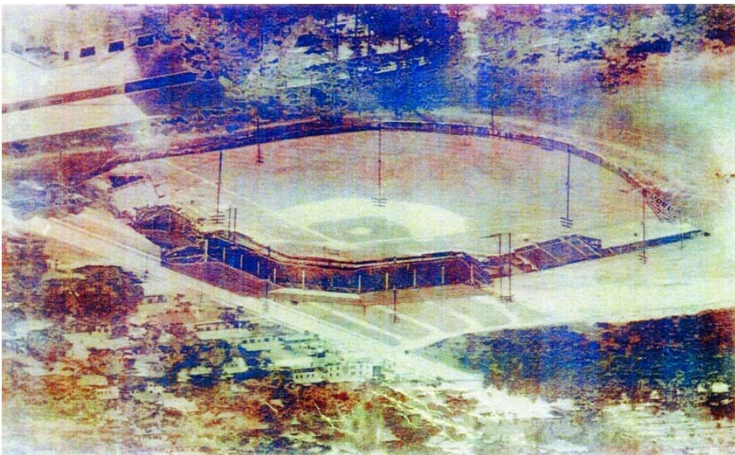
- Field dimensions for Monroe Park were 351' in left field, 404' in center field, and 268' in right field.
- Monroe Park's wooden grandstand was destroyed by the hurricane that struck Mobile on September 20, 1926.

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HARTWELL FIELD

1927 – 1958

- The genesis of what became known as Hartwell Field began with the destruction of the wooden baseball grandstand at Monroe Park by a hurricane that struck Mobile on Monday, September 20, 1926.
- On Friday, January 28, 1927, a contract for the construction of the new ball park was signed by the Mobile Baseball Association with the R.E. Sundberg Construction Company of Mobile. The initial cost estimate was given to be \$25,000.
- The park was to have a 5,000 seat grandstand and be built of wood with steel supports and structure. Seating was to be supplemented by bleachers that had been salvaged from hurricane damaged Monroe Park.



- Field dimensions of the new park were to be 400' in left field, 450' in center field, and 398' in right field. Automobile parking was for 1,000 cars.
- Original seating capacity of 9,000 which was reduced to 8,000 by 1937 and again in 1944, capacity was reduced to 6,500. In 1952 seating capacity was increased to 7,500.
- Field dimensions had been changed by the 1940's to 335' in left field, 400' in center field, and 335' in right field.

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“NEW” HARTWELL FIELD

1959 – 1983

- On January 11, 1959, the city of Mobile announced it would be demolishing the old baseball park and building a new one. The old wooden park had become too dilapidated and needed to be replaced.
- Seating capacity was increased to 11,000 and field dimensions were the same as the old ball park – 335' down the lines in left and right field, 400' in center field.



- The Bears didn't play at the new park until May and no night games were played until June.
- The Bears played only three years in this park. The 1959 club was a winning team while the 1960 and 1961 teams posted back-to-back second division finishes.
- The city of Mobile eventually decided the ball park needed to be demolished due to its deteriorated condition and so on Tuesday, April 12, 1983 demolition work began and was completed in about 45 days.

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STANKY FIELD

1980 – Present

- When professional baseball returned to Mobile in 1994 and 1995, the site for the games in these two seasons was Stanky Field at the University of South Alabama.
- This facility originally opened in the late 1970's as Jaguar Field, but was rebuilt and reopened on March 9, 1980 and named Stanky Field in honor of Eddie Stanky, a former major league player and manager who later became the head coach of the University of South Alabama.



- The stadium was renovated again in 2004. It seats 3,500 and has field dimensions of 330' down the left and right field lines and 400' to center field.

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HANK AARON STADIUM

1997 – Present

- On Monday, September 9, 1996 the Mobile city council agreed to spend \$7.2 million to build a new baseball stadium.
- The new ball park was named Hank Aaron Stadium in honor of their native son who had picked blackberries on the same site as the ball park 50 years prior to its opening.
- On Thursday, April 17, 1997 the Bay Bears opened the new ball park with a 4 – 2 win over the Birmingham Barons.
- The seating capacity of Hank Aaron Stadium is 6,000 with field dimensions of 325' in left field, 400' in center field, and 310' in right field.
- The stadium contains club offices, a souvenir shop, elaborate concession stands named for some of the older major league ball parks, elaborate suites and a stadium club for season ticket holders/suite occupants.



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