

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Normandale Field

other names/site number Erv Lind Field

Name of Multiple Property Listing N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

street & number NE 57th Avenue and NE Hassalo Street not for publication

city or town Portland vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Multnomah code 051 zip code 97213

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 at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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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.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
1	0	site
		structure
		object
1		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Sports
Facility
LANDSCAPE: City Park

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Sports
Facility
LANDSCAPE: City Park

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT
NO STYLE

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
 walls: WOOD: Plywood

 roof: ASPHALT
 other: BRICK
EARTH

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Summary Paragraph

Normandale Field, renamed Erv Lind Field in 1965, is a softball diamond with fixed bleachers, a press box, concessions building, and other associated objects and structures, at the southeast corner of Normandale Park, a 13.7-acre public park in northeast Portland, Oregon. Normandale Park is bounded by NE 55th Avenue on the west, NE 57th Avenue on the east, NE Halsey Street on the north, and NE Hassalo Street on the south. The nominated property starts at the two street edges on NE 57th Ave. and on NE Hassalo St. and extends to the outer arcing fence line, a little more than 3 acres in size. Within this area, the playing field site itself is contributing as an ensemble with its supporting and accessory structures: field lights on poles, the Modern-style brick concessions building, the permanent inner sets of bleachers constructed on berms, and the Modern/ utilitarian press box/ bathroom/ storage building, situated diagonally at the street corner of the site. The field and its accessory structures all were designed and constructed by the Portland Parks Department, and remained the home field for a National champion women's softball team, the Erv Lind Florists, during the period 1948 to 1964. The site displays good integrity, with specific character-defining features providing a link to the Florists players and their fans who experienced the field as it was in that time period. These features include the field surfaces with "skinned" (non-grass) infield and turf outfield, the asphalt and concrete terraced berms with permanent seating, though seating itself has been replaced, and the use of field lighting for night games, though the existing lights have been moved and upgraded numerous times. Both the press box/ bathroom building and the concessions building have also been altered somewhat over the years, but these structures, constructed in the L-shaped berm zone, serve to physically define and separate the field from the surrounding neighborhood. They both also represent the time period in their simple, unadorned surfaces and their Modern-style flat overhanging roofs, and provided amenities and features that spoke to the caliber of games played at the field. At these games, often at night under the lights, the Florists' fan base paid admission, heard an announcer calling the plays, and could purchase concessions during games. The individual components of Normandale Field are interwoven, creating a place that was remarkable for its time and is little changed today.

Narrative Description

Normandale Field, now named Erv Lind Field, is in the southeast corner of the larger Normandale Park, in NE Portland, Oregon. The ballfield is oriented with the first baseline running north-south parallel to NE 57th Avenue and the third baseline running east-west parallel to NE Hassalo Street. A rectangular two-story structure occupies the southeast corner of the site, at a diagonal to the surrounding roads. The one-story portion closest to the corner is a restroom, and above and behind it to the northwest, facing the field, is the press box. Bleachers are constructed on tiered berms along both street sides of the site, and a small brick concessions building marks the north end of the berm structure along NE 57th Ave. A plan for the original design of the field, seating, press box, and other features was not located, but the Portland Parks Department was fully responsible for the original design of Normandale Field in 1948, for the concessions building added in 1953, for the design of alterations to the press box/ bathroom building in 1955, and for most of the subsequent additions and alterations.¹ The field and its accessory features and structures (see Site Plan, Figure 4) are further described below.

¹ Ruth Strode, "Expanding: City Bureau of Parks Adds Indoor As Well As Outdoor Play Facilities To take Care of Growing Patronage," *Oregonian*, October 10, 1948, 80. The 1953 concessions building was likely designed by Roland B. Hall of the Portland Parks Department.

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Setting and Vicinity

The field is located at the south end of Normandale Park in a mostly-residential neighborhood in northeast Portland (see Figure 1). Across NE Hassalo Street to the south are several large warehouse or office buildings, one- or two-story in height. East and west of the park, there are residential, mostly one-story single-family homes, on 50' by 100' lots. These were developed in the 1920s through 1950.

Only the southeast corner of Normandale Park is being nominated, but the setting of the ballfield within the larger park is important to its context. In the rest of the "L"-shaped Normandale Park, various areas have been developed or altered over time (see Figures 1 and 2). West of Normandale Field, there were tennis courts in the 1940s and 1950s, a soccer field by the early 1980s, and now is a flat grassy area. Just north of the softball field, within a stand of tall Douglas fir trees, is an off-leash dog park. To the west and north of the off-leash area, still in the central treed area of the park, is a picnic shelter and restroom structure, built before 1950 and "reconstructed" in 1978. A circular concrete wading pool, located to the west of the picnic shelter during the 1950s, is no longer extant. Two open ballfields are located in the north end of the park, where the park is narrower in footprint as it abuts NE Halsey Street, one of the larger east-west street corridors in the vicinity.

Character-Defining Features of Normandale Field

- The 1948 softball field itself, including "skinned" (non-grass) infield diamond and turf outfield;
- Field lighting for night games, though the existing lights have been moved and altered;
- The structure of asphalt and concrete tiers built into the berms and supporting the lower bleacher seats, including the aisle steps and the general arrangement of the bleacher seating (though not the specific seats);
- The locations of the press box/restroom building and concessions building within the general parameter of the bermed edges, helping to define the field edges, and
- The flat, utilitarian/Modern surfaces and Modern overhanging roofs at the press box/restroom building and concessions buildings, providing a visual tie to the 1948-1964 time period through this style of architecture.

Normandale Field Site Features

1. *Softball field, fencing, and lights.* 1948-2000s.

The infield (central field area that includes the bases) is a sandy dirt surface, with mowed grass in the outfield beyond the bases. The outfield is enclosed by an inner and an outer standard galvanized metal chain-link fence, and along the two sides of the field there is a single chain-link fence. The distance from home plate to the "inner" outfield fence is about 250' (see Photos 0003 and 0005). A line of closely planted Incense Cedar trees curves around the outfield, just inside the outer fence line which is located about 23 to 25 feet beyond the inner fence line.² The trees form a green backdrop some 65 to 70 feet tall, with a flagpole and several galvanized metal lightpoles also in this zone between the fences.³ A wooden scoreboard, somewhat deteriorated in condition, is also in this zone, just in front of the trees. Behind home plate is a black vinyl-coated chain-link fence with mesh above the fencing, and a galvanized chain-link fence extends along either side to form the front of two dugouts, enclosed by fencing. Each has a drinking fountain and bench seating within the fenced area. Existing field lights are on round metal poles, significantly taller at around 70' high than the lights along the street edges of the park, which are on faceted precast concrete poles, about 25' tall. Field lights, which have a top disc-shaped fixture and

² The fences are constructed in straight-line segments to form an overall arc, so the dimensions between the two fences vary.

³ Portland Parks & Recreation, *Tree Inventory Project*, accessed at <https://pdx.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b4671f4591144530b1c590731923b182>.

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about 6 cone-shaped fixtures on each pole, individually angled, are spaced around the perimeter of the ballpark in five locations (see Photo 0005 and Figure 4).

Alterations: The inner fence was put up along the outfield in 1955 (within the period of significance), with the idea that balls hit over the inner fence would be home runs, exciting events for fans.⁴ Irrigation was installed in 1951 across the entire Normandale Park, including at Normandale Field. Irrigation was later replaced in 1991 in the outfield. The infield has been resurfaced and the grass outfield likely replaced or re-seeded numerous times, and the fencing has been replaced several times, most recently in 2006 when the backstop, dugout enclosures, and infield fencing was replaced. There is now a line of mature Incense Cedar trees just inside the outer fence around the outfield, forming an impenetrable visual backdrop to the field. These trees were likely planted in the early 1980s. While these dark green trees bring a similar feeling of backdrop and enclosure to Normandale Field as the original Douglas Firs still present throughout Normandale Park north of the field, the Cedar trees are closer and much denser than the more naturalized, wooded Park aesthetic present during the period of significance.

In 1948, the field lighting consisted of wood poles with several short crossbars supporting individual lights, and there were ten of them surrounding the field. The pole lights were replaced in 1961 and again in 1972, when the lighting was a combination of incandescent flood lights and mercury flood lights. In 1978 additional lights were added to the poles and lights already in place. By 1989, the number of poles had been reduced to seven. While the lights are not in their original exact placement, nor are they materially the same, their presence around the field perimeter has been a strong factor in the level of competition hosted at the field, and they are still present and still being used. Pedestrian pathway lights were added in 1993.

2. **Permanent bleacher tiers, berms, and seating.** 1948-1987.

There are two primary entries into the field. One is just north of the existing restroom and press box structure, on an asphalt path leading up and over the berm from NE 57th Avenue. The other is from NE Hassalo St., between the first and the second sets of permanent bleachers. In both cases, the asphalt path ramps up to arrive at the aisle between the lower bleachers and the upper bleachers. Lower bleachers are built on concrete and asphalt tiers, and their lengths are customized for the length of each tier. Between each segment of tiers and bleachers are concrete steps (see Photo 0010). The permanent bleachers are painted wood bench seats with a wood back (see Photo 0002). The bleachers are constructed at three angles wrapping two sides of the field, one facing north, one northwest at a 45-degree angle, and one facing west. The upper sets of bleachers are built as units, with metal cross-braced structure below the seats, and no backs. The central set, just below the press box, are metal rather than painted wood seats. The two dugouts, where players sit when not on the field, also have metal seats with metal back supports.

Alterations: Seats were initially park benches placed on the tiers constructed into the berms on the east and south sides of the field (see Figure 12). Images from 1948 and 1949 show temporary bleachers constructed entirely around the field (Figures 9, 10, 13, and 15). These were brought in and then removed numerous times over the history of the field, perhaps even every season for some period. The permanent seating, both upper and lower bleachers, was replaced in 1987. The two dugouts (which are coplanar with the field surface) have also been increased in size, pushing back into the berm terrace area; see Figure 4 site plan.

Landscaping at the perimeter of the ballpark has changed quite a bit over time. Early photos of the site as well as one in 1964 show the berms along the street edges covered with grass. The berms are now landscaped with various perennial shrubs.

⁴ "Softballers Set Opener," *Oregon Journal*, April 10, 1955, 31.

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3. **Press box/ bathroom building.** 1948 -1990s.

Exterior: The primary building on the site, accessory to the field, is Modern style. It is a two-story structure housing the announcer's booth, storage, bathrooms, and two ticket booths. Closest to the southeast corner of the site, housing storage and public toilet rooms, is a one-story rectilinear volume, of red brick and painted concrete stucco with a flat concrete overhanging roof at the front. At either outside corner is an expressed, rectangular form, also of red brick. The overall width of the building is about 33 feet, with each corner volume adding another 5.5 feet. A single metal door opens to the side on each of these ticket booth volumes, and a memorial plaque is mounted next to the north-facing door.⁵ At the front elevation, diagonally facing the street intersection, the symmetrical corner volumes each have a small louvered vent opening, and in the inset center wall between them there are three evenly placed metal doors, two for the bathrooms and one for a storage room (see Figure 7 and Photo 0001). The concrete overhang forms the roof of the two corner volumes, and dies into the sides of the painted stucco-finish volume behind the brick corner elements. Two louvered openings at the sides face north and the same at the south. The earth is bermed up towards the back of this one-story concrete volume.

The taller part of the building housing the press box is immediately behind (to the northwest of) the one-story portion. The two-story painted plywood volume is a simple, rectangular form, about 33' by 8' in footprint. The floor level below the press box, used for storage, is at least a half-level above the floor in the bathroom structure so there is no interior connection (see Figure 7 plan). Exterior walls are painted wood panel, with no divisions, and a flat overhanging roof. A single wood door faces south in the lower level. At the upper level, a small wood-sash slider window is at the south wall, and facing the street corner (southeast) there are a row of louvered panels. A wood sign is mounted below the louvers, reading "Erv Lind Stadium." Two painted metal downspouts descend from the roof, on either side of the louvers. There are two aluminum slider windows on the southeast façade, with metal security bars over them, at the storage room below the press box. At the side facing the field (northwest) there are a series of openings with large painted wood panels held in wood frames (Photo 0006). A painted wood sign above the openings reads "Jack Herron Press Box." The center three openings are covered by a shed-style fabric awning. While definitely utilitarian, the structure as a whole exhibits a number of carefully considered, Modern features. The placement of most openings is symmetrical and thoughtful, and the composition of the side elevations in particular is dynamic. The small brick corner volumes are topped with a strong horizontal plane, which laps around the higher concrete volume of the bathrooms, and is juxtaposed against the tall, narrow side of the announcer's booth volume behind, also capped with a strong horizontal roofline. The press box is entered by continuing up the steps at the north end of the open metal stands to reach a covered but open landing, carved out of the volume of the upper level. This is the only way in, meaning that persons who cannot climb steps are not able to enter. There is a single door on its north end.

Interior: The announcer's booth consists of a single long room, with simple wood ceiling joists, wood plank floor, open wood framing without insulation, and a long counter with chairs along the wall facing the field. A series of wood shutters, which are hinged at the top and can be held open using hooks at the ceiling, closes off the seven large openings facing the field (see Photo 0011).

History: By the time the ballfield opened for the women's softball championship tournament in September 1948, the concrete bathroom structure had been built, and a press box structure above it (see Figure 8). However, the upper wood structure at that time, a simple shed not unlike the existing press box, was not the one that exists today. The early press box was supported on cross-timbered stilts.⁶ Also, as seen in

⁵ The text reads, "In memory of James A. Cline (1909-1972) and Beverly E. Cline (1918-1995); Dedicated fans and supporters of Portland softball, for their countless hours in attendance and work at this ballpark and their love of the game."

⁶ The date of the photo, item A2004-002.6775 at Portland City Archives, seems suspect. If it was December 1947 as noted, that would be prior to the award of the tournament to Portland, which occurred in January 1948. It is more

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the 1950 Sanborn Fire Map (Figure 10) and in the 1948 aerial photo of Normandale Park (Figure 9), the “Radio booth” was not as wide as the concrete restroom building in its first iteration.

Alterations: In the spring of 1955, a more “permanent” press box was erected, above the lower level volume containing restrooms and storage space. Also in 1955, the corner ticket booth volumes and brick front were added to the 1948 concrete restroom volume.⁷ Because the 1953 concessions building is red brick, the addition of the brick facing and ticket booths at the front bathroom wall gave the two buildings a more compatible visual relationship. The press box/ bathrooms building had updated electrical work done in 1983, with ballfield floodlights and a new scoreboard on switches in the press box, and interior fluorescent lights added. Concrete floor slabs in the restrooms were replaced, along with bathroom fixtures and exterior doors, in 1998. Lighting and electrical systems in the press box and restrooms were also updated at this time.⁸

4. **Concessions Building.** 1953-1990s.

The concessions building, accessory to the field, is a low red-brick Modern style / utilitarian structure with an “L”-shaped footprint. It has a flat concrete roof that forms an overhang towards the northern, eastern, and western sides of the northern leg of the “L,” where concessions are sold through the large openings in the wall (Photo 0004). The south side of the concessions building is cut into the berm and forms the berm’s terminus.

Interior: The concessions building’s main room has two roll-up metal shutters in the large openings at east and west, with the large opening to the north infilled with a painted panel. The ceiling is painted concrete with light fixtures directly affixed, as well as some electrical conduit. A series of small cabinets with wood countertops are against the walls, with miscellaneous kitchen equipment and a sink at west wall (see Photo 0012). There are several other smaller rooms: a bathroom and a storage room with another refrigerator and freezer. All have concrete floors and plain painted walls.

History: Constructed in 1953, the small “L”-shaped concessions building was likely designed by Roland B. Hall of the Parks Department, and was built by the C. M. Corkum Co.⁹ Walt Rudd was given the contract to manage the concessions at the park, and did so for about 20 years.¹⁰ Property maps show a 40’ square around the concessions building, with this small property a separate taxlot (see Figure 3). This may have been done to allow commercial uses on a property otherwise zoned for open space and parks.

Alterations: the building was slightly altered in footprint sometime in the early to mid-1990s, with the westerly leg of the “L” in plan both shortened and widened, and a roof overhang created at north and west. No foundation or seismic improvements were done; the building is a slab-on-grade structure. 1998 updates to the building included replacement of doors, electrical and lighting.

5. **Storage shed.** Approximately mid-1950s-1980s (?).

A storage shed structure at the southwest corner of the field, presumably where the mower is kept, is a small flat-roofed building with a single person door and a garage door facing the field. Next to it to the north is a standard metal storage container. The storage shed has painted “T-1-11” type vertical siding and a slightly overhanging shed roof. The person door is a painted plywood panel door; the garage door is aluminum panel (see photo 0007).

likely sometime in the summer of 1948.

⁷ Determined by comparing a 1940s photo with the current bathroom structure.

⁸ Robertson Merryman Barnes Architects plans, 1998.

⁹ “Building permits,” *Oregon Journal*, April 19, 1953, 50 (builder). While no plans of the concession building have been located, a 1982 electrical plan of the field by N. Vanderburgh cites references for “other plans with electrical information” including “Concession Building/ Normandale Park/ NE 57th and Hassalo” by R. B. Hall, undated.

¹⁰ *Oregon Journal*, March 18, 1972, 13.

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Alterations: although a shed was present at the southwest corner of the field by at least 1960, the shed was likely rebuilt at some time in the last 40 years, and its exterior materials have almost certainly changed, both at the garage door and the exterior wall material. Though lacking in material integrity, the shed structure does not impact the integrity of the overall field ensemble because it is so clearly utilitarian, out of the way, and small in size. Early original plans for the field have not yet been located, but further research may enable a comparison of the existing shed with the footprint of the early shed.

6. **“Hall of Fame.”** Early 1980s.

The covered structure along the south side of the park is a series of shallow-depth shadow boxes constructed of wood panels held between “log” posts, and covered by a shingled gable roof with ridgeline following the line of the panels. A series of larger square boxed-out wood posts support the roof at the edge facing the field, and a wood sign reads, “Portland Hall of Fame and Honor.” There are locked painted-wood panels, hinged at the top, that cover the display of black and white player photographs. These large panels can be held open using clips that hang from the structure above, but had not been opened in some time. Under the panels are shadow boxes with glass fronts made up of two sliding-glass panels, most of which are partly open or off-track. Framed photos and player statistics are displayed behind the glass. The center shadow box (out of seven total) has a poster-sized photo of one of the most famous local softball players, Betty Evans Grayson; other photos or player statistic sheets are all smaller. Photos and displays in many cases are now cobwebbed and sitting on the bottom of the display box.

In 1980, Ormond R. Bean, whose father Ormond Bean, Sr. was the commissioner in charge of Parks during the 1940s, designed a covered gallery structure (the “Hall of Fame”) for Erv Lind Field. The covered structure was added in approximately 1982, well after the period of significance.

7. **Scoreboard.** Approximately late 1960s or 1970s.

The scoreboard is a wood panel, painted various shades of green, and supported on three metal posts. It has glass-covered electro-mechanical light bulb dot numerals for changing the score and inning, but appears unused (see photo 0008). Above the scoreboard is a wooden sign reading “Donated by Ray Bristow Company.”

Alterations: In 1953, a new “partially electric” scoreboard was erected at the field, and later replaced again with the scoreboard now at the site. The scoreboard’s sign refers to the Ray Bristow Company, which was founded in 1964, so it is unlikely that the scoreboard was erected before the end of 1964. It probably dates from later in the 1960s and is therefore outside of the period of significance.

8. **Erv Lind Plaque.** 1965.

The Erv Lind Plaque is a metal plaque, 18” by 20”, set into a concrete surface set at a 45-degree angle and pressed with “sewn seams” to represent a softball. The plaque is set just inside the entrance to the field, next to the ramp on the north side of the press box/ bathroom building (see photo 0006).

Alterations: The Erv Lind Plaque was added to the field after Erv Lind’s death. It was presented to the city by the Amateur Softball Association and dedicated on July 16, 1965, the same date as the city ordinance naming the field Erv Lind Field. While important as a commemorative object, the plaque dates from just outside the field’s period of significance, which ends in 1964.

Integrity

Historic integrity is the composite of seven qualities; location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Erv Lind Field retains its *location*, *design*, *setting*, *feeling*, and *association* and retains much of its *materials* and *workmanship* from the period of significance.

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The *location* of the field has not changed from its construction in 1947-1948. The *setting* of the field, within a city park in a residential neighborhood, is retained to a high degree. The changes to the field surface, dugouts, and fencing follow the same general original outlines and appearance and have very little impact on the overall integrity of the field. The field ensemble is perceived as being part of a larger park, with trees north and west of the outfield in the larger Normandale Park creating a feeling of enclosure and backdrop. The public green space surrounding Erv Lind Field continues past the field, and is part of the larger Rose City Park neighborhood, with modest houses in a semi-suburban setting facing the park on east and west sides. Across NE Hassalo Street, to the south, the formerly light industrial setting is now transitioned to more office type uses, but the low, larger buildings are of the same approximate size, scale, and location as they were during the period of significance.

The *design* of the field ensemble has changed little since 1964, the end of the period of significance. The field dimensions have not been altered, and the grass and “skinned” surfaces are as originally built. The lights, evergreen trees in the park beyond, and the tiered berms at street edges where the accessory architectural features are located all help to define this space, though all of these features have been slightly altered.

The field retains historic *feeling* and *associations*. As a public recreational facility with lights for night-time events, a concessions structure, ticket booths, bathrooms and a press box, speak to the field’s continued capacity for crowds of spectators. Although there are several commemorative elements that provide a link to women’s achievement or women in softball, the association to the Erv Lind Florists’ team and fan base are those elements that highlight the fact that such a facility, very impressive for its time in 1948, was built primarily for a woman’s semi-professional sports competition. The field retains its original use, and its original associations. The feeling is likewise strongly retained, with the sense that the field meets “regulation” to be able to host a high level of semi-professional competition. The women’s teams achieving this level of competition could only feel pride and excitement at being provided with the first and only major league softball park that women played on in Oregon.

The *materials* and *workmanship* at the site have been altered to some degree, but overall retain good integrity. The field, bleachers, lights, and the concessions and press box/ restroom buildings resemble their historic appearances, with material changes at some of the bleachers, at the fences and berm conditions (plantings), and a few other minor changes over time.

Although the seating itself has been changed out several times, the tiered steps supporting the lower sections of permanent seating are original. The lower levels of seating was, at one time, simply a series of park benches placed onto these tiers, but has been updated and replaced several times since then.

The scoreboard, though now disused, is another existing feature that illustrates a fan amenity at the field. Though the scoreboard may date from just outside the period of significance, it replaces older scoreboards in the same approximate location which would have been part of the ensemble creating the fan experience at the site.

The grove of Douglas firs where the dog park currently exists, just north of Erv Lind Field, is visible in 1940s and 1950s photographs before the curving, densely planted line of Incense cedars was added behind the outfield fence line. It is probable that the cedars were added in the early 1980s, but they only add to the density of trees that was pre-existing. Without relying solely on the added curving line of cedars within the fenced outfield, then, the “backdrop” of tall evergreen trees in the larger park area to the north is an important aspect of the setting of the field, mentioned in early descriptions and still a feature today. The park setting of Normandale Field is the most important feature of its surroundings, with trees visible beyond the outfield.

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Conclusion

From the period of significance, 1948 until 1964, up until the present, Normandale Field is still a well-used softball field and retains its essential components as a recreational facility built in the 1940s and 1950s, with the capacity for crowds of paying spectators. The permanent seating built into berms as well as the buildings developed within this bermed zone along the street edges define and encircle the field, which is fenced and lit for nighttime use and features “skinned” infield and turf outfield. The field, tucked into a city park in a residential neighborhood, continues to express its association with the highest level of competition in softball.

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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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY: Women

SOCIAL HISTORY: LGBTQ+

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1948-1964

Significant Dates

1948, date of construction

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Portland Parks Department

Carl Lundell, city utilities engineer

Roland B. Hall, Parks Department

Period of Significance (justification)

The field, constructed as a showcase for Portland's national champion women's softball team and a revenue-generator for the city, was completed in time for Portland to host the 1948 National Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Softball Championship tournament. During the period 1948-1964, the field was the home field for the Erv Lind Florists softball team, and became a safe and affirming place for LGBTQ+ women. After coach Lind's death in 1964, the Florists players scattered to other teams.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

Normandale Field, an open-air softball venue in Portland, Oregon, is significant at a state-wide level under criterion A in the areas of women's history as well as entertainment and recreation. The field is also locally significant to LGBTQ+ history in Portland as one of the few known early, important, and long-lasting gathering spaces associated with lesbians or queer women in Portland.¹¹ Renamed Erv Lind Field in 1965, the ballpark is the first and only sports facility in Oregon to be constructed primarily for a women's major-league team for any team sport. The field was built specifically to host the 1948 National softball championship tournament (both men's and women's teams, though the women's team "opened" the field and was the bigger draw), hosted west of the Mississippi River for the first time. From its inaugural use in September 1948, it was the home of the National champion women's softball team the Erv Lind Florists, until the Florists team disbanded at the end of 1964 after coach and sponsor Erv Lind's death. There are simply no other public sports facilities in Oregon that were built for and associated with a women's team or any women's nationally competitive sport in the era of 1948 to 1964, the field's period of significance. The field offered, for its time, the highest caliber of ballfield design features. The field is also the only resource known to be associated with LGBTQ+ women outside of bars or nightclubs in Portland during this immediately postwar, conservative era. The field had a strong association with the Florists team, which included over time at least some women who identified as LGBTQ+. ¹² The achievements of the Erv Lind Florists brought a certain level of pride and star power that was unmatched by another Oregon team. Normandale Field during this period was a safe and welcoming place for lesbian, bisexual, or queer women. ¹³

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

With three areas or themes of significance, this nomination undertakes a larger amount of contextual information than most nominations. Accordingly, a brief organizational summary is offered to assist the reader. The phenomenon of women's softball in the U. S. and in Oregon, the rise of the Florists team in particular, and the contextual backdrop to U. S. postwar cultural perceptions of athletic women and how the women on the Florists team dealt with those perceptions are covered on pages 12 to 21. The story of bringing the ASA softball championship tournament to Portland, the history of Normandale Park, the design of Normandale Field and events at Normandale Field are covered on pages 21 through 27. A background to Portland's lesbian history and a section on LGBTQ+ women in the Florists' fan base is covered from pages 28 to 33. Finally, Normandale Field, 1965 to the present is on page 33, and a brief discussion of Title IX and comparative properties begins on page 34.

Women's softball in the United States and in Oregon

Softball and baseball first developed in the midwestern region of the United States, especially Chicago and Minneapolis, as a team sport primarily for men. In the early days of softball, as it grew into a separate sport from baseball, it was initially called "kitten ball" starting in about 1900 in many regions such as Minneapolis,

¹¹ The use of the acronym LGBTQ or LGBTQ+ is meant to cover the breadth of diverse non-hetero-normative sexual and gender identities in this nomination, but this term was not used during the period of time discussed in this nomination. The term "queer," is also occasionally used in its modern sense as a word "explicitly inclusive of those who, for personal or political reasons, do not feel represented by lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender identifiers" and who have reclaimed it from a historic pejorative term. [Megan E. Springate, "Introduction to the LGBTQ Heritage Initiative Theme Study," *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*. Published online by the National Park Service, 2016, 02-6].

¹² During the time period 1948-1964, Florists players did not identify publicly as LGBTQ+, but some did later in life.

¹³ There were other local women's teams that played on the field after 1964, including Dottie Moore's Pennant Shop and the "Dr Bernard's" team that took over the Florists name for a few years after Erv Lind's death. These teams may have had a fan base including a high percentage of LGBTQ+ people as well, but more research would be required to find those associations.

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where men complained about the name being the equivalent of “sissy ball.” Some areas differentiated baseball from “playground ball,” another early name for the game.

Women’s earliest known participation in softball or baseball seemed to be mostly an entertainment act. Philadelphia’s Dolly Vardens, a Black women’s exhibition team that formed in 1883, is the earliest record of a women’s professional baseball team in the United States.¹⁴ Other men’s and women’s “barnstorming” or exhibition teams did occasionally tour and perform across the country, such as the Boston Bloomer Girls of 1903, who traveled and played against men’s teams.¹⁵ The phenomenon of women’s teams representing a community and playing competitive games against other women’s teams began in the 1930s in Oregon and in many other states.

During the 1910s and 1920s, American women had progressed in being allowed to take part in certain vigorous activity or sports. The idealized woman of the 1910s was, for the first time, admired for having some level of physicality or “natural” appearance, though only specific sports were deemed “appropriate” for women, such as ballet and tennis, while most other sports—viewed through a white, middle-class lens of gender-conforming behavior—were seen as suitable for boys.¹⁶ In the 1920s, women gained the right to vote, and were also pushing for other new freedoms and opportunities within their lives.¹⁷ With the Flapper era of the late 1920s, women had shorter, looser dresses and shorter haircuts, better allowing activity such as bicycle riding. Individual women also became celebrities in sports in the 1920s, including Babe Didrikson in track, baseball and golf; Annie Oakley the sharpshooter; and Amelia Earhart, aviator.¹⁸ The Great Depression, starting in 1929, reduced women’s opportunities in athletics because in a time of so few jobs and lean budgets, it was seen as inappropriate for a woman to do the job of a man.¹⁹ Women’s softball and baseball, however, were simply good entertainment, in the era before television.²⁰ Baseball and softball emerged as one of the few athletic endeavors that anyone could play without any real equipment or a field; it could be played with only a ball and a make-do bat, in any outdoor space available. Gloves were not necessary, even for the catcher. Girls who were used to physical exercise, or with encouraging families, could join in and even excel, given the right circumstances.²¹

In 1933, the same year that Franklin Roosevelt took office, the first softball national championship tournament was held in Chicago, coinciding with the World’s Fair and promoted by William Randolph Hearst through his newspaper empire. Fifteen women’s teams competed that year, all of whom were from Illinois or neighboring states (or Ontario Canada). The tournament made it clear, however, that a uniform set of rules governing ball size, the size of the field, and other aspects of the game was sorely needed.²² The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) came together in 1934 to do just that, standardizing the name “softball” and the rules that governed it.²³ In general, the differences between baseball and softball were primarily the diameter of the ball,

¹⁴ Carly Adams, “Softball and the Female Community: Pauline Perron, Pro Ball Player, Outsider, 1926-1951.” *Journal of Sport History*, Vol 33 No. 3 [Fall 2006], 328.

¹⁵ Mary L. Littlewood, *Women’s Fastpitch Softball- The Path to the Gold: An Historical Look at Women’s Fastpitch in the United States* (Columbia, Missouri: The National Fastpitch Coaches Association, 1998), 6.

¹⁶ Anne Enke, “Pioneers, Players, and Politicos: Women’s Softball in Minnesota,” *Minnesota History*, Winter 2002/2003, Vol. 58, No. 4, 212.

¹⁷ While the 19th Amendment gave white women the right to vote, many Black women or women of color were still unable to vote due to state laws, poll taxes, literacy tests, threats and intimidation, and other obstacles. It would not be until 1965 with passage of the Voting Rights Act that all women in the United States could vote. In 1924, Native American women and men gained the vote. Oregon ratified the 19th Amendment in 1920, becoming the 25th state to do so.

¹⁸ Littlewood, 8.

¹⁹ Amy M. Doyle, “Diamonds are a Girl’s Best Friend: An Oral History of Women’s Softball in America,” Honors Thesis at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, 1999, 7-8.

²⁰ Yvonne Zipter, *Diamonds Are A Dyke’s Best Friend: reflections, reminiscences, and reports from the field on the lesbian national pastime*. (Ithaca, New York: Firebrand Books, 1988), 41.

²¹ Zipter, 55-65.

²² Littlewood, 11-13.

²³ Enke, 212.

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the distance between bases, and underhand pitching in softball, as opposed to overhand pitching allowed in baseball. Yet all of these regulations were still in flux for some time. Over a period of some years, the ASA divided the U. S. into twelve regions that would compete for the annual National Championship. Portland was part of the Pacific Northwest region, playing against Seattle, Tacoma, Boise, Salt Lake City, and other communities in the four states of Oregon, Washington, Utah, and Idaho. In order to get to a National Championship, each year a team had to win first the local City leagues, then State and Regional League titles, a process that involved many games, and a lot of travel.

Before the early 1930s in Portland, Oregon, softball was also termed “kittenball” or later, “diamondball.” Regulations up until the end of the 1930s, like those in other parts of the country, changed rapidly. The first regulations for the game as played on playgrounds around Portland included the use of a 14” diameter ball and a 45’ diamond on the field.²⁴ In 1932, a commercial “diamondball” league was started, sponsored by the Meier & Frank Company in Portland. Games were played at Civic Stadium (now Providence Park stadium, at 1844 SW Morrison Street), and the response was enthusiastic. The Portland Parks Bureau built a City league for local teams the next year. The adopted Portland rules included a 50’ distance between bases, and allowed for “bunts,” as opposed to National (ASA) rules at the time.²⁵ The Portland City Parks Bureau sponsored separate girls and boys softball leagues starting in 1936, using “national softball rules, with exception that diamonds will have 40-foot bases and 32 1/2-foot pitching distance.”²⁶ The same year, the women’s industrial league was formed in Portland, with teams of women who were employed together to compete against other teams in softball, volleyball, and tennis.

The rise of women’s softball teams was a 1930s, depression-era phenomenon that became more popular than ever during the 1940s. The rise in the national popularity of baseball and softball towards the end of the 1930s was bolstered by the New Deal policies of President Franklin D. Roosevelt beginning in 1936, which actively promoted recreational facilities and constructed more than 3000 athletic fields under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Many of these fields were lighted and were constructed to work for baseball or softball.²⁷ Westmoreland baseball and softball fields (at 7530 SE 22nd Avenue), completed in 1939 in Portland, were constructed under the WPA as part of the New Deal.²⁸

Newspapers around Oregon were beginning to report on womens’ or girls’ softball in the late 1930s.²⁹ A 1937 film, “Girls Can Play,” starred a number of “athletic Venuses who are making girls’ softball the nation’s latest sports craze.”³⁰ In 1939, the State Softball Director, Dwight Adams, put out a call for a meeting at the YMCA in Salem to start an organization “which would be able to better administer the girls’ problems” than the Oregon State Softball Association.³¹ In other words, the established men’s sports organizations in Oregon did not want to be saddled with organizing the newcomers, and outside of clubs or interest groups there were no women’s sports organizations at the time.

In 1942, with ballparks in Chicago sitting unused after the United States had entered WWII, Philip K. Wrigley, owner of the Chicago Cubs, convened a meeting to discuss ideas for use of empty baseball venues without enough men to play. The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) was conceived at this time, the first professional women’s sports league in the United States. They recruited players from the existing

²⁴ Official ASA regulations by 1935 specified a 12” diameter ball, and the base diamond dimensions could be either 45’ or 60’.

²⁵ Ted Wagoner, “World Series of Softball: Tournament Starts at New City Park With Night Games,” *Oregonian*, September 12, 1948, 77. A batter hits a “bunt” when she does not swing the bat at a pitch but allows the ball to just bounce off the bat.

²⁶ “Boys and Girls Leagues Planned,” *Oregonian*, June 7, 1936, 47.

²⁷ Littlewood, 14.

²⁸ NYC Working Group, online site for New Deal resources: <https://livingnewdeal.org/sites/westmoreland-park-portland-or/>

²⁹ See, for instance, “League Playoffs, Girls’ Softball Games Included in Schedule Lined Up for Next Week,” *Oregon Statesman*, August 14, 1937, 8;

³⁰ “Sparkling Comedy Capitol Offering,” *Oregon Statesman* [Salem, OR] September 5, 12.

³¹ “Softball Director Sets Date of Girls’ Softball Meeting at Salem,” *Vernonia Eagle*, July 7, 1939, 6.

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women's fastpitch softball teams, which had existed in some states since the early 1930s. The AAGPBL did pay their players, unlike the ASA which enforced a strict "amateur" standing, but the AAGPBL played a game more resembling softball with underhand pitching from 1943 to 1945, then switched to baseball from 1946 to 1954.³² The AAGPBL was a midwestern phenomenon, and although players were recruited from all over the U.S. and Canada, teams were all based in either Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, or Michigan.

World War II did not diminish the popularity of women's softball, though the war limited all sports games to daylight hours due to blackouts. In the 1940s, two teams stood at the top of the women's ASA Fastpitch league: the Phoenix (Arizona) Ramblers and the New Orleans (Louisiana) Jax.³³ The Ramblers went home with the National trophy in 1940, 1948, and 1949; whereas the Jax won the championship in 1942, 1943, 1945, 1946, and 1947. The Ramblers came from a pool of homegrown talent in Phoenix with other women's powerhouse teams nearby such as the A-1 Queens. Interrupting this dominance came a team from Portland, Oregon. The Portland-based Lind and Pomeroy Florists, seemingly out of nowhere, won the National ASA championship in Ohio in 1944. During the 1940s, "[o]utstanding semi-professional softball teams such as the Erv Lind Florists out of Portland, Oregon, the A-1 Queens and the PBSW Ramblers both out of Phoenix, Arizona were filling the stands game after game. Approximately 3000-4000 fans were packing in to watch women play highly competitive world-class softball."³⁴

Like the New Orleans Jax and the city industrial leagues in Portland, most of the national-caliber teams were formed of women who worked together, often in factory settings. Recruiting for these competitive teams was often based on athletic ability and the tasks or skills demanded by the job were secondary. Many women's ASA softball teams were sponsored by industrial companies, who would name the team: The Peppers (Dr. Pepper); The Nobby Knits (high-end clothing).³⁵ It was common for women's teams to be denoted by the feminized ending "ettes," as in the Raybestos Brakettes, the Caterpillar Tractor Diesettes, or even Dr. Bernard's Molarettes out of Salem, Oregon. Many of these women (in some cases, girls) were from a specific class in American society as well: families who didn't have access to the other sports that were "respectable" for girls in the 1940s to mid-1960s, such as horseback riding, volleyball, and tennis. That meant the players mostly came from a lower-middle class background, many of them from smaller towns and farming communities. Many of the women on various fastpitch teams during these decades were accustomed to hard physical work. In the 1940s and 1950s, players on the Florists softball team were homegrown talent. "Several were from logging families, and all had grown up playing outdoors."³⁶ While a few Black women played on some of the teams in the women's ASA softball league, the sport was dominated by white players.³⁷

The states in the Midwest were early softball enthusiasts, but there were other areas in the U. S. with a strong pool of interest and talent as well. The Orange Tomboys, for instance, were a regional powerhouse women's team in the Los Angeles area. The team was a Mexican-American woman's baseball/softball team based in Orange, who played other Mexican-American women's teams from surrounding towns or cities such as Anaheim, Santa Ana, Placentia, and La Habra. The Orange Tomboys were league champions in 1944 and 1947.³⁸

³² Littlewood, 249. The nuances between "amateur" and "professional" were hotly contested and led to the formation of a rival league, the National Softball Congress, which did allow players to be paid at least for winning tournaments. The women in the ASA, though, were often given perks such as easy, well-paid jobs. The term "semi-professional" perhaps captures the status of Amateur Softball Association teams. A Chicago-area league that existed from 1944 to 1954 called the "National Girls Baseball League" actually played the game of softball [Littlewood, 47].

³³ "Fastpitch" softball as opposed to "slowpitch" was yet another distinction, with fastpitch softball allowing for the distinctive "windmill" pitch and more speed on release. Competitive softball of this era was almost all fastpitch.

³⁴ Doyle, 8-9.

³⁵ Erica Westly, *Fastpitch: The Untold Story of Softball and the Women Who Made the Game*. (New York, New York: Touchstone, 2016).

³⁶ Westly, 80.

³⁷ A Black women's team from Seattle called the Brown Bombers won the Washington State Championship and competed against other regional women's teams including, in 1940, the Lind & Pomeroy Florists.

³⁸ Chris Petting, *Baseball in Orange County*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012, 58.

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Japanese-Americans who were imprisoned during WWII in west coast camps also organized women's softball teams. In the bleak settings of these hastily-built internment centers, women took the lead in organizing sports teams and competitions between themselves. Yet Nisei women both in the L.A. area and further up the coast in Portland and Seattle had formed softball teams considerably before the attack on Pearl Harbor. These "Nisei female teams undoubtedly competed against similar clubs representing women from Mexican, [B]lack, and Chinese neighborhoods."³⁹

The popularity of women's fastpitch softball as well as women's baseball began to decline in the mid-1950s. The All-American Girls League folded, and although the National Softball Congress, a rival league to the ASA, still existed, it was struggling with dwindling attendance.⁴⁰ One factor cited in the decline of softball as entertainment was TV. In 1950, only 9 percent of American homes owned a television. By 1960, 90 percent of homes had a TV, an astounding change in just one decade. There were also social changes during the Cold War period in the U. S. that increased societal disapproval and suspicion of women who played sports in the 1950s. The result did affect the women's softball leagues.⁴¹ Further, women's softball organizations found that there were just too many teams overall and not enough local businesses to sponsor them, during a time when many "mom and pop" companies were closing or being purchased by large corporations.⁴² Major League Baseball officially banned female players in 1952, in a move designed to block women's opportunities to try out for the men's teams, as women's softball players became more skillful and many men feared that women's teams would draw away fans from men's games.⁴³ Talented, competitive women who might have taken that route to enter the world of paid, professional sports were prevented from even trying.⁴⁴

Erv Lind and the Portland Florists team

The Erv Lind Florists women's softball team began in Portland as the Lind & Pomeroy Florists in 1937. Their sponsor and coach, Erwin "Erv" Lind, had opened a flower shop on Union Avenue (now MLK Jr. Blvd) in 1929. Lind was competitive by nature and loved playing baseball, which he continued to do recreationally into his middle age. With his business partner Seley Pomeroy, he began sponsoring City league sports teams. These teams initially included a bowling team, a soccer team, a men's softball team, and a basketball team.

In their first city game, the Lind & Pomeroy women's softball team lost 28 to 1, and Erv Lind, who hadn't even attended the game, decided he had better get involved and do some coaching.⁴⁵ The team improved quickly and Mr. Lind became invested in seeing them win games. A few of the softball players also worked in Erv's flower shop over the years, such as Elizabeth Locke, listed in the 1950 census as a delivery truck driver for a florist. The women were supported by Erv Lind not only in the coaching and advocacy he offered, but also in high-quality team uniforms and equipment he supplied.⁴⁶ Many players described Erv Lind as a father figure.⁴⁷ By 1942 the local press was starting to notice the Lind & Pomeroy women's team, and reporting that large numbers of fans were beginning to follow the team.⁴⁸ In the early 1940s the team was playing games at Buckman field, Westmoreland, and a few other scattered municipal fields. But soon they were reaching a much higher level of competition, and were simply outgrowing many of Portland's local playing fields.

³⁹ Samuel O. Regalado, "Incarcerated Sport: Nisei Women's Softball and Athletics During Japanese American Internment," *Journal of Sports History*, Fall 2000, Vol. 27 No. 3, 431-433.

⁴⁰ Westly, 95.

⁴¹ Zipter, 43.

⁴² Westly 152.

⁴³ Enke, 214. Also Westly, 95.

⁴⁴ Westly, 95.

⁴⁵ Beverly A. Willis, "Lind & Pomeroy's Strong Lineup Proves Playground Ball is One Sport Where Girls Can Outplay Male Rivals," *Oregonian*, September 12, 1948, 77.

⁴⁶ Westly, 80.

⁴⁷ Littlewood, 80.

⁴⁸ "Canadian Girls Lose," *Oregon Journal*, August 3, 1942, 18. A Florists game at Buckman field attracted 1800 fans.

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The Lind & Pomeroy Florists' (as they were named until 1948) National ASA championship win in 1944 was the first time any team from Oregon had won a National softball or baseball championship.⁴⁹ The team, coaches, and a few family members drove in two station wagons across the country to Cleveland for the championship tournament, suffering a total of 27 flat tires on the trip, and playing five exhibition games on their way to Ohio.⁵⁰ They would not win the national ASA championship again until 1964, but for two decades they were almost always in the top two or three teams in the nation.⁵¹ The team missed only two national tournaments between 1943 and 1964, both for financial reasons.⁵² The Erv Lind Florists team played in a different league from 1951 to 1954; the National Softball Congress (NSC) which was created in 1947 and was not as strict about "amateur" status for the players. The Florists won the NSC championship tournament in 1953.⁵³ The Florists also traveled to the Far East for six weeks for a series of exhibition games at the invitation of the State Department in 1959 (see Figure 13). On this trip, as player Margaret Dobson recalled, the players were treated as celebrities. "Madame Chiang Kai-shek had a dinner for us, and they had a big pigeon ceremony in the Emperor's Palace in Japan. Yeah, we were treated royally."⁵⁴

Erv Lind deserves credit and admiration for the success of the Lind & Pomeroy and Erv Lind Florists teams. He also was one of the people who pushed for his team to get a "home" field, which was constructed in 1948. In his 28 years as manager, the team's record was 1,113 wins and 324 losses. The team almost certainly would not have achieved the victories they did without his leadership and coaching, and he managed to do this without the deep pockets of a big industrial business. But the casual sexism of a 1963 reporter describing Erv Lind as "a master in the field of human relations. Any male would have to be, to maintain discipline and morale among so many women over such a long period of time," reminds us that this man-centered perspective was the norm at this time.⁵⁵ "The ... 1964 team won as the Erv Lind Florists just two months prior to his death from a heart attack. The team folded after his death."⁵⁶

After Mr. Lind died, at only 58 years old, he was inducted into the ASA Hall of Honor and the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame. In the months after his death, quite a number of players scattered to other teams before the 1965 season got underway. The Florists players left in Portland became the "Dr. Bernards" for several years, named after the local dentist who took over the sponsorship.⁵⁷ But the team was no longer Erv Lind's championship team, and Normandale field, where the Florists practiced and played from 1948 to 1964, was no longer associated with the team's collective achievements, camaraderie, and empowerment.

Postwar prejudice against women in sports

Popular culture in the United States immediately following WWII expected women, especially younger women born in the 1930s, to get married quickly and have children. The positive images of Rosie the Riveter and similar ideas of women challenging traditional gendered labor divisions were swiftly eradicated. In Oregon, the number of children an average woman had in 1940 was about 2.0; by 1950 the number was about 3.2 children,

⁴⁹ Note that the Portland Beavers, Portland's minor-league men's baseball team, based at Vaughn Street Park, played in the Pacific Coast League during the period the Florists existed. The Beavers won the regional league and made it to the playoffs in 1945 but fared poorly in years after that. The Portland Florists were on another scale entirely; they consistently won both state and regional titles to qualify for National competition in every year since 1943.

⁵⁰ Littlewood, 38-39.

⁵¹ Steve Dimitry's Softball History Website, accessed at <https://www.softballhistoryusa.com/> shows the Florists made it to second place in the ASA in 1948, 1949, 1959, 1960, and 1963; and 3rd or 4th place in 1946, 1955, 1961, and 1962.

⁵² "OHofAdmin," "Erv Lind- Softball," Oregon Sports Hall of Fame and Museum website, posted Dec. 2018.

<http://oregonsportshall.org/timeline/erv-lind-softball/>

⁵³ 1954 was the last National Championship held by the NSC, before most of the teams returned to the ASA league.

⁵⁴ Margaret Dobson, interview by Michael O'Rourke. Portland State University Oral History, PSU Library Special Collections and University Archives. November 22, 2010, 8 [of transcript].

⁵⁵ "Success Story of Erv Lind," *Oregon Journal*, October 22, 1963, 10.

⁵⁶ "OHofAdmin," "Erv Lind- Softball," Oregon Sports Hall of Fame and Museum website, posted Dec. 2018.

<http://oregonsportshall.org/timeline/erv-lind-softball/>

⁵⁷ Westly, 151.

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and by 1960, just past the 1958 peak of the baby boom, the number of children an average woman was having was 3.6.⁵⁸ Yet, as author Joanne Meyerowitz points out in a critique of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, women in the 1950s were looked up to and lauded as examples of having achievements and even careers outside of the home during this period as long as they were also "successful" on the domestic front, meaning married with children.⁵⁹ This societal expectation worked against women's opportunities in sports simply because motherhood and raising children is demanding on women's bodies and time.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to women's participation in sports, however, was that it was seen as not wholly feminine. In her 2006 study of Canadian women softball players in the 1940s and 1950s, Carly Adams observed that participation in sports—let alone any other issues of "suspect" behavior or appearance—was far outside of cultural norms at this time for women. Among the players, she found "direct evidence of the close-knit female athletic community that existed among these women— an athletic community that for the most part was closed to outsiders who did not share similar experiences and shared histories of physical activity."⁶⁰ Society had defined women as delicate creatures to be protected (by men), so it did not come easily to many people to see women as competitive, physical beings, with tans, muscles, or injuries. Further, in the Cold War era, a pervasive suspicion of communism became a suspicion of anything unknown or different, as paranoia and anxiety about subversiveness from within took hold.⁶¹ Women who played sports were seen as oddities.

After the war, when women were expected to reassume traditional and family-oriented gender roles, those who did not do so increasingly stood out as a deviant group.⁶² Women who remained unmarried and who played sports, or who stayed in the military instead of returning to civilian life, were subject to increasing suspicion that they were lesbians.⁶³ Political figures such as Joseph McCarthy linked communism to homosexuality and anti-Americanism. By the mid-1950s, the Navy's "undesirable" discharge rate, for reasons of suspected homosexuality, was internally acknowledged as being much higher for women than for men.⁶⁴

Schools in this era did not provide women with many athletic options. Colleges or Universities had some organized sports women could play such as tennis and field hockey, but these were intramural or often just "field day" sports. The University of Oregon first organized an intercollegiate women's volleyball team in 1967, and in the 1970s, University of Oregon women were first allowed to compete in track & field against other schools as well.⁶⁵ Before the 1960s, Oregon was represented by a handful of women athletes who managed to rise to prominence on a national stage, such as Nancy Merki (Lees), the nation's top female swimmer from 1939 to 1943, who went to the Olympics in 1948.⁶⁶ The path for Oregon women to excel in sports in this period, as for most women across the United States, was generally as a solo athlete with personal resources rather than as part of a team, and within certain more "genteel" or "graceful" sports such as tennis or swimming.

⁵⁸ *Oregon Vital Statistics Report* 2005, V.1, Table 2-2, 2-14.

⁵⁹ Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (March 1993), 1479.

⁶⁰ Adams, 336.

⁶¹ Peter Boag, "Does Portland Need a Homophile Society? Gay Culture and Activism in the Rose City Between World War II and Stonewall," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 105, No. 1, 2004, 14.

⁶² Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 262.

⁶³ There are excellent scholarly accounts of the postwar anti-homosexual panic, such as David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

⁶⁴ Bérubé, 263.

⁶⁵ Julie Malmberg and University of Oregon Libraries, *Leadership and Legacy, Putting Oregon on the Map: Elevating Intercollegiate Competition (1930s-1960s)*, 2012. Accessed at <https://sportshistory.uoregon.edu/topics/the-universitys-approach-to-changes-in-athletics/modifying-sports-offerings/elevating-intercollegiate-competition-1930s-1960s/>

⁶⁶ OhofAdmin, Oregon Sports Hall of Fame, accessed at <http://oregonsportshall.org/timeline/nancy-merki-lees-swimming/>

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In the 1940s and 1950s, most men felt entitled to voice opinions about the appearance of women who participated in “men’s” spheres such as the workplace or sports fields, whether to label them as “mannish,” or to sexualize them. Discussions around women in sports (particularly softball) often used coded terms for women suspected of being lesbians, such as “too masculine,” or “overly aggressive.” Even when women were needed as workers during World War II, they were often objectified as they wore overalls and other “masculine” work clothing. Women workers at Kaiser Shipyards, just north of Portland, were displayed in the company’s weekly magazine, *The Bo’s’n’s Whistle*, as pinup models, cover girls, and contestants in shipyard beauty pageants.⁶⁷ Women in sports in the 1940s and 1950s were subject to a similar sexualization and commentary.⁶⁸ Rather than face the labels and social stigma that came with sports especially during the 1950s, many women stopped playing sports by their teen years, or never started playing at all. A 1961 article in the daily Klamath Falls, Oregon newspaper by a woman doctor pleaded with women to be more physically active. “I suspect that many women still abhor the notion of taking part in competitive sport because of the stigma that used to be attached to female athletes. In the past, certain sports were considered unladylike and the participants too aggressive.”⁶⁹

Women softball players in the 1940s to 1960s

Margaret Dobson, third-base player for the Florists, recalled that coaches, sponsors, and advertisers emphasized the appearance and femininity of the players in the late 1940s into the 1950s. “I think that the ASA was trying to make softball more palatable and attractive for women so they created the Miss Softball trophy. That was highly coveted... I let my hair grow long that year and at the world tournament in Phoenix in fact, I was presented with the Miss Softball trophy...”⁷⁰ The women’s fastpitch teams in the 1940s, 1950s, and up to the mid-1960s, almost all wore satin uniforms with short shorts, which required serious ironing before games.⁷¹ The uniforms were not meant to protect players’ legs from sliding into base, but rather to look feminine and alluring to fans. Owners and coaches of women’s softball teams wanted to avoid at all cost the impression that players were too “masculine,” and put in place strict rules about players’ appearance and behavior both on and off the field.

For example, in the case of the Erv Lind Florists out of Oregon, Erv Lind stuck to a list of strict rules that included always having your shirt tucked in, never having your hands in your pockets in public, and always travelling to and from games in a dress. Managers such as Erv Lind encouraged, even demanded “lady-like” behavior off the field.⁷²

The consequences for violations could be serious. Josephine “JoJo” D’Angelo was cut from her team on the AAGPBL in 1944 because she got a short haircut. The AAGPBL even put in place rules against fraternizing with other teams, in order to limit the possibility of lesbian influence.⁷³

Women who were enrolled in college and were also part of one of the ASA softball teams across the United States in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s were regularly asked to quit playing by their college or university, or risk repercussions. Women were intimidated, stripped of honors, and even kicked out of school for “mingling with

⁶⁷ For instance, photo entitled “Glamour Express” in the Kaiser publication *Bo’s’n’s Whistle* Oregonship Vol.4 No. 32, September 15, 1944; 4. The caption reads, “Proof of the pudding is the collection of choice plums shown above from the Welding department. Oldtime OSC male welders claim that Oregon Ship now has more beauty per crew than any yard on the coast and selected the following girls during one lunch hour to prove it.”

⁶⁸ For instance, the women’s softball team the A-1 Queens, out of Phoenix, were labeled “the most beautiful softball team in the world” in 1949, with their manager screening newcomers for “character first, feminine charm second and ability to play ball third.” He would not allow players to wear bandages, braces, or “anything that would detract from the attractiveness of the uniform.” [Littlewood, 42].

⁶⁹ Dr. Christine E. Haycock, “Let’s Have More Women in Sports,” *Herald & News*, March 19, 1961.

⁷⁰ Margaret Dobson, interview by Amy M. Doyle, in Doyle, 31.

⁷¹ Westly 151.

⁷² Doyle, 10.

⁷³ Frankie De la Cretaz, “The Hidden Queer History Behind “A League of Their Own”,” *Narratively Greatest Hits*, 2018, accessed at <https://narratively.com/the-hidden-queer-history-behind-a-league-of-their-own/>

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the 'undesirables'.⁷⁴ It was hard enough to be accepted as a woman athlete in these years. "Without question, women who actively engaged in sport in the 1940s and 1950s were pioneers acting outside of the boundaries of normative behavior," so women softball players already had an uphill battle to be seen as likable, feminine, or even normal.⁷⁵ Yet the positive feelings generated by achievement and camaraderie that are often found throughout team sports may have been a strong salve for the negative feelings of guilt, worry, and personal failure that many women felt during this era if they did not conform to gender or social norms. Team sports, particularly softball, provided a point of entry into lesbian culture from the 1940s on.⁷⁶

The reality was that a number of the women who played sports in these years were lesbian or bisexual. Women who were athletes, or in education, or held public positions, often never spoke about being bisexual or lesbian even with other known queer women. Some women never "came out," or came out at an advanced age. Terry Donohue and Pat Henschel, for instance, both played for the Peoria Redwings on the AAGPBL in the 1940s and became life partners, but only finally came out to their own families when they were in their mid-80s.⁷⁷ Some women identified a "lifelong partner" in obituaries, but it is not the intent of this nomination to speculate or name specific players as a sexual minority unless they self-identified as such in the public record. Self-identification is important because, even in the relatively recent past, not all people who participated in sexual activities with same-sex partners would necessarily perceive themselves as being part of a defined minority category.⁷⁸ For some of the women who played sports before the 1960s, recognizing themselves as different from the norm may have been just as much for the outsider label of being an athletic woman as for the specific reason of having same-sex attraction.

Lesbians on Florists team⁷⁹

The Florists team was by no means a lesbian team across the decades, but there were players who identified as lesbian or bisexual, often much later in life. It is important to note that many players on the Florists team were quite young. As a result, some of them at the time may not have fully understood or accepted their own sexuality or whether they were or were not attracted to women. Many players started with the Florists team while they were still in high school.⁸⁰ Some of the players on Portland's team, as well as other young female softball players across the United States, may have known or suspected they were lesbian at the time they started playing ball. But for others, understanding their own sexuality was likely an evolving knowledge, or perhaps an evolving acceptance of this part of their identity. For young women in the era of the 1940s to 1960s, the experience of knowing their own sexual attraction or identity may have been significantly delayed in comparison to similar-aged gay male youths. Fern Gardiner proposed two reasons for this in a 1977 article. The first was simply societal pressure to be compliant in the societal role that was uniquely expected of women. "Lesbians, who are under immense pressure ...to define themselves not as persons but as good wives and mothers, marry for the same reason most women marry: they are supposed to."⁸¹ The other reason Gardiner put forth was that as opposed to boys and young men who were expected to have sexual desires, a woman "is taught not to think about her sexuality" and may be only "aware of a vague uneasiness, a feeling

⁷⁴ Littlewood, 28.

⁷⁵ Adams, 335.

⁷⁶ Susan K. Cahn, "From the "Muscle Moll" to the "Butch" Ballplayer: Mannishness, Lesbianism, and Homophobia in U.S. Women's Sport," *Feminist Studies*, Summer 1993, Vol. 19, No. 2, 357.

⁷⁷ Dr. Becki L. Ross, "Revealing the long but hidden history of queer women in sport," The University of British Columbia, <https://beyond.ubc.ca/hidden-history-queer-women-in-sport/>

⁷⁸ Katherine Schweighofer, ed. by Megan E. Springate. "LGBTQ Sport and Leisure," *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*. Published online by the National Park Service, 2016, 24-5.

⁷⁹ The use of the term lesbian is used as appropriate to the time period to mean the people identifying as women who love women, and is not intended to exclude trans women, bisexuals, or any other queer players or fans.

⁸⁰ A few examples of young (not necessarily LGBTQ) players include Jackie Rice, a Grant High School student and Florists player; and Liz Parrott, who played for the Florists from 1945-1962, though graduating from Washington High School in 1948. "Bullet" Betty Evans, the Florists' star pitcher in the 1940s, had started on the team when she was just 14. See Westly, 79.

⁸¹ Fern Gardiner, "Portland Lesbians, Where Are You?" *Northwest Gay Review*, Vol. IV No. 5, June 1977.

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that something is missing from her life. This could explain the high percentage of lesbians who have been married.”⁸²

Chris Mazzuca, who played on the Florists team from the late 1950s into the early 1960s and identified as lesbian or bisexual, noted that there were many lesbians on the Florists team, but “as a 19 year old, or 18 year old... I was mostly clueless.”⁸³

Over the period of significance for Normandale Field, starting in 1948 until the team disbanded in 1964, quite a few extremely talented women softball players considered the field their home field. What these women had in common was a competitive desire to play sports together, to work together as a team, and to win. Evidence of team bonding is apparent in the nicknames they used. Many of the nicknames were derived from a player’s last name, such as “Fitz” for Caroline Fitzwater or “Pricy” for Dolores Price. Others were versions of a player’s first name such as “Chris” for Christine Meyer or “Mugsy” for Margaret Dobson. It is interesting that programs or press articles occasionally used these nicknames, mostly reverting to a player’s given name. But in online obituaries and personal interactions, players who had been on the field together almost invariably used nicknames with each other. Players, whether they were lesbian, bisexual, or straight, grew up together and stood outside of the societal norms together for this period of time, because they were athletes. The 1950s caricature of the mannish lesbian athlete affected all of the players, reminding them to publicly maintain a heterosexual, feminine identity, “or risk falling into a despised category.”⁸⁴ Because women who were publicly identified as lesbian (or any sexual minority) could be very much damaged by the stigma, with the possibility of losing their families, occupations, and reputations, it is not surprising that a code of silence took hold within women’s sports especially in the era before 1970. The team stuck together, and did not disclose anyone’s sexual orientation. They did not talk about it.

Bringing the ASA softball championship tournament to Portland

Now that they were known nationally after their 1944 championship, the Florists team was beginning to feel the pressure of recruitments coming from outside Oregon, and by March 1947, it was announced that several Florists players had accepted offers from National Girls Baseball League teams, where they would receive money (probably a stipend) for turning “professional.”⁸⁵ This pressure may have been one reason why local officials were determined to bolster the local scene for women’s softball to keep these players in Portland.

Throughout the 1930s, Oregon’s State championship softball tournaments had been held in Salem, due to its superior playing facilities.⁸⁶ Portland, however, was catching up and boasted several excellent baseball or baseball/softball fields by 1940, including Westmoreland Park and the Civic Stadium. By 1946, the Florists team was playing most of its “home” games at the existing Vaughn Street Park baseball stadium (at NW 24th Avenue and Vaughn Street, now demolished) in Portland.⁸⁷ Yet this field was less than ideal for the Florists team and their rivals. For one thing, it was a baseball stadium and, while infield bases could be moved to work for softball, the outfield was sized for baseball, a large place to cover for softball outfielders. Further, Vaughn Street stadium was the home stadium of the Portland Beavers men’s baseball team, so women’s softball would have been scheduled only when the men were not using the field.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Chris Mazzuca, Interview by Sarah Tolle and Andrew Clark. PSU LGBT History Capstone course, Winter Term 2011, instructor Pat Young. GLAPN archives at Oregon Historical Society, SR 11231, 2011. Transcript p3.

⁸⁴ Susan K. Cahn, 356. Also see Katherine Schweighofer, ed. by Megan Springate, “LGBTQ Sport and Leisure,” *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*. Published online by the National Park Service, 2016, p.24-7.

⁸⁵ “Florists Become ‘Bloomer Girls’,” *Oregonian*, March 19, 1947, 33. The NGBL, despite their name, played softball rather than baseball [Littlewood, 227].

⁸⁶ Irvin Kawarsky, “The Evolution and History of Softball in the United States,” thesis, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, 1956, 66.

⁸⁷ “Gals to Play,” *Oregonian*, May 5, 1946, 22.

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During the period 1946-1947, some jockeying for softball leadership seemed to occur at a statewide level in Oregon. Several men (all members were men) resigned from the Oregon State Softball association in late 1946 or early 1947, including the state director and the association president. When the dust had settled, the association announced in February 1947 that Don January would be the new state director, Ralph Guynes was president, and Charles Walker of Portland, an employee of the Parks Department, was the new secretary-treasurer.⁸⁸ Don January in particular may have been angling for Portland to gain more importance on a national stage. He had been named one of the delegates to the American Softball Association annual meeting of 1946, held in New York City that year. The Pacific Northwest regional tournament had been held in the Portland area in 1946 and, it was agreed, would be in Seattle in 1947, so the Pacific Northwest region (and Portland in particular) was getting noticed by ASA leaders, especially after the Florists' National win in 1944.⁸⁹

There were multiple people involved in Portland's successful bid to host the 1948 National Championship tournament, including the team manager and sponsor Erv Lind, local jewelry store owner Morris Rogoway, City Commissioner Fred L. Peterson, and State Softball Chairman Don January. Commissioner Peterson and Mr. January traveled to Houston for the softball convention in January 1948, and persuaded ASA officials to grant Portland the hosting rights for the tournament. January "rented a hall and saw to it the boys in attendance were given plenty to eat and drink—with no expense spared..." while Peterson "discussed with fluency the beauties of Oregon and the right of the Pacific Northwest to play host..."⁹⁰ Fred Peterson claimed that he was told to wait until he was called to speak to the assembled group in Houston, and that he would be given only 10 minutes notice to get to the meeting. In order to be ready, he sat for almost 48 hours in his hotel room, suit on, until he got the call.⁹¹ Morris Rogoway, a local jeweler, agreed to sign over a check to the ASA for \$10,000.00 to guarantee Portland the right to host.⁹²

Behind the scenes, however, the local Parks Department, especially Dorothea Lensch and Charles Walker, played a significant part in the drive to host the National tournament. Charles B. Walker had organized the first industrial and commercial softball leagues in Portland in 1934 and was appointed the City's first sports director in 1935. In 1950, he was appointed as the commissioner of the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) for the Portland Metro area. He also served as the Pacific Coast Vice-President of the ASA.

In 1937, Dorothea Lensch had been hired as Portland's Parks Bureau Recreation Director by Superintendent C. P. Keyser. She may have been the only woman hired in a similar role at that time anywhere in the United States, or one of a very few.⁹³ During the war years, Lensch provided leadership in developing recreation programs directed at the military as well as civilian defense workers living in Portland. In his pitch to the ASA convention to allow Portland to host the 1948 tournament, Fred Peterson credited Dorothea Lensch with laying out the plan for visiting teams and how they would be entertained and provided for. "The fact that she is a national figure in recreation added great credit to her program," he said.⁹⁴ Ms. Lensch was born in Oregon to Marie and Julius Lensch, both immigrants from Germany, in 1908. Her unwavering support of recreational programs included not just "team" sports but dance, theater, and other community programs for all ages and genders, with shared resources between schools, community centers, and local parks across all neighborhoods of the city. She took on speaking engagements, wrote for national publications, and advocated for recreational programs as she continued to reside with her mother on NE Alameda Street in Portland at least through 1950. She became the first woman to be president of a state amateur baseball association in 1949,

⁸⁸ "Guynes Gets Softball Post," *Oregonian*, February 24, 1947, 22.

⁸⁹ "Seattle Lands Softball Meet," *Oregonian*, January 11, 1947, 13. The 1946 Regional tournament was held at McLoughlin Heights, just north of Portland in Vancouver, Washington.

⁹⁰ Marlowe Branagan, "It Took Lots of Get Up and Go To Get Softball Tourneys Here," *Oregon Journal*, Aug 29, 1948, 19.

⁹¹ Fred L. Peterson, interview with Linda Brody, OHS, 1982. SR 9600_T03S2.

⁹² Branagan, "It Took Lots of Get Up and Go To Get Softball Tourneys Here," *Oregon Journal*, Aug 29, 1948, 19.

⁹³ Sports organizations in Portland were up in arms at the idea that a woman might be appointed, so they attempted a run-around with the creation of a new office of executive sports at City Hall. These men were "[f]earful of the contact that may be lost" with Lensch's appointment, according to "Sports Group Seeks Closer Organization," *Oregon Journal*, September 30, 1936, 22.

⁹⁴ Elizabeth Salway Ryan, "Her Work is Play," *Oregonian*, June 10, 1956, 106.

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and was named chair of the National Recreation Association in 1954. Dorothea Lensch's scrapbooks about softball, mostly the Erv Lind Florists, were donated to the City of Portland Archives after her death.

As the idea of hosting the "World" ASA Softball Championship first took hold among public officials, Westmoreland Park, which already had been constructed with lights and seating at the ballfield there, was initially considered as the site for the tournament.⁹⁵ Once the Oregon officials were awarded the hosting rights, however, they decided that Westmoreland Park was too far from the center of Portland, and was too difficult to get to. Normandale was chosen instead, with the park essentially a blank slate at that time. The Parks Department would have only about seven months to plan, design, and construct a new stadium for the tournament.

While the new field was not exclusively for the Florists team, there was no question that the field was an investment in the team. There was no precedent at that time for financial support and backing of a women's team, especially with public dollars. There had simply never been an investment in women's competitive sports of any kind in Oregon.

History of Normandale Park

The lower Columbia and Willamette valleys, including what is now Normandale Park and the Rose City Park neighborhood, were densely populated by Native American societies prior to contact with European explorers and trappers. The groups in the area were primarily Upper Chinookan speakers including the Clackamas and Multnomah peoples. Successive waves of Old World diseases such as smallpox decimated these Native peoples during the 1500s to 1850s, spread by Europeans who increasingly had a presence on the continent. Oregon Trail settlers began to come to the area to settle by the early 1840s. These settlers were spurred by the expansionist United States government, who forced many of the remaining Portland-area Native Americans to relocate to reservations such as the Grand Ronde Reservation, established in 1857. The Federal Donation Land Claim act of 1850 divided the western territories into quarter mile grid sections and deeded the land to white men (up to 320 acres) and couples (up to 640 acres), as long as the claimants would live on and farm the land. One of these settlers was Samuel E. Barr, whose name was probably the source of the original name for Halsey Street: Barr County Road.

The area that became northeast Portland was shaped not only by the grid of Donation Land Claim surveys, but also by the development of the railroad. Railroad tracks were laid in East Portland starting in the early 1880s by the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company. The tracks followed a geographic feature in Portland now known as Sullivan's Gulch, which became considerably deeper towards the west and the Willamette River.

In the first decades of the 20th Century, Portland experienced a period of exponential growth, much of it on the east side of the Willamette River.⁹⁶ While there were several independent towns such as Montavilla as well as neighborhood centers, most of the area was platted and developed for single-family housing. Rose City Park, the general neighborhood around Normandale Park, was one of the early subdivisions a distance east from the downtown area and was served by a streetcar line running along Sandy Boulevard by 1907.⁹⁷

Farms and dairies were located south of Halsey and north of Sullivan's Gulch, and up until the 1930s, the Pacific Car and Foundry Company manufactured rail cars in the area immediately north of the rail line and south of what became the park, between what is now NE 55th and NE 60th Avenues.⁹⁸ By 1950 this industrial site was producing prefabricated homes (see Figure 1). The parcels just north of this industrial property had a few small, scattered structures on them prior to 1930, including a "creamery," a few open sheds, and a couple

⁹⁵ Branagan, "It Took Lots of Get Up and Go To Get Softball Tourneys Here," *Oregon Journal*, Aug 29, 1948, 19.

⁹⁶ City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and Portland Parks and Recreation. *City of Portland Civic Planning, Development & Public Works, 1851-1965*, 2009; 25.

⁹⁷ MacColl, *Growth of a City*, 69.

⁹⁸ Sanborn Fire Insurance Co., Portland Map no. 879, 1924-1928.

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of residential buildings. A 1930 ad listing prunes and pears for sale at one house may indicate that there was a fruit orchard near the southwest corner of Normandale Park.⁹⁹

The Normandale Elementary School was located at the northern end of what is now Normandale Park. The school was intended to temporarily alleviate crowding in nearby schools such as Laurelhurst and Rose City Park, and consisted of three “portables” which were installed around an open play shed in the summer of 1923, ready for the school year to begin.¹⁰⁰ The school operated for a little over a decade, closing after the school year in 1934. By 1935, the three portable units were allocated to other schools; one to house a sewing department at Jefferson High School, and the other two to a new Thomas Edison 6-year high school.¹⁰¹ In 1936, a report was issued by Portland’s Planning Commission recommending acquisition of land for Park facilities and for the development of a recreational system for Portland’s neighborhoods. The Planning Commission asked for the Parks Department to recommend a series of locations for future neighborhood parks, and proposed a 10-year plan to achieve those goals.¹⁰² The funding mechanism that was put in place for acquisition and development of recreational properties was the “4 tenths of a million” set aside from tax revenues. At this time, the Normandale property, referred to as “Old Normandale School Site,” consisted of 6.54 acres owned by the Portland School District. The Parks Department asked the City to buy it.

A wooded ten-acre tract immediately to the south should be acquired. In the past few years several attempts to subdivide this property into dwelling sites have been made. The properties would provide an ideal playground and park, now badly needed.¹⁰³

By 1943, the Portland Parks Department had been able to aggregate almost all of the parcels creating the current boundaries of Normandale Park, but the school district was still the owner of almost seven acres. That changed in 1945, when the City and school district swapped parcels, the school district receiving property near Gregory Heights school and the City receiving the Normandale acreage.¹⁰⁴ The park was by then its full current area, 16.5 acres in size.

The Parks Department began to make improvements on the Normandale Park property in 1947, and while there were many pre-existing trees in the park, a planting plan for the park as a whole was developed by George Otten, a well-known landscape architect in Portland. By August of 1947, the City Maintenance Bureau had approved plans to bring sewer lines to a new bathroom structure at the south end of the park and had widened the streets along the south and east sides of Normandale Park.

Design of Normandale Field

Between the Superintendent of Parks, Charles P. Keyser, and several other Parks employees and engineers, the design of Normandale Field was likely a joint effort.¹⁰⁵ City Commissioner Fred L. Peterson said that the field was constructed in only 30 days, and that people liked it so much, the Parks Department ended up

⁹⁹ Classified Ads, “Fruits and Vegetables,” *Oregonian*, August 29, 1930, 14.

¹⁰⁰ “Schools are Ready for Fall Semester,” *Oregonian*, August 12, 2023, 20.

¹⁰¹ “Edison School of Vocations Opens Jan. 27,” *Oregon Journal*, December 31, 1935, 11; *Oregon Journal*, October 15, 1935, 7.

¹⁰² Portland Parks & Recreation, “Open Space & Park Development 1851–1965,” January 2010, 31-32.

¹⁰³ City Planning Commission, “Portland Oregon Recommended Ten-Year Park Program,” [under authority of Charter amendment, approved by Referendum vote on November 8, 1938]. September 1939, 13.

¹⁰⁴ “City, Schools Trade Tracts,” *Oregonian*, January 18, 1945, 9.

¹⁰⁵ Keyser retired at the end of 1948 and was replaced by Harry B. Buckley. W. Riley Matsler, Landscape Architect, laid out sketches for new softball fields at Westmoreland Park in 1948 and was likely involved with the Normandale plans as well. Roland B. Hall designed Westmoreland Park’s grandstands, the Normandale concessions building in 1953, and also laid out the plans for Farragut Park softball field in 1954, which supposedly was based on Normandale. Plans for Normandale Field have not yet been located.

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sending out 25 or 30 copies of the blueprints to various places around the U. S.¹⁰⁶ The physical features that made Normandale Field stand out were its turf outfield, its lighting, and the seating structure.

The new Normandale Field was “hailed in the press as the most modern softball field in the country. It included an announcer’s booth and a press box and was in a picturesque setting surrounded by trees.”¹⁰⁷ There were two-way telephones from the press box to the umpire, and between the dugouts and the press box. The field was also the first field in the entire league to have a grass outfield.¹⁰⁸ The infield, according to regulation, was “skinned” (smooth dirt surface). Normandale was Portland’s first ballfield constructed to be softball-specific; the other fields in Portland at that time were typically laid out for baseball with the flexibility of allowing for softball.

The lighting at the field was a huge feature. Ball field lighting had already been used at a few other Portland fields, and the lighting at Normandale was patterned after that installed at Westmoreland Park for semi-professional baseball.¹⁰⁹ The lighting and poles at both Westmoreland and at Normandale Field were designed by Carl Lundell, city utilities engineer. The Normandale lighting, on 70’ tall poles, allowed for the ASA fastpitch tournament to be played entirely in night games, ensuring more spectators. Prior to the award of the 1948 tournament to Portland, Cleveland had hosted the World championship tournament for the preceding handful of years, and used some lit fields and some not, with games scheduled at various times. National Softball Association president Walter Hakanson came to Portland for the 1948 World ASA softball tournament and expressed amazement at the quality of the lighting installed at Normandale.¹¹⁰

Portland was a comparatively early adopter of using night lighting at baseball and softball fields. Notably, the first major league baseball game in the United States to be played at night dates from 1935, but Portland’s first lit baseball field, Vaughn Street Park, demolished in 1955, had (somewhat primitive) lights installed in 1930.¹¹¹ Peninsula Park boasted the first lit softball field in the city, in 1935. Portland City Council had declined to fund field lighting or public address systems in the spring of 1935, leading to a fundraising effort for softball lighting held at “Portland Baseball Park,” soon to be commonly called Vaughn Street Park.¹¹² With the funds, a booster group purchased cable and the lights, and “[s]ix 50 foot telephone poles were donated by E. C. Hickman.” The Portland General Electric Co. then donated services to erect the poles and lights.¹¹³ Fields at Montavilla, Duniway, Buckman and Westmoreland parks followed with night lighting installation by 1941.¹¹⁴ Lights at Duniway were later removed, so Normandale became the fifth lighted ballfield in Portland in 1948.

In addition to the lighting and the turf outfield, Normandale Field had exceptionally well-constructed seating. There were to be a grand total of 6268 seats for spectators, “568 box seats with chairs, 1200 reserved seats, and 4500 general admission seats in bleachers that will completely encircle the playing area.”¹¹⁵ One reason Normandale Field impressed its fans appears to have been the decision to create earthen berms upon which permanent seating terraces were constructed. The primary sections of permanent seating were then built onto the terraces on the inside (field side) of the berms. The earthen berms were constructed with a flat area on top, where the more typical structured stadium seating could be located. In addition to these, moveable bleachers were erected surrounding the rest of the field on every side. “Mike Pauley, executive secretary of the Amateur

¹⁰⁶ Fred L. Peterson, interview with Linda Brody.

¹⁰⁷ Westly, 79.

¹⁰⁸ “Softball’s Best Vie at Opener Tonight,” *Oregon Journal* September 12, 1948, 17.

¹⁰⁹ Ted Wagoner, “World Series of Softball: Tournament Starts at New City Park With Night Games,” *Oregonian*, September 12, 1948, 77.

¹¹⁰ Elizabeth Salway Ryan, “Taxpayer’s Friend Watches the Juice,” *Oregonian*, February 18, 1951, 86.

¹¹¹ George Bertz, “Night Baseball,” *Oregon Journal*, July 2, 1930, 19. On May 24, 1935, the Cincinnati Reds played the Philadelphia Phillies under the lights at Cincinnati’s Crosley Field. The delay in implementation from the early lighting installations in 1930 to adoption by the major leagues was partly due to some pushback against night games; batting averages suffered under early lighting systems. Cost was another factor as the Great Depression took hold.

¹¹² “Big Softball Doings to be Held Tonight,” *Oregon Journal*, May 23, 1935, 19.

¹¹³ *Oregon Journal* June 30, 1935, 24.

¹¹⁴ “Softball Teams Ready to Start,” *Oregon Journal*, May 18, 1941, 10.

¹¹⁵ “Softball Park Draws Praise,” *Oregonian*, August 8, 1948, 71.

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Softball association... had never seen a city park bureau install the ultimate in grandstand construction..."¹¹⁶

Finally, Normandale stadium was designed to provide a generous amount of parking. Although City council did not formally approve the street widening until August 1948, the streets along both sides of the field, NE Hassalo Street and NE 57th Avenue, were both widened considerably in 1947, allowing for 90-degree parking along the edges of the park, and trees were added along these edges.¹¹⁷ Homeowners along these streets protested at being asked to shoulder costs of the improvements, noting that traffic and congestion were very intrusive during the 1948 tournament. Because the rest of Normandale Park was not yet completed in 1948, the future tennis courts and picnic area near to the stadium were also temporarily available for use as parking during the first tournament there.¹¹⁸

"The Amateur Softball Association people were so taken by the new facility that blueprints of the stadium were requested by cities throughout the country."¹¹⁹ Some years later, in 1954, another new field in Portland was announced at N Farragut Street and N Commercial Avenue, which would be laid out just like Normandale Field, "ranked by national softball officials as one of the finest plants in the country."¹²⁰

Events at Normandale Field

It would not have been unusual for a new softball stadium anywhere to be inaugurated by a pitch from the Mayor to the municipal Parks Director, if the field had been built by that Parks Department. But in 1948, both the mayor and the recreation director were women, inaugurating a facility that was constructed not exclusively, but predominantly for a specific woman's sports team—a team that many people paid money to watch. It was inaugurated on September 12, 1948, by a throw from Mayor-elect Dorothy McCullough Lee to Dorothea Lensch, Portland director of public recreation. Various marching bands, color guard, boy scouts, and other pageantry was on display prior to the all-women double-header (two games) played that first night at the ballpark. The new field and the women's teams proved to be very popular. The World's Championship Women's ASA Softball tournament of 1948 pulled in 44,000 fans in the first week of the tournament, though Portland's population at that time was only 475,000.¹²¹ In the second week of the tournament, the men's teams competed, with Friberg Electric as the men's local host team. The women's tournament had never preceded the men's in past National championship tournaments, but instead had been played concurrently.¹²² The decision to put the women first in 1948 highlighted Portland's pride in the Florists team and its vote of confidence that the team could fill all those new seats.

The field at Normandale was designed to be able to generate revenue.¹²³ For the 1948 2-week tournament in Portland, all "loser's bracket" games were to be played at ballfields at McLoughlin Heights, a huge wartime housing project outside of Vancouver, Washington, just north of the Columbia River.¹²⁴ This decision reduced the pressure to cram in as many games as possible at Normandale, allowing for the higher spectator evening games—and the winning teams—to play at Normandale.

¹¹⁶ Marlowe Branagan, "Softball Teams Will Be Pleased With Portland's Normandale Park," *Oregon Journal*, September 3, 1948, 14.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. Also, Portland City Council Ordinance 87660, August 11, 1948.

¹¹⁸ Ted Wagoner, "World Series of Softball: Tournament Starts at New City Park With Night Games," *Oregonian*, September 12, 1948, 77.

¹¹⁹ George Pasero, "Betty's Legacy," *Oregon Journal*, July 11, 1979, 45.

¹²⁰ "Portland Due to Get Field," *Oregonian*, February 14, 1954, 48. Farragut Park in North Portland is the only other known example of a softball field patterned on Normandale Field, though several sources asserted that the Normandale plans were sent to other locations across the U. S.

¹²¹ Dorothea M. Lensch and Portland Parks and Recreation, "Annual Report: Recreation 1947-1948," 19; 7.

¹²² Branagan, "It Took Lots of Get Up and Go To Get Softball Tourneys Here," *Oregon Journal*, Aug 29, 1948, 19.

¹²³ The Normandale Field account, specifically, paid for salaries of ticket-takers and other employees during the Regional and National Tournaments, plus to Erv Lind for expenses incurred by visiting teams during the season.

¹²⁴ Marlowe Branagan, "Buck Grayson Allows Softball Meet Will be Tip-Top Affair," *Oregon Journal*, August 8, 1948, 20.

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Portland's Normandale Field hosted the women's ASA Fastpitch Championship playoffs in 1948, 1949, 1951, 1955, and 1961. In the early 1940s, those championship tournaments had been held in Detroit, then from 1944 to 1947 in Cleveland. The 1961 tournament was broadcast from Normandale Field on CBS; the first time the ASA women's softball finals had been on TV.¹²⁵ Although the Florists were not playing the final championship game in the 1961 tournament—they came in a disappointing fourth—the Raybestos Brakettes and Whittier Gold Sox contest lasted until 3:30am, a 19-inning game!¹²⁶ Normandale also was the site of the 1953 NSC Women's Fastpitch World Tournament, won by the Erv Lind Florists with Betty Evans pitching. This was also the year that the concessions building was added to the site, at the north end of the bleachers. During the period 1948 to 1964, many of the higher-level city, state, and regional tournaments were hosted at the field. The 1950 state women's softball tournament, for instance, was held at Normandale.¹²⁷ Announcers from the press box were universally men, as were the umpires on the field.¹²⁸ Further research may find who was announcing plays from the press box for the years 1948-1964.¹²⁹

It was not just the championships or tournaments played at Normandale Park, however, that made it a place of lasting importance for sports and for women's history. As a municipal field, Normandale hosted a vast array of softball games for people of all abilities. Portland youths were able to step out onto the same bases, under the same lights as the Erv Lind Florists or the Orange Lionettes, and play softball. What made Normandale special was the tie to the team. Anyone stepping on to the field must have felt at least a bit star-struck to be playing on the same ground as the National champion Florists. Fern Wilgus, who played fastpitch softball for a local rival of the Florists, the Dottie Moore Pennant Shop team, recalled that playing at Normandale Field was really special. "Normandale was "striking gold." You knew you had made it to the big time. I mean, that field was reserved for the Erv Lind Florists, the best women's teams—we got to play there too."¹³⁰ As Recreation Director Dorothea Lensch said of the women's softball program in Portland, "growth within the program in 1950 shows that women are taking over the job. There is much to be done and much more will be done in 1951."¹³¹ In 1952, the Parks Department in Portland, in collaboration with pitcher Betty Evans Grayson, started to provide softball instruction specifically for grade school and high school age girls.¹³² Multiple "sessions in a series of clinics on softball" were held at Normandale Park, with options for girls to join all-girl teams in girls-only leagues.¹³³

The Florists remained extremely popular and kept a strong fan base despite the changing times for competitive women's softball. In 1964, 1,000 spectators were die-hard enough to remain at Normandale field until almost 1am while the Erv Lind Florists and their biggest rival, the Raybestos Brakettes from Stratford, Connecticut, battled it out in an exhibition game well before the National or regional tournaments.¹³⁴ The teams at the top—including the Florists as well as the Brakettes—did not lack for fans well past the 1950s.

¹²⁵ Stormy Irwin, "Write Your Letter Now!" *Women in Sports*, No. 68, September 15, 1961, 5.

¹²⁶ Anthony Renzoni, *Connecticut's Girls of Summer*, The History Press, Charleston SC, 2023, 39-40.

¹²⁷ "Shopping Gals in 2nd Round," *Oregon Statesman* [Salem, Oregon], August 23, 1950, 8.

¹²⁸ The first woman umpire with the ASA, Madeline Lorton in New York, was registered in 1951. She was not joined by a second female umpire until 1967. [Littlewood, 249].

¹²⁹ George Pasero, "Old Times," *Oregon Journal*, June 2, 1982, 17. John Hilsenteger would hang numbers on the scoreboard in those early years, starting at the age of seven. He later "was scoring and announcing for Erv Lind Florist games and for men's fastpitch leagues" from the press box. Note that, until the early 1960s, women were generally not allowed in sports press boxes, whether or not they were journalists. See L. H. Gregory, "Greg's Gossip," *The Oregonian*, April 25, 1963, 56.

¹³⁰ Fern Wilgus, interviewed by Kristen Minor and Cayla McGrail on June 2, 2023. Fern played softball on Dottie Moore's Pennant Shop team for years. Personal notes (no recording).

¹³¹ Dorothea Lensch, "Softball from a Woman's Viewpoint," Parks and Recreation files, City Archives No. AF/65535.

¹³² George Pasero, "Betty's Legacy," *Oregon Journal*, July 11, 1979, 45.

¹³³ "Softball Clinics Slated for Girls," *Oregonian*, April 27, 1955, 22.

¹³⁴ Carl Cluff, "Florists Pack Fan Appeal," *Oregon Journal*, August 10, 1964, 10.

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Lesbian history and places in Portland, Oregon

Pre-war evidence of lesbians is scanty in early Portland. Marie Equi, Oregon's first publicly known lesbian, came to Oregon in 1892 and had maintained a relatively open series of same-sex relationships, even as she became a physician and adopted a daughter. According to several sources, Portland may have been known as something of a destination for lesbian women by the period between World War I and World War II. One woman discussed her older partner who "knew about the Portland lesbian community, which was ...huge! Still is—huge. It was huge then. The biggest lesbian community probably in this country was here. I presume we're still all... I'm including bi because I'm bi, but, you know... I'm including all of us..."¹³⁵ Lesbians in the decades before WWII often separated themselves into "butch," or performatively masculine, or "femme" roles, and dressed accordingly.¹³⁶ Attorney Cindy Cumfer said by 1970 in Portland, there were young college educated lesbians as well as older lesbians "who came in through the bars who were probably more working class and just in a different set of, sort of the older set of norms about butch/femme..."¹³⁷

Despite Portland's permissive reputation, women in Oregon before 1953 could be—and were—put in institutions and given shock treatments or even sterilized for being a "degenerate."¹³⁸ After 1953, a new "psychopathic offender" law in Oregon allowed LGBTQ+ people to be sent to asylums for a "cure." A 1957 law forbid a person to teach in public schools if convicted of having sex with a same-sex partner.¹³⁹

As historian Peter Boag discussed, World War II created an environment where many service personnel and war-industry workers across the United States left their hometowns and began to work in mainly same-sex environments. Portland exemplified this trend, with "thousands of sailors and other servicemen and women coming into port and leaving for locations in the Pacific" through the duration of the war.¹⁴⁰ The earliest exclusively gay or lesbian bars emerged during this era. Allan Bérubé's book *Coming Out Under Fire* made a similar point, noting that the "nation's port cities," like Chicago, Washington DC, San Francisco, and New York, became centers of urban gay and lesbian life during and after WWII.¹⁴¹

By the late 1940s, Boag mentions the Music Hall as well as the Buick Café, both downtown, as places for lesbians to meet other lesbians in Portland. The Harbor Club, also downtown but closer to the Willamette River (at 736 SW 1st Avenue), opened in 1949, and by the early 1950s had become a center of LGBTQ+ life in Portland. The LGBTQ+ bars and nightlife in the 1940s to 1950s tended to cater to a mainstream (heterosexual) crowd until a certain late-night hour, when gay or LGBTQ+ groups would come in. The Portland police, including plainclothes officers of the Women's Protective Division, monitored known lesbian and LGBTQ+ bars and nightclubs.¹⁴² The surveillance records also created a paper trail, so today we do have information about gay- or lesbian-affiliated bars and restaurants that existed in the 1940s well into the 1960s.

Certainly there was a lesbian bar culture in Portland, but fewer bars were welcoming to LGBTQ+ women as compared to the numbers of bars that catered to gay men. Bars appealed to—or felt safe to—a limited number of lesbians, but were important places to connect with other LGBTQ+ people. For the vast majority of same-

¹³⁵ Patty Wolff, interview by David McCormack and Carla Moller. PSU LGBT History Capstone course, Winter Term 2012, instructor Pat Young. GLAPN archives at Oregon Historical Society, SR 11439, 2012, transcript p.9.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 8.

¹³⁷ Cindy Cumfer, Interview with Erik Funkhouser & Tim Aguirre. PSU LGBT History Capstone course, Winter Term 2009, with instructor Pat Young. Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest (GLAPN), 2009, transcript p.5.

¹³⁸ This 1917 eugenics law was responsible for the sterilization of 877 men and 1416 women in Oregon and not repealed until 1965. See Logan Lynn, "Made in Oregon: Homophobia," *Portland Mercury*, June 12, 2013, accessed at <https://www.portlandmercury.com/Queer/2013/06/12/9640178/made-in-oregon-homophobia>

¹³⁹ Ibid. The 1957 law specified sodomy, though that was clarified in 1961 to include cunnilingus.

¹⁴⁰ Boag, 11.

¹⁴¹ Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 106.

¹⁴² "Those Fabulous Florists! Women's Softball and the Flowering of a Lesbian community in Portland," *Northwest Gay and Lesbian Historian*, 6. The same was undoubtedly true for any queer person of that era, not just women.

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sex relationships of this era, an initial meeting would likely have taken place at a bar, restaurant, or some other place that was known to have LGBTQ+ associations. Some women reportedly managed to find other LGBTQ+ women in the spheres of their everyday lives. These women met other women who were interested in same-sex relationships in their own neighborhoods, at work, or at church, rather than at bars.¹⁴³

During the 1940s and 1950s, homosexuality especially between women was almost never discussed, and many women had not even heard the word “lesbian.” The American Psychiatric Association categorized homosexuality as a mental illness until the end of 1973, and typically women held a strong internal taboo against it, either as associated with mental problems, or (from a majority Christian perspective) as a sin. The popularly held stereotype of the mannish “dyke” would have been the only idea many women had about what a lesbian was. “I knew that women who like women are really tough and masculine. I don’t know where I got that,” said Portlander Laurie Lockert, who noted that she had never felt shame about her identity as a lesbian, but she did, even into the early 1970s, feel shame about that commonly held stereotype of lesbian women.¹⁴⁴

Author Laura Jae Gutterman calls the period from the late 1940s until the mid-1960s the “Long 1950s,” and demonstrates through letters women wrote to an organization called the Daughters of Bilitis (a homophile, or same-sex supporting, organization out of San Francisco) during this period that some women found female sexual partners in the course of their married suburban lives, without naming themselves or identifying as lesbian or bisexual. The Daughters of Bilitis and its leaders Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon did identify as lesbian, but that label was confusing, intimidating, or frightening for many women, even those who were in same-sex relationships. “For many married women the labels... were more emotionally distressing than the behavior itself.”¹⁴⁵ Many other LGBTQ+ women during this period, of course, avoided marriage to a man and may have been more comfortable (though mostly not in public) with their own identity.

The 1950s and 1960s were repressive decades in Portland (and generally across the United States) for anyone bucking societal expectations and norms. Mayor Dorothy McCullough Lee instigated an anti-homosexual crusade in the early 1950s and tried to stamp out other so-called “vices” such as prostitution and gambling as well. A pervasive fear of “perverts” and sex crimes against children were fanned by lurid newspaper stories about adult males molesting girls and boys. Lesbians were not immune from the homosexual-bashing.¹⁴⁶ Women had to be very careful about the places they went to and the people they were seen with. In these years, lesbians often gathered in private homes or apartments because these spaces offered privacy that bars and nightclubs did not. Dot Wilkinson of the ASA fastpitch softball team the Phoenix Ramblers told her teammates in Arizona not to frequent lesbian bars. “I told the girls, “don’t ever go to a gay bar... because you’ll get caught. Don’t do that.”¹⁴⁷

By the early 1960s in Portland, there were generally two downtown areas for gays or lesbians to meet at bars. The more working-class bars such as the Harbor Club were located in the southern part of downtown, closer to the Willamette River, while the more middle-class bars developed west of SW Broadway in the triangular area just south of W Burnside Street.¹⁴⁸ Portland was quite a bit more working class in those years, and many lesbians took on a “butch” role. The lesbians who frequented Demas Tavern in 1967, in the Old Town area just north of West Burnside (at 208 NW 3rd Avenue, later to become the drag venue Darcelle XV) were described as “tough, militant types, but they did buy beer and play pool, as well as occasionally brawl.”¹⁴⁹ The

¹⁴³ Laura Jae Gutterman, “The House on the Borderland”: Lesbian Desire, Marriage, and the Household, 1950-1979,” *Journal of Social History* vol. 46 no.1 (2012); 3.

¹⁴⁴ Laurie Lockert, interview with Lee Ann Phillips. Portland State University LGBT History Capstone course, Summer Term 2007, with instructor Christa Orth. Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest (GLAPN), 2007, transcript pp.17-18.

¹⁴⁵ Gutterman, 3, 7-8.

¹⁴⁶ Boag, 16-18.

¹⁴⁷ Lane Sainty, “How 101-year-old softball legend Dot Wilkinson found her two great loves in the same place,” *Arizona Republic*, October 20, 2022.

¹⁴⁸ Jayden Dirk, 40-62.

¹⁴⁹ Kristen Minor and Don Horn, “Darcelle XV,” 28.

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Transfusion Inn (1139 SW 1st Ave.) opened in 1959 as Portland's first exclusively lesbian bar, with a working-class clientele, and closed in 1964. Another early lesbian bar of this era in Portland was the Milwaukee Tavern (at 20 NW 16th Avenue), owned by Edna Jordal and frequented by a more middle-class crowd of lesbians.

As pointed out in a 1977 article in the *Northwest Gay Review*, before 1970 Portland lesbians often sought out tolerant religious spaces where they could be accepted as lesbians, and/or towards athletics, rather than going to bars.¹⁵⁰ Yet truly accepting spiritual or religious options at that time were almost non-existent for any LGBTQ+ person, until the Metropolitan Community Church was first organized in Portland in 1972. In the 1960s and 1970s, a number of lesbian feminist women moved from Portland and other urban places to form communes in Southern Oregon as part of the "back to the land" movement. The participants in these clusters of communities "made the conscious choice to disengage from the patriarchal mainstream rather than continue participation in their own oppression," as one 2013 thesis put it.¹⁵¹ These communal places in southern Oregon have relevance to the history of Portland's LGBTQ+ places because they did attract some lesbians and feminists away from Portland. During the 1970s, more LGBTQ+ women became comfortable identifying with a sexual minority group, often using the term "gay" as an umbrella term that meant gay, lesbian, or bisexual.¹⁵²

By the early 1970s, southeast Portland was the primary area of Portland where many feminist and lesbian women gravitated, mostly to live, but also where they would go to bookstores, hear music, and hold meetings.¹⁵³ A number of women, predominantly white women, lived in collective houses in SE Portland that had names such as Red Emma or PRYM. The Metropolitan Community Church, formed by the queer community (initially in California) for the queer community, held early meetings in southeast Portland at the Centenary Wilbur Methodist Church (215 SE 9th Ave). The first location of A Woman's Place, which was part bookstore and part women's center, opened in 1973 at 706 SE Grand Avenue.

A blog called "Lost Womyn's Space," highlighting lesbian history at various locations around the U.S., noted that there are far fewer locations where women were able to hold on to community places for any length of time as "their own" compared to those places where gay men gathered.¹⁵⁴ The reasons for this disparity are partly the economic reality that women rarely have as much income as a man, but also, as pointed out by author Amin Ghaziani, that there are deep differences in motivations behind lesbian women compared to gay men. "Gay men are more influenced by sexual transactions and building commercial institutions like bars," he posited, whereas lesbians favor "feminism and countercultures."¹⁵⁵ The comparative lack of lesbian territory in LGBTQ+ history makes Normandale field a rare resource. The deeply closeted queer women of the "long 1950s" in Portland did find each other and a few were brave enough to discuss their circumstances and the locations they frequented. Normandale Field is one of a very few locations where lesbians went and spoke about it in their own voices as opposed to the knowledge historians have from police reports on bars.

Lesbians in the Florists' fan base

Normandale Field's importance to LGBTQ+ women in Portland from 1948 to the mid-1960s was paramount. The ballpark was a safe place to find and meet similar women. It was not only a place of camaraderie and community for the players and fans, but a place to belong even if you did not play or had only passing interest

¹⁵⁰ Fern Gardiner, "Portland Lesbians, Where Are You?" *Northwest Gay Review*, Supp. to Vol IV No.5, June 1977, 13.

¹⁵¹ Heather Jo Burmeister, "Rural Revolution: Documenting the Lesbian Land Communities of Southern Oregon," *Masters of Arts in History Thesis* at Portland State University, Portland, Oregon, 2013, i.

¹⁵² Carol French, interview by Adrienne Sourbeer and Marcus Haslam. Portland State University LGBT History Capstone, Winter Term 2012, instructor Pat Young. GLAPN archives at Oregon Historical Society, SR 11440, (transcript) 19.

¹⁵³ Ann Mussey, interview by Justine Larson and Brooke Welch, November 2000, Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest (GLAPN) at Oregon Historical society, SR 4148, [transcript] 4-7.

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous, "Club Northwest," posted August 23, 2012, in blog *Lost Womyn's Space*, accessed online on June 6, 2023 at <https://lostwomynsspace.blogspot.com/>. See also Jen Jack Gieseking, ed. by Megan Springate, "LGBTQ Spaces and Places," *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History*. Published online by the National Park Service, 2016, 14-16 and 14-17.

¹⁵⁵ Amin Ghaziani, "lesbian geographies," *Context*, Winter 2015, Vol.14 No. 1, 63.

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in the game. The popularity of the team provided a low-risk crowd environment for women who could simply blend in if they chose to, rather than be seen going into a known gay or lesbian establishment.

As mentioned in interviews with people who lived in Portland during the period of significance and who identify as LGBTQ+, women's softball games at the field became an event and place to socialize with other queer women in Portland. During this time period, the field was the only consistent LGBTQ-friendly venue outside of residences and a few bars, and was often the first point of contact with locally established lesbians for women who were new to Portland. At least for softball season, about six months of the year, women could meet other women, support and enjoy women's achievement and physicality, and yet be safe from social censure. The family-friendly sports atmosphere provided a wholesome "cover" for LGBTQ+ women who were meeting or looking for other queer women, but also allowed a rare opportunity for women to get rowdy and behave in slightly more masculine ways, such as yelling for the team. "In the words of one woman who remembered these precarious times, 'There were two places where you could go if you were a lesbian—the bars or the Florists' games.'"¹⁵⁶

Sally Cohn, in a 2011 interview, said, "before I left Portland in the early 60's I used to go to a lot of . . . ballgames and the team was. . . sponsored by a florist that used to be near Lloyd Center. I think it's no longer around and the guy who owned it passed away. [...] But a lot of lesbians, ahh, played for that team. And of course they had to be closeted and all that stuff. Oh, I would, I would watch, you know I would go out and watch the team and borrow someone's [...] clicker counter. And, I would read the sports section about each game and, ahh, it would say what the attendance was. And then I would, you know, press my clicker. I'd click for everybody who I thought was one of ME. I would click. And then I would figure the percentage. [chuckling...] The lesbian percentage in the softball audience."¹⁵⁷

In the 1950s and early 1960s, softball was an important social event for LGBTQ+ women.

It was a place to go where you knew there would be dykes," [Barbara Grier] said, pointing out that there is a lesbian *audience* for softball games as well as lesbian *players*. One woman... recalled traveling at that time with her lover; neither of them were ball players. In a strange city, looking for something to do with themselves one evening, the woman suggested they head out to the ball parks... "Because that's where the lesbians will be".¹⁵⁸

The fact that even women new to Portland would- through word of mouth alone- go to Normandale Field to look for other queer women speaks to the reputation of women's softball generally as well as a reputation the Florists themselves specifically had. The high percentage of lesbians on the team is corroborated by interviews with several players but may not have been known to many of the fans. Again, many of the lesbian fans as well as players remained closeted for their entire lives.

As The Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest (GLAPN) wrote in their publication *Northwest Gay and Lesbian Historian*, a crowd of "groupies" formed around the Florists during the 1940s and 1950s. These were "lesbians who found friendship, relationships and identity within a community of women who enjoyed getting together for a summer of softball socializing."¹⁵⁹ Many of the players did socialize with their fans, in fact, outside of softball season as well, when they were likely to be less busy. "The team fostered connections between lesbian women in Portland, helping create close-knit social circles. In their interviews, both Mazzuca and Cach suggested that the team would regularly hold parties in their homes and would often go to the

¹⁵⁶ "Those Fabulous Florists! Women's Softball and the Flowering of a Lesbian community in Portland," *Northwest Gay and Lesbian Historian* Vol 1 No. 4, June 1977, 6.

¹⁵⁷ Sally Cohn, Interview by Jade Davis & Erin Babcock Musick. Portland State University LGBT History Capstone course, Winter Term 2011, instructor Pat Young. Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest (GLAPN), 2011. Transcript p10.

¹⁵⁸ Zipter, 48-49.

¹⁵⁹ "Those Fabulous Florists! Women's Softball and the Flowering of a Lesbian community in Portland," *Northwest Gay and Lesbian Historian*, June 1977, 1.

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downtown queer bars.”¹⁶⁰ David Grant Kohl lists the “Lind & Pomeroy Club” under Portland’s historic LGBTQ+ organizations in his book.¹⁶¹ It is not clear when this organization might have existed or who participated.

Chris Mazzuca, a pitcher for the Florists in the late 1950s and early 1960s, described many of the women players on the Florists team as having a tight social circle with many of the fans of the team. “Well, if you’re going to have relationships with same sex people, you don’t have the whole population to choose from. And if your friends are like, you know, fans from your softball... you know, it’s just like you’re at the same parties and the next thing you know, you’re thinking somebody else’s girlfriend is cute...”¹⁶² The close community that these women created together was based around playing, and watching, softball games, which for local fans was an activity that mostly took place at Normandale, the Florists’ home field. There was a section of the bleachers the friends of the players would regularly sit in at Normandale, a player on a different team remembered. There would have also been opportunities to meet, or interact, with players and fans from elsewhere, both at the field and possibly in other venues across Portland.

In 1957, a California-based fan of women’s team sports, Stormy Irwin, began a newsletter devoted to coverage of women’s sports.¹⁶³ Later the focus of the publication was specifically on women’s fastpitch softball, and the name of the publication changed in 1972 to *Women in Softball*. While the publication made no reference to women’s sexuality or lesbians in the fanbase for the various teams, the newsletter did sometimes mention women who would be going to various tournaments. A 1961 issue reports,

Some of the women we know of that will be attending the “big games” in Portland for the World Series will be: Shirley Phillips, Karen Jensen, Mrs. Phillips, Mary Matten, Judy Parsons, Helen Vogel, Midge Mariano, Ruth Reed, Gaylene Morton, Eva Reeder, Jackie Lane, Jean Contou, Mr. & Mrs. Bertini, Mary Ahrendes and your editor, Stormy Irwin.¹⁶⁴

The tournament is clearly being discussed as a social event for women fans of women’s softball teams, traveling from California to Portland, Oregon. The fan group listed by Irwin may have included a number of LGBTQ+ softball fans, just as the Florists fan groups discussed by Mazzuca included many queer or lesbian women.

One of the local Florists fans was Pat Cach, who described the Erv Lind Florists as “like heroes to me, to the extent that they turned a lot of women on to something that was holistic and a better place to go than the bars...”¹⁶⁵ She helped to drive the team to a National championship ASA tournament in 1962. She described her experience as a lesbian fan of the team as helping her figure out her own feelings. “...when I came out, it was kind of an emotional time for me and I think my first hook into determining what my emotions were all about was going to softball games to Normandale Park, now Erv Lind Park and our... and that’s where I met Chris Mazzuca, who was a world champion softball player and we had a relationship...”¹⁶⁶ In the 1970s Pat Cach coached one of the “out” lesbian women’s city-league teams, the Lavender Menace, before the Portland Gay Softball League was organized in 1982.

The Erv Lind Florists fan base at Normandale Field represents a history of lesbian women who found a place to appreciate and support women, while creating community themselves. “Importantly, it also suggests that

¹⁶⁰ Jayden Dirk, 66.

¹⁶¹ David Grant Kohl, *A Curious and Peculiar People: A History of the GLBTQ Community and the Metropolitan Community Church*, Portland, Oregon: Q Press, 2016, 407.

¹⁶² Chris Mazzuca, 7.

¹⁶³ Stormy Irwin, editor & publisher, *Women in Sports*, accessed online at <https://sites.google.com/site/womeninsoftball/women-in-sports?authuser=0>

¹⁶⁴ Stormy Irwin, “Portland Bound!!!,” *Women in Sports*, No. 67, August 15, 1961, 5.

¹⁶⁵ Pat Cach, Interview by Aaron Powell and Dorothy Zapf. Portland State University LGBT History Capstone course, Winter Term 2011, instructor Pat Young. GLAPN archives at Oregon Historical Society, SR 11232, 2011. Transcript p5.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p3.

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queer women were more likely to find spaces for themselves outside of the bars and other nightspots...”¹⁶⁷ Normandale Field was a rare location that was public, as opposed to private residences, and was long-lasting, in a way that many commercial bars or nightclubs were not. Because of the field’s association with women’s sports and specifically with the extraordinarily dominant Florists team, queer culture and specifically lesbian culture developed at the field, without being publicly acknowledged during the time period. As a number of authors have noted, women in sports operated (and often still operate) under a code of silence about lesbians. While this may have been partially a discomfort with the terminology itself,

[t]he code of silence is rationalized as a means of protecting women in sport from the stigma of lesbianism. The reasoning among producers of women’s sporting events is that fans and/or sponsors would abandon the game if the presence of lesbians was openly acknowledged. Ironically, of course, some sports at some times have provided a haven for lesbians.¹⁶⁸

Portland’s Normandale Field was such a haven for fans and players on the Erv Lind Florists, during a time when women were often ostracized, discriminated against, and even institutionalized for having same-sex attractions.¹⁶⁹ As Fern Wilgus put it, “softball and Normandale Field was a safe zone, a safe zone people like me could go to. I was so hidden...”¹⁷⁰

Normandale Field, 1965 to the present

Normandale Field, renamed Erv Lind field in 1965, continues as a hard-working Portland Parks softball field. In about 1980, the Portland State University Vikings began to use Erv Lind Field as their home field. It also hosts community leagues and Little League.

It is not clear whether the lesbian fans of the Erv Lind Florists continued to go to Normandale Park to watch other women’s teams after the team mostly disbanded. It is likely that some did, and that lesbians new to Portland continued to find other lesbian or bisexual women at women’s softball games even without a clear and specific team to follow. However, further research would be required to show that a lesbian association persisted at Normandale Park after 1964. There was an “out” lesbian women’s city team who sometimes played games at Normandale (as well as other municipal fields) from the early 1970s, named the Lavender Menace. The Lavender Menace also was a bowling team, a basketball team, and a volleyball team. The name was a direct reference to a comment by Betty Friedan, the head of the National Organization for Women (NOW). She referred to lesbianism as the “Lavender Menace.”

In 1996, women’s softball was introduced as an Olympic sport for the first time. For decades, supporters had lobbied for its inclusion and were repeatedly frustrated, especially in the 1992 Summer Olympics when baseball was included as a men’s only medal sport.¹⁷¹ Softball was subsequently removed from Olympic competition in 2012.

As of 2022, however, a new women’s softball league is launching in Portland, Oregon, with all games to be played at Erv Lind Stadium. The Women’s Collegiate Softball League stated that the purpose was “to give

¹⁶⁷ Jayden Dirk, 67.

¹⁶⁸ Darcy C. Plymire and Pamela J. Forman, “Speaking of Cheryl Miller: Interrogating the Lesbian Taboo on a Women’s Basketball Newsgroup,” *NWSA Journal*, Vol. 13 No. 1 (Spring) 2001, 3.

¹⁶⁹ Oregon’s 1953 “psychopathic offender” law meant that LGBTQ+ or queer persons could be sent without their consent to be “cured” in mental institutions.

¹⁷⁰ Fern Wilgus, interviewed by Kristen Minor and Cayla McGrail on June 2, 2023. Fern identifies as lesbian and played softball on Dottie Moore’s Pennant Shop team for years. Personal notes (no recording).

¹⁷¹ Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Softball_at_the_Summer_Olympics

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women an opportunity to improve their position in life and at the same time provide affordable entertainment for fans and an opportunity for businesses to support the women and the community.”¹⁷²

Title IX

The U. S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 had addressed a number of forms of discrimination in employment, but lacked any mention of discrimination in education. Congresswoman Edith Green from Oregon had been working on legislation around women and education in the early 1970s and had proposed an equal pay act in the U.S. Congress. As chair of the House Committee on Education, Representative Green worked with Dr. Bernice Sandler to come up with a bill requiring gender equity in education. Dr. Sandler brought in women to testify in Congress about lower pay, lack of benefits, and other inequities that commonly existed at the time. “When it came time for the vote on Capitol Hill, Dr. Sandler and some of her colleagues showed up at Representative Green's office to volunteer for lobbying duty. She told them to leave and not draw attention to the bill ... [and] that most Congressmen had no idea of its implications.”¹⁷³ Title IX was passed on June 23, 1972. Many believe that Title IX was primarily a sports-equity law, but its wording does not mention sports at all and is an anti-discrimination law, meant to fill in the gap in the 1964 Civil Rights Act with regards to educational institutions. The bill has indeed had far-reaching implications and created opportunities for girls and women in sports.¹⁷⁴

Comparative properties

In looking for comparisons to Normandale Field under the theme of women's history in Oregon, there are no direct comparisons. The statewide comparative properties for the theme of Entertainment and Recreation are easier to find, as are those for the theme of LGBTQ+ history in Portland.

Sites of women's opportunity and achievement in Oregon

In 2012, the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) created a category in the Oregon Historic Sites database called Women's History Sites.¹⁷⁵ One of these sites, Gerlinger Hall at the University of Oregon campus in Eugene, Oregon, was listed on the National Register as part of the Women's Memorial Quadrangle Ensemble. Built in the 1920s, Gerlinger Hall, originally the Women's Memorial Hall, was designed to furnish headquarters for all women's organizations and activities in the University. The building provided sheltered spaces for the system of physical training which every woman student was required to undergo, and also housed a social center on the campus for women faculty, alumni, students and guests.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Aron Yohannes, “Women's Collegiate Softball League launching in Portland with inaugural season coming in 2023,” *Oregonian*, February 24, 2022 (updated March 2, 2022): <https://www.oregonlive.com/sports/2022/02/womens-collegiate-softball-league-launching-in-portland-with-inaugural-season-coming-in-2023.html>.

¹⁷³ Lacy Lee Baker, “Women's History Month great time to reflect on softball's rich history,” Blog produced by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association, March 15 2021, accessed at <https://nfca.org/easyblog/womens-history-month-great-time-to-reflect-on-softballs-rich-history>

¹⁷⁴ The implementation of Title IX bumped up against the reality of unequal gender practices especially in the early years. As one example in Oregon, a track coach at Mt. Hood Community College held a men's only meet in 1977. “We would have had to cut out half the boys' events and the prizes to include an equal number of girls' events,” he was quoted in “Track meet runs into antidiscrimination laws,” *Oregonian*, May 28, 1977, 28.

¹⁷⁵ As of 2023, there are 44 extant sites listed, but only 39 of these are listed on the National Register or surveyed and found eligible. Most are women's club or civic society meeting places around the state. Though there are three YWCA buildings, none mention women's achievement or opportunity in sports. Several are included based on an association with an individual woman who ran a farm, business, or other achievements. Many women were successful as individuals competing in a man's world, but there are few sites that empowered groups of women or supported women working together.

¹⁷⁶ Sohyun Park Lee, *Women's Memorial Quadrangle Ensemble*, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. National Park Service, 1992, 8:B and 8:1.

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A few professions such as health care allowed for women as individuals to get past the barrier of gender discrimination and achieve the highest ranks of professional training. As a group, many of the properties associated with women's opportunities in nursing are associated with an earlier period of significance. Multnomah County Hospital, for instance, in its 1909 location at Second Ave. and Hooker Street, opened the first school of nursing, which was started and run by a woman, Mrs. Alta B. Y. Spalding.¹⁷⁷ More importantly, the school enabled women to gain competence and self-determination through a career. Later nursing programs or sites in Oregon that gave women autonomy such as the National Register-listed Portland Sanitarium Nurse's Quarters may be more comparable to the training and empowerment that women could achieve as part of the Florists softball team.

Other sites of women's empowerment and opportunity in the time period 1948-1964 in Oregon were limited. In the era of McCarthyism, patriotism, and prescribed gender roles, there were few places or opportunities for women to realize their potential outside of the role of wife and mother in the 1950s. The labor movement and unions, especially those of the lower-paying jobs that women were offered in the postwar years such as Laundry Workers, United Garment Workers, Telephone Workers, Hotel and Restaurant Employees, etc. did provide some opportunity for white women in Oregon to organize workers as well as take leadership positions in some cases.¹⁷⁸ Women organized a collective bargaining group at the Mallory Hotel in Portland in 1945, for instance.¹⁷⁹ Various labor union offices were sometimes sites of women's individual and collective empowerment, though wage and benefit gains were minimal and many professions remained blocked to women's entry.

In comparison to employment-related sites of women's opportunity and achievement such as nursing programs and union organizing, Normandale Field initially seems less important as a place women learned to play a game. Yet the field represented a haven for a select, competitive group of young women, where they could gain skills, confidence, and the sense of participation in a group endeavor in the company of other women. There may not be another site in Oregon that gave women a comparable sense of collective pride in group achievement during the immediate postwar era. Gerlinger Hall and the Women's Quadrangle Ensemble at the University of Oregon probably did provide this collective sense of achievement, support, and bonding for women in college, but the time period was much earlier than the period of significance for Normandale Field.

Ballparks and softball fields in Oregon, 1948-1964

Ball fields with night lighting and a capacity for crowds in the state of Oregon included a number in Portland. *Vaughn Street Stadium*, first just called "Baseball Park," was Portland's earliest baseball field in 1901, and was initially the home of the Portland Beavers, with Portland's first night baseball game played there in 1930. The Florists did occasionally play games at Vaughn Street, especially in the period after their 1944 National win and before Normandale was constructed in late summer 1948. Vaughn Street Stadium was demolished in 1955. *Westmoreland Park* was developed starting in 1935, with a baseball field added in 1939 after a local business owner, Nick Sckavone, convinced city officials and the WPA to fund it. In 1942 a larger wooden baseball stadium was built in Westmoreland for amateur baseball. *Montavilla Field*, *Peninsula Park*, *Buckman*, and *Duniway* all had baseball or softball fields configured with lighting and built by the Portland Parks Department. Outside of Portland, Salem's *Sweetland Field* was opened complete with field lighting for night games by June 1936.¹⁸⁰ *Silverton* opened a new baseball park with lights in 1937. Other fields such as Klamath Falls' *Gem Stadium*, *Conger Field*, and *Modoc Field* were outfitted with lights by at least 1947; *Waters Field* and *Leslie Field* in Salem; *Municipal Ballpark* and *Bruin Field* in Bend; *Allen Field* in Mill City, and Eugene's *Amazon Park* all hosted women's softball games in the period 1948-1964.

¹⁷⁷ Barbara Conway Gaines, *Oregon Health Sciences University School of Nursing: A History of the School 1910-1996*, 1998, pp. 5-11.

¹⁷⁸ Laurie Mercier, "Breadwinning, Equity and Solidarity: Labor Feminism in Oregon, 1945-1970." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* Vol 120 No.1, Spring 2019, 9-12.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 9.

¹⁸⁰ "Colorful Softball Opener...Marks Opening of New Grandstand," *The Oregon Statesman* [Salem], June 21, 1936, 7.

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None of these, however, was the “home field” for a women’s team, nor were any of them constructed initially and primarily for a woman’s team. It is this unprecedented investment in constructing a field primarily for a woman’s team, and also as a venue that could earn money through ticket sales, that stands out the most in comparing Normandale Field to other ballparks across Oregon. While many of the fields across the state were also constructed by municipalities (or by cities in collaboration with a school, such as Sweetland Field), there was no precedent whatsoever for a public investment in woman’s competitive sports.

Lesbian- or LGBTQ-friendly sites in Portland, Oregon, 1948-1964

Known venues of this period included a handful of bars, most of which did not last for more than a few years. *The Harbor Club* at 736 SW 1st Avenue was the best-known and most infamous gay bar of 1950s Portland. As Cook and Painter put it, “[t]he bar also attracted a significant lesbian crowd, and local artist Pat Ware remembers hanging out here in the early 1960s with some of the members of the Florists, the women’s national softball champions, which was largely a lesbian team.”¹⁸¹ *The Buick Cafe*, at 1239 SW Washington, was noted in police reports as a hangout for “confirmed lesbians.” The Buick was a part of the Drake Hotel when constructed in 1910, but became the Buick Café in 1949 until the 1960s.¹⁸² Located at 1139 SW 1st Ave, the *Transfusion Inn* was a working-class lesbian “dive” from 1959 to 1964, owned by Milton Buck.¹⁸³ Reportedly, two of the women who worked at the bar there had been jailed for theft.¹⁸⁴ The *Milwaukee Tavern* was a lesbian bar at 1535 W. Burnside St. Owned by Edna Jordal and staffed entirely by women, it lasted only a year, from 1963 to 1964.¹⁸⁵ *The Cartwheel Tavern*, at 1223 SW Fifth Avenue, existed from 1958 to 1962 and was the first of several bars to be associated with “Papa Scott,” a popular lesbian bartender who dressed as a man. Much of the history of Portland’s lesbian bars before the mid-1960s is known from police reports, so the lesbian population represented may not have been the relatively careful, closeted majority.

In comparison to these commercial bars, Normandale Field as a meeting spot for lesbians was considerably more anonymous for women who did not wish to be seen at a lesbian bar. There is no question that softball games at the field were attended by not only LGBTQ+ women fans, but people and families of all types, so the presence of queer women was more diluted at the field as compared to bars. However, the field offered an LGBTQ-friendly location that was consistent for at least 17 years while it was connected to the Florists team, and probably longer. Normandale Field was the longest-lasting public venue for women to find and meet a lesbian community in Portland. It was word of mouth and the reputation of softball which pulled women to games at Normandale Field, but even more so, it was the association with the Florists team that created the LGBTQ+ draw. During this period of time, there were no known local LGBTQ+ newspapers or radio, and there were not even “alternative” newspapers such as the *Willamette Bridge* for queer people to meet others like themselves, so women who did not already belong to a local lesbian or queer network would not have had an easy time figuring out where to meet other women.¹⁸⁶ Normandale Field stands out as being one of the few places lesbians have mentioned in their own words as a “safe place” to meet, a community they created and supported around a special, talented, and LGBTQ-friendly team.

Summation of significance

The home field of the Erv Lind Florists from 1948 to 1964 represents the sole expression in Oregon of a public investment in a woman’s competitive sports team.¹⁸⁷ Normandale Field is eligible at a state-wide level under Criterion A in the area of women’s history for its importance in supporting, inspiring, and promoting women’s

¹⁸¹ Cook and Painter, <https://www.glapn.org/6045walkingtour.html>

¹⁸² Kohl, 401.

¹⁸³ Kohl, 402.

¹⁸⁴ Kohl, 15.

¹⁸⁵ Cook and Painter

¹⁸⁶ The *Willamette Bridge* was published from 1968 to 1971.

¹⁸⁷ In 2012, Papé Field at the University of Oregon (UO) campus in Eugene was constructed as the home of UO women’s soccer and lacrosse teams. This is possibly the second facility constructed in Oregon for women’s competitive sports. It was constructed using funds donated to the University for this purpose, though, in other words was not a public expenditure.

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athletic achievement in association with the Erv Lind Florists women's softball team. The field is important to Oregon's sports history overall, as the home field of a National championship-winning team. The field also represented a beacon of opportunity for a few young athletic women over a period of time when there were few other options available to women outside of marriage and family. In the era before Title IX required equal athletic opportunities for male and female students, and even before there were competitive team sports for women in college, the construction of Normandale Field represented an incredibly unusual vote of confidence in a group of athletic women by a city hoping to see them succeed.

Normandale Field is locally eligible under Criterion A in the area of LGBTQ history as one of the very few places lesbians or bisexual women could safely meet in Portland outside of bars or nightclubs, in the period from its construction in 1948 until 1964 when the Erv Lind Florists team disbanded. Normandale Field's LGBTQ+ fans may have been a mostly "closeted" population, but this population was probably the majority of women who were attracted to other women during the "long 1950s," as author Laura Jae Gutterman termed the conservative postwar period. Lesbian bars in Portland at the time were dangerous for one's reputation and career. Although women did find each other for same-sex relationships at bars or even by happenstance, the field was a public place where (at least for softball season) queer women could find and meet other women without fear of social censure, and where women could support women's achievements and physicality. Whether or not players on the team were queer, they were subject to suspicion that they were, simply because they played softball. The field therefore is highly significant in women's history as a place where women formed community, protecting each other from being "outed" and bonding through a shared love of competition and athleticism, as well as their "outsider" status in society.

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APPENDIX:

A Few Notable Players on the Florists Team

Lind & Pomeroy or Erv Lind Florists players inducted into the National Softball Hall of Fame include Betty Evans (Grayson), pitcher, inducted in 1959 as the third woman ever inducted into the ASA Hall of Fame, and Margaret "Mugsy" Dobson, third-base player, inducted in 1964 as the seventh woman inducted into the ASA Hall of Fame. Jackie Rice, pitcher, inducted in 1984; Chris Pettina Miner, inducted in 1986; Carolyn Fitzwater; inducted in 1992; and Dot Dobie, inducted in 1995; were all former Florists players in the National Softball Hall of Fame. Margaret Dobson, Carolyn Fitzwater, Betty Evans Grayson and Jackie Rice, as well as manager and sponsor Erv Lind, were inducted individually into the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame. The entire teams from 1944 and 1964 were also inducted into the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame.

Betty Evans, who was 22 years old in 1948 when Normandale Field was built, had been playing on semi-professional teams for seven years, since she was fifteen. Truly a star athlete and the backbone of the Florists' early success, she was called "Bullet Betty," and described in the press as "a windmill in action," as well as "blonde" and "a lanky lass."¹⁸⁸ Her father, R. E. Evans, coached her.¹⁸⁹ Especially in the time before 1965 when pitching distance was less than 40 feet for women's fastpitch softball, the team's success depended directly on the effectiveness of its pitcher. "In the early days, the rules were... loose and fairly non-restrictive. [Pitchers] became very creative in devising fancy wind-ups and trick pitches."¹⁹⁰ Some of Betty's special pitches included the "submarine pitch" where the ball was released very low to the ground; the "slip pitch," where the ball was released during an arm windmill action with the arm continuing to circle after the pitch; and a windmill delivery in which she would alternate between circling her left and right arms and switching the ball from hand to hand, with a release possible from either hand.¹⁹¹

Jackie Rice and Chris (Louise) Mazzuca were also star pitchers for the team. Jackie Rice took over the primary pitching duties from Chris Mazzuca in 1963, and pitched four shutouts for the Florists to win its second National championship in 1964. Chris led the team to the National final in 1959 and 1960 and moved to Whittier Park California in 1963 to play for the Gold Sox. Jackie later also moved to California, joining the Orange County Lionettes and pitching them to the 1969 National championship.¹⁹²

It was not only pitchers on the Erv Lind Florists team over the years who stood out, of course. Dorothy "Dottie" Moore, catcher on the 1944 Lind & Pomeroy championship team and through the early 1950s on the Erv Lind Florists, went on to lead her own team: Dottie Moore's Pennant Shop. Moore's team was the primary local rival for the Erv Lind Florists. "Hap" Piper was chosen for the ASA All-American first team for at least four years, then went on to become a coach for the Erv Lind Florists. Another former player turned Florists coach was Lois Williams, who had played for the A-1 Queens and was selected as an All-American for six years. Dorothy "Dot" Dobie played both outfield and infield for the Erv Lind Florists from 1958 to 1965, and was chosen as All-American in 1960, 1965, and (with the Fresno Rockets) in 1969 and 1970.¹⁹³ "Mugsy" Dobson held the record for the highest batting average in a women's national championship until it was broken in 1975, and played for the Florists from 1945 to 1959. Robbie Mulkey (1951 to 1953), Thelma Parrish (1952), Doris Barrett (1951), Beverly Wadsworth (1953) and Elizabeth Locke (1952, 1953) were also chosen as All-Americans for the years noted in parenthesis while the team played in the National Softball Congress league.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ The appearance of women athletes was a big topic of reporting in this era.

¹⁸⁹ Don McLeod, "Beaver Batters to Hit Women- They Hope," *Oregonian*, August 15, 1948, 72.

¹⁹⁰ Littlewood, 118.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² "OHofAdmin," "Jackie Rice- Softball," Oregon Sports Hall of Fame and Museum website, posted Dec. 2018.

<http://oregonsportshall.org/timeline/jackie-rice-softball/>

¹⁹³ Littlewood 175.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 205-206. While some of the notable players and statistics were honored at Erv Lind Field with the construction of the "Hall of Fame" in the early 1980s, those displays are faded, in disarray, and not visible under locked covers today.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.19

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>45.530310</u>	<u>-122.605252</u>	3	<u>45.531373</u>	<u>-122.606817</u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	<u>45.531373</u>	<u>-122.605252</u>	4	<u>45.530305</u>	<u>-122.605817</u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated area is part of Normandale Park. The specific boundaries start at the intersection of the curblines (property lines) along NE 57th Avenue and along NE Hassalo Street (45.530310, -122.605252). Moving north from the intersection approximately 395 feet, the next point (45.531373, -122.605252) intersects with the curving arc of the outer fence line. Point 3 (45.531373, -122.606817) is outside the nominated boundary, but serves as an orthogonal shape reference point. The actual boundary line is an arc between points 2 and 4 following the outer outfield fence line. Point 4 (45.530305, -122.605817) is the westerly point of the property line along NE Hassalo Street, and moving east back to point (1) completes the nominated area, a total of 3.19 acres.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated area includes the area developed as a ballfield and the amenities created for fans and players, including the entry and landscaped street edges of the field itself. This area does not include other uses within Normandale Park such as the dog off-leash area immediately north of the outfield fence.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kristen Minor date Oct. 30, 2023
organization Minor Planning & Design, for City of Portland telephone 503-706-9618
street & number 2146 NE 17th Avenue email kristen.minor.pdx@gmail.com
city or town Portland state OR zip code 97212

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Regional Location Map**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Tax Lot Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

Normandale Field
Name of Property

Multnomah Co., OR
County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Normandale Field
City or Vicinity: Portland
County: Multnomah **State:** Oregon
Photographer: Kristen Minor
Date Photographed: March 7, 2023 unless noted otherwise

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 of 14:** OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0001
Looking northwest from NE 57th Ave towards the field entry
- Photo 2 of 14:** OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0002
Looking east from bleacher center walkway towards press box building
- Photo 3 of 14:** OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0003
Looking northwest from the upper bleachers across the field
- Photo 4 of 14:** OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0004
Looking southwest at the concessions building from the east field frontage [March 23, 2023]
- Photo 5 of 14:** OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0005
Looking east across the outfield towards the infield
- Photo 6 of 14:** OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0006
Looking south at the Erv Lind plaque and north corner of the press box building
- Photo 7 of 14:** OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0007
Looking northwest at the storage shed in the far southwest corner of the field
- Photo 8 of 14:** OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0008
Looking northwest at the scoreboard in the zone between the outfield fences
- Photo 9 of 14:** OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0009
Looking northwest from the upper bleachers across the field
- Photo 10 of 14:** OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0010
Looking south from lower bleachers at steps [May 22, 2023]
- Photo 11 of 14:** OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0011
Looking southwest from secondary stadium entry towards the "Hall of Fame"
- Photo 12 of 14:** OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0012
Looking northeast at side of press box/restroom

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Photo 13 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0013
Interior: Looking southwest inside the press box [March 23, 2023]

Photo 14 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0014
Interior: Looking north inside the concessions building [March 23, 2023]

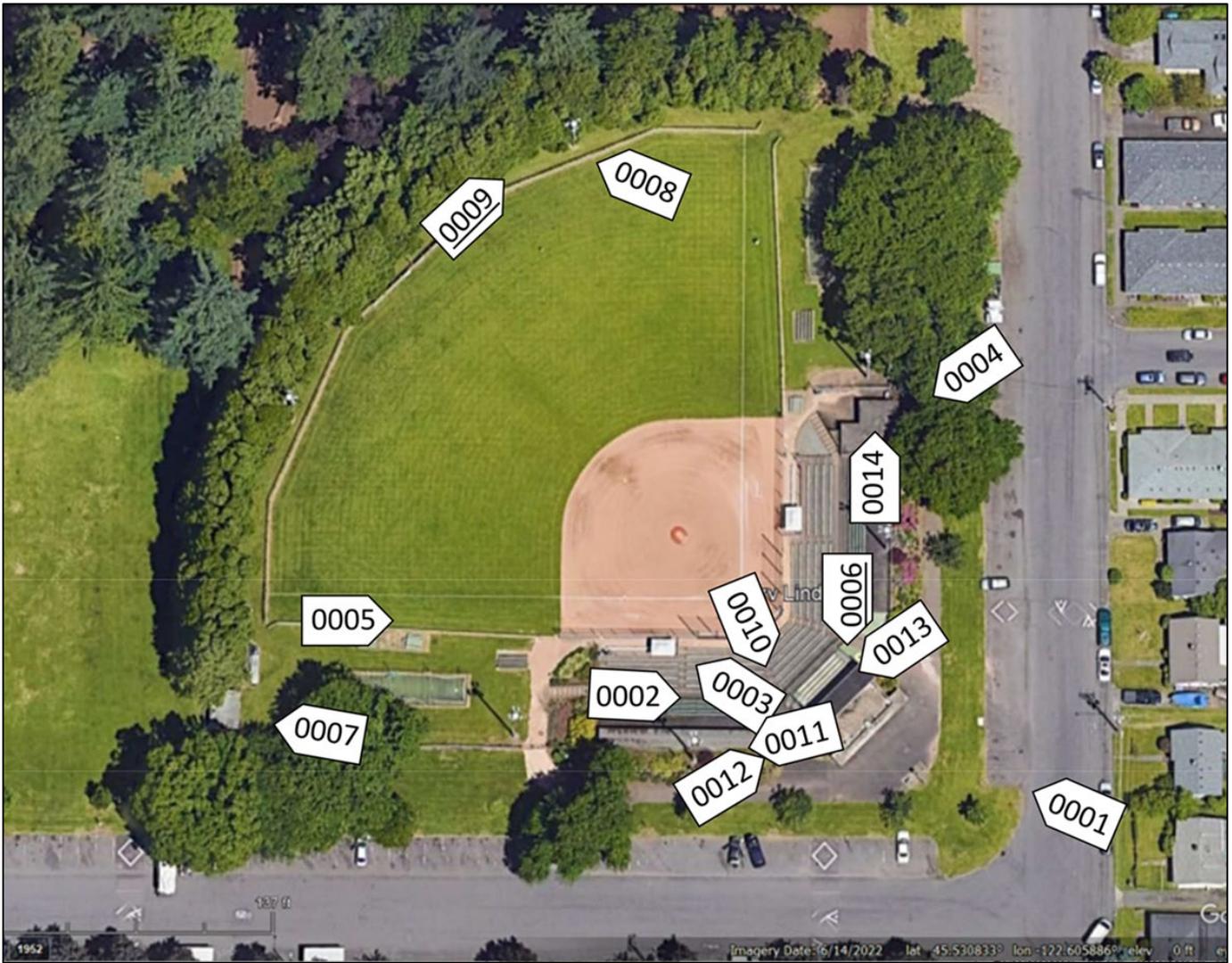
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Photograph Location Map



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List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.

Figure 1. Regional Location Map

Figure 2. Local Location Map: Aerial street view

Figure 3. Tax Lot Map

Figure 4. Site Plan, 2023.

Figure 5. Site Plan (Irrigation Plan), 1989. This site plan shows the seating configuration prior to the removal of upper bleachers on the berm along south side of the site to construct the "Hall of Fame," which occurred in the early 1980s. A phone booth was also located near the street corner.

Figure 6. Sanborn Fire Map, 1924 corrected to 1950.

Figure 7. (Lower) Floor Plan and Front Elevation of Pressbox/ Restroom building, Robertson Merryman Barnes Architects, 1998. This plan and elevation is still quite accurate as of 2023, with the exception of the single ticket booth door shown on plan and elevation (noted with the numeral 5 inside a diamond) which were not constructed. Rather, there is a single louver, matching the left side of the plan/elevation. Further, there is now a sign just below the "Erv Lind Stadium" sign that reads "Hollywood- Rose City."

Figure 8. South and East Elevations of Concessions building, Robertson Merryman Barnes Architects, 1998. These elevations are still (as of 2023) accurate.

Figure 9. Aerial photo of the field nearing completion, noted as December 1947 but likely summer 1948.

Figure 10. Aerial photo of Normandale Park, September 1948.

Figure 11. Photo of Normandale Field looking south at berm, noted as c.1960 but definitely pre-1953, likely c. 1950 (A2001-030.3075, City Archives)

Figure 12. Photo of Normandale Field looking north from bleachers, 1953 (A2005-05.296.2, City Archives)

Figure 13. *Oregon Journal* Image of Betty Evans superimposed on an aerial photo of the field, 1948.

Figure 14. Front cover program of Florists traveling team, 1959.

Figure 15: Matchbook with images of field, team, and Erv Lind, 1949 (A2004-002.6741 and -002.6743, City Archives).

Figure 16. Erv Lind Florists championship team, 1964.

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Normandale Field

Name of Property

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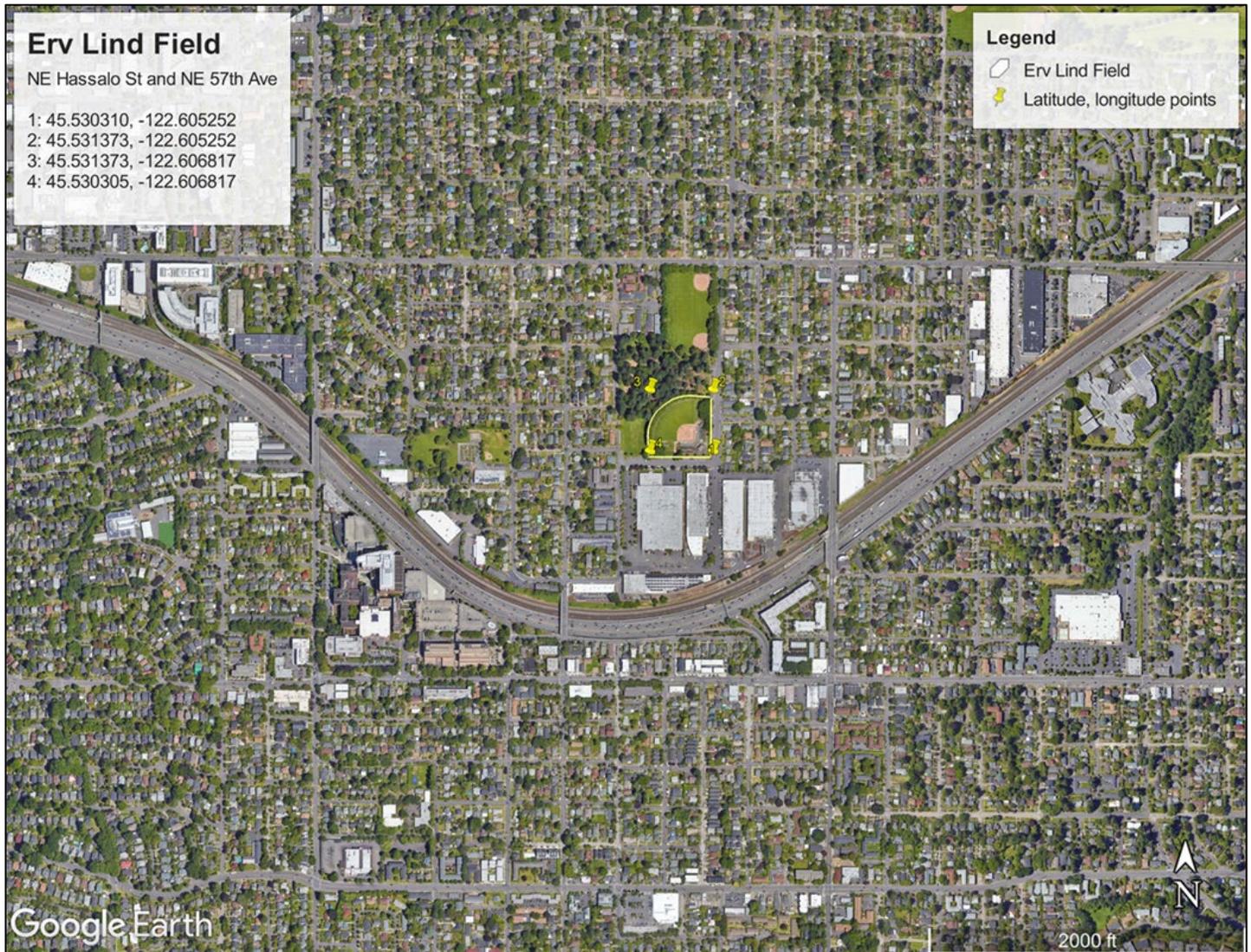
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N/A

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Figure 1. Regional Location Map. Google Earth application, 2023.



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Figure 2: Local location map (PortlandMaps imagery, 2022). Site boundary is dashed in red. Red Latitude/longitude points on map are: Point 1 (45.530310, -122.605252); Point 2 (45.531373, -122.605252); Point 3 (45.531373, -122.606817); Point 4 (45.530305, -122.605817)



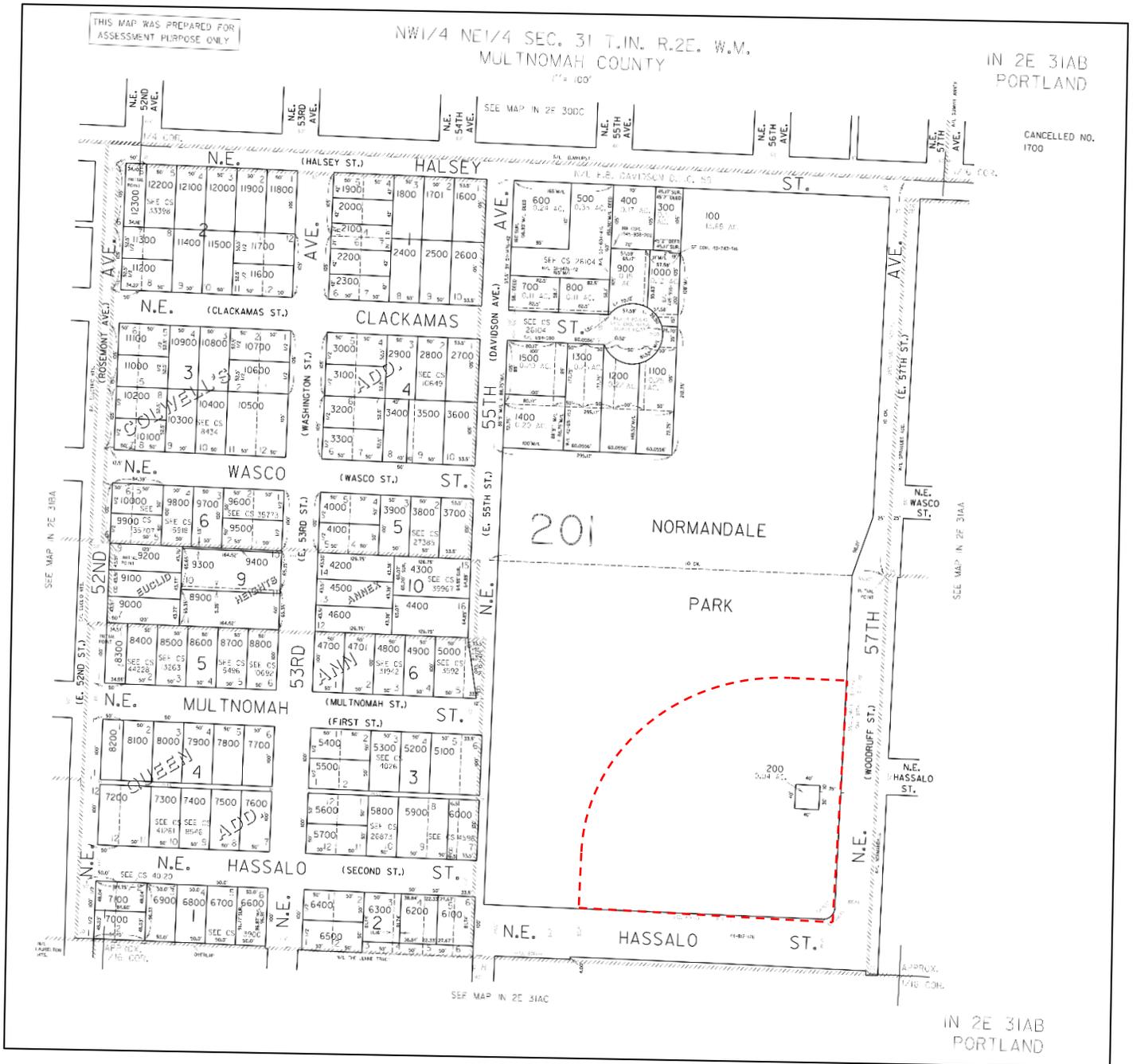
United States Department of the Interior
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Figure 3: Tax Lot Map (nominated site is the lower right corner of the tax lot only, as shown in dashed red line, including the separate small square parcel)



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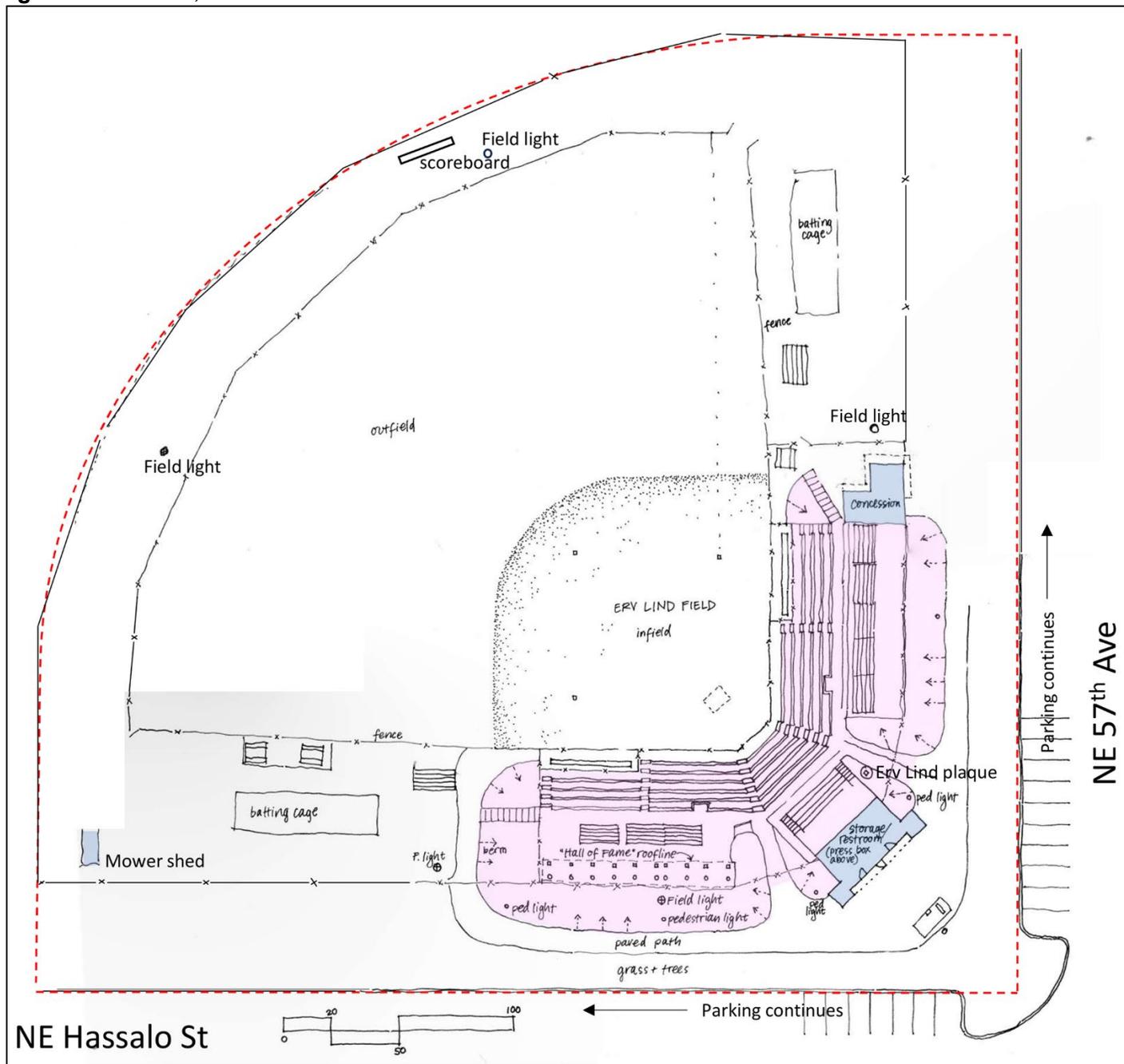
N/A

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Figure 4: Site Plan, 2023.



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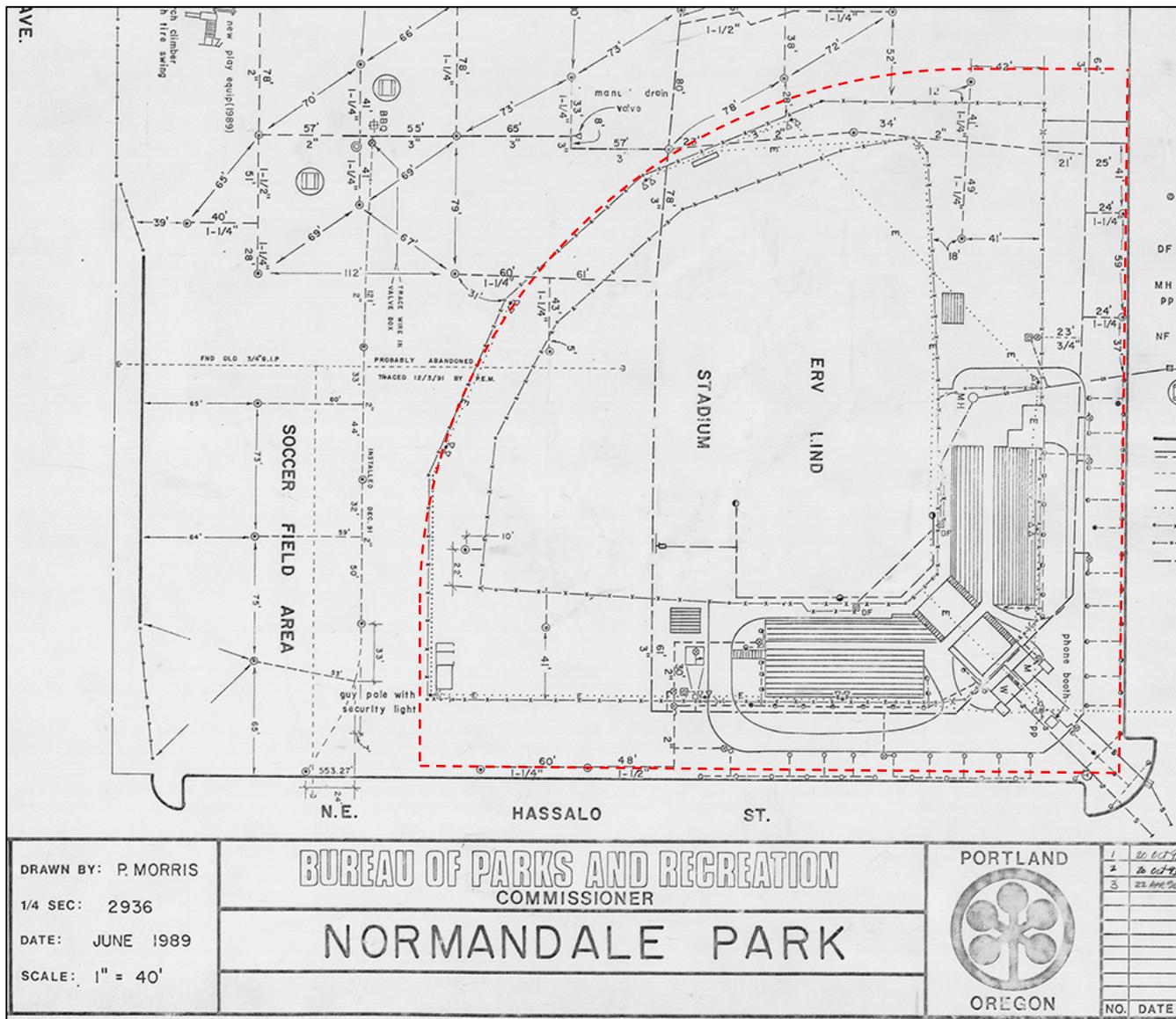
Name of Property
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Figure 5: Site Plan (Partial Irrigation Plan at Normandale Park, Bureau of Parks & Recreation, 1989)



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Normandale Field

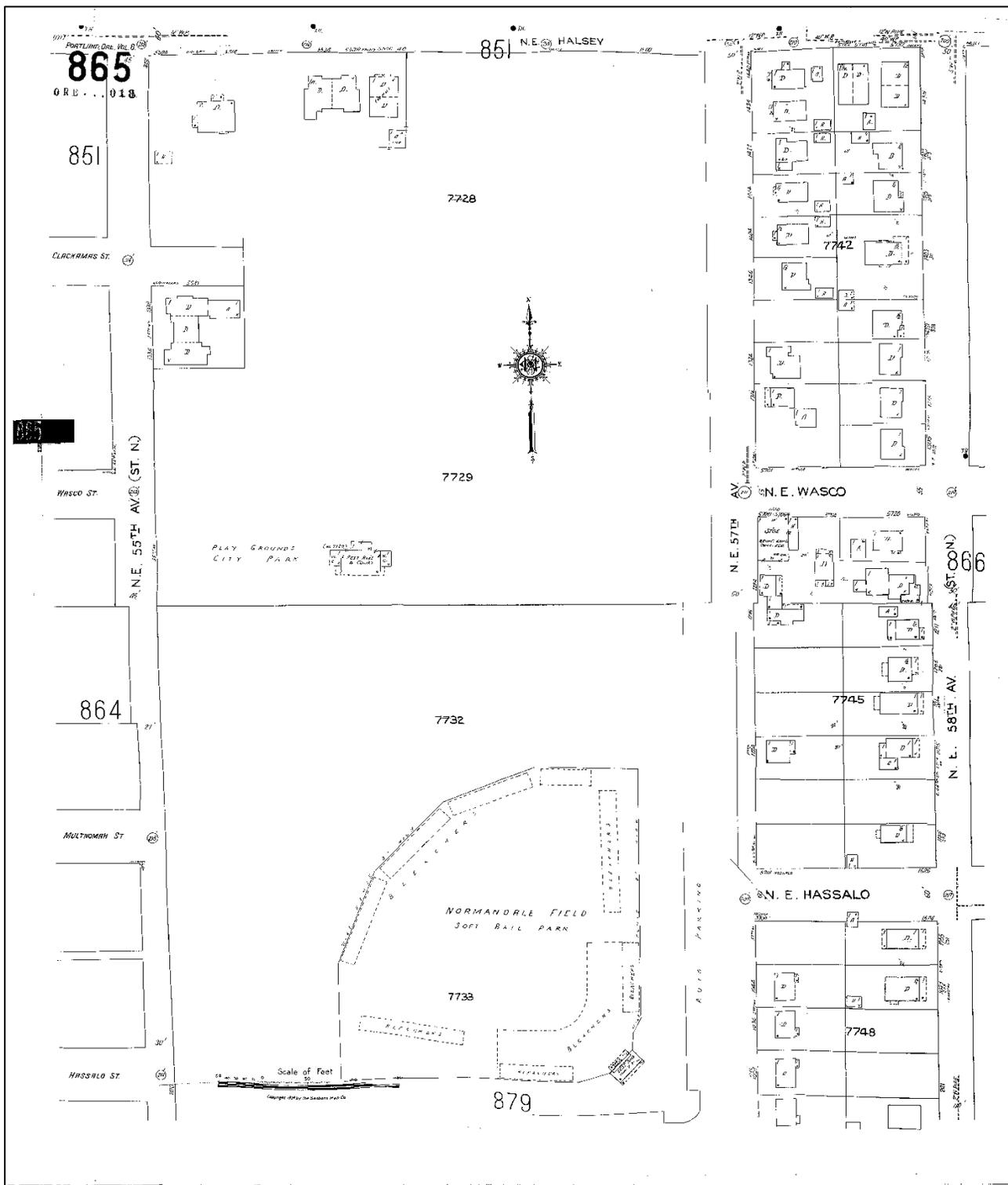
Name of Property
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Figure 6: Sanborn Fire Map, 1924 corrected to 1950. Portland, Oregon, Map No. 865.



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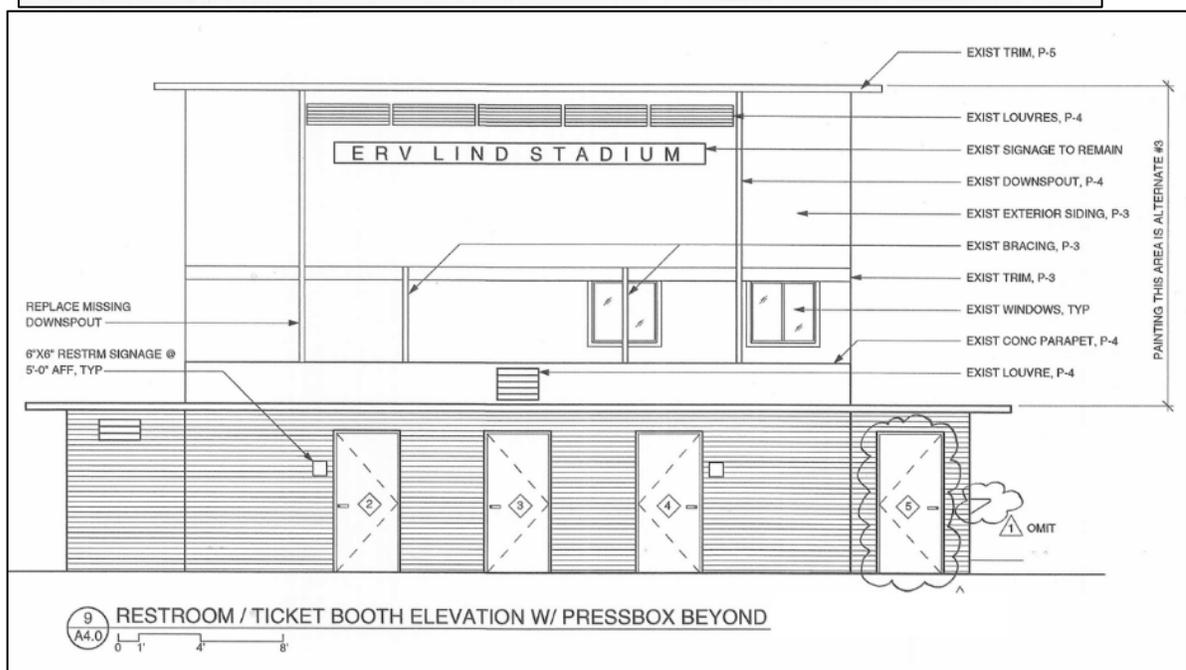
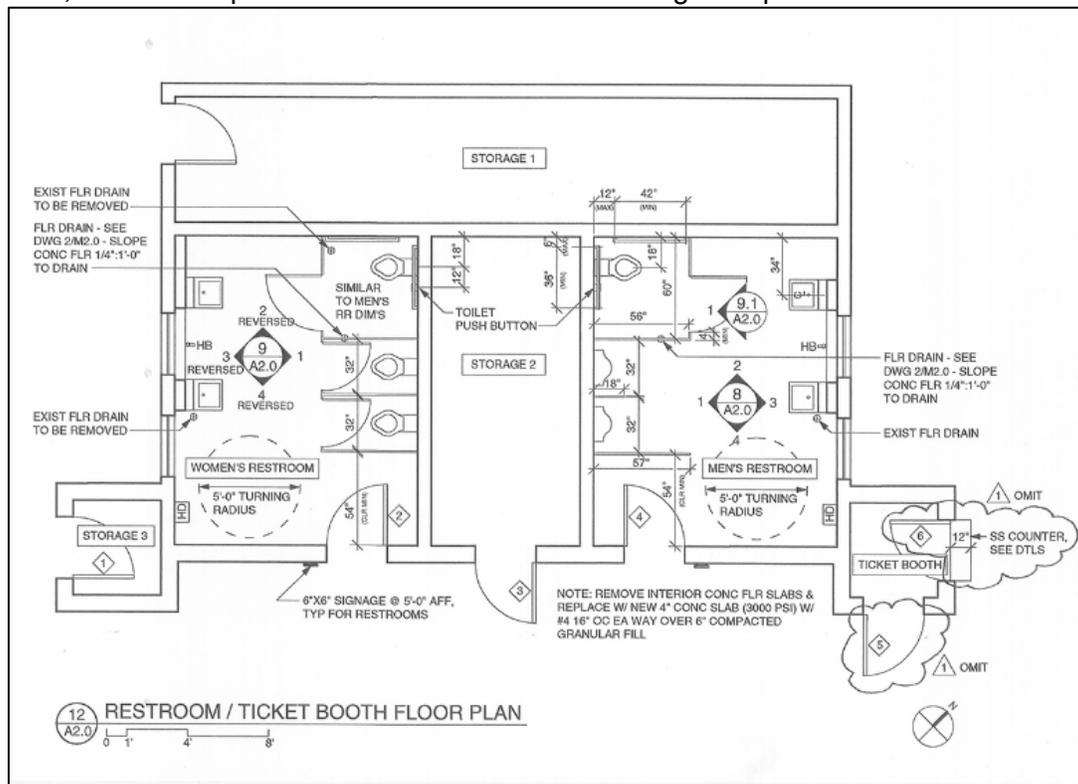
N/A

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Figure 7: (Lower) Floor Plan and Front Elevation of Pressbox/ Restroom building, Robertson Merryman Barnes Architects, 1998. Note press box level is above the "storage 1" space.



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Figure 8: South and East facades, Concessions building, Robertson Merryman Barnes Architects, 1998.

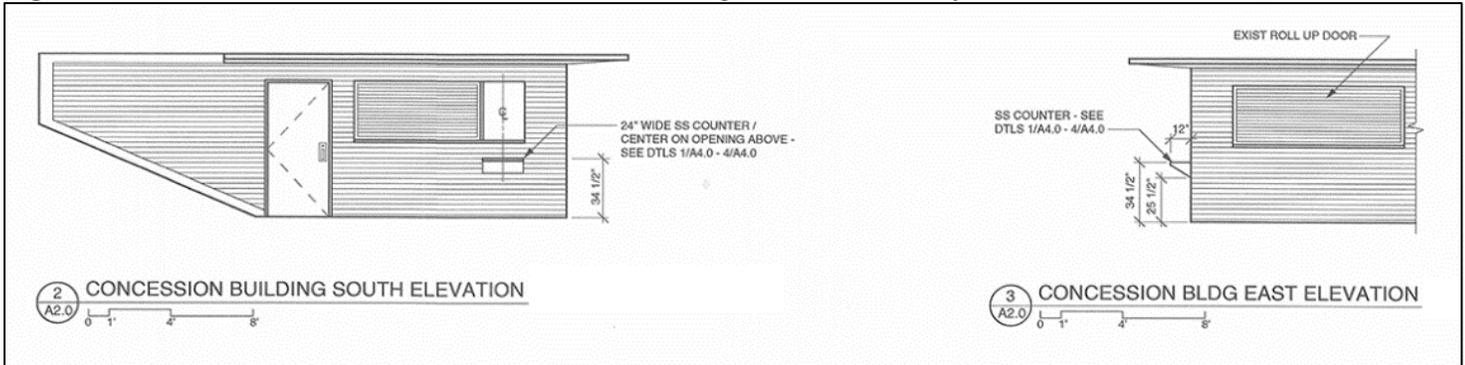


Figure 9: Aerial View noted "December 1947" but likely summer 1948. [Portland City Archives A-2004-002.6775]



City of Portland (OR) Archives, A2004-002.6775

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Figure 10: Aerial View of the whole of Normandale Park, looking east, September 1948. [Portland City Archives A2001-045.436]



City of Portland (OR) Archives, A2001-045.436.

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Figure 11: Normandale Field looking south at berm, c.1950 [Portland City Archives A2001-030.3075]



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Figure 12: 1953 image of Normandale Field and Park looking north/northwest from bleachers [Portland City Archives A2005-005.296.2]



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Figure 13: Oregon Journal Image of pitcher Betty Evans superimposed on an aerial photo of the field, 1948.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

World Softball Tourney to Open City's Newest Park

SPORTS : BUSINESS : MARINE : RADIO

Sunday Oregon Journal

PORTLAND, OREGON, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1948 8 1

JOURNAL
COPTER PHOTO

THE WORLD'S SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS, bringing together the elite of the American softball family in both men's and women's competition, opens tonight on Portland's new Normandale park on NE 37th avenue and Halsey street. The new park is equipped with a modern softball stadium, including box seats, grandstand seats and bleachers extending around the field. Equipped for night games, the new field will accommodate more than 5000 fans. The Arizona Ramblers women's team will open the tourney tonight at 8:15 o'clock, meeting the Des Moines, Ia., nine. The second game will see Betty Evans (inset) pitching for her Lind & Pomeroy Florists against the Boise, Ida., Newettes. Women's play dominates the first week of action.

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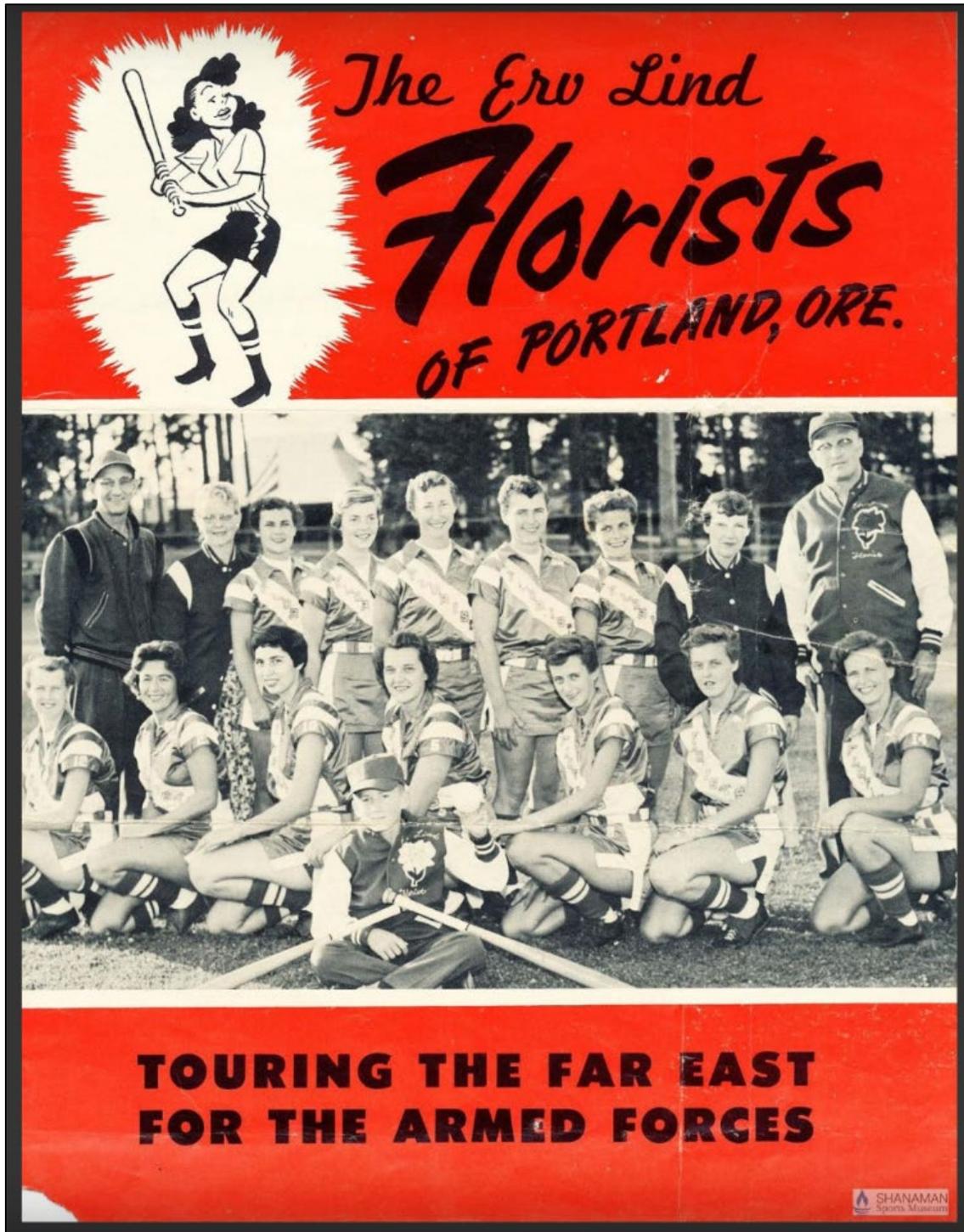
County and State

N/A

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Figure 14: Front of Program for 1959 Erv Lind Florists traveling team, courtesy of Tacoma Sports Museum, <https://www.tacomasporthmuseum.com/1219-3/>



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Figure 15: Matchbook (front and back) made for 1949 Normandale World's Champion Softball Tournament [Portland City Archives, A2004-002.6743/6741]



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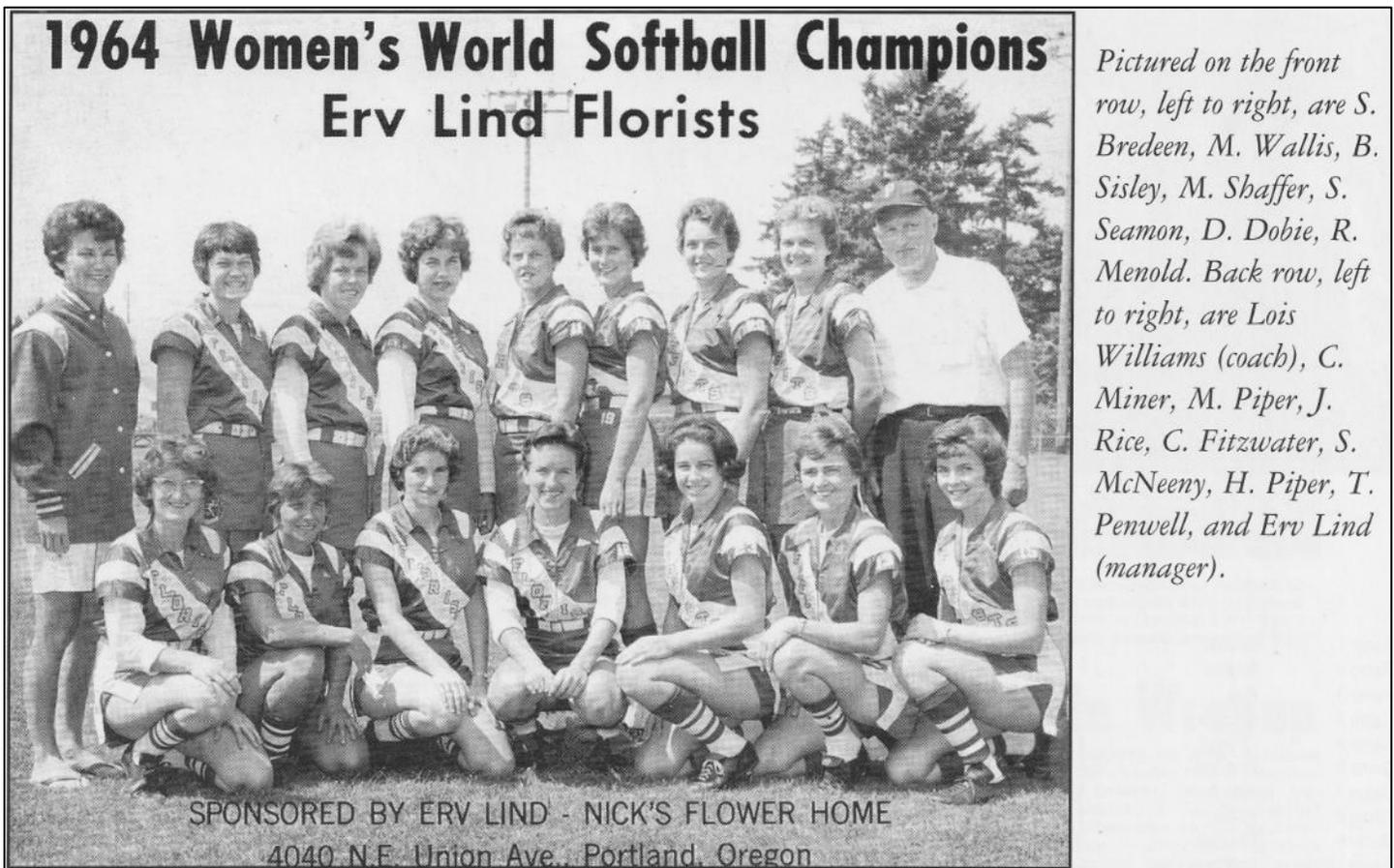
Name of Property
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Figure 16: 1964 Photo of National Champion Erv Lind Florists team [Littlewood, page 80]



Pictured on the front row, left to right, are S. Bredeen, M. Wallis, B. Sisley, M. Shaffer, S. Seamon, D. Dobie, R. Menold. Back row, left to right, are Lois Williams (coach), C. Miner, M. Piper, J. Rice, C. Fitzwater, S. McNeeny, H. Piper, T. Penwell, and Erv Lind (manager).

**Normandale Field
Multnomah County, Oregon**



Photo 1 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0001
Looking northwest from NE 57th Ave towards the field entry



Photo 2 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0002
Looking east from bleacher center walkway towards press box

**Normandale Field
Multnomah County, Oregon**



Photo 3 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0003
Looking northwest from the upper bleachers across the field



Photo 4 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0004
Looking southwest at the concessions building from the east field sidewalk frontage

**Normandale Field
Multnomah County, Oregon**



Photo 5 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0005
Looking east across the outfield towards the infield



Photo 6 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0006
Looking south at the Erv Lind plaque and north corner of the press box building

**Normandale Field
Multnomah County, Oregon**



Photo 7 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0007
Looking northwest at the storage shed in the far southwest corner of the field



Photo 8 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0008
Looking northwest at the scoreboard in the zone between the outfield fences

**Normandale Field
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Photo 9 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0009
Looking northeast at zone between outfield fences and scoreboard

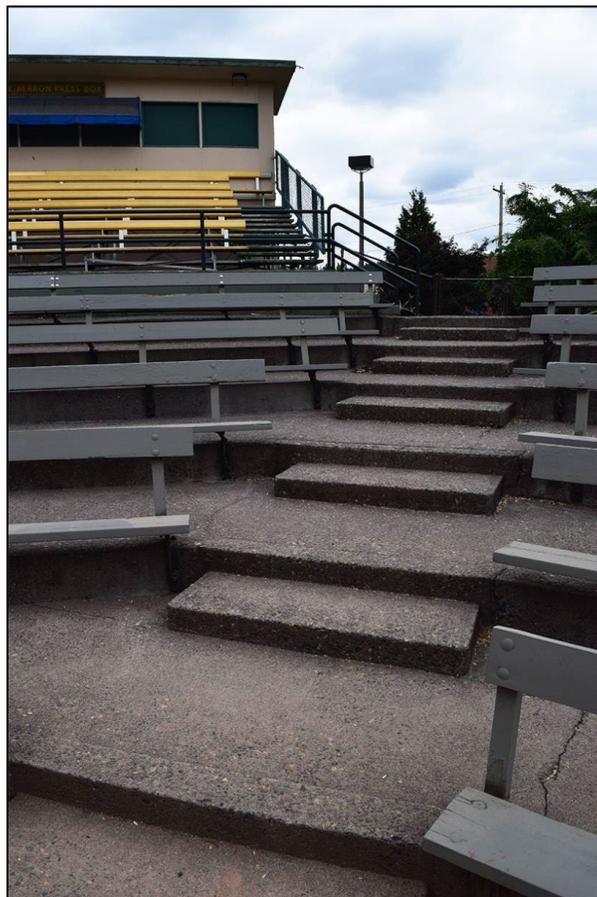


Photo 10 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0010
Looking south from lower bleachers at terraced steps

**Normandale Field
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Photo 11 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0011
Looking southwest from secondary stadium entry towards the “Hall of Fame”



Photo 12 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0012
Looking northeast at side of press box/restroom

**Normandale Field
Multnomah County, Oregon**



Photo 13 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0013
Interior: Looking southwest inside the press box



Photo 14 of 14: OR_Multnomah_NormandaleField_0014
Interior: Looking north inside the concessions building