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1897 UNION TERMINAL
1034-1076 West Bay Street
Jacksonville
Duval County
Florida

HABS No. FL-344

WRITTEN HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. FL-344

1897 UNION TERMINAL

Location: 1034-1076 West Bay Street, Jacksonville,
Duval County, Florida.

USCS Jacksonville Quadrangle Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 17.435220.3355195.

Present Owner: Jacksonville Terminal Company.

Present Occupant: Seaboard Coast Line Railroad and Wiltshire-Gooden
Paint Store.

Present Use: Storage, paint store.

Significance: The largest depot in the South at the time of its
erection. One of the few commercial structures to
predate the 1901 fire in downtown Jacksonville, this
passenger terminal and the amelioration of rail
transportation to and from it were significant steps
in Henry Morrison Flagler's plan to develop southern
Florida as a major resort area at the turn of the
century. 1(Davis, p. 357)

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Work on the train shed was begun in the summer of 1884, but reframing was necessary after the hurricane of September 26, 1894. Not entirely complete, it was in service on February 4, 1895. The contract for the brick depot was let in June, 1896; the edifice was completed on January 15, 1887 (Davis, p. 357).
2. Architect: Unknown. The Master Files for Jacksonville to the Secretary of State's Office of Archives, History, and Records Management contain a report on the structure code in the summer of 1974 under the supervision of Ms. Diane Greer. The architect is listed as W. B. Howe; the entry is not footnoted and has been unverifiable according to the sources listed in the State bibliography.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The terminal lies on a parcel described as Block 8, lots 1-4 of La Villa Division C in the LaVilla-Lem Turner Park Deed Book, p. 60, of the Title and Trust Company of Florida, 200 East Forsyth Street, Jacksonville, as follows:

3. Original and subsequent owners: The terminal lies on a parcel described as Block 8, lots 1-4 of LaVilla Division C in the LaVilla-Lem Turner Park Deed Book, p. 60, of the Title and Trust Company of Florida, 200 East Forsyth Street, Jacksonville, as follows:

1895 Quit Claim Deed, March 12, 1917, recorded
1917 June 22, 1917, in liber 161 folio 562, from

Plant Investment Co.

to

Jacksonville Terminal Co.

"Deed made by reason of fact that deed of conveyance between parties hither to wit; July 30, 1895, was lost or destroyed before same became of record"

4. Original plans, construction: No original building records are available for this portion of the terminal complex. According to Jacksonville's historian T. Frederick Davis:

The movement for a union station (to link the several rail lines coming into the city) was started by H. M. Flagler when on July 24, 1890, he bought the property then known as the Burch property from John Bensinger. The public did not know of this purchase until May 5, 1893, when the deed was filed for record and after the railroads had united in an agreement to build a union depot on the site. They then secured a charter in 1893 as the Jacksonville Terminal Company: H. M. Flagler (Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Halifax River Rail), president; H. R. Plant (Savannah, Florida, and Western Rail), treasurer, J. R. Parrott, secretary. The Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West at this time was in the hands of the receiver. The location was low marsh land and 300,000 cubic yards of earth were hauled in to reclaim it. McCoys creek was diverted by a great ditch. More than 2,100 piles were driven for a foundation, some of them to a depth of 70 feet. The cost of this preliminary work was \$100,000 (Davis, p. 356).

The shed was under construction from the summer of 1894 to the spring of 1895, having been set back by the hurricane of September 28, 1894, "it was an enormous structure one-fifth of a mile long by 520 feet wide, with a transept 168 x 40 feet" (Davis, p.

357). The contract for the brick depot was let in June of the next year to S. S. Leonard for \$58,000 (Ibid). When completed in January 1897, it covered 325 x 120 feet and was to meet adequately the needs of travelers for almost twenty-five years (Ibid). The completed station cost \$125,000; the trackage complex, \$375,000 (Florida Times Union, 11/11/19, g:3).

5. Additions and alterations: During the 'teens, the public began to call for a larger and "more presentable" terminal (Davis, 357). The City apparently wished to demolish the 1897 terminal and build a new one on a site west of Myrtle Avenue. The prohibitive cost to them of such a move led the members of the Terminal Company to successfully fight the City in court. Consequently, most of the original depot was left intact. The baggage room of the new terminal acts as a transitional element. Its architect, Kenneth Murchison of New York, renovated the western half of the old terminal for use as an additional baggage room.

Murchison's entry won the Terminal Design Competition, and was published in The American Architect, No. 2128, of October 4, 1916. Re-laying of the tracks and rebuilding of the sheds occurred simultaneously with the erecting of the terminal; the completed station was thrown open to the public at 12:01 a.m. November 17, 1919...The fourteen sandstone columns in the front form an imposing entrance to the main waiting room, which is 125 feet long by 80 feet wide, with a dome 70 feet above the floor. The main building is composed of Tennessee marble and cost \$750,000. The total cost of the improvement including trackage, sheds and purchases was \$1,300,000 (Davis, 357).

Not all of Murchison's plan for renovation and attaching the 1897 terminal to his new one was carried out. Later surveys indicate that there was a fire in the east end of the original building; for whatever reason, Murchison's idea of removing the east tower and reusing the windows from its facade in a new recessed facade was never acted upon (see Murchison's plan survey 1922).

What seems to be an addition on the west end of the building, having a brick partition between it and the eastern section of the building and having different fenestration, may well have been part of the original design; it appears on the Sanborn Insurance Company Map of 1897. This area was used as a kitchen and storeroom until 1913, and as a dining room until ca. 1949 (Sanborn Maps); presently it is a storage area. On the southwest or rear of the building, a w. c. area was added in 1913; in 1921 this had been altered to a baggage area. By 1949, the western kitchen-dining room complex was being used as a bottling works, the 1913 addition, as a locker room (Sanborn maps).

According to permits on file at City Hall, a minor addition was made to the second floor of the eastern section of the building after 1944; in 1954, some of the wooden framing was replaced with steel and a built-up roof applied to the western portion of the structure. At about the same time, a new door was made in a window opening of the north facade on the second floor, and a stairway run up to it. This was probably done when the second floor offices were remodeled, paneled, air-conditioned, and partitioned (Permits 1034-1076 West Bay).

The Jacksonville Terminal Company has plans to convert the older Station into a "Gaslight district" along the lines of Underground Atlanta in the immediate future (Epstein interview), at an approximate cost of \$4 million.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

Henry Morrison Flagler (1830-1913): Flagler was born the son of a Presbyterian Minister in Hopewell, New York on January 2, 1830. In spite of his father's attempts to groom him for the ministry, and "frustrated by the poverty he shared in the minister's home, he early promised himself to become a rich man..." (Lee). Leaving home at age fourteen, he began his climb to success as a clerk, then manager, then president of a grain-selling firm. It was through his dealings in the grain business that Flagler became acquainted with John D. Rockefeller:

When Rockefeller needed new capital and new imaginative leadership in his oil company, he turned naturally to Flagler. Flagler easily found the capital and there was formed a partnership that was to result in one of America's great industrial empires and millions of dollars for its founders. The company was known as Rockefeller, Andrews, and Flagler. The years of close collaboration between Rockefeller and Flagler resulted eventually in the Standard Oil Company. Rockefeller said years later that the idea of the Standard Oil combine was born in the mind of Henry Flagler (Lee).

The second phase of Flagler's illustrious career began when he and his ailing wife Mary Harkness visited Florida in the winter of 1878-9. They stayed in Jacksonville, then the end of the rail line, and Flagler was quick to note "with concern the need of hotel facilities and travel accommodations in the state which boasted of magic curative qualities for invalid persons" (Martin, pp. 77-78). Flagler was to return with his second wife, Ida Shrouds, on their honeymoon in 1883. Though accommodations were better by then, the luxurious St. James Hotel having been built in the interim, the Flaglers chose to steam south to St. Augustine. Henry was apparently even more charmed by the oldest city and more struck by its lack of development as far as tourist accommodations. When Henry B. Plant started to build railroads in the state in the 1880's, and when St. Augustine celebrated the landing of Ponce de Leon with a festival in 1885, Flagler needed no more impetus to go through with the idea he had been toying with of building a luxury hotel there (Martin, p. 106). The Ponce de Leon, designed by Carrere and Hastings in 1885-6, opened its doors during the season of 1888. The lack of reasonable transportation more or less forced Flagler into the railroad business. His first purchase was the Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Halifax River, bought in 1885; in 1888 he acquired the St. Augustine and Palatka and the St. Johns running from Tocol on the river to St. Augustine. Next he acquired a logging road between South Jacksonville and Daytona, upon which he began laying tracks in 1889, the same year in which he began constructing an all-steel rail bridge across the St. Johns in Jacksonville. The bridge opened on January 20, 1890 and eliminated the inconvenience of ferrying passengers (Martin, p. 133). This was the year in which Flagler purchased land for a depot building in Jacksonville (Davis, 356); while one of his biographers suggests that Flagler had no intentions of opening up Florida south of Daytona in 1890 (Martin, p. 136), the building of a proper passenger terminal in Jacksonville

would prove to be even more imperative to his operations within the next five years. Land owners and speculators soon induced Flagler to push further south; in 1892 he obtained a charter from the State of Florida enabling him to build a railroad along the Indian River to Miami. The Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Indian River Company was incorporated in 1893 and was succeeded by the Florida East Coast Company (Florida Metropolis, 2/19, 3:2). First he was to develop Palm Beach and he may be said to have created West Palm Beach, so sparsely was it populated (Martin, p. 141). There, Royal Poinciana and the Breakers were added to his chain of hotels in 1893-4, while the Union Terminal was being planned in Jacksonville (Martin, p. 145). On April 15, 1896, the road was completed to Miami; Flagler was not unjustly called the father of the city (Martin, pp.150-2). "The last phase of Flagler's railroad construction in Florida was his most expensive and most daring undertaking, the overseas extension from Miami to Key West. The project cost about \$20,000,000, and though it was in operation for twenty-odd years, it was never a paying proposition" (Martin, p. 202). "Flagler's Folly," "the railroad that went to sea" was begun in 1901, when Flagler had obtained a notorious divorce from his insane second wife (Martin, p. 204). The seventy-one year old Flagler's motivation was less one of personal financial gain than a desire to do something capping for the good development of the country and facilitate trade with Cuba and Latin America (Martin, p. 205). The fantastic engineering feat was begun in 1905. Flagler rode on the first train to Key West in 1912. The road bed was converted to a State Highway in 1938 after an exceptionally bad hurricane on Labor Day, 1935, had washed away the tracks (Martin, p. 227). Flagler died a year after he rode into Key West; "beginning with the thought of building one good hotel in St. Augustine, he ended with 642 miles of Florida East Coast Railway and a great system of luxury hotels from Jacksonville to the Bahamas." (Lee)

C. Sources of Information:

1. Plans: A number of unsigned floor plans, dated 1913, drawn for the Jacksonville Terminal Corporation, and possibly referring to interior alterations, as well as Kenneth Murchison's drawings for the renovation of the 1897 terminal, are included in a set of drawings of the 1919 Terminal in the Engineering Office of the Seaboard Coast Line. Murchison's drawings are dated April 10, 1914, revised January 26, 1917 and include details of the baggage counter, foundation plans, floor plans, and north and south elevations at 1/8" scale; not all of Murchison's plans are

are implemented; however, the two-story tower of the 1897 building still remains. A survey made by Arthur H. Williamson for the Terminal Corporation, dated December 31, 1920 contains north and south elevations and details of the truss system. This is also in the possession of the Engineering Department of the Seaboard Coast Line, 500 Water Street, Jacksonville, Florida.

2. Old views: There is an artist's conception, undated and unsigned of the 1897 Terminal in Brown's Book of Jacksonville of 1895 differing from the design as built.

Prepared by: Carolyn Hamm
Historian
Historic American
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Jacksonville, Florida
August, 1975

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A General Statement:

1. Significant to Henry Morrison Flagler's development of rail travel and resorts in Florida, this terminal was built in the Tuscan/Italian Villa style, featuring entry tower and elaborate exposed wooden posts and trusses.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.
3. Description of exterior: Over-all dimensions: W 317'-5" x 128'-1". Number of Bays: 10 plus tower or 14 (incl. 7 original) 2 stories. Layout, shape: Rectangular.
4. Foundations: Masonry (brick) on piles.
5. Wall construction, finish and color: Stuccoed brick, tan. Red brick trim.
6. Structural system, framing: Brick bearing walls, modified hammer beam trusses in gable section, bar joists replace charred beams (fire probably ca. 1917) in east (flat roof section).
7. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: Entry tower (Bay Street side), tuscan with bound arch entries, roofed concourse (track side), iron rings street side indicate possible existence of canopy.

8. Chimneys: None - originally large stack at west end.
9. Openings: Doorways and doors: Round arch over entry doors in tower.
10. Windows and shutters: 6 round arched windows (2 formerly doors) on facade. Tri-part lights.
11. Cornice, eaves: Scalloped corners on parapet.
12. Dormers, cupolas, towers: Tuscan tower with pyramidal hipped roof and round arch (on impost belt course) entries.
13. Floor plans: Main floor originally housed two waiting rooms plus baggage area to the east. Street entrance at tower paralleled by projecting arched entry, concourse side. Later entire structure used for baggage. Upper level, tower section only. Offices.
14. Stairways: Metal stair to offices, rear of tower section.
14. Flooring: Wooden, concrete. Original material not visible.
15. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster. Pressed tin ceiling. Exposed dark wooden hammer beam type trusses with decorative woodwork.
16. Notable hardware: None evident.
17. Mechanical equipment: Modern heat, A.C., lighting in office areas.

Site and surroundings:

General setting: Oriented north on Bay Street, is in a deteriorating area with many turn of the century or early twentieth century buildings, Murchison's 1917 Union Terminal Attached to east (new terminal oriented east).

Historic landscape design: None. Terminal of rails for Seaboard Coast Line, Florida East Coast. Glazed brick walk street side.

Outbuildings: Numerous buildings associated with the railroad yard.

PART III. Projection Information

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Florida Bicentennial Commission and the Jacksonville Historical and Cultural Conservation Commission, under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, at the HABS Field Office, Riverside, Jacksonville, Florida, by Susan Tate (University of Florida), project supervisor; Frederick Wiedenmann (University of Florida), architect; Carolyn Hamm (Cornell University), project historian; and student assistant architects Robert Moje (University of Virginia), Ruthie Wiley (Mississippi State University), and Robert Wiltse (Louisiana State University).

ADDENDUM TO:
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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