

**City of Jacksonville**  
**Revised Landmark Designation Report**

**Camp Mooney Cemetery**  
*at*  
**538 South Ellis Road**

**LS-23-01**

**January 26, 2024**

**July 24, 2024 (Revised)**



**Application Prepared By:**

Sons of the Confederate Veterans, Kirby Smith Camp 1209, Inc.  
4884 Victoria Chase Court  
Jacksonville, Florida, 32257

**Property Owner:**

Sons of the Confederate Veterans, Kirby Smith Camp 1209, Inc.  
4884 Victoria Chase Court  
Jacksonville, Florida, 32257

I. Planning and Development Department – Findings,  
Conclusions, and Recommendation

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**REPORT OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION  
AS A CITY OF JACKSONVILLE LANDMARK**

**July 24, 2024**

**LS-23-01**

*GENERAL LOCATION: West side of Ellis Road (538 Ellis Road South) between Cassidy Road and West Beaver Street (U.S. Highway 90) in west Jacksonville*

Prepared in accordance with the JACKSONVILLE ORDINANCE CODE, SECTION 307.104, the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department hereby forwards to the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission, its "Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations" on the Landmark Designation, **LS-23-1**, sponsored by the property owner Sons of the Confederate Veterans, Kirby Smith Camp 1209, Inc., 4884 Victoria Chase Court, Jacksonville, Florida 32257.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- (A) Consistent with the JACKSONVILLE ORDINANCE CODE, SECTION 307.104(d), the Planning and Development Department determined that the designation application for 538 Ellis Road South, Camp Mooney Cemetery, as a Landmark Site was complete.
- (B) As required, the Planning and Development Department had signs posted in front of the property being considered for designation, as well as sent notices by U.S. Mail to each owner of real property within three hundred and fifty (350) feet of the proposed landmark. Notice of the public hearing on the designation of the property at 538 South Ellis Road, Camp Mooney Cemetery, as a Landmark Site was published in the *Financial News and Daily Report*. Proof of publication is attached to this report.
- (C) Once designated, any major activities affecting the proposed landmark site at 538 Ellis Road, Camp Mooney Cemetery, will require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). All proposed work will be reviewed for consistency with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*. Most routine work, such as ground maintenance, landscaping, cleaning, and repair of monuments, will not require a COA application or review by the Historic Preservation Section (HPS) of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department. Certain activities like new fencing, new roads and pathways or major changes to them, as well as new construction, will require a COA. Any work the HPS determines to be potentially in conflict with the *Secretary of the Interior Standards*, will require review by the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission.

The purpose of the historic designation of this site is to provide protection to the property at 538 South Ellis Road, Camp Mooney Cemetery, but not to discourage or prohibit the future development of the site. The review of work through the COA process is to preserve the historic character, architectural features, and materials of this significant site, as well as, to ensure any future development is compatible with and sensitive to this primary historic resource. Any burial or disinterment at the Camp Mooney Cemetery will not require an approved Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). However, it is recommended that the Planning and Development Department be notified of new burials or disinterment for documentation purposes.

(D) In preparing the application, the Planning and Development Department has found the application to meet **two of the seven criteria**. The two criteria include the following.

***A. Its value as a significant reminder of the cultural, historical, architectural, or archaeological heritage of the City, state or nation.***

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department that the subject property at 538 South Ellis Road, the Camp Mooney Cemetery, does meet this landmark criterion.

With state vital statistic records including birth and death records were not complete until after 1917, historic cemeteries such as the Camp Mooney Cemetery have long been recognized for possessing valuable genealogical information, particularly before 1917. However, in more recent years, cemeteries are being recognized and protected as significant historic resources that contribute to understanding our cultural past.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the burials of Confederate veterans, Camp Mooney Cemetery also is significant for its association with the site of a Confederate encampment with the same name. Although the actual physical location of Camp Mooney has never been determined, it is commonly believed to be at or near the site of the cemetery

The cemetery is named after George Mooney, reportedly the pre-Civil War owner of the property containing the cemetery.<sup>2</sup> In addition to a joint ownership of a sawmill (Byrne and Mooney Company), George Mooney also operated the Mooney Machine and Engine Manufacturing Company to provide products for mills, as well as Mooney & Gookin Shipyard. Mooney was contracted with the Confederate government to construct a 600-ton gunboat to be launched before the Federal blockade was in effect. The nearly completed vessel was destroyed during the first occupation of Jacksonville in March of 1862 as well as other buildings and facilities that would have had strategic importance to the Union.

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<sup>1</sup> Sharyn Thompson, *Florida's Historic Cemeteries, A Preservation Handbook*. (Tallahassee, Florida: Historic Tallahassee Preservation Board, 1989), pp. 3 – 5.

<sup>2</sup> According to an email from the Mirian Spalding, Florida Division of Historical Resources to Don Hillman, June 17, 2003, according to tax roles (Series S28) for Duval County, George Mooney was owning 160 acres but location not determined. In 1872 & 1873, Ellen Mooney had 160 acres at Section 18, Township 2 South, Range 26 East. The cemetery is in the northwest ¼ of Section 19 to the north of Section 18. Camp Mooney Cemetery vertical file – Historic Preservation Archives, Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

The date and origin of Camp Mooney Cemetery is not known, but could be as early as 1864 according to the landmark site application (2022). It is the opinion of Lucy Ames Edwards, author of *Grave Markers of Duval County*, p. 102, that it started out as the Wamsley family cemetery, but eventually evolved into a community cemetery. A recent inventory listed the earliest marked grave as being that of Emma A. Wamsley who died in 1877. An 1875 newspaper article reported that a church school had been established at Camp Mooney indicating the presence of a community by the same name.<sup>3</sup> The number of graves recorded in the cemetery vary greatly from 16 in 1955 by Lucy Ames Edwards to 126 according to the current landmark site application. Other estimates included 89 marked graves identified by Jon Ferguson and Mike Lawon in March of 2021; 61 recorded by the Jacksonville Genealogical Society in 1997; and 43 graves by the Jacksonville Genealogical Society in 1977.<sup>4</sup> Some of the discrepancies may vary according to how visible the markers were at the time of the survey and whether counting only markers vs markers and suspected grave sites (depressions in the ground).

A chain of titles for the property has not been found. The cemetery was incorporated within the boundaries of the 40-acre Mooney Subdivision, Addition to Buenos Aries (Plat Book 12, Page 55, 1926), platted by N. E. Roberts. The Buenos Aries Subdivision was platted in 1925 by Lola E. Mason (Plat Book 10, Page 6). The cemetery was also depicted on Rumph's Replat of the Mooney Subdivision (Plat Book 22, Page 28, 1950).

Under three separate property conveyances in the 1970s, Camp Mooney Cemetery came under the ownership of the Dr. Thomas M. Palmer Chapter No. 2261 of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.<sup>5</sup> It was under the Daughters of the Confederacy that the cemetery was re-interpreted as being predominately associated with the Confederacy due to the placement of an historically inaccurate stone marker and memorial plaques to Confederate veterans buried elsewhere. In January of 2021, Camp Mooney Cemetery was conveyed through a quit claim deed (OR Book, 19592, Page 868) by the Florida Division United Daughters of the Confederacy to the Sons of the Confederate Veterans, Kirby-Smith Camp, 1209. The Kirby-Smith Camp replaced the existing stone marker with one that is historically accurate, as well as removed the memorial plaques to avoid the confusion of these individuals as being interred in Camp Mooney Cemetery. Since taking ownership of the Camp Mooney Cemetery in 2021, the Kirby-Smith Camp 1209 has installed fencing, a flagpole, updated signage, as well as the clearing of debris and removing of dead trees. An on-going maintenance plan has also been established.

The Camp Mooney Cemetery also may have significance for its association with the Camp Mooney encampment established by Confederate forces as part of a chain of encampments and fortifications paralleling the Florida Atlantic & Gulf Railroad. Although the presence of Camp Mooney has been established by historic documents as

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<sup>3</sup> *The New South*, March 27, 1875.

According to the article, the church school had over 70 enrolled with an average attendance of 55.

<sup>4</sup> David Coles, Compiler, *Biographical Rosters of Florida's Confederate and Union Soldiers, 1861- 1865, Volume I.* (Wilmington, North Carolina: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> Duval County Clerk of the Circuit, Official Records (OR) 3737-532, 3751-1188 and 4772-519. E-Mail, H. Eugene Cowger, P.E. to Joel McEachin, February 27, 1998. Vertical File – Camp Mooney Cemetery, Historic Preservation Archives, Jacksonville Planning and Development Department.

servicing as an outpost and camping grounds for both Confederate and Federal troops during the Civil War, the actual physical location has never been determined, but is commonly believed to be at or near the site of the cemetery. In historic documents the encampment has been called Camp Mooney, Mooney's Place, Three-mile point and Three-mile run.<sup>6</sup>

***B Its location is the site of a significant local, state, or national event.***

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department that the subject property at 538 South Ellis Road, the Camp Mooney Cemetery, does not meet this landmark criterion.

***C It is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state, or nation.***

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department that the subject property at 538 South Ellis Road, the Camp Mooney Cemetery, does not meet this landmark criterion.

***D It is identified as the work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, state, or nation.***

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department that the subject property at 538 South Ellis Road, the Camp Mooney Cemetery, does not meet this landmark criterion.

***E Its value as a building is recognized for the quality of its architecture, and it retains sufficient elements showing its architectural significance.***

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department that the subject property at 538 South Ellis Road, the Camp Mooney Cemetery, does not meet this landmark criterion.

***F It has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials.***

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<sup>6</sup> Schmidt, Lewis G. *The Battle of Olustee, The Civil War in Florida, A Military History, Volume II* (Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1989), pp.19, 22 & 26.

Blakely, Arch Frederick, Ann Smith Lainhart and Winston Bryant Stephens, Jr., Editors, *Rose Cottage Chronicles, Civil War Letters of Bryant – Stephens Families of North Florida*. (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1998), pp. 214 & 216.

*The War of the Rebellion, A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. Series F., Volume XXXV. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), p. 366.

Schmidt, Lewis G. *Florida's East Coast, The Civil War in Florida, A Military History, Volume I* (Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1991), p. 802.

It is the determination of the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department that the subject property at 538 South Ellis Road, the Camp Mooney Cemetery, does not meet this landmark criterion.

***G. Its suitability for preservation or restoration.***

Historic cemeteries such as the Camp Mooney Cemetery have long been recognized for possessing valuable genealogical information, particularly when state vital statistic records including birth and death records were not routinely completed until after 1917. However, in more recent years, cemeteries are being recognized and protected as significant historic resources that contribute to understanding our cultural past. In addition to reflecting burial traditions and folk art, historic cemeteries can also provide information on settlement patterns, early trade and transportation routes, demographics, as well as epidemiology, or the study of the cause, distribution, and control of illnesses. Cemeteries, when properly maintained, can contribute valuable open and green spaces in our growing urban and suburban environments.<sup>7</sup>

The process of designating cemeteries as local landmark sites greatly contributes to the recommendations of the report of the Blue-Ribbon Commission on Abandoned and Neglected Cemeteries (December 2007), particularly in the areas of identifying, mapping, and recording, increased public awareness, protection from development as well as determining and assigning responsibilities. Currently fifteen cemeteries have been designated as local Landmark Sites in Jacksonville. Preparing landmark applications and reports requires a significant amount of research documenting the history of the specific cemetery, within the general historic context of the area. Properly archived and assimilated this body of information can raise public awareness and a degree of protection and preservation through local and state laws. Since taking ownership of the Camp Mooney Cemetery in 2021, the Kirby-Smith Camp 1209 has installed fencing, a flagpole, updated signage, as well as the clearing of debris and removing of dead trees. An on-going maintenance plan has also been established.

**RECOMMENDATION**

According to Chapter 307.104 Jacksonville Ordinance Code, properties nominated for landmark designation must meet two criteria. Since the property owners for the Camp Mooney Cemetery, 538 South Ellis Road, sponsored the landmark site designation, at least two of the seven criteria must be met. In reviewing the application, the Planning and Development Department has found the application to meet two criteria. Based on the findings of this report, the Jacksonville Planning and Development Department recommends that the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission approve the designation of the Camp Mooney Cemetery, 538 South Ellis Avenue, **LS-23-01**, as a City of Jacksonville Landmark Site.

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<sup>7</sup> Sharyn Thompson, Florida's *Historic Cemeteries, A Preservation Handbook*. (Tallahassee, Florida: Historic Tallahassee Preservation Board, 1989), pp. 4-5.