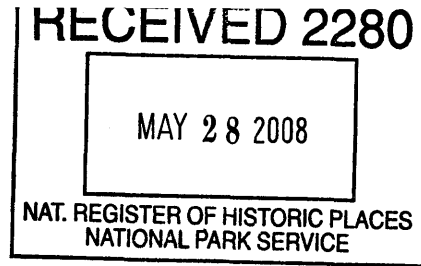


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



691

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name SEMINOLE CAFE AND HOTEL

other names/site number Colonial Theater, Garden Theater, Seminole Theatre, Landmark Hotel, FMSF #2665

2. Location

street & number 55 South Flagler Avenue N/A  not for publication

city or town Homestead N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL countv Miami-Dade code 025 zip code 33030

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Barbara C. Mattick / DSHPO 5/27/2008  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

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

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

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

Edson W. Beall 7.10.08  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
0	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater

COMMERCE/TRADE/Cafe

DOMESTIC/Secondary Structure/Storage Shed

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Hotel

DOMESTIC/Secondary Storage Shed

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Mission Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Stucco;

Asphalt Shingle

roof Asphalt Roll

other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1921-1951

Significant Dates

1921

1936

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch: Unknown

Blder: Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

#

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	5	2	6	0	0	2	8	1	6	9	9	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Victoria Lague/W. Carl Shiver, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 2008

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Raymond S. Carroll

street & number 622 NE 11th Street telephone (305) 793-0057

city or town Homestead state Florida zip code 33030

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

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

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SEMINOLE CAFE AND HOTEL  
HOMESTEAD, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY  
DESCRIPTION

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**SUMMARY PARAGRAPH**

The Seminole Cafe and Hotel at 55 South Flagler Avenue in Homestead, Florida, is a one- and two-story Mission Revival style building that was constructed in 1914 in Miami, Florida, as the "Colonial Theater" which showed silent motion pictures. The two-story, Wood Frame Vernacular building was moved by railroad car to Homestead in 1916 and re-erected on its present site. It opened as the "Garden Theater" in 1918. When the building changed property owners in 1919, it underwent major modifications, including the construction of the existing one-story concrete block addition presently found on the southwest elevation of the original hotel. Retail shops located at the front of the building were removed and the space converted into a restaurant and refreshment counter serving the theater patrons. Six guest rooms were constructed on the second floor to rent to winter tourists. The theater closed in 1921 and reopened a short time later as the Seminole Cafe. Around 1926, more guest rooms were installed and the building was renamed Seminole Hotel. The remodeled building contained 26 hotel rooms, 16 upstairs and 10 downstairs, and a restaurant located next to the lobby. In 1936, the building underwent an extensive "modernization," giving it the existing Mission Revival style facade with its arched loggia, L-shaped roof deck, and rounded parapet. The restaurant closed in 1951 and the space was converted into a residential apartment which is now used as a storage space. The building continues to be used as a hotel and has not undergone any significant alterations since that time.

**SETTING**

Homestead is a city with a population of approximately 58,000 that lies near the southern-most tip of the Florida peninsula. It lies 25 miles south of Miami and ten miles east of Everglades National Park. To the east and south are Biscayne Bay and its underwater national park, the Florida Keys, and the Atlantic Ocean. Homestead is an integral part of the multi-billion dollar vegetable, fruit and ornamental plant market in Miami-Dade County and the United States. Agri-business remains a significant job base. Krome Avenue is the heart of the Homestead Downtown Historic District (listed on November 19, 2007) and has evolved into an antique and entertainment center. The Seminole Cafe and Hotel (now the Landmark Hotel) sits on a large corner lot that is situated one block east of Krome Avenue and is a contributing resource in the district.

**PRESENT AND ORIGINAL APPEARANCE**

**Appearance 1917-1936**

There are no photographs of the Colonial Theater as it existed in Miami. The first view that we have of the relocated building in Homestead is a photograph (Photo 1) that appeared in the Homestead Enterprise, January 25, 1917, announcing the grand opening of the Garden Theater. The two-story wood frame building has a high "false front" facade that has a shaped parapet consisting of three arches separated by wooden posts that extend above the parapet and are capped with wooden finials. The posts have been painted white as have the

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tympanums of the arches, the frames of the windows, and the trim of the ground story storefronts. The storefronts consist of rusticated concrete block knee walls and pilasters—some of which are still visible today—and wood framed display windows and transoms surrounding wood and glass panel entrance doors set flush into the wall. The grainy black and white newspaper photograph of the building makes it impossible to determine the color of the exterior walls which feature weatherboard siding on the side elevations and flush wooden siding on the main facade. The front-gable roof abuts the front parapet and appears to be surfaced with wood shakes.

Significant changes were made to the building in 1919 when its ownership changed hands and the building was renamed the Seminole Theatre. These are clearly indicated on the Sanborn Maps of Homestead for 1920 (See Attachment 1). The former retail shops have been replaced by a restaurant, and the theater is found at the rear of the building. The one-story concrete block building constructed in 1919 is clearly visible on the Sanborn Map, which shows a doorway between the two buildings about where the original wood frame theater marquee was located. The facade of the addition featured rusticated concrete block like the storefronts of the theater building. The side and rear walls were constructed of ordinary concrete block. A two-story veranda has been constructed on the Flagler Avenue facade, but the concrete block street level storefronts remain intact, even though the shops are no longer extant. There is a one-story extension at the rear of the building which probably contained the stage and screen. Six guest rooms were constructed on the second floor to rent to winter tourists.

The theater closed its doors in November of 1921 after a new movie palace opened on Krome Avenue, which had become the commercial center of Homestead. The former theater reopened with great ceremony in the spring of 1922 as the "Seminole Cafe," as can be seen in a photograph taken of the event (Photo 2). The photo shows that the parapet of the 1918 main facade remains virtually unchanged but now carries the name "Seminole Cafe" in its center. The two-story veranda indicated on the 1920 Sanborn Map occupies the front of the building. It is a simple wood frame structure, supported by rectangular wooden posts, that extends the width of the hotel facade but does not include the concrete block building next door. The upper deck is sheltered by a shed roof that extends the width of the facade, sloping from the facade wall just above the second story windows. The upper deck is bordered by a high wooden knee wall rather than an open balustrade. The second story windows on the side elevation seem to prove that at least a portion of the second floor was a hotel. The automobiles parked along Flagler Avenue and the clothes worn by the assembled people indicate that the photograph was taken during the early 1920s. Unfortunately no photographs of the interior of the building from this period have so far come to light.

The Homestead city directory for 1927-1928 indicates that the name of the building has changed from the Seminole Cafe to the Seminole Hotel.<sup>1</sup> An advertisement for the hotel (and its restaurant) appears on page 37 of the directory. The 1927 Sanborn Maps clearly show the building as a two-story hotel (Attachment 2). The building had acquired its present recessed front entranceway. The one-story concrete block building next door

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<sup>1</sup> Polk's Homestead-Redland District City Directory (Jacksonville, FL: R.L. Polk and Co., Publishers, 1927-1928), p. 96.

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was occupied at this time by the Western Union Telegraph Company.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, no photographs of the Seminole Hotel for this time are available, so it is unclear exactly what changes had been made to the building since 1922. The two-story wooden veranda is still in evidence, not to be replaced until 1936 when the building acquired its present appearance; however, it is clear that the building has acquired more guest rooms, as indicated by the three large stall automobile garages found at the rear of the hotel. By the 1949 revision of the Sanborn Maps; however, all of the garages had been removed (Attachment 3).

**Present Appearance**

**Exterior, Main Facade**

The Seminole Cafe and Hotel (now Landmark Hotel) is found on the southeast side of South Flagler Avenue between S.E. First Drive and S.E. Mowry Street (Photos 3-4). The building is rectangular in plan and features a four-bay, one-story arched loggia that extends the width of the main (northwest) facade and covers a concrete paved walkway (Photo 5). The loggia is constructed of stucco surfaced concrete block and supports a flat deck that extends the width of the main facade and continues around the southwest elevation of the building. The four arches that support the deck are of different widths, have archivolts that are flat in the center, and rest on plain rectangular piers which have neither impost moldings at the spring of the arches nor plinths at the bases. The area above the arches has no entablature, only a coping on top of the balustrade wall. The first story of the main facade is divided into six asymmetrically placed door and window bays. Near the center of the hotel portion of the building—inside the wide arch which bears the name “Landmark Hotel”—is a double leaf wood panel door that serves as the main entrance to the hotel (Photo 6). This doorway and the two single leaf wood and glass panel doors that flank it are recessed into the facade wall and surrounded with smooth stucco (Photos 6-7).

To the left (northeast) side of the facade is a bank of three 1/1-light, double-hung wood sash windows, each surmounted by a single-pane transom light (Photo 8). The remains of the original rusticated concrete storefront dating from 1916 can clearly be seen here and surrounding an identical bank of three windows and transoms is found at the other side of the recessed entranceway (Photo 9). The next door addition (Photos 9-10) has a similar treatment, framing the entrance which is flanked by individual 1/1-light, double-hung wood sash windows that are surmounted by 2-light fixed transoms. The transom above the doorway features three lights.

The fenestration of the second story of the main facade (Photo 11) survives from the 1916 building, the only notable change being the doorway in the center which was installed by James English in 1919. The grouping consists of eight 1/1-light, double-hung wood sash windows, four on either side of the wood and glass panel door that provides access to the roof deck. The windows have “blind” segmental arch frames that contain the

<sup>2</sup> Polk's Homestead Directory, p. 104.

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ordinary wood sash windows. Above the second story windows is a high wooden parapet that is rounded in the center and flat on the sides. It rises above the ridge of the front gable roof which is surfaced with composition roll. The present parapet replaced the original 1916 one which had become severely deteriorated by 1936.

Exterior, Northeast Elevation

The northeast elevation of the building (Photo 12) features asymmetrically placed single and paired 1/1-light, double-hung wood sash windows. There are also three small, single pane fixed windows, one on the first story and two on the second. Approximately the front two-thirds of the exterior wall is surfaced with smooth stucco, while the rear third is covered with asbestos shingle siding. It is unclear if the stucco and shingles were added at different times or if there is wood siding under both materials.

Exterior, Southwest Elevation

The southwest elevation (Photos 13-14) exhibits a confusing jumble of doors and window types that makes it difficult to interpret the interior spaces from their placement. Except for the rusticated concrete block facade, the walls of the one-story addition are constructed of ordinary concrete block. The side extension of the roof deck—a portion of which is cantilevered from the wall separating the first and second stories—is found on this elevation. The first story features two metal doors and several metal-framed windows that provide light and entranceways into the addition which was converted into a residential apartment in the 1950s. A metal fire escape ladder (Photo 15) that descends from the first story roof deck is found not far from the front of the building. Installed about 1989 to bring the hotel up to fire code, the ladder replaced wooden stairs that were found at the same location. The second story exhibits what appears to be a series of randomly placed individual and paired 1/1-light, double-hung sash wood-frame windows (Photos 13-14). There is even one example of a paired window joining a smaller single window (Photo 16). The wall of the upper story is wood that has been surfaced with asbestos shingle siding.

Exterior, Rear Elevation

The asbestos shingle siding can clearly be seen on the rear of the building. In places it is cracked and the original wood siding can clearly be seen where pieces of the siding have fallen off. The second story doorway stands immediately above the ground floor entrance. These provide access to the hallways which are lighted by the individual 1/1-light, double-hung wood sash windows that flank the entrances. The window at the corners of the building on both stories light four of the guest rooms. The metal fire escape stairs were installed around 1989.



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Exterior, Roof Deck

The first story roof deck extends the width of the main facade (Photos 18-19) and extends around to nearly the full length of the southwest elevation (Photos 20-21). The deck is bordered by a low concrete wall covered with stucco that descends in stepped stages on the southwest elevation until it stops before the end of the deck. The side of the deck also slopes gently downward and eventually becomes level. The deck served as a fire exit when constructed in 1936 and led to wooden exterior stairs that were demolished in 1989. A metal ladder (Photo 21) now serves as the means of emergency egress.

Interior, Hotel Lobby

At least some features of the present hotel lobby survive from the c. 1922-1926 alterations to the interior of the building when the building became the Seminole Hotel. The main entrance exhibits the recessed bay that did not appear on the 1920 Sanborn Maps but does appear on the 1927 edition. The walls and ceiling are covered with narrow novelty wood siding. The existing French Doors (Photo 18) are probably not original but are of the type that would have filled the space around 1927. Moving north and east around the lobby (Photo 22), is possible to see one of the single leaf doorways that flanked the main entrance to the building. One of the original 1916 tripartite storefront windows also occupies this space. The metal frame window occupying the northeast wall of the lobby is not original and probably dates from the 1950s or later. This view is seen looking from the behind the original hotel registration desk which may date from 1919.

Moving to the southeast wall, one can see the two enclosed rectangular apertures (Photo 23) that are usually referred to as the theater ticket window; however, it is more likely that these openings served for communication between the dining room and kitchen when the first restaurant occupied what is now the hotel lobby. The space behind the wall is now occupied by Guest Room 24. The electric organ is not part of the original furnishings for the lobby. Continuing along the southeast wall, one comes to the registration desk and the doorway that opens on the hallway leading to the first floor guest rooms (Photos 24-25). On the southwest wall is the partition that was installed after 1951 when the restaurant closed (Photo 26) and the dining room space and the interior of the concrete block addition were converted into a residential apartment for the manager of the hotel.

Interior, First Floor Hotel Section

The hotel section of the first floor consists of ten guest rooms separated by a central hall that contains a stairway leading to the second floor (Photos 28-32). Just past the entranceway to the first floor hall is the hotel office and a storeroom to the right and Guest Room 24 on the left (Photo 28). This room may originally have been the kitchen to the earliest restaurant established c. 1919. It is uncertain where the kitchens for the earlier or later periods were located. The stairs (Photo 29) supposedly date from the 1936 renovation, but they may actually be

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those constructed by James English which were moved to the hallway from the lobby when the theater space was converted into hotel rooms. The newels, stair rail, and delicately turned balusters seem to date from before the mid-1930s. The walls, floor, and ceiling of the hall (Photo 30) are constructed of stained tongue and groove boards that contrast strongly with the narrow novelty siding found in the lobby. The doors to the guest rooms (Photo 31) appear to be hollow core doors, painted white, that date from a period much later than the 1930s. The wood and glass panel door found at the rear exit (Photo 32) of the hall may indeed date from the 1930s, as is also the case for the somewhat narrow 1/1-light, double-hung wood sash windows that flank the door. Access to the guest rooms on the first floor was not available, so their exact layout and the location of the bathrooms is uncertain. Supposedly, Gussie Jordan installed one bathroom for every two guest rooms. This seemed a luxury at an era when hotel guests often had to share a single bathroom on each floor.<sup>3</sup> Now all of the rooms have individual baths.

Interior, Second Floor Hotel Section

The divisions of the second floor reflect the time periods of the floor below. Looking toward the rear of the hall at the top of the stairs, one sees the same kind of construction, finishes, and hardware that is found in the hotel section below (Photo 33). Looking toward the front end of the hall (Photo 34), however, there is a division of the hallway, now occupied by linen closets, that separates the c. 1926 and 1919 sections of the hotel. At least a major portion of this section of the hotel forward of the division (Photos 35-37) feature walls and a ceiling covered with narrow novelty wood siding of the type found in the hotel lobby. Clearly, this portion of the upstairs was the section of the original storeroom area converted into hotel rooms by James English. The remainder of the rooms were constructed under the supervision of Gussie Joiner around 1926. As with the first floor, access to the bedrooms was unavailable because they were occupied by tenants.

Interior, Former Dining Room and Concrete Block Addition

The former dining room was used for many years as a residential apartment and was subdivided to create a living room, bedroom, kitchen, and dining room. These spaces are no longer defined and the area is used mainly for storage. The single doorway found in the angled wall of the main facade (Photo 38), once served as an entrance to the restaurant dining room. Found immediately next to the doorway is one of the original storefront windows (Photo 39). The other side of the glass and wood partition that was installed between the lobby and former dining room (Photo 40) is now lined with antique furniture that was not necessarily part of the apartment furnishings. The subdivision of the dining room to create living spaces necessitated the creation of

<sup>3</sup> South Dade Newsleader, September 26, 1989.

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the doorways connect the areas. Two doorways connect the dining room with the concrete block addition (Photos 41-42).

Hotel Office

The original hotel office (Photo 43) shows evidence of having been subdivided at some point, perhaps after 1951, but some of the novelty wood siding is still evident on the wall facing the hotel corridor.

Outbuilding, Garage Storerooms

This one-story wood frame garage (Photo 44) appears on the 1948 edition of the Sanborn Maps for Homestead. It rests on a concrete slab foundation, has flush wood siding walls, and gently sloping shed roof. The doors appear to be constructed of plywood, and small rectangular openings without window glass provide illumination to the two garage bays.

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SEMINOLE CAFE AND HOTEL  
HOMESTEAD, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY  
SIGNIFICANCE

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**SUMMARY PARAGRAPH**

The Seminole Cafe and Hotel and is significant at the local level under Criteria A and C in the areas of Recreation and Culture and Architecture as a small tourist hotel of the type constructed in Florida during the days of railroad and automobile tourism during the 1910s and 1920s that provided simple shelter and sometime an associated restaurant. It became associated with the early development of the city of Homestead as a tourist destination in Dade County, Florida. It is also distinctive as a type of inexpensive rooming house and residential hotel used before the post-World War II era by winter season tourists and transients that has been largely replaced by modern hotels, motels and seasonal rental apartments. The building is architecturally significant as a Wood Frame Vernacular building that was "modernized" with a Mission Revival style facade and arcaded loggia applied to it in 1936 to help attract tourists in a market where more attractive and convenient hostels were beginning to compete with such venerable inns. The period of significance is 1921 to 1936, which is largely reflected the present configuration of the building on both its exterior and interior.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The settlement of South Florida in the Territorial Period (1821-1845) was slow because of its extensive wetlands and lack of transportation facilities. One of the first American settlers was Dr. Henry Perrine, who in 1838 was given a Congressional Land Grant to several sections of south Dade County. Perrine's efforts in pioneering agriculture, however, never met his expected potential, and he was killed in a Seminole Indian Raid on his home on Indian Key in 1840. Florida became the 27th state in the Union in 1845, but even after achieving statehood, settlement of the Homestead area was slow in coming.<sup>4</sup> A U.S. Government survey of the area undertaken in 1848 found that the area had little to recommend it for agricultural or other uses.<sup>5</sup> By the start of the Civil War, there were fewer than 150 settlers in the entire southeastern section of the peninsula, an area of 6,000 square miles.<sup>6</sup>

The agricultural potential that Henry Perrine had envisioned was finally realized with the arrival of the railroad. In 1896 Henry Flagler provided the basic infrastructure for the development of the south Florida peninsula when his Florida East Coast Railway opened from West Palm Beach to Miami. By that time settlement in Miami had already begun on the shores of the Miami River and in nearby Coconut Grove. The area south of Miami, however, remained remote. Fifteen miles to the south, a small settlement called "Cutler" was the only gateway to the southern reaches of the peninsula. Overlooking Biscayne Bay, the village boasted a post office, a hotel, two stores, and a scattering of houses. Cutler had three wharves from which boats took freight and

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<sup>4</sup>"Perrine of Indian Key," <http://www.keyshistory.org/Perrine-Page-2.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Jean C. Taylor, Introduction to "Railway Location in the Florida Everglades," *Tequesta* (No. XXXIX, 1979), p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Colonel James C. Staubach, "Miami During the Civil War, 1861-1865," *Tequesta* (No. LIII, 1993), p. 36.

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passengers to and from Miami. Produce grown in the area was carried by wagon to the docks and the Miami-Key West mail boat was stopped for these shipments by hanging out a white flag at the end of the pier.<sup>7</sup>

In 1902, William J. Krome arrived in the area and accepted the job of surveying routes for Henry Flagler's Key West Extension of the Florida East Coast Railway. He later became chief engineer of the Key West project and moved his work camp to the present-day site of Homestead. There are many versions about how the name of the nascent settlement came about, among them, "since there was no name for the end of the line, the railroad cars carrying supplies and building materials were labeled "Homestead Country" in chalk. Engineers mapping the area dropped the "Country" and labeled the work camp "Homestead."<sup>8</sup> The actual settlement of Homestead began shortly before the railroad arrived. In 1903, William Alfred King, the section foreman for the Florida East Coast Railway, moved his work camp to the area, and a small population consisting of King and about a dozen workmen built the first buildings, none of which survive.<sup>9</sup>

In June of 1904, the railroad arrived in Homestead and John S. Fredericks laid out the town. The name "Homestead" became official on January 15, 1904, when J.E. Ingraham, Third Vice President of the Florida East Coast Railway received Flagler's permission to use the name on company printed material.<sup>10</sup> The last rail on the F.E.C. extension from Miami to Homestead was laid on July 31, 1904.<sup>11</sup> That same year a railroad depot and agent's house were constructed on North Flagler Avenue near N.E. 3rd Street.<sup>12</sup>

The construction of the Key West Extension of the Florida East Coast Railroad was launched from Homestead in May, 1905. Although the labor force was small at first, by February, 1906, four thousand men had arrived to work on the railroad extension to the Florida Keys, and some of them brought their families to settle in Homestead. As the Model Land Company promoted the area, settlers arrived in greater numbers, and the importance of agriculture grew to form the economic base for the new town.

On January 27, 1913, the town of Homestead was incorporated with a population of 121 people.<sup>13</sup> Homestead's first municipal light plant began operation in 1916. A new two-story town hall was erected c. 1917. This structure held the police station, jail, and fire station. Between 1920 and 1924 the population of Homestead grew from 1,500, to 3,360.<sup>14</sup> The future seemed bright for Homestead at the beginning of 1926, and new

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<sup>7</sup> Howard Van Smith, "The Cities of Dade," Miami News, February 8, 1959; "Cutler" Official Directory of the City of Miami and Nearby Towns, 1904.

<sup>8</sup> Letter on File at the Henry Morrison Flagler Museum, Palm Beach, Florida, dated January 15, 1904, to J.E. Ingraham.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Taylor, The Villages of South Dade (St. Petersburg, n.d.), p. 157.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> "Last Rail Laid," Miami Metropolis, August 5, 1904.

<sup>12</sup> The two buildings were moved to Krome Avenue in Florida City to become the Pioneer Museum.

<sup>13</sup> "Homestead is now an incorporated city," Miami Metropolis, June 30, 1913.

<sup>14</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1920; Homestead Enterprise, January 1, 1926.

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residential subdivisions emerged around the commercial core; however, the boom was already in serious trouble by January, 1925 because real estate investors were beginning to read negative press about Florida investments. Forbes Magazine warned that Florida land prices were based solely upon the expectation of finding a customer, not upon any reality of land value. Speculators intent on flipping properties at huge profits began to have a difficult time finding new buyers. The inevitable bursting of the real estate bubble had begun. There was also a shortage of building supplies for projects in progress, and there was not a sufficient labor force to complete them. The final blow to the boom in South Florida was brought by the devastating hurricane that struck Miami Beach on September 6, 1926. The storm was described by the U.S. Weather Bureau in Miami as "probably the most destructive hurricane ever to strike the United States." It hit Fort Lauderdale, Dania, Hollywood, Hallandale and Miami. The death toll is estimated to be from 325 to perhaps as many as 800. No storm in previous history had done as much property damage in the United States.<sup>15</sup>

During the Depression years of the 1930s, the population of Homestead declined from a high of 3,360 in 1924 to 2,319 in 1930. The Great Depression wreaked havoc in the city. Because of financial strains due to a decrease in property taxes, Homestead had to fire its police chief and could only afford to employ two policemen. The New Deal's Works Progress Administration funded projects that helped the local economy. These included the construction of a new municipal library and hospital, plus the paving of streets. By 1934, the number of residents had grown to almost 3,000, but the economic recovery of the community was set back in 1935 by the powerful Labor Day hurricane that destroyed a portion of the Overseas Railway linking Homestead with Key West. The rail link was abandoned and construction of the Overseas Highway was undertaken in 1936. The new roadway used many of the bridges of the former railroad.

By 1940, the population of Homestead had rebounded to 3,145, but the 1940s saw only modest changes to the historic district. A Greyhound Bus Terminal (since demolished) had been constructed near the railroad depot, and more commercial buildings were constructed on the east side of Flagler Avenue. Downtown Krome Avenue was fully built up and remained the retail and commercial center of the community, since Washington Avenue had not yet been developed. Giving a boost to the economy was the establishment of the Army Air Field at the old Pan American Airline facility located six miles northeast of the city. The base was activated in September, 1942 and was operated by the Army Air Transport Command as a training facility and a transportation depot during World War II. A hurricane swept through the South Dade area on September 12, 1945, destroying crops, businesses, homes, and parts of the Homestead Army Airfield. Krome Avenue was flooded for days, and damages to the area were estimated to be at 10 million dollars. The army airfield was turned over to Dade County, which used it for small commercial and industrial operations. By 1950, Homestead had 4,573 residents. In 1953, the U.S. Air Force acquired the airport and rebuilt it. It became a

<sup>15</sup> Stuart McIver, "The Blow that Broke the Boom," Miami Sun-Sentinel, September 19, 1993.

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base for the Strategic Air Command and is today the home of the Homestead Air Reserve Base which is home to the 482 Fighter Wing.<sup>16</sup>

By the 1960s, Homestead's population had grown to 9,152 residents, 5,000 of whom came from the opening of the Homestead Air Force Base. The population of Homestead has grown steadily since the 1960s and in 2000 reached 31,909. Passenger railway service to Homestead was discontinued in 1971,<sup>17</sup> although the old depot continued to receive freight shipments until 1972. In 1964, the station agent's cottage was moved to 900 S. Krome Avenue in Florida City to become the nucleus of the Florida Pioneer Museum. The building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. That same year, the old railroad depot was relocated near the former agent's house. Both buildings are now used for museum exhibits dealing with Florida pioneer history.

On August 24, 1992, Hurricane Andrew destroyed much of the South Dade area. Property damage exceeded \$20 billion dollars. No event in recent history has played a greater role in reshaping the city. Many homes were destroyed and a number of historic commercial buildings severely damaged. The hurricane severely damaged Homestead Air Force Base, which was a vital part of the local economy. Although the Homestead Air Force Base was already listed as one of several bases to be down-sized, the immediate loss of a functioning Air Force base resulted in a concentrated economic loss to the local economy which was still largely based in the agricultural sector.

In spite of the destruction, a survey of the historic resources of Homestead in 1993 found that much had survived. Although damaged by the storm, the Seminole Cafe and Hotel (Landmark Hotel), Historic Town Hall, and Seminole Theatre were still standing. With the clearing away of debris, restoration work began on a number of historic residences.<sup>18</sup> The downtown area has since made a remarkable recovery partly through private investment and the efforts of the Florida Main Street Program.

**CRITERION A—RECREATION AND CULTURE**

(Portions of the following narrative are taken from the program for the City of Homestead Historic Designation Ceremony of the Landmark Hotel, Presented by the City of Homestead's Historic Preservation Board, January 13, 1990)

What was to become the Seminole Cafe and Hotel in Homestead started life in 1914 as a two-story wood frame building named the Colonial Theater.<sup>19</sup> In 1916, its owner, Joseph C. Boss, considered constructing a new and

<sup>16</sup> "Homestead Air Force Base...History," unpublished article on file at the Homestead Public Library, n.d., p. 76.

<sup>17</sup> The city directory for Homestead in 1957 indicates that the depot was still receiving passenger traffic.

<sup>18</sup> City of Homestead, Florida, Historic Sites Survey, (Coral Springs, FL: Research Atlantica, Inc., 1994), p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> "Amusements," Miami Herald, January 2, 1916.

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up-to-date moving picture playhouse in Homestead, believing that the town had a promising future. Boss purchased a prominent corner lot in Homestead's Flagler Avenue business district from Sara J. and T.E. Savage for \$900.<sup>20</sup> He abandoned the idea of constructing a new theater and decided to move his Colonial Theater from Miami to Homestead. In June of 1916, the theater was disassembled and moved by rail cars to Homestead. A newspaper article in the Homestead Enterprise Newspaper on June 29, 1916, reported that the "front of the building will have concrete pillars, while the sides and rear will be [wood] slat construction with canvas curtains to permit free circulation of air." The dedication of the nearly completed theater was held with great ceremony on January 24, 1917, attracting a crowd of visitors from Homestead and nearby communities who had traveled to the city by rail and automobile.<sup>21</sup> A speakers' stand and wooden bleachers were set up in the park across Flagler Avenue from the theater, which was draped in American flags and red, white, and blue bunting. Temporary stalls sold refreshments to the visitors who came to attend the celebration (Photo 1). There is no record of what film(s) were shown on the occasion.

The theater, now named the Garden Theater, occupied the entire first floor of the building, while the second floor consisted of three large storerooms. The building was lighted with electricity and had shops in the front.<sup>22</sup> In December of 1917, Boss sold the theater to Arthur K. and Alice Smith, who closed the theater and reopened it in January 1919, only to sell it to James W. English on May 27, 1919, for \$5,000. English (1871-1942), who had come to Homestead from Georgia<sup>23</sup> to open a boarding house, named the English House, immediately made a number of changes to the building to make it more attractive to movie patrons. He removed the partitions between the retail shops facing Flagler Avenue, which still remained unoccupied, and converted the space into a restaurant dining room and an ice cream and soda fountain, installing a partition to separate them. He demolished the theater marquee at the side of the building and constructed a one-story concrete block building adjoining the theater to rent out for retail use.

He erected a two-story wooden veranda on the front of the theater building, and refitted a portion of the second floor for six bedrooms to rent out to tourists during the winter season to relieve congestion at the English House, a boarding in Homestead owned by English. These were reached by stairs he built next to the partition between the dining room and confectionary store. English changed the name of the movie house to the Seminole Theater and replaced the already installed wooden benches with individual theater seats bolted to the floor. The renovated theater, under the name Homestead Movies showed its first film on August 9, 1919. The Homestead Enterprise reported that English stated that the new motion picture house would be a first-rate theater "having the best films available and appreciated by all."<sup>24</sup> Two months later English changed the name

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<sup>20</sup> Dade County Deed Records, June 25, 1917.

<sup>21</sup> The Homestead Enterprise, January 25, 1917.

<sup>22</sup> These storefronts can clearly be seen in the 1917 photograph.

<sup>23</sup> U.S., Department of Commerce, 14th Census of the United States, Population, Homestead, Dade County, Florida, January 9, 1920, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> "Moving Picture House for Homestead," Homestead Enterprise. June 29, 1916.



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of the movie house to the Seminole Theater. To defray some of the expenses of renovating his theater, English sold his boarding house to James R. Chambliss, also a recent arrival in Homestead from Georgia.<sup>25</sup>

In 1918, James English married Gussie Joiner, nee Wesson (1869-1951), a widow who had come to Homestead with her son, Burrell L. Joiner, Jr. (1889-1960) to manage the English House. Both he and Gussie were from Andersonville, Georgia, and their families were related by marriage.<sup>26</sup> James English and his wife divorced in October of 1921 and she returned to her former married name of Joiner. James English opened a new Seminole Theater on Krome Avenue on November 26, 1921. The feature for that night was Cecil B. DeMille's "Forbidden Fruit." The last motion picture that appeared at the old Seminole Theater was on November 24, 1921, featuring Mae Marsh in "Nobody's Kid." Gussie Joiner, who now owned the old Seminole Theater building, closed the theater but continued to run the restaurant, naming it the "Seminole Cafe." The restaurant was opened with great ceremony at some time in the spring of 1922. The cafe was such a popular eating establishment that the railroad ran a special Saturday evening excursion train from Miami to Homestead so diners could enjoy Gussie Joiner's food. The restaurant became well-known for its "all you can eat" dinners, drawing patrons from as far away as Miami on a special Saturday night excursion train.<sup>27</sup>

By 1927, the property is listed in the Homestead City Directory as the Seminole Hotel. Gussie Joiner had added additional guest rooms on the second floor to the six James English had installed in 1919,<sup>28</sup> and she continued to operate the restaurant. The hotel and restaurant was a stopping point for railroad passengers on their way to Key West. The Seminole Hotel was located just across the street from the railroad depot, and travelers could eat lunch or stay overnight before continuing their trip to the "Southernmost City."<sup>29</sup> In 1936 Gussie Joiner decided to fully remodel the building, and took out a mortgage on the property on October 10, 1926, for \$4,056.62, with \$2,493.93 going to the Booker Lumber Company and \$1,558.69 going to the Crane Company Contractors. The theater space had been used for civic and private meetings since the movie house had closed in 1921. The old theater stage was ripped out, and the stairs erected in the lobby by James English were removed. A new stairway was constructed in what became the downstairs hallway for the enlarged hotel. The remodeling and modernization of the building was completed on December 18, 1936. The 65-foot wide by 100-foot long building had 26 bedrooms to serve transients or seasonal guests. The alterations gave the hotel a larger lounge, a more inviting dining room, and a "modernized" Mission Revival style main facade.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> U.S., Census, Population, January 9, 1920,

<sup>26</sup> Ancestry.com, Suber and Joiner Families, <http://boards.ancestry.com/localities.northam.usa.states.georgia.counties.sumter/1118/mb.ashx>

<sup>27</sup> Homestead Enterprise, August 9, 1919.

<sup>28</sup> One account gives 1929 as the date for the addition of new rooms, but this appears to be too late, "Landmark Hotel Has Rich History," South Dade Newsleader, September 26, 1989.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> "Modernization Project Turns Former Theater Here Into Hotel Rooms," The Homestead Leader Enterprise, December 18, 1936.

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In later years, Gussie Joiner turned management of the hotel and restaurant over to her niece, Mary Suber, the town librarian.<sup>31</sup> After Joiner's death on September 26, 1951, Suber became guardian of her estate and hired Lester J. Myer to manage the hotel.<sup>32</sup> The restaurant was closed, and the dining room and concrete addition space were converted into an apartment for Lester. Gussie's son, Burrell Joiner, died on October 25, 1960 at the age of 71.<sup>33</sup> The hotel has had several owners since then, and in 1965 the name was changed to the Landmark Hotel.<sup>34</sup> The 1980s and 1990s saw hard times for the Landmark Hotel. Various fire and safety code violations were uncovered and some damage occurred when Hurricane Andrew made a direct hit on Homestead. Much of the damage inflicted by the hurricane was repaired, and the hotel continues in operation, although the cafe remains closed. The present owner is actively pursuing a course of recovery for the well-known landmark and wishes to return the building to its original condition.

**CRITERION C—ARCHITECTURE**

Beginning in the 1870s, residents from northern states visited Florida as tourists to enjoy the state's natural beauty and mild climate. Steamboat tours on Florida's winding rivers were a popular attraction for these visitors. Prior to the development of Florida's railroad system, only the relatively wealthy could afford vacation journeys to the state. Steamboat trips up the St. Johns and Ocklawaha rivers became favorite excursions for early visitors. Also, small wood frame hotels were constructed next to the state's numerous fresh water and mineral springs, so visitors could enjoy the healthful benefits of drinking and bathing in the water. Since at least the mid 19th century, the natural beauty of Silver Springs attracted visitors from around the country. Glass bottom boat tours of the springs began in the late 1870s. It was the coming of the railroad, however, that would make all parts of Florida accessible to both settlers and tourists. As the rail lines began to snake down both coasts of the Florida peninsula, hotels were constructed to encourage the establishment of new communities.

This trend continued during the early decades of the 20th century, with railroad companies even constructing some hotels within walking distance of their rail terminals. The 1920s in Florida saw the construction hundreds of miles of new highways as Americans began to purchase affordable automobiles in great numbers. Florida became a prime destination for thousands of tourists and new residents, prompting a real estate boom whose

<sup>31</sup> She was the daughter of Lula Suber (nee Wesson) the sister of Gussie, Ancestry.com, Suber and Joiner Families.

<sup>32</sup> Homestead and Florida City Directory (New Haven, CT: Price & Lee Co., Publishers, 1957), p. 51.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Census, Schedule 1, Inhabitants in Sumter County, Georgia, June 4, 1880, Page 4, Burrell L. Joiner is listed as being 20 years old and living with his mother, Ella, aged 68.

<sup>34</sup> "Landmark Hotel Residents Face Unknown Future," The South Dade News Leader. April 17, 1980.

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hallmark became Mediterranean Revival architecture, of which the Mission Revival style was one of its most readily accessible variations, because of its simplicity.

California was the birthplace of the Mission Revival style beginning in the 1890s, but spread eastward rapidly, quickly taking root in Florida even before the beginning of the 1920s real estate boom era when Spanish and Mediterranean Revival architecture became the signature style for the state's rapidly growing cities and residential neighborhoods. Mission style houses were much simpler than the sometimes elaborately decorated Spanish Colonial style houses. Typical features of Mission style houses were rounded and stepped roof parapets, smooth stucco walls, and porch roof supported by thick arches resting on large, square piers. The construction of the Mission Revival loggia on the facade of the Seminole Theater in 1936 seems somewhat dated in a period when the popularity of the Mediterranean Revival style was waning, but its use was probably inspired partly by the "false front" facade parapet that had occupied the front of the building since its theater days beginning in 1916. The facade, in any case, is distinctive and contrasts strongly in character to the mainly Wood Frame Vernacular construction of the remainder of the building. The Seminole Cafe and Hotel survives as an architectural remnant the pioneer days of tourist hotel design in Florida.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Seminole Cafe and Hotel is located at 55 Flagler Avenue (one block east of the Krome Avenue Business District), on the northeast corner of Flagler Ave and S.E. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary is justified because it consists of the entire property historically chosen by Joseph C. Boss in 1916 after he purchased it.

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3. Unknown
4. January 25, 1917
5. City of Homestead Historic Preservation Board
6. Garden Theater, Main (Northwest) Facade and Southwest Elevation, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 1 of 44

1. Seminole Cafe and Hotel
2. 55 S.E. Flagler Avenue, Homestead (Miami-Dade County), Florida
3. Unknown
4. c. 1922
5. City of Homestead Historic Preservation Board
6. Seminole Cafe, Main (Northwest) Facade and Southwest Elevation, Looking Northeast
7. Photo 2 of 44

1. Seminole Cafe and Hotel
2. 55 S.E. Flagler Avenue, Homestead (Miami-Dade County), Florida
3. Sofya Belair
4. April 2008
5. City of Homestead Community Redevelopment Agency
6. Main (Northwest) Facade, Looking Northeast along Flagler Avenue
7. Photo 3 of 44

**Items 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs, except where noted.**

6. Main (Northwest) Facade and Northeast Elevation, Looking Southwest along Flagler Avenue  
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6. Main (Northwest) Facade, Looking Southeast
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6. Main (Northwest) Facade, Detail of Recessed Entrance, Looking South
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6. South Storefront and Concrete Block Addition, Looking South

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6. Southwest Elevation, Detail, Metal Fire Ladder, Looking North

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6. Southwest Elevation, Detail, Second Story Windows, Looking Northeast

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6. Rear, Southeast Elevation, Looking North

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6. Roof Deck, Main Facade, Looking Northeast

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- 6. Interior, Hotel Lobby, Entrance to Hotel Wing, Looking Southeast
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6. Garage/Storage Shed, Looking North

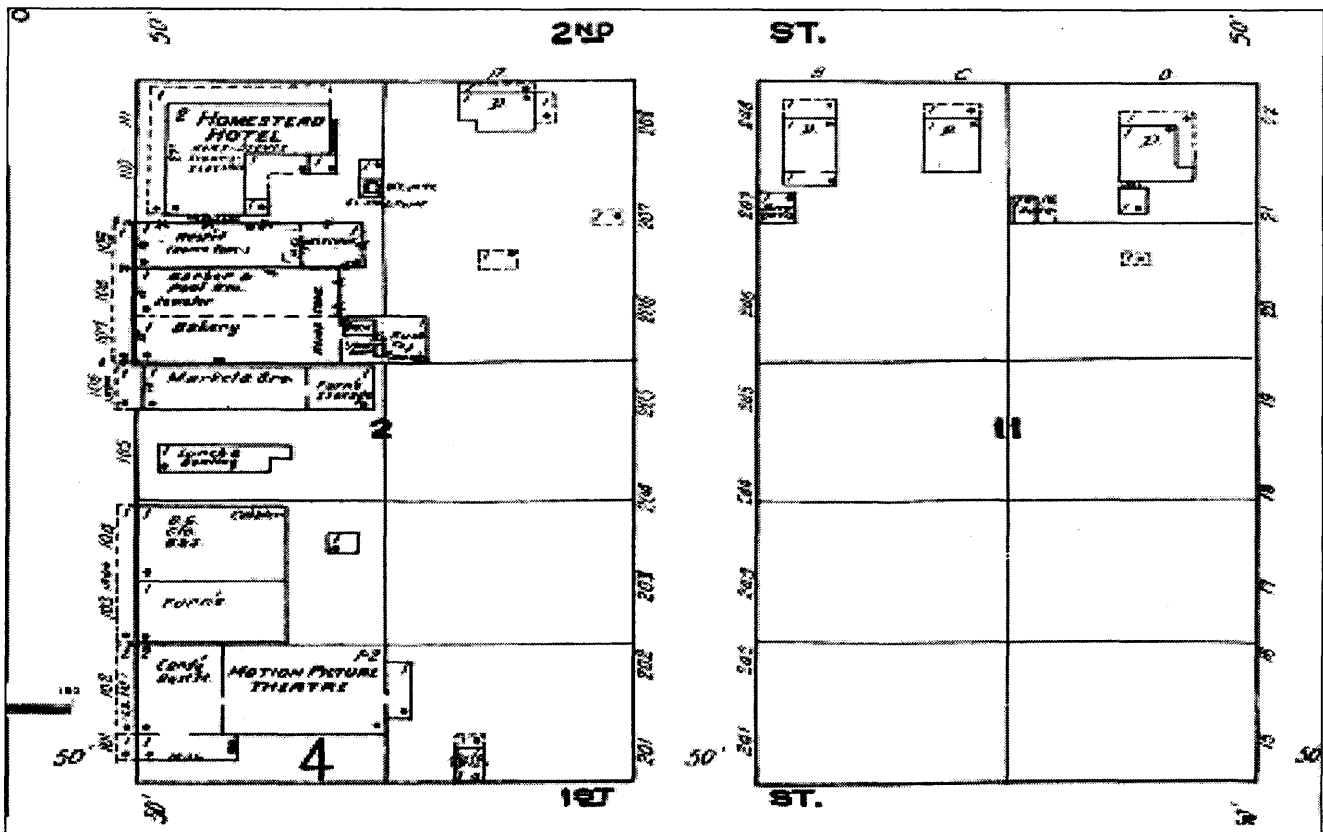
7. Photo 44 of 44

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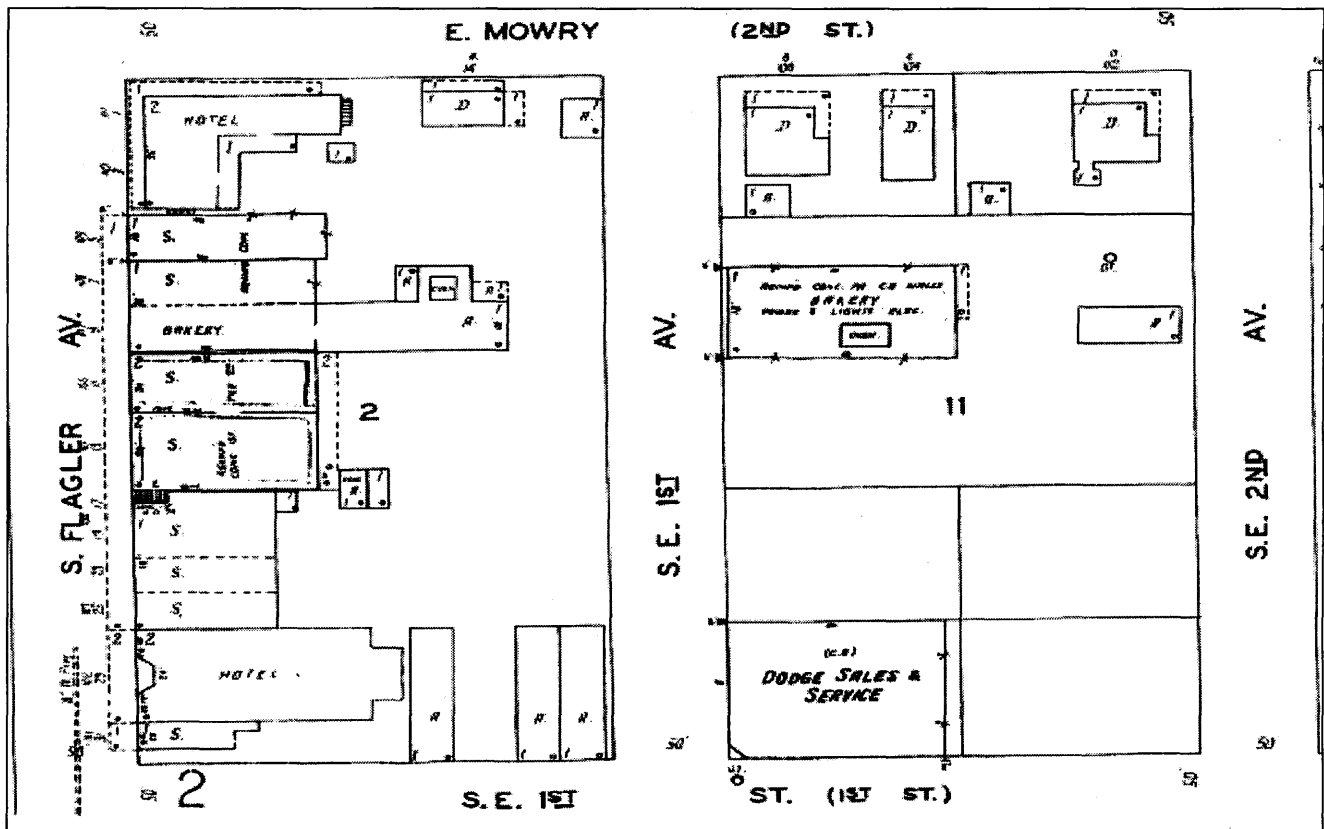
ATTACHMENT 1: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Homestead, Florida (New York: Sanborn Map Company, December 1920), Sheet 3.

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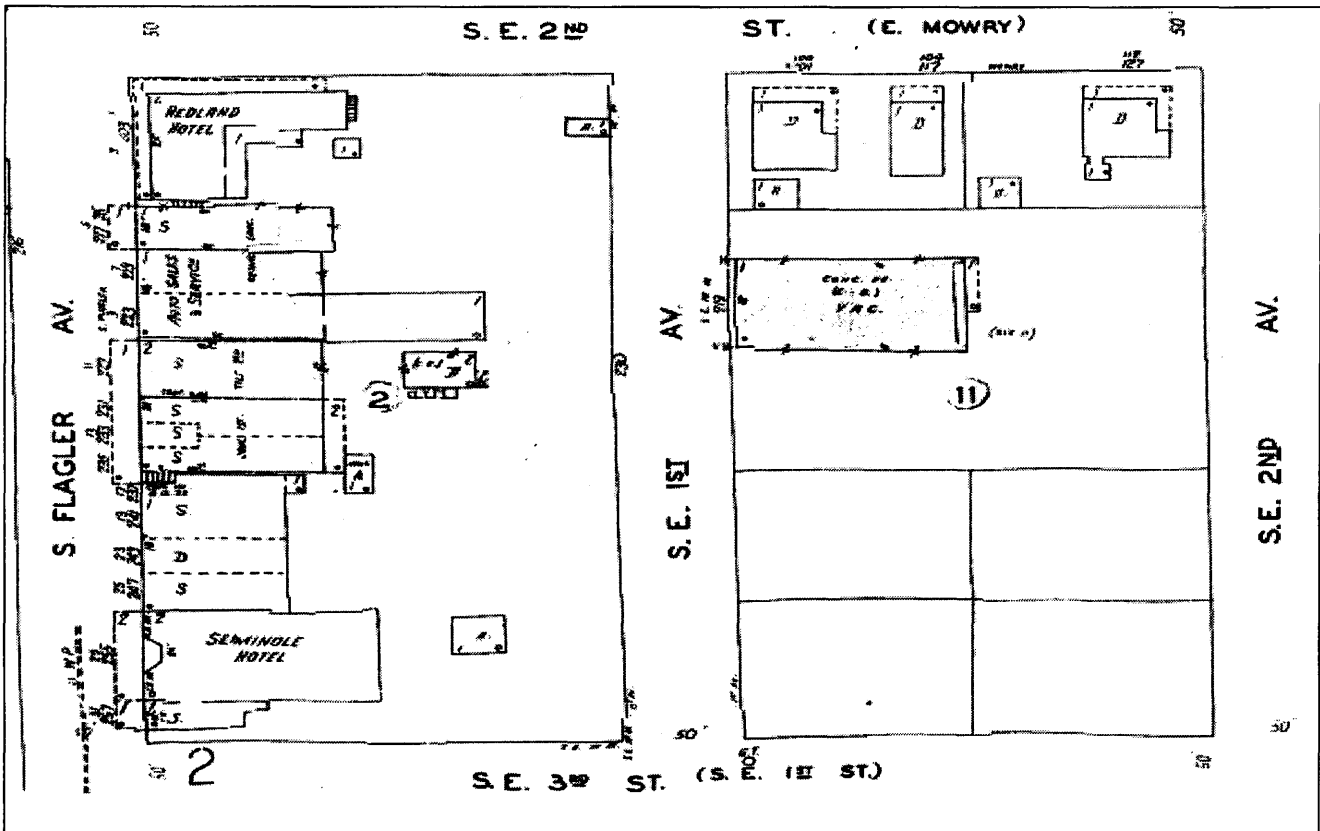
ATTACHMENT 2: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Homestead, Florida (New York: Sanborn Map Company, December 1927), Sheet 4.

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ATTACHMENT 3: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Homestead, Florida (New York: Sanborn Map Company, October 1927, Revised March 1949), Sheet 4.