

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 7 1985

date entered

DEC 4 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Homestead Public School

and/or common Neva King Cooper School

2. Location

street & number 520 N.W. 1st Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Homestead

N/A vicinity of

state Florida

code 12

county Dade

code 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Dade County Board of Public Instruction

street & number 1450 N.E. 2nd Avenue

city, town Homestead

N/A vicinity of

state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dade County Courthouse

street & number 73 West Flagler Street

city, town Miami

state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Dade County Historic Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Division of Archives, History and Records Management

city, town Tallahassee

state Florida

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Constructed in 1914, with additions made in 1915 and 1920, the Homestead Elementary School is a collection of seven one-story rectangular buildings joined by a covered colonnade. All of the buildings were designed by local architect August Geiger and represent an early expression of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The 1914 portion of the school comprises a U-shaped grouping of three buildings located around a square courtyard. In 1915, two buildings were added to the north and south ends of the westernmost building of the 1914 design. Two additional buildings were added to the west of this grouping in 1920, resulting in the present configuration of the school. The buildings are of concrete and stucco construction and are covered by clay barrel tile hip roofs. Most of the classrooms have been modernized but the exterior of the building generally retains its original appearance.

The Homestead Elementary School consists of a group of seven, one-story buildings symmetrically arranged around a colonnaded garden and courtyard. The courtyard is presently completely enclosed but was originally open on its east side with a breezeway and gazebo connecting its two wings. School offices were introduced into the breezeway and gazebo in 1954. The buildings are of concrete construction, as is that of their connecting colonnade. Ludovici clay tiles typical of the tiles utilized in South Florida during the teens were used as roofing material. The westernmost building of the 1914 group of buildings includes two towers at its north and south ends. The towers have clay tile hip roofs with exposed rafterends and jig-saw cut wood brackets. The openings of the towers consist of two small rectangular openings flanking an arched opening. The south tower retains a working bell. These elements, along with the colonnaded central courtyard and octagonal gazebo comprise the principal decorative elements of the school.

A four-hundred seat auditorium was originally located in central or westernmost 1914 building of the school. The two projecting 1914 wings on the north and south ends of the auditorium each contain two classrooms. According to the architect's plan, rooms could be added to the west of the auditorium to form an H-shaped plan. In 1915, two additional classroom buildings designed by Geiger were constructed. However, they were built at the north and south ends of the auditorium building, creating a T-shaped plan. In 1920, two additional Geiger-designed buildings were added to the west of the auditorium at its north and south ends, resulting in the present symmetrical configuration of the buildings. (See site plan.)

The school has undergone considerable interior alterations. The auditorium of the school has been converted into administrative offices, resulting in the enclosure of the stage and the partitioning of the auditorium space into three large rooms. These alterations,

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1914, 1915, 1920 **Builder/Architect** August Geiger, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Constructed in 1914, the Neva King Cooper School, historically the Homestead Public School, is significant in the area of education as one of the first multi-room school buildings in Dade County and architecturally as a forerunner of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The building was designed by locally prominent architect August Geiger and made use of a distinctive plan which facilitated the symmetrical expansion of the school. The additions made to the school are of the same style and general appearance of the original buildings and the entire complex reads as a single composition. The school has served the community for more than seventy years in a variety of ways and was, for a long time, the principal public building in the community.

At the time of the extension of Henry Flagler's railroad to Miami in 1896, only six people lived south of the town of Cutler. There was no interest in the Homestead area as long as there was land available in Miami; additionally, the land was rocky and subject to seasonal flooding. Only a trail called "Homesteader's Trail" led to the area. Not long after the Miami line was completed Flagler decided to continue his railroad to Key West, his decision influenced by the United States resolution to build the Panama Canal. Flagler's extension continued south from Miami and in June of 1904, a new town called Homestead was laid out thirty miles south of Miami, by J. J. Fedrick for the F. E. C. Railroad. Basically a railroad town with the aura of a small southern town, Homestead remained primarily rural as opposed to many of the other towns in the area which became mostly tourist oriented. Today, Homestead is the only railroad town from Miami to Key West which became a large, viable community.

In 1906, a one-room school building was constructed to serve the fifteen school-age children of the community. The first teacher was Mrs. Hudson who taught all grades.

The community continued to grow and in 1914 a new four-room school building, which would form the nucleus of the present-day school, was constructed. The land for the school had been purchased by the Dade County Board of Public Instruction from Henry Flagler's Model Land Company in the previous year for five hundred dollars. Considered a show place at the time, the twelve thousand dollar building was the first multi-room school building in the area. Built on an U-shaped plan, the design of the school facilitated the symmetrical addition of new structures to the school. Subsequent additions were made to the school in 1915 and 1920, resulting in the present configuration of the building.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.5 acres

Quadrangle name Homestead

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	5	5	2	2	6	0	2	8	1	7	4	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elise Brault-Hoessly, Michael Zimny/Historic Sites Specialist
Department of State/

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date October 1985

street & number The Capitol telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida

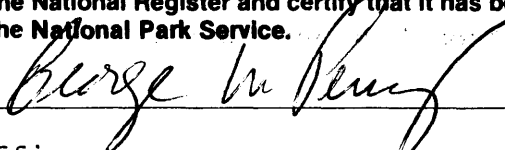
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

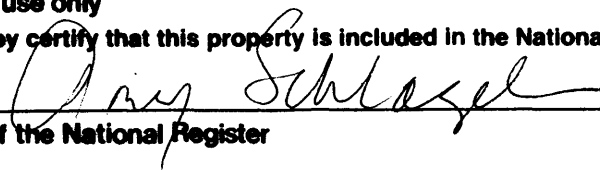


title State Historic Preservation Officer

date October 30, 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register



date 12/4/85

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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however, are not reflected on the exterior of the building. Most of the classrooms have also undergone major modifications, including the carpeting of floors, the lowering of ceilings to accommodate new lighting and air conditioning and the replacement of doors and windows. As in the case of the auditorium, these alterations are generally not suggested on the exterior of the school. The major exterior alterations include the enclosure of the courtyard gazebo and its adjoining colonnade and the replacement of some original roof tiles with similar tiles.

At the time of this writing, the 1914-1915 portion of the school is undergoing major interior alterations. The gazebo is being transformed into a psychologist's office and a conference room. The first four original classrooms in the 1914 building are being transformed into horticulture and work adjustment/assembly classrooms and into home living classrooms. For these purposes, new door and window openings will be made, wood floors replaced by sheet vinyl flooring over new-poured concrete floors and the twelve-foot high ceilings dropped to accommodate air conditioning ducts. Existing double hung sash wood windows will be kept and refurbished and the glass jalousie windows of the gazebo will be replaced by metal casement windows imitating the other windows of the school. A greenhouse and a new chain-link structure with shade screen located in the courtyard behind the gazebo is also being planned.

Several other buildings are located immediately adjacent to the school but are unrelated either historically or architecturally to the buildings being proposed for nomination. According to John Frederick of the Homestead Housing Authority, a long-time resident of Homestead and a student of Neva King Cooper during the late twenties, a masonry vernacular gymnasium was built in the early 1920's on the southwest corner of the lot principally for the use of the high school students across the street. The gymnasium, situated at the opposite end of the lot, has no physical or visual link with the school buildings and is therefore not included in this proposal. A second addition built near the school, but unrelated to it stylistically, historically, or by any association with original design intent, was a cafeteria which first shows up as an existing building to the northwest of the two 1920 rectangular school-room buildings. The cafeteria underwent many alterations through the years and is no longer extant. What is now used as a dining area was built circa 1948 and is not a part of this proposal. All other buildings on the lot were built circa 1959 and are not part of this proposal. They also have undergone many alterations, the latest which were in 1981 when the school became an occupational training center for profoundly mentally and handicapped children.

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The school was designed by August Geiger, an early Florida architect. Geiger came to Florida in 1905 and his Prairie Avenue home was one of the first houses built on Miami Beach. He served as co-architect for the present Dade County Courthouse and as architect for the Dade County School Board from 1935 to 1948. The tenth registered architect in Florida, Geiger designed the Alamo (Jackson Memorial Hospital's first building) and the Miami Beach Golf Club House (now the Washington Avenue Community Center) which holds a high resemblance to the hospital building. Both designed in 1915, the buildings are examples of Beaux-Arts-inspired Spanish Colonial Revival architecture and are among the earliest buildings in the Spanish vocabulary in South Florida. Geiger was also the architect for the Miami Woman's Club, built in 1925. This building, along with the Alamo and the Miami Beach Golf Course, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The first graduation from the new school was held in 1917 with one member graduating, Miss Ophelia Fuchs. In 1921 a high school was constructed one block west of the school and the earlier facility became an elementary school. During the "boom day" rush of the twenties, it became necessary for the elementary school to have a full time principal. Mrs. Neva King Cooper, at that time a teacher at the school, was appointed and held the position until after the bust in 1929, when she returned to sixth grade work. Cooper was an active member of the Baptist Church and, according to her students, a dedicated teacher. Beloved, well known, and highly regarded by the whole community, the school was named in her honor following her sudden death in 1934. Previously, the school was known simply as the Homestead Public School. During the first exodus of Cubans to Miami in the early 1960's, about 150 children from the Cuban Children's Refugee Camp in Florida City were enrolled to make up about 20 percent of the school's total pupil load. For a short period in 1981, the school was closed to undergo renovations. It reopened in 1982 and presently serves as an occupational training center for physically and mentally handicapped children.

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- "Neva King Cooper Closes Doors; Oldest Elementary Bids Farewell."
The South Dade News Leader, June 19, 1981, p. 1.

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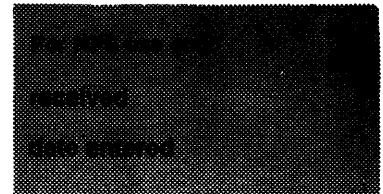
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Page 2

"Neva King Cooper School is Dade County's Oldest," The South Dade News Leader, October 22, 1974, page 2A.

"Neva King Cubans Get Royal Treatment" The Miami Herald, October 4, 1963, no page.

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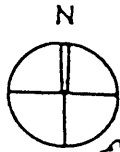
Boundary Description/Homestead Public School

Beginning at the southwest corner of the intersection of 6th Street and 1st Avenue in the City of Homestead, Florida, proceed south along the west side of 1st Avenue to the northwest corner of the intersection of 1st Avenue and 5th Street; then proceed west along the north side of 5th Street for a distance of 300 feet; thence proceed north following a line perpendicular to 5th Street to a point on the south side of 6th Street; thence proceed east along the south side of 6th Street to the point of beginning. The property includes only the 1914-1920 buildings associated with the Homestead Public School.

Circa 1954

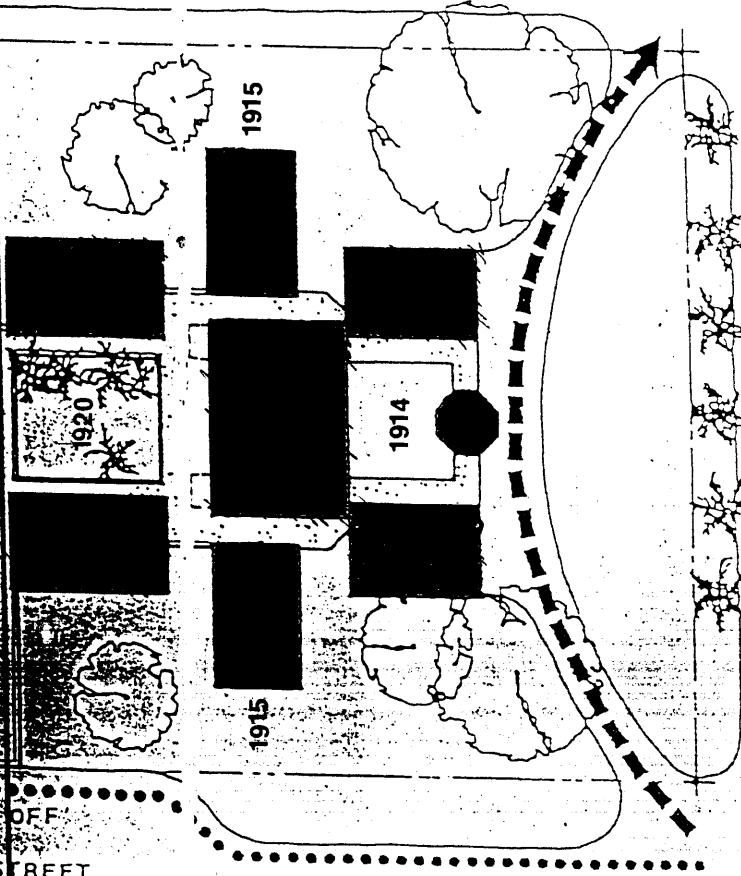
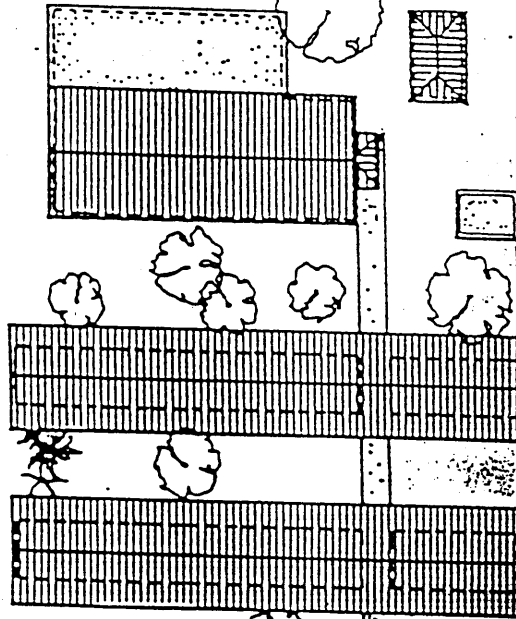
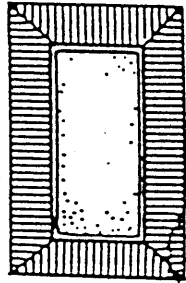
1914-1920

N. W. 6th STREET



N. W. 2nd AVENUE

Circa 1920



N. W. 1st AVENUE

BUS DROP OFF

N. W. 5th STREET

PORTION EXCLUDED FROM NOMINATION PROPOSAL

PROPOSED NOMINADED PORTION

NEVA KING COOPER