



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Other names/site number Escuela Perry

Name of related multiple property listing Early XXth Century Schools in Puerto Rico

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

## 2. Location

Street & Number San Blas Street, corner with Concordia Street

City or town Lajas

State Puerto Rico

County Lajas

Not for publication  Vicinity

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

*Cariangeli Leon Moraza*  
Cariangeli Leon Moraza, Esq. SHPO

Signature of certifying official/Title:

10/24/2016  
Date

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of Commenting Official

Date

Title

State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

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

*Joe Salter*  
Signature of Keeper

12-13-2016  
Date of Action

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Lajas, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

**Category of Property** (Check only **one** box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register** N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.)

Education/School  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.)

Education/School  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions.)

Neoclassical  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, concrete, wood

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Lajas, Puerto Rico

Name of Property

County and State

## Description

**Summary Paragraph** (Briefly describe the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

The Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School is a 1904/1907, one story, five-classroom, L-shaped, brick and concrete, Neoclassical, galvanized iron and flat roofed building. The property, with a footprint of 353.03 square meters, sits at the northern end of an 841.66 square meter urban lot facing the southwest corner of the town square in the Municipality of Lajas. The Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School is the earliest extant school building built by the Department of Education of Puerto Rico in the Municipality of Lajas. The school has some aspects of integrity as location, setting, workmanship and association.

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable.)

Oliver Hazard Perry's School is an L-shaped, Neoclassical, one story brick and concrete building (see Figure 1) built on a stone and concrete foundation. The school building, at the corner of Concordia and San Blas Streets, is the earliest extant school building in the Municipality.<sup>1</sup> The school sits in a privileged position in an urban lot facing the southwestern corner Lajas' plaza.

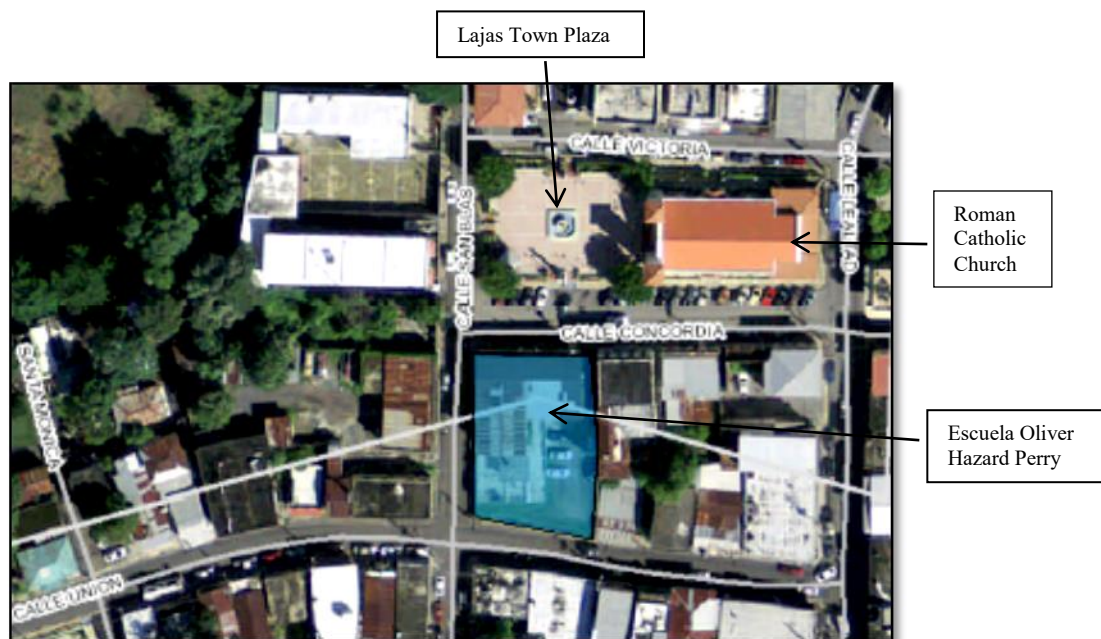


Figure 1. Site map of the Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School.

### Western Façade

The Perry School current entrance on the western façade faces the San Blas Street. This entrance has an iron steel gate (see Figure 2) installed in June 2016. Perry School has under gone several changes since it was originally completed in 1907. This façade is neoclassical. The school portico (Picture 2) is framed

<sup>1</sup> The older building in Lajas is the Town Hall built in 1889. Although the town's Catholic Parish Church is from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was remodeled in 1918.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Lajas, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

by two Doric pilasters. Ornamentation is down to the basic essential, pilasters with cornices and frieze. The first floor's original slatted wood casement windows were replaced by five aluminum louvered windows.



Picture 1: Western façade.



Picture 2: Oliver Hazard Perry's main entrance, facing west (San Blas Street).

To the west side of the Perry School building there is a stone and brick retaining wall up to 7'0" high. This retaining wall joins to a more modern concrete block retaining wall to the south of the property. Both retaining walls help to keep stable the slope terrain.

Northern Façade

Perry School's northern façade, which faces the Concordia Street, includes three bays with a base with a bas-relief. It is divided by pilasters that framed the original door openings and building's corners. Currently, the doorways were sealed sometime during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and aluminum louvered windows were mounted in the upper part of the opening. Above these two openings there are two key stones and construction dates (1904 and 1907) in high relief. Over the 1904 entrance the words "Graded School", also in high relief, appear over the date. Each bay includes two windows with the corresponding window

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Lajas, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

sills. The cornice and parapet were constructed after 1907 additions. Changes on sidewalk level and size impacted the structure lifting its original doors.



Picture 3: View of the Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School's main (north) facade and Concordia Street.

Eastern façade

Changes have occurred in the building's eastern façade including the ground level which was lowered sometime after its construction. The façade has two horizontal bands, two window openings and a doorway to the room that served as the principal's office.



Picture 4: View of the Eastern façade.

Southern Façade

The southern façade includes five windows. From this façade the volumes of the building can be appreciated. As well as, the courtyard includes a dog-leg shaped stairway.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Lajas, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**



Picture 5: View of the southern façade looking approximately north.



Picture 6: The dog-leg shaped stairway that currently serves as access to the roof.



Picture 7: View of the southeast classroom looking west.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Lajas, Puerto Rico

Name of Property

County and State



Picture 8: Bathrooms in a small concrete building looking southwest (2015).

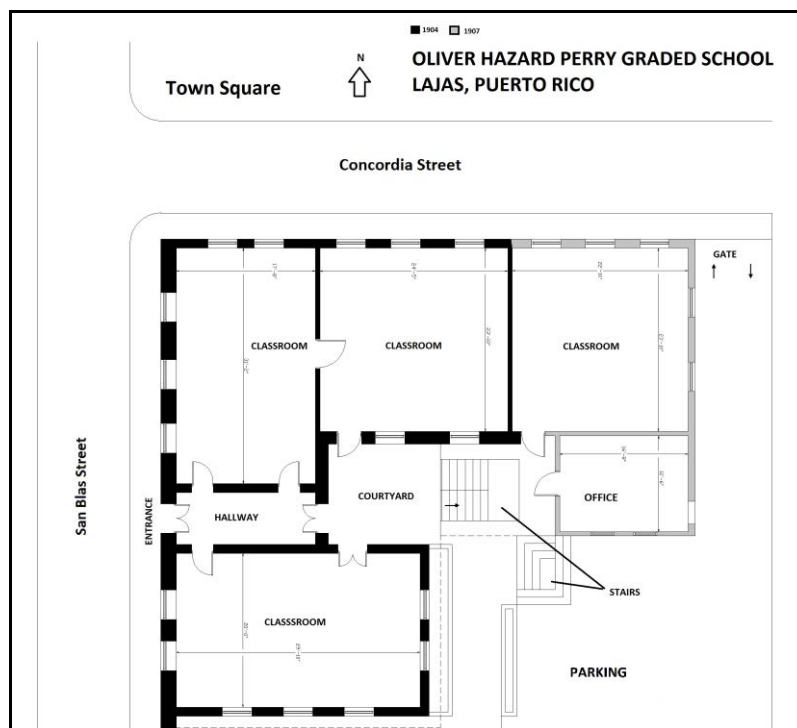


Figure 2: Floor plan of the Oliver Hazard Graded School showing area of 1904 building (black lines) and 1907 addition (grey colored lines).

Five rooms encompass the first story (four classrooms and one office). The original wooden sliding partition, that separated the 1904 original building from the 1907 addition, was replaced by a concrete wall in the early 1980. The new wall supported the weight of the second floor.

The southwest room measures 20' north to south and 29'10" east to west. The northwest room measures 31'2" north to south and 17'8" east to west. Both rooms are used as classrooms and for community activities, their floors are covered with porcelain tile. The third room (north) measures 23'10" north to south and 24'5" east to west. The northeast room measures from north to south 23'10" and east to west 22'10". The third and fourth rooms still have their original concrete floor. The small office, in the east

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Lajas, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

side of the building measures 12'6" from north to south and 16'8" from east to west. These rooms, with the exception of the northwest room, have access to the hallway or the courtyard.

Facing south is a backyard which served as a children playground until the 1980s when it became a parking lot for building employees. The parking is accessed by way of an asphalted pathway and connects the backyard to Concordia Street. The backyard is a slope rocky terrain covered on green grass. On the southern boundary of the lot there is a double retaining wall that stabilizes the sloped terrain. Its height is up to five feet.

By 2008 the Municipal Government of Lajas sought to remodel the building as a cultural center. As part of this effort schematic plans for project were prepared by the Western Regional Office of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. In July 2016, the second floor – which was in an advanced state of deterioration – was demolished by members of the Puerto Rico National Guard (PRNG). It took PRNG three-day work, as part of their community outreach program<sup>2</sup>. The Municipal Government started work on sealing the roof to prevent water filtrations.

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<sup>2</sup> Félix Cruz, "Demuelen segunda planta Escuela Oliver Hazard Perry en Lajas", El Post Antillano, Sección Cultura, Domingo 10 de julio de 2016.



Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Lajas, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**

**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 a grave.
- D** A cemetery.  
A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- E** A commemorative property.
- F** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

Education

**Period of Significance**

1904-1965

**Significant Dates**

1904, 1907, 1939

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Post, Charles G.

González, Adriano

Frank, Jorge

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

The Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School is of local significance under the criteria A in the area of education and social history. The Perry School original construction, 3-room brick graded urban school, was designed by architect Charles G. Post of the Department of Education of Puerto Rico's Extension Division and built in 1904 by Adriano González. Three years later the two additional rooms were built by Jorge Frank. The school is significant as the first urban school built with permanent materials (brick, stone and concrete) by the Government of Puerto Rico in the town of Lajas. During the first twenty-four

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Lajas, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

years after its construction, the school served as Lajas' primary urban educational center. In 1939 the building housed the offices of the Lajas School Superintendent. The school's period of significance starts with the construction date (1904) and closes off with the fifty-year cutoff date (1965).

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

In 1883, Lajas became an independent municipality from San Germán. Education became a priority for Lajas newly established municipal Council.<sup>3</sup> The council approved a curriculum for rural schools which included the teaching of Spanish basic grammar elements, spelling, reading and writing, arithmetic, and Christian doctrine. Lajas urban school (downtown Lajas) expanded its academic offerings to add into its curriculum Biblical history, calligraphy, geography, agriculture, industry and commerce.<sup>4</sup>

The municipal council established in 1883 five schools, two in the urban core and three in the rural wards of the Parguera, Lajas Arriba and Candelaria. Enrollment was of 142 students. The two urban schools were segregated by gender. While Manuel Janer y Soler was in charge of the male school, Carmen Dominguez de Soler ran the female school.<sup>5</sup> In 1887, the Lajas Board of Education reported an enrollment of 218 students, including 65 boys and 40 girls who were enrolled in the two urban schools.<sup>6</sup> Lajas had six public schools by December 31, 1897.<sup>7</sup> Student's enrollment had slightly increased to 220 by 1898.<sup>8</sup> Under the Spanish regime, the local school board described school conditions as inadequate, dangerous and unsanitary.<sup>9</sup> The main reason for this situation was the use of rented facilities in the town for classrooms. In the first US Census of Puerto Rico in 1899 shows a picture of Lajas' poor social and economic situation, when it reported that 77.54% of the population were illiterate.<sup>10</sup>

Puerto Rico's new educational system was started on July 1, 1899 by the code of school laws prepared by General John Eaton and Dr. Victor S. Clark. Under these laws the local school boards responded to an Insular Board of Education (Order # 8 and # 9). Also, the new Island wide curriculum excluded religious teachings (Order # 4) and instituted a graded system (Order No. 3).<sup>11</sup> United States' vision toward people's education required a massive transformation of all levels of instruction. Qualified faculty and staff formed under American educational standards were to be hired but also modern facilities, equipment and teaching materials were needed to facilitate this massive educational campaign. An educational apparatus was structured to provide educational guidance and proper supervision. Sixteen educational districts were created<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> As stipulated in the *Decreto Orgánico de Despujols* of 1880, the Town Council was charged with establishing a Local Board of Education, opening schools in the town and neighborhoods and paying the salaries of teachers.

<sup>4</sup> Archivo Municipal de Lajas, *Actas Municipales*, Libro I, 19 de julio de 1883.

<sup>5</sup> Mario F. Pagán, *Historia de Lajas, 1883-1983*, (Mayagüez: Imprenta Negrón Martín, 1983) 145, quoting *Actas Municipales*, 1884.

<sup>6</sup> Archivo Histórico de San German, *Actas Junta de Instrucción Pública Local*, 21 de enero de 1887.

<sup>7</sup> Government of Porto Rico, *Second Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), 230.

<sup>8</sup> Archivo Histórico de San German, *Actas Junta de Instrucción Pública Local*, 2 de febrero de 1898.

<sup>9</sup> Archivo Histórico de San German, *Actas Junta de Instrucción Pública Local*, 21 de enero de 1887.

<sup>10</sup> Mario F. Pagán, *Historia...*, 146. Also, in page 248 of the 1899 Census indicates that in Lajas only 1,073 out of 8,789 inhabitants could read and write. Departamento de la Guerra, *Informe sobre el censo de Puerto Rico, 1899*. Washington, Imprenta del Gobierno, 1900. Reprinted by the *Academia Puertorriqueña de la Historia* in 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Government of Porto Rico, *Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico, 1908* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), 222-223. See also Yusto López, *Historia documental de la educación en Puerto Rico*, 3d ed. (Hato Rey: Publicaciones Puertorriqueña, 1992), 79-84.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Lajas, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**



Figure 3. Hamilton Agricultural School, completed in October 5, 1901, was the first school building in Lajas.<sup>13</sup>

In 1901 the Department of Education of Puerto Rico completed the construction of the Hamilton Agricultural School “a mile to the southwest of the town, at Candelaria, close to where the cane land of the bottoms joins the hill country, whose chief crops are coffee and pineapples”<sup>14</sup> This one-room wooden building was the first educational facility built in Lajas by the US Regime. This school was one of eighteen agricultural schools built through a \$20,000 transferred by the US Government to the Puerto Rican Treasury earmarked for school extension. The schools were built in municipalities that donated “at least an acre of suitable ground”<sup>15</sup>.

By February 21, 1902 there were nine public schools in Lajas<sup>16</sup>. The supervision of the schools in Lajas was transferred from San Germán School District to Yauco in 1902. However, the supervision of schools was complicated by lack of good roads between Yauco and Lajas

The headquarters are at Yauco, the extreme eastern point of the district. So peculiar is the geographical form and such the conditions of the roads that, to reach Lajas from Yauco, or to return, it is frequently convenient to pass through the neighboring district of San Germán<sup>17</sup>.

In 1903 the pupil population increased to 639; which was distributed among an urban graded school (143), rural schools (427), agricultural school (39) and evening school (30).<sup>18</sup> At the time, Lajas only provided instruction of four grades in school<sup>19</sup>. Although the number of student and classrooms had

<sup>13</sup> Government of Porto Rico, Second Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902).

<sup>14</sup> Government of Porto Rico, First Annual Report of Charles H. Allen, Governor of Porto Rico covering the period from May 1, 1900, to May 1, 1901. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), 266.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>16</sup> Government of Porto Rico, Second Annual Report, 230. However, there is no mention in previous reports about expenditures for building schoolhouses. With the exception of the Hamilton Agricultural School, the schools were located in buildings that were either bought or rented.

<sup>17</sup> Government of Porto Rico, Third Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 217.

<sup>18</sup> Government of Porto Rico, Third Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 218. Report by Superintendent Francis Lynch, School District No. 10, Yauco, P.R. June 15, 1903.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 220. In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, eight grades constituted the complete common-school system in Puerto Rico.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Lajas, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

increased in Lajas, the deteriorated condition of its urban graded school required the construction of a new building,

The present graded building at Lajas is about as poor as a schoolhouse as could be imagined. In time of rain the roof leaks, thus affording little shelter within. Its rooms are small, ill-suited to the purpose, the floor is rotten, so much so indeed that it has now reached a danger point. In short, the building possesses no commendable feature. My predecessor in his report of last year condemned the building, but in view of the sheer impossibility of securing other quarters it was put to use during the present year. On June 3 of the present year the Ayuntamiento of Lajas agreed to impose a special "school tax," with which it will be enabled to pay its portion of the expenses incurred in the construction of the proposed new structure....<sup>20</sup>

In an effort to address the need of a new urban schoolhouse, the Department of Education allocated the sum of \$7,500.00 for the construction of a 3-room graded school in an urban lot in 1903<sup>21</sup>. The Lajas municipal government contributed \$1,500.00 to the construction of the school<sup>22</sup>, through school tax imposed on June 2, 1902.<sup>23</sup> The Lajas Board of Education acquired a private 0.207980 acre lot to build the school. This new facility was named Oliver Hazard Perry.<sup>24</sup>

On June 4, 1904, the office of the Superintendent of the District of Yauco called for a construction bids for a graded school at Lajas. The announcement specified that each proponent had to guarantee the quality of construction materials to be employed, count with skilled and trained workers and to complete construction in three months<sup>25</sup>. In its specifications described the details of the construction.

The work covered by these specifications consists of the construction of a three (3) room, one (1) story, stone and brick school building with corrugated, galvanized iron roof, and two (2) water closets, and the furnishing and placing of coat and hat hooks and blackboards also mounting and placing of desks<sup>26</sup>

On July 14, 1904 the Articles of Agreement for the graded schoolhouse were signed by Enriquez Hernández, representative of the Commissioner of Education, and Adriano González, a resident of Mayagüez.<sup>27</sup> The advertisement and specifications together with the agreement formed established the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 219.

<sup>21</sup> Government of Porto Rico, Fourth Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), 30. According to Mario F. Pagán the amount allocated by the Department of Education was \$8,000.00. In page 257, "In Lajas we have secured a fine lot facing the principal plaza for the 3-room schoolhouse which the department and the municipality purpose erecting. It is hoped that this new schoolhouse would be ready for occupancy in the fall".

<sup>22</sup> Mario F. Pagán: Historia..., 148.

<sup>23</sup> Government of Porto Rico, Third Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 219.

<sup>24</sup> Government of Porto Rico, Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico, 1906 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), 30.

<sup>25</sup> "Advertisement" for construction of Graded School Building at Lajas, June 4, 1904. AGPR, Obras Públicas, Edificios Escolares, Caja 1015, Legajo 38, Expediente 1.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> "Articles of Agreement", between S.M. Lindsay as Commissioner of Education of Porto Rico and Adriano González for the construction of a Graded School Building at Lajas, July 14, 1904. AGPR, Obras Públicas, Edificios Escolares, Caja 1015, Legajo 38, Expediente 1.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Lajas, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

project's contractual obligations. The total construction cost was \$9,000.00.<sup>28</sup> The original structure was a one story brick building with three rooms. The footing and the floors were built with concrete mixed of six part of broken stone, coarse gravel, three parts of clean and sharp sand, and one part of Portland cement. All walls were plastered with cement mortar one-fourth inch thick. The original framing was made of native timber or yellow pine, as recommended by the Commissioner of Education.

The original roof boarding was a cover rafter with 1" x 12" yellow pine boarding. The porch rafter was covered with 7/8" x 6" yellow pine, tongued, grooved and double beaded, laid dressed side down. All rooms were sealed overhead with 1/2" x 3 1/2" tongued and grooved, beaded yellow pine. All roofs were covered with corrugated galvanized iron, #24 gauge, with 2 1/2" corrugations, lapped 8" on ends and 1 1/2" corrugation on side. Each classroom had a ventilator of two slatted 3' x 6'. Door and window frame were made of yellow pine. The windows were two leaves ones. Interior partition had folding doors, covered with 1/2" x 3 1/2" tongued, grooved and beaded yellow pine, put on vertically. The school also includes two water closets build to the south of the main building.

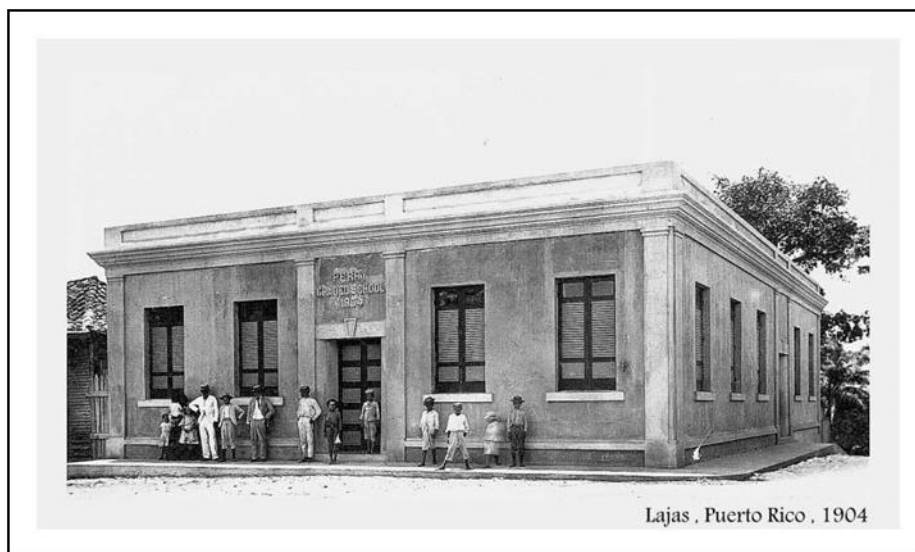


Figure 4: Oliver Hazard Perry, 1904 (Colección Histórico Fotográfica de Ángel Luis Ortiz)

In 1907, the need of space to house an increasing student population and to provide an office for the school principal made the Lajas Local Board of Education prepare a project adding two additional rooms. On July 8, 1907 bids were requested for the construction of the extensions for the Oliver Hazard Perry School.<sup>29</sup> The specifications described the project was for

...the construction of a two room addition of brick and stone to the north wall of the present building; connecting same with main building by folding doors; wooden partitions between rooms; cupboards for books; corrugated roof; furnish and placing desks and hat hooks and making of cement blackboards.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Informe del Comisionado del Interior al Hon. Gobernador de Puerto Rico 1919 (San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta, y Transporte, 1919), 159.

<sup>29</sup> "Advertisement" for the erection of an addition to the Graded School at Lajas. Undated. AGPR, Obras Públicas, Edificios Escolares, Caja 1015, Legajo 38, Expediente 1.

<sup>30</sup> "Specifications of the material and labor" for the addition to the Lajas Graded School. Undated. AGPR, Obras Públicas, Edificios Escolares, Caja 1015, Legajo 38, Expediente 1.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
 Name of Property

Lajas, Puerto Rico  
 County and State

On August 5, 1907 the Department of Education and the School Board of Lajas signed Articles of Agreement with Jorge Frank, resident of Lajas, for the additions to the Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School for \$2,762.80.<sup>31</sup> A larger room was to be used as a classroom, while a second smaller room would serve as the principal’s office.<sup>32</sup> A wooden folding door was built between the new and the old classroom so that the two rooms could converted into as a meeting hall, to hold school activities and celebrations. The floor was concrete of three inches thick. Two additional doors were built, one facing north, the other facing east. The one facing east was the entrance of the office. By 1907 there were twenty classrooms in the municipality of Lajas, including rented buildings, each having one teacher for every classrooms in the municipality of Lajas, including rented buildings, each having one teacher for every classroom and a total enrollment of 865 students<sup>33</sup>.

In 1909 eight rural schools were built the Paris, Maguayo, Candelaria, Sabana Yeguas, La Parguera, La Plata and Costa wards.<sup>34</sup> It is of significance to acknowledge that the population of Lajas increased from 1899 to 1910 about 26%.<sup>35</sup>

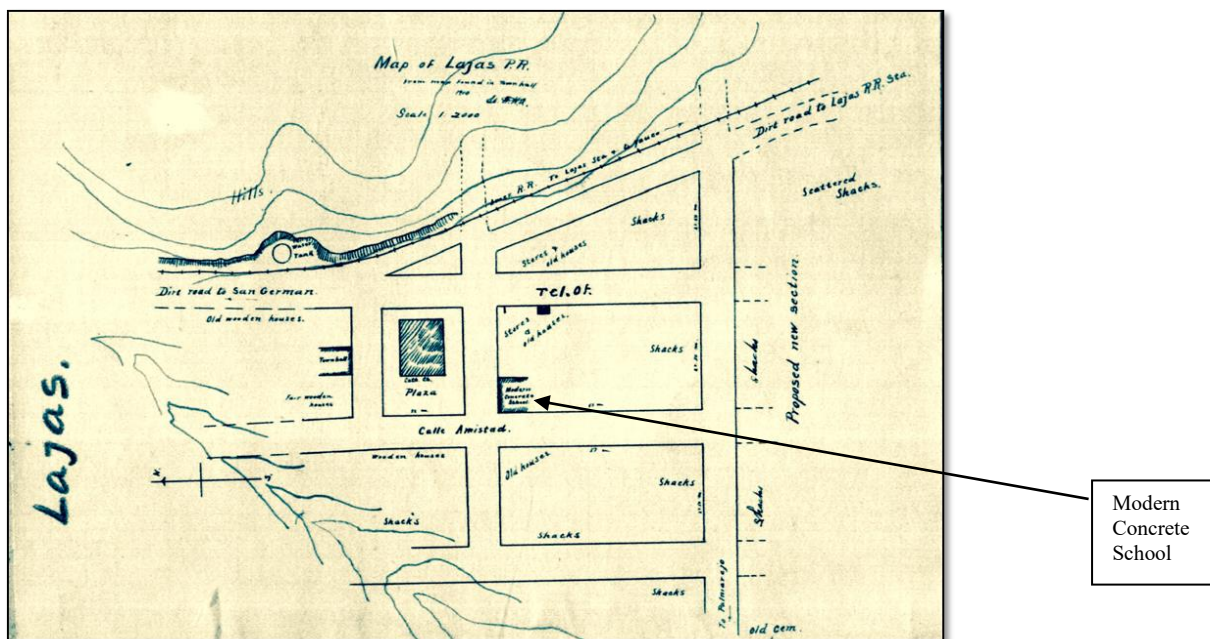


Figure 5. Lajas, PR, from map found in town hall. Scale 1:2000.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> “Articles of Agreement” between the Commissioner of Education, the School Board of Lajas and Jorge Frank, for the construction of an addition of two rooms to Graded School Building at Lajas, Porto Rico, August 5, 1907. AGPR, Obras Públicas, Edificios Escolares, Caja 1015, Legajo 38, Expediente 1.

<sup>32</sup> Government of Porto Rico, Annual Report of Governor of Porto Rico, 1908 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909), 250.

<sup>33</sup> Mario F. Pagán, Historia..., 157.

<sup>34</sup> Government of Porto Rico, Ninth Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico, 1909 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1909), 264. These schools were built using \$40,000 approved by the 1908 Insular Legislature for the construction island wide of low cost rural schools. “The purpose of these buildings was to provide in the rural regions sufficient and cheap accommodations for rural schools, relieving the boards of the necessity of paying rent for buildings not suited for the purpose”. Government of Porto Rico, Annual Report of Governor of Porto Rico, 1908, 206.

<sup>35</sup> The 1899 census reported a population of 8,789, while in 1910 the number of inhabitants rose to 11,071. For demography data see Pablo L. Crespo Vargas and Lidia Padovani, Lajas, desde los amerindios hasta el siglo XIX: Historia, sociedad y cultura de un pueblo (Lajas: Akelarre, 2013), 205; and José Luis Vargas, Lajas: Notas para su historia (San Juan: Comité de Historia de los Pueblos, 1986) 32.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Lajas, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**

In the academic year 1915-16, the local education board was able to extend until the ninth grade. It is at this time that the Board decided to include into the school's curriculum home economics, industrial arts, drawing and music on the seventh, eighth and ninth grades. While in the primary grades, students began to receive five minutes of body exercises at the beginning of classes in both the morning and evening.<sup>37</sup>

Mario F. Pagan<sup>38</sup> emphasizes the positive community impact that the urban school Oliver Hazard Perry had over Lajas population during the period of 1908-1920. He described the Perry School (**School**) as a center of local cultural and social interactions for the town by providing a variety of activities, including evening conferences to parents, festivals, exhibition of school work, special events such as Tree Day (*Día del árbol*), fairs and athletic activities.<sup>39</sup>

Perry School milestone 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduated class of 1920 exemplified the importance of Perry School in Lajas cultural, educational, social, political and commercial life. Outstanding Lajas citizens who were critical in shaping the Lajas of the twentieth century graduated on this class. Most of these distinguished Perry School students, listed in the graduation program below (see Figure 5 and 6) still being honored and remembered. To mention just a few, Esmeraldo Velez Vargas, an attorney, was the first native born "lajeño" in Puerto Rico State House of Representatives. Velez won the house seat in 1967.<sup>40</sup> Professor Maria Dolores Farias exemplifies commitment to education. Ms. Faria was a teacher at Perry School in the thirties, a Lajas Santa Rosa Ward school director in the forties and superintendent of Mayagüez School District in the fifties and sixties. She was a distinguished member of Puerto Rico literacy campaign from the 1940s to 1970. A middle school in the city of Mayagüez carries her name honoring her contributions to society. Just to mention few other distinguished Perry School 1920 class members were Cesar Feliu, a public servant, who became Lajas historian in the sixties; Enriqueta Torres (Tomei) and Pedro Irizarry were Lajas school teachers; José Toro was a businessman; Arnaldo Irizarry was a policeman and Emilio Davila was a pharmacist.

<sup>36</sup> William Armstrong, Progressive Military Map of Porto Rico. 1910.

<sup>37</sup> Mario F. Pagán, *Historia*, 151.

<sup>38</sup> Mario F. Pagan was a historian and educator who was named superintendent of the School Distric of Lajas. Profesor Pagan wrote the first historical book of his own town: Lajas. Mario F. Pagan compiled a list of Lajas early twentieth century school educators, many of them were teachers at Oliver Hazard Perry School during the first two decades of last century: Antonio Pagan, Jose Antonio Morales, Arturo Grant Pardo, Eladio Vargas Pabón, Ramón Cancel, Enrique Puig, Otilio Muñoz, Jerome Irizarry, Leonides Morales, Goyita Aviles, Aurelio Ramirez, Antonio Camacho, Sepulveda Santos, Isabel Feliu, Josefina Irizarry, Maria Figueroa, Rosalva Irizarry, Josefina Biaggi, Leonor Rivera, Aydee Irizarry, Arcadio Figueroa, Celina Pagan, Hortensia Noriega, Emma Calder, Marcolina Feliu, Adolfina Pardo, Emilia Baez, Adolfina Irizarry, Gumersinda Feliú, Julita Ortiz, Rafael Ronda, Everidis Ramos, Ramon Pujals and Millin Castillo. Several Perry School teachers stood out in the field of education becoming icons not only to the community but statewide. Professor Arturo Grant Pardo was the most distinguished of all Lajas teachers in early twentieth century. Grant, who served as an assistant principal in urban schools in Lajas, including the Perry School, founded in neighboring Dominican Republic two outstanding education facilities: the Antillean Academy in San Pedro de Macoris and the Polytechnic Institute in Santo Domingo. Jerónimo Irizarry was also a well-known educator who was assistant director at Perry's School and later on became assistant school superintendent, first in Cabo Rojo District and in later years in San German District. Perry School teachers, Sepulveda Santos, became assistant superintendent of schools in Bayamon and Josefina Irizarry, was the first guidance counselor at school Muñoz Rivera in Lajas.<sup>38</sup> These notable "lajeños" started their professional whereabouts at Oliver Hazard Perry School.

<sup>39</sup> Mario F. Pagán, *Historia*, 151-153.

<sup>40</sup> Lupercio Lluch Figueroa, *De política y elecciones en Lajas* (Lajas: Editorial Yo Soy Lajas, 1992), 23, 52.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
 Name of Property

Lajas, Puerto Rico  
 County and State



Figure 6: Graduate Class, 1920, Eighth Grade, Revista El Valle (Colección Histórico Fotográfica de Anghel Luis Ortiz)

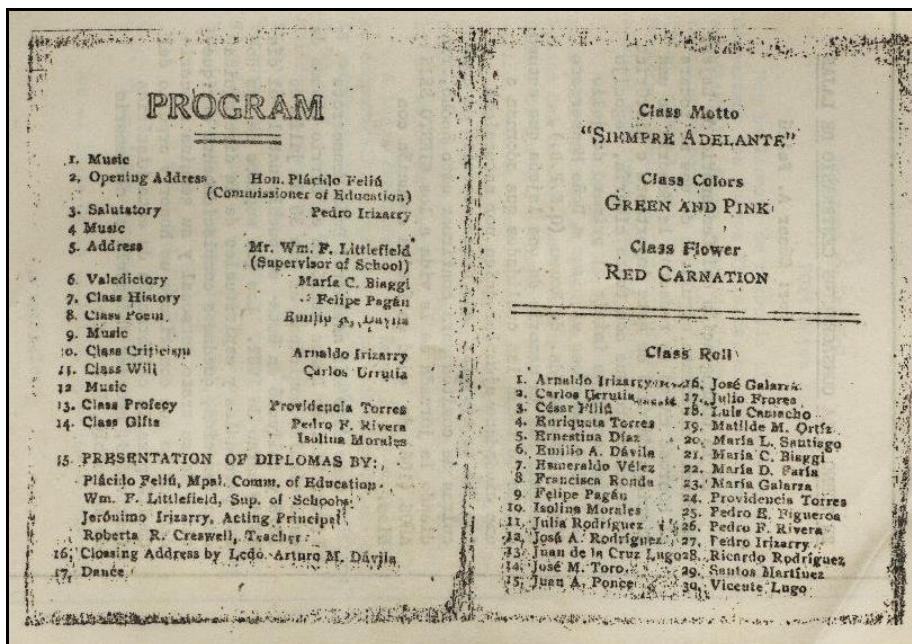


Figure 7: Graduation Program, Class 1920 Perry School (Colección Histórico Fotográfica de Anghel Luis Ortiz )

In 1926, the construction of the Luis Muñoz Rivera School was completed. This building was designed to house the town's middle school and its curriculum included regular academic courses but also home economics and industrial arts. At the end of school year 1929-30, the municipality of Lajas had thirty-five classrooms, with the same number of teachers and a student population of 1,893 attending school. Most schools, given the large number of students, were working in dual enrollment. The decade 1930-



Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Lajas, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

1940 brought more community insolvent in school activities and emphasized civic and recreational activities in both urban and rural school. Some of the new concepts included in the new educational vision were the planning of recreational activities, parent conferences, setting up training seminars for teachers, and the formation of the Junior Red Cross.<sup>41</sup>

In 1939 Lajas became an independent school district. The district superintendent moved to the principal's office in the Perry School.<sup>42</sup> The first Lajas School District Superintendent was Tomás F. Agrait. Superintendent Agrait was active in building new schools, hiring more academic and administrative staff and increasing school enrollment. Agrait believed in improving teacher's educational skills through teaching workshops. At the end of the academic year 1940-41, Lajas had fifty-nine classrooms with fifty-two academic teachers, two home economics teachers, two industrial arts teachers, two agriculture teachers and one native industries teacher. Enrollment totaled 2,234 elementary school students and 197 in intermediate level. Ten years later, in 1950-1951, the number of teachers had risen to sixty-five, fifty-eight of them academics.<sup>43</sup>

Even though a new urban school was built, Perry School kept its prominent role during the 1940s and 1950s, not only as an educational institution and house of the school government but as a community organizing center. The school classroom served as the headquarters to community initiatives: cultural and social activities were planned there and later on implemented by school staff members and community activists.<sup>44</sup> Some of the activities organized had much to do with social and cultural evenings to enhance the quality of life of town residents. Students and teachers put together theater plays, concerts, dances, festivals<sup>45</sup> and book fairs<sup>46</sup> among other activities. Most of former Perry School students agreed on that the school was the most important place in town.<sup>47</sup>

Mario F. Pagan served as school superintendent from 1953 to 1965. From his office at Perry School, Pagan implemented an internal educational reform which included the opening of night schools for adults, the development of vocational education programs in rural schools, the increasing of student enrollment and of the faculty to educate this new students, the launching of Puerto Rico first student public transportation service, the establishment of school bands and of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP). Mario F. Pagan indicated that all of his achievements as school superintendent were the result of the input and consensus of parents, students and community at large.<sup>48</sup> Mr. Pagan left his Perry School office by the end of school year 1965-1966 to move on to a higher position in the Mayagüez school region office.

Under the supervision of Mario F. Pagan, in 1954, the Adult Education Program was introduced. The adult literacy program was very successful, by the end of school year 1958-59 3,700 citizens had participated. Municipal illiteracy was reduced from 20.4% in 1946 to 12.3% in 1959 and by 1961 to 11.3%. Mario F. Pagan outstanding work as a school superintendent was acknowledged statewide. His

<sup>41</sup> Mario F. Pagán, *Historia*, 155-159.

<sup>42</sup> Alfredo Velázquez González, *Crónicas de mi pueblo* (Lajas: Editorial Yo Soy Lajas, 2015), 17.

<sup>43</sup> Mario F. Pagán, *Historia*, 159-160.

<sup>44</sup> Damaris Bracero, interview by Pablo L. Crespo Vargas, Lajas, January 31, 2015.

<sup>45</sup> Ángel Francisco Vargas, interview by Pablo L. Crespo Vargas, Lajas, January 21, 2015.

<sup>46</sup> Damaris Bracero, interview by Pablo L. Crespo Vargas, Lajas, January 31, 2015.

<sup>47</sup> Felipe Ortiz, interview by Pablo L. Crespo Vargas, Lajas, January 31, 2015.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 167-168.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Lajas, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

office at Perry School, was the planning center of Lajas educational transformation, movement that positively impacted Lajas community at large.<sup>49</sup>

At the end of school year 1965-1966 Perry School facilities has served well the Lajas community for 61 years. Its influence in every aspect of community life had no comparison to any other building in the town with the exception of the City Hall. Throughout this period, the Perry School has only been used as elementary school. On the 1980s, the School was also used as offices for Lajas School District. Due to lack of sufficient space for the offices a second floor was built on the school building. In 2000, with the new administrative changes in the Department of Education, Lajas joined the District of San Germán. The Perry School building was transferred to the Municipality of Lajas, to be use as an education center and workshop subsidized with federal funding.



Figure 8: Oliver Hazard Perry School, c. 1965 (Colección Histórico Fotográfica de Anghel Luis Ortiz)



Figure 9: Oliver Hazard Perry School, with second floor built in the 1980. Photo taken from parish church bell tower (2013).

<sup>49</sup> Mario F. Pagán, *Historia*, 168-172. Dr. Morris Siegel, renowned anthropologist and sociologist who researched communities in Puerto Rico during the 1940s, was the first one to publicly recognize the work done by Professor Pagan in the transformation of Lajas educational system in an article published in the June 1964 edition of “San Juan Review”, a statewide magazine. Dr. Siegel highlighted Pagan leadership as manager of Lajas public education system, encouraging others to follow in Pagan footsteps. The state government acknowledged professor Pagan commitment to education, his leadership and his outstanding performance granting him in 1965 the highest award given by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to its public servants, the Manuel A. Perez Award.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Lajas, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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**Bibliography** (Insert bibliography here – cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Archivo Histórico de San German, Actas Junta de Instrucción Pública Local, 1884-1898.

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Cruz, Félix. “Demuelen segunda planta Escuela Oliver Hazard Perry en Lajas”, *El Post Antillano*, 10 de julio de 2016.

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### Interviews

Bracero, Damaris. Interview by Pablo L. Crespo Vargas, January 31, 2015, Lajas, PR. Transcript by Mayra Santiago. HPF 2014 Sub grant, Nomination of Oliver Hazard Perry School to the National Register of Historic Places.

Cruz, Félix M. Interview by Pablo L. Crespo Vargas, May, 26, 2015, Lajas, PR. Transcript by Mayra Santiago. HPF 2014 Sub grant, Nomination of Oliver Hazard Perry School to the National Register of Historic Places.

González, Alfredo Velázquez. Interview by Pablo L. Crespo Vargas, January 21, 2015, Lajas, PR. Transcript by Mayra Santiago. HPF 2014 Sub grant, Nomination of Oliver Hazard Perry School to the National Register of Historic Places.

Ortiz, Felipe. Interview by Pablo L. Crespo Vargas, January 31, 2015, Lajas, PR. Transcript by Mayra Santiago. HPF 2014 Sub grant, Nomination of Oliver Hazard Perry School to the National Register of Historic Places.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Lajas, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**

Vargas, Ángel Francisco. Interview by Pablo L. Crespo Vargas, January 21, 2015, Lajas, PR. Transcript by Mayra Santiago. HPF 2014 Sub grant, Nomination of Oliver Hazard Perry School to the National Register of Historic Places.

Lluch Figueroa, Lupercio. De política y elecciones en Lajas. Lajas: Editorial Yo Soy Lajas, 1992.

López, Yusto. Historia documental de la educación en Puerto Rico. 3ra ed., Hato Rey, Publicaciones Puertorriqueña, 1992.

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Vargas, José Luis. Lajas: Notas para su historia, San Juan: Comité de Historia de los Pueblos, 1986.

Velázquez González, Alfredo. Crónicas de mi pueblo. Lajas: Editorial Yo Soy Lajas, 2015.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other (Name of repository) \_\_\_\_\_
- Archivo General de Puerto Rico

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 0.207980 acres USGS Quadrangle San Germán

(Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates. Delete the other.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

- |    |          |       |           |       |
|----|----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 1. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 2. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 3. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 4. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |

**OR**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map): \_\_\_\_\_

1. Zone 19 Easting 705365 Northing 1996801

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School \_\_\_\_\_

Lajas, Puerto Rico \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Property** \_\_\_\_\_

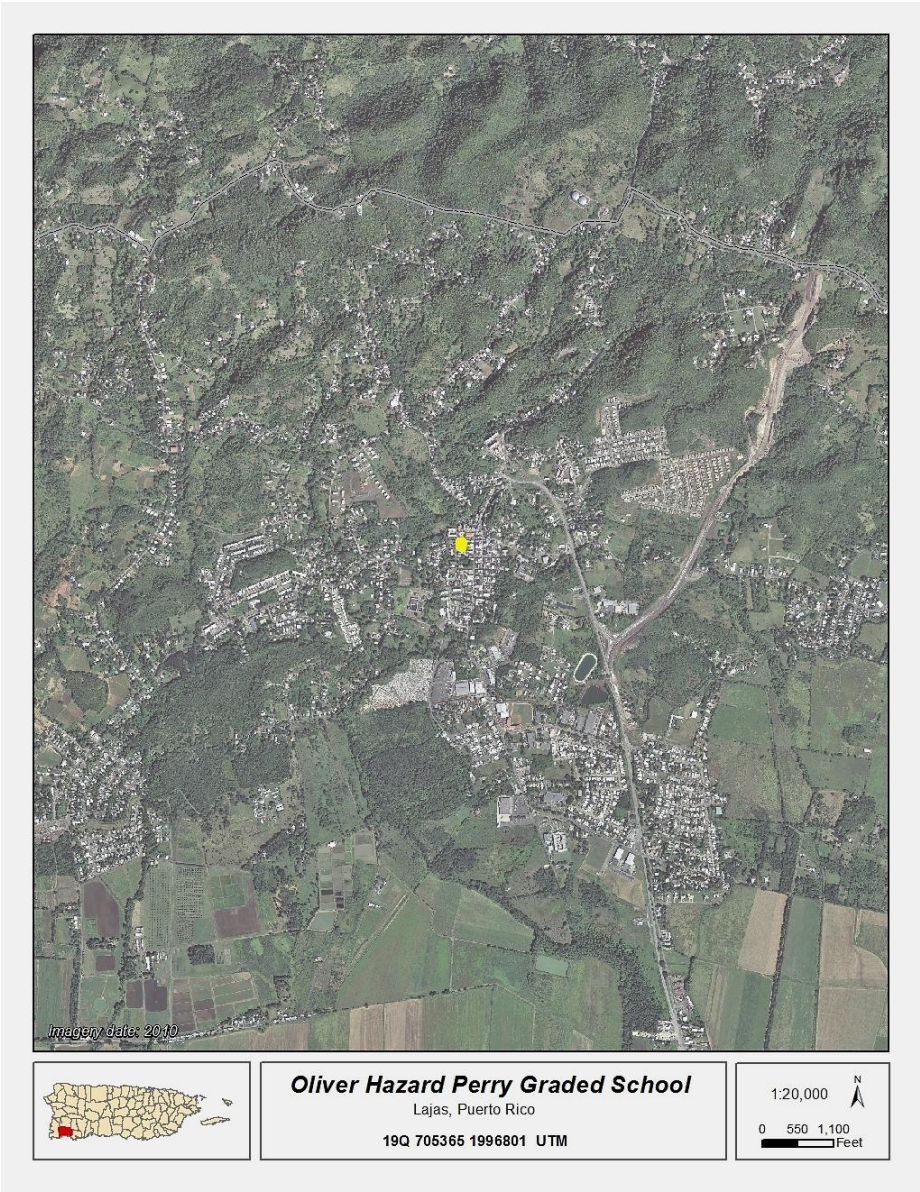
**County and State** \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Zone \_\_\_\_\_ Easting \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Zone \_\_\_\_\_ Easting \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Zone \_\_\_\_\_ Easting \_\_\_\_\_

- Northing \_\_\_\_\_
- Northing \_\_\_\_\_
- Northing \_\_\_\_\_

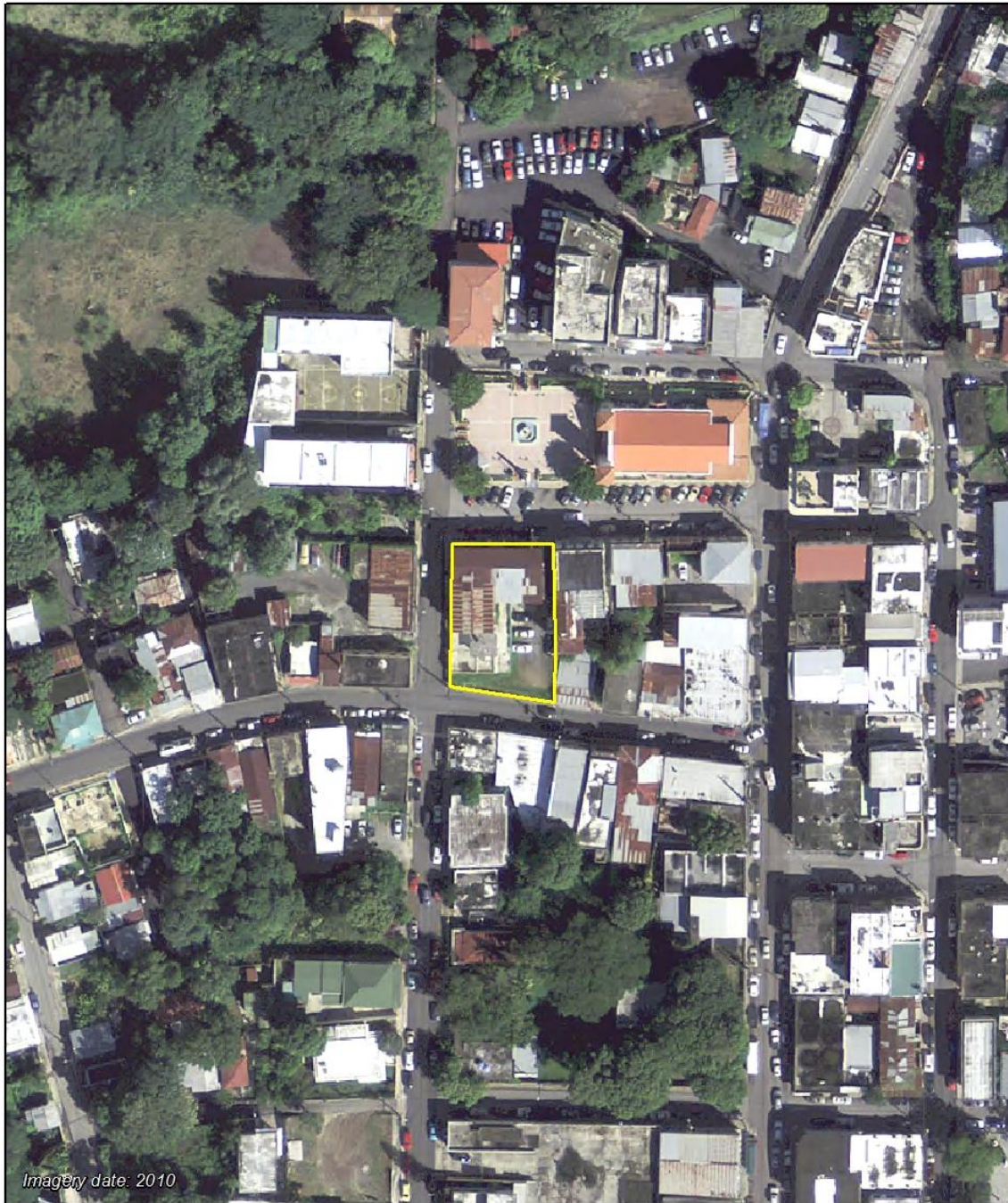
**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Urban lot of eight hundred forty one and sixty six hundredths (841.66) meters, recorded at the *Centro de Recaudación de Ingresos Municipales* (CRIM) under number 358-031-020-01.



Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
Name of Property

Lajas, Puerto Rico  
County and State



**Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School**

Lajas, Puerto Rico

19Q 705365 1996801 UTM



**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire lot historically associated with the Oliver Hazard Perry School.

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
**Name of Property**

Lajas, Puerto Rico  
**County and State**

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Pablo L. Crespo Vargas  
organization Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones del Sur Oeste de Puerto Rico, Inc. date October 21, 2016  
street & number PO Box 384 telephone (787) 318-6795  
city or town Lajas state PR zip code 00667  
email pablo.crespovargas@gmail.com

---

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
City or Vicinity: Lajas  
County: Lajas State: Puerto Rico  
Photographer: Pablo L. Crespo Vargas  
Date Photographed: September 13, 2016  
1 of 8: Western façade looking east.

Name of Property: Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
City or Vicinity: Lajas  
County: Lajas State: Puerto Rico  
Photographer: Pablo L. Crespo Vargas  
Date Photographed: September 13, 2016  
2 of 8: Oliver Hazard Perry main entrance, facing west (San Blas Street)

Name of Property: Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School  
City or Vicinity: Lajas  
County: Lajas State: Puerto Rico  
Photographer: Pablo L. Crespo Vargas  
Date Photographed: September 13, 2016

Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Lajas, Puerto Rico

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

3 of 8: View of the Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School's main (north) facade and Concordia Street, looking southeast.

Name of Property: Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

City or Vicinity: Lajas

County: Lajas

State: Puerto Rico

Photographer: Israel Román

Date Photographed: August 18, 2016

4 of 8: View of the Eastern façade looking northwest.

Name of Property: Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

City or Vicinity: Lajas

County: Lajas

State: Puerto Rico

Photographer: Israel Román

Date Photographed: August 18, 2016

5 of 8: View of the Southern façade looking approximately north.

Name of Property: Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

City or Vicinity: Lajas

County: Lajas

State: Puerto Rico

Photographer: Israel Román

Date Photographed: August 18, 2016

6 of 8: The dog-shaped stairway that currently serves as access to the roof looking north.

Name of Property: Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

City or Vicinity: Lajas

County: Lajas

State: Puerto Rico

Photographer: Israel Román

Date Photographed: August 18, 2016

7 of 8: Exterior view of the southeast classroom looking west.

Name of Property: Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

City or Vicinity: Lajas

County: Lajas

State: Puerto Rico

Photographer: Israel Román

Date Photographed: May 9, 2015

8 of 8: Small building used as bathrooms looking southeast.

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

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.









GRADED SCHOOL  
1904

1907

PLEASE RELOAD  
CASHES EARLY  
10:35 AM  
9:00 PM

VINCIGLIA

THE  
1177  
S. S.







CUIDADO  
AL PASAR  
ALTO







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School

Multiple Name: Early 20th Century Schools in Puerto Rico MPS

State & County: PUERTO RICO, Lajas

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Pending List: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of 16th Day: 12/13/2016 Date of 45th Day: 12/13/2016 Date of Weekly List: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: 16000852

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

<i>Submission Type</i>	<i>Property Type</i>	<i>Problem Type</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal	<input type="checkbox"/> PDIL	<input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo
<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver	<input type="checkbox"/> National	<input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary
<input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Period
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other		<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years

Accept  Return  Reject 12/13/2016 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: Meets the registration requirements of the MPS

Recommendation/ Criteria Accept A

Reviewer Jim Gabbert  Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date 12/13/2016

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



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**PUERTO RICO**

Oficina Estatal de Conservación Histórica  
State Historic Preservation Office



October 24, 2016

Ms. Stephanie Toothman, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8<sup>th</sup> floor (MS 2280)  
Washington, DC 20005

**SUBMISSION – Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School, Lajas; *Sistema de riego de las tres haciendas*, Santa Isabel; and MPS Going with the Flow: Waterworks in Puerto Rico, 1840-1898.**

Dear Ms. Toothman:

The enclosed disks contains the true and correct copy of two nominations - Oliver Hazard Perry Graded School, Municipality of Lajas and *Sistema de riego de las tres haciendas*, Municipality of Santa Isabel – and the MPS Going with the Flow: Waterworks in Puerto Rico, 1840-1898 to the National Register of Historic Places.

Should you have any questions on the nominations, please contact Berenice Sueiro, Historic Preservation Manager, at 787-721-3737, ext. 2002 or [bsueiro@prshpo.pr.gov](mailto:bsueiro@prshpo.pr.gov).

Sincerely,

  
Cariangeli León Moraza, Esq.  
State Historic Preservation Officer

CLM/BRS/JEM

Enclosures

Cuartel de Ballajá (Tercer Piso),  
Calle Norzagaray, Esquina Beneficencia, Viejo San Juan, P.R. 00901

PO Box 9023935, San Juan, P.R. 00902-3935  
Tel: 787-721-3737 Fax: 787-721-3773  
[www.oech.gobierno.pr](http://www.oech.gobierno.pr)



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CONSERVACIÓN HISTÓRICA  
OFICINA DEL GOBERNADOR  
STATE HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION OFFICE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR