

Lead to Hudson
7/14/89

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Geneva Country Day School
other names/site number Adventure School, Geneva Memorial Community Center (1956)

2. Location

street & number 1250 South Street not for publication
city, town Geneva vicinity
state Illinois code IL county Kane code 089 zip code 60134

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] 6-26-89
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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. _____

removed from the National Register. _____

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education

School (Schoolhouse)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade

Organizational (offices)

(American Red Cross,

Fox River Chapter)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century

American Movements

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood Shingles

roof Asphalt Shingles

other Wood Columned Porch

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Geneva Country Day School is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Western Avenue and South Street in Geneva, Illinois. The one story wood frame, shingle sided structure has its main entrance facing north, protected by a covered porch with four columns. The school building is symmetrical in plan, its footprint clearly an "H" configuration with overall dimensions of 74 feet in the east-west direction and 55 feet in the north-south direction. The asphalt shingled, gable roof is broken only by a simple brick chimney to the west end of the middle roof section and has an octagonal shaped cupola with a copper roof and ball finial. Formerly set on a 4.8 acre site which included open play areas for the school, the building occupies the northern most 200 feet of the property, the remainder having been developed for a public swimming pool and parking. The site still presents the building as a cottage on open land as originally intended, reflecting the 1920's attitudes associated with progressive education.

The Country Day School represents an example of the progressive education movement active in the early 20th century. The cottage type building style presented a residential scale school environment, bringing informality into the classrooms and shifting the center of interest from the teacher to the child. Designed by the eminent Chicago architectural firm of Holabird and Roche, the building related to "the newest ideas in modern school construction" as advised by the School of Education of the University of Chicago (Geneva Republican, December 2, 1927).

The building's plan is comprised of two classroom wings, 19 feet wide by 55 feet long, on both sides of a 36 foot by 28 foot central library, arranged to make possible a flexibility of curriculum to develop initiative and self expression. One of the wings was devoted to the lower school, kindergarten through third grade, while the other wing was occupied by the middle and upper grades. French doors on the building's south elevation opened to a terrace which extended across the entire south side of the building. The door openings, not used presently, are still in place, but only traces of the flagstone terrace remain. A fireplace is the major focus of the library space at the west end of the room with double hung windows lining the north and south walls. Vaulted ceilings which formerly enhanced the library and classroom spaces are now behind a two foot by four foot grid suspended acoustical ceiling, except at the southeast corner room where the vaulted ceiling is still exposed. The east end of the central library previously had been covered with book shelves. French doors remain at the north exterior entrance to the library from the 8 foot deep covered porch and also at the east and west walls which open to the two classroom wings.

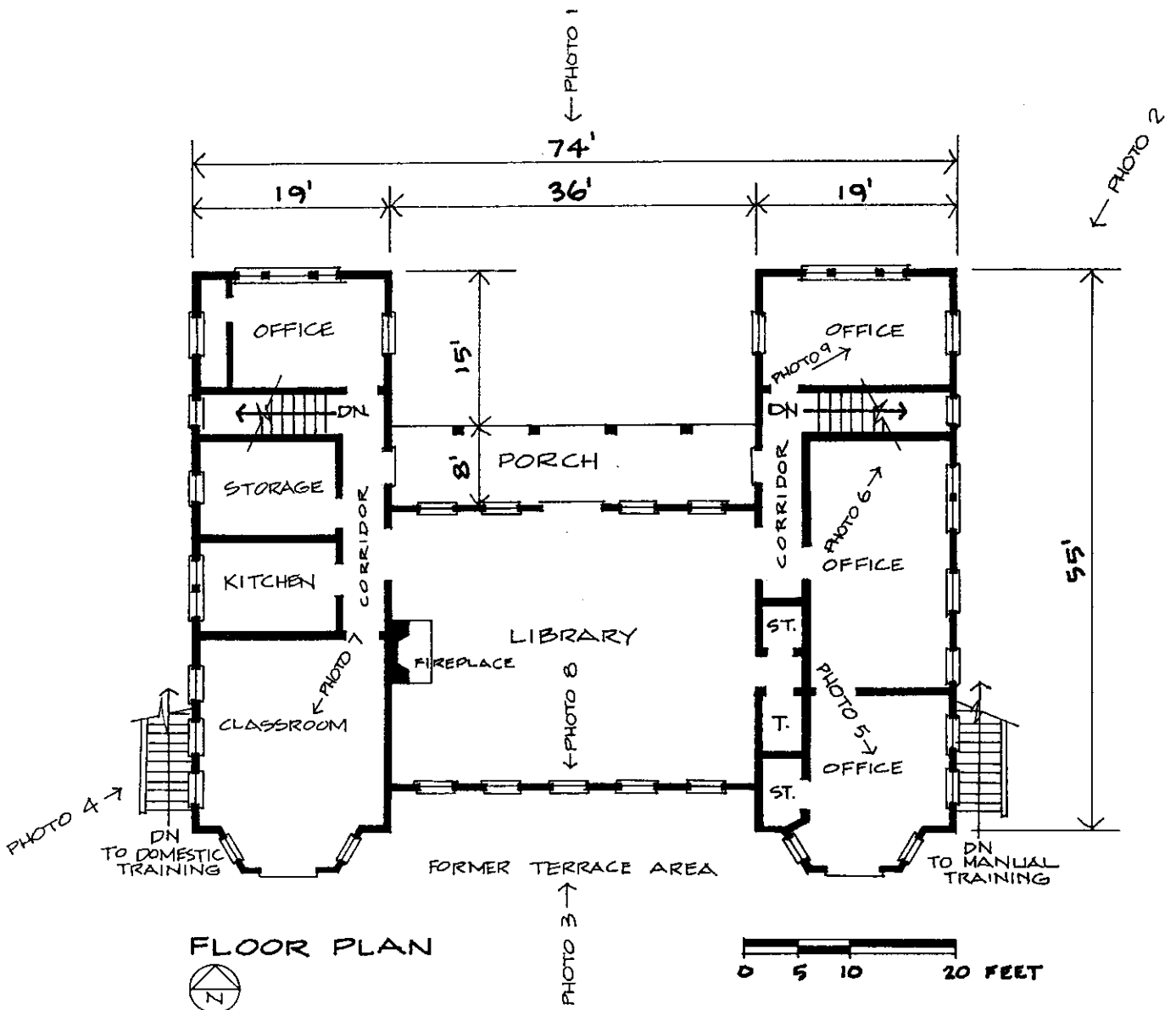
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The building has forty-five double hung windows and seven door locations which add to the unpretentious small scale design and the philosophy of progressive education to provide a healthy atmosphere with natural sun-lighting. Most of the windows are six over six double hung types except for fifteen narrow windows which are a four over four configuration.

The basement level has classrooms and toilet rooms which were used for manual training and domestic science instruction. Outside stairs provide access to these classrooms on the east and west ends of the building as well as two interior stairs at the north ends of the classroom wings.



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The exterior of the Geneva Country Day School emphasizes an expressive shingle surfacing and the overall appearance corresponds as an important part of the progressive education concept. The building is a one-story cottage or bungalow style structure with a minimal reference to colonial revival elements, insuring an informal, yet classical presentation. Also, the recessed porch carries over, in a modest way, the integration of veranda and building which had become a Victorian architectural characteristic.

Today the Geneva Country Day School building, with its four column front porch, spacious surroundings and numerous windows and doors for natural light, small classroom spaces on both sides of a central library and unpretentious small scale design in a pleasing cottage style appears on the exterior virtually as it did in 1927. The basic interior plan is still preserved, although carpeting and dropped ceilings are in place. The building has retained sufficient integrity of location, design, materials and association of use to display the integral architectural elements as a necessary part of the progressive education concept.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education

Architecture

Period of Significance

1927-1939

Significant Dates

1927^{N/A}

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Holabird and Roche

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Geneva Country Day School meets Criteria A and C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It is a locally significant building associated with progressive education, an alternative form of education in the Fox River Valley. The school housed in it represented a typical example of that movement as it spread across the United States in the early 20th century. The building was constructed in 1927 because the school, which had been founded in 1919, had outgrown its former quarters. It continued as the Country Day School until 1939, when it was forced to close for economic reasons during the Depression. This school, along with others of its type, affected public school systems both nationally and locally as it questioned the aims of education and the methods used to realize these aims, brought informality into classrooms, and shifted the center of interest from the teacher to the child.

The building also meets Criterion C as it incorporated distinctive architectural characteristics for a school specifically planned for progressive education. Designed by Holabird and Roche, the eminent Chicago architectural firm, according to "the newest ideas in modern school construction" as advised by the School of Education of the University of Chicago (Geneva Republican, December 2, 1927), it met well the needs of its unique client. Its home-like style and interior furnishings offered pupils a familiar and comfortable environment. Its small classrooms arranged around a central library made possible a flexibility of curriculum to develop initiative and self-expression. Its 45 windows and seven doors brought in light and sunshine and provided an easy exit outside. Its long front columned porch, wide rear veranda, and spacious grounds made the out-of-doors an extension of the learning area.

Around the turn of the century, traditional American schools were seen as "infant damnation" (De Lima, 1926, p. 2) under the control of "iron rule." Children sat "with arms folded, eyes front, putting up a hand for a begrudged permission to move, chanting lessons in unison, forty or fifty eyes glued to an identical paragraph while a halting reader at the front of the room limps painfully through sentences already too familiar to be interesting" (Rugg and Shumake, 1928, pp. 4, 35). Francis Parker and John Dewey believed that new schools must foster not memorization and recitation but, more important, initiative, independence, critical thinking, leadership, and social and moral character.

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Children should develop naturally under the motive of interest, and teachers should be guides, not taskmasters. Thus reform of the schools began, especially according to these ideas called "progressive education." After World War I, "some of the most courageous and imaginative pedagogical experiments" were true to that movement, proceeded under private auspices, and exerted "incalculable influence on the larger course of American education." Progressive schools sprang up all over the country. Their "clientele was overwhelmingly upper middle class" and well-educated, and they stemmed from the most varied sources (Cremin, 1964, pp. 277-278).

The Geneva Country Day School fit this pattern. It began out of necessity rather than philosophy. The founders were Mr. and Mrs. William D. Bangs. Mr. Bangs, general counsel for Illinois Bell, was a graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School; his wife was a graduate of Vassar College. When their first child had had double pneumonia twice, they invited a friend over from England in 1919 to tutor him and his sister (Compton, 1988). This "Little School," held in the Bangs' barn and later called the Adventure School, was the predecessor of the Country Day School. Other people in Geneva who desired the best education for their children soon became involved in such an enterprise: the vice president and director of R.R. Donnelley and Sons and member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Chicago, the president of the Reuben H. Donnelley Corporation, a prominent Chicago lawyer, a vice president of the Northern Trust, and a vice president of the J. Walter Thompson Company.

As the enrollment of the school grew to over 50, including children from near-by towns through grade 11, the need for new quarters became evident. So in 1927 a new building was constructed at the corner of South Street and Western Avenue. By this time a faculty of unusual merit and experience had been attracted to the school to teach French, Latin, art, drama, music, manual training, and athletics as well as the grades. Its aims were to offer children interesting activities and special projects so they could develop naturally and to promote sportsmanship, workmanship, cooperation, initiative, and a sense of social responsibility. It considered itself, with justification, a school unique in the Western suburban area (Ammerman, 1927; The Geneva Country Day School, n.d.). Its reputation was such that visitors came not only from the Chicago area but from other states and even other countries (1929 Adventure).

Educational pioneering was not unusual in Geneva, a community settled by "New York and New England Intellectuals" (Crissey, 1919, p. 1). The first private kindergarten was begun in 1882, an early Montessori kindergarten was held in a private home, and the Cottage School Association purchased land in 1873 (Carlisle, 1912; Ehresmann, 1977). However, local ill-feeling toward an elite school surfaced when plans for the new permanent building were made public in 1927. "Some ladies have been outspoken, it is said, in declaring that they do not care to have their children get any snobbish ideas in their heads" (Geneva Republican, June 10, 1927). To diffuse public criticism, the Country Day School offered free kindergarten, first, and then when the public schools planned such a program, voted to discontinue their own kindergarten and present their

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equipment as a gift to the public schools (Geneva Republican, January 22 and May 7, 1926; June 17, 1927). The Depression of the 1930's was a more formidable opponent. The school was forced to close in the fall of 1939 due to "not enough students registering for the upper grades" (Geneva Republican, September 22, 1939).

Eventually progressive education, as it was practiced at the Country Day School and around the country, had an influence on the Geneva Public Schools. Articles in 1933 and 1934 proudly described "child-initiated" projects in local first and third grades which "stimulate interest, motivate the work, call out creative expression, and give valuable training in cooperative endeavor" (Geneva Republican, November 17, 1933; November 9, 1934). The legacy of progressive education is now seen to be considerable: a new organization of subject matter, the utilization of the environment in instruction, cheerful classrooms, the enlistment of students in the management of school affairs, and a richer variety of teaching materials (Cremin, 1964). The Geneva Country Day School, both locally and as part of a nation-wide movement, shared in this contribution. It stands as a fitting tribute to a band of local intellectuals who "put their stamp of respect for education upon Geneva with an effaceable impress" (Crissey, 1919, p. 1) as they set forth "with earnest hopes and high purpose" to "give boys and girls a liberal education that shall ... incorporate in its methods and procedure the best of modern educational practices" (Ammerman, 1927, p. 3; The Geneva Country Day School, n.d., p. 3).

In June 1927 William D. Bangs offered four acres of land opposite the Golf Club for a permanent Country Day School building. Holabird and Roche were hired as the architects because they were familiar to Bangs as the architects for Illinois Bell. Since one of the school's directors was a trustee of the University of Chicago, that institution's School of Education drew up plans for the building, helped choose "an outstanding exponent of progressive education" to be principal, inaugurated the building and visited it periodically to assist in its operation (Geneva Republican, June 17, July 29, and December 16, 1927).

The contemporary description of the new building showed a great deal of pride:

The new building recently completed represents the newest ideas in modern school construction. It is of the one story cottage type with shingled roof and side walls. The advice of the School of Education of Chicago University to build the school around the library has been followed. The central features of the school are the large library and study room with vaulted ceiling reaching to the ridge pole. At one end of this room is a huge fireplace, at the other the book shelves. The north and south sides of the room are lined with windows and at each end French doors open to the two side wings which contain the classrooms. One of the wings is devoted entirely to the lower school, kindergarten and third grade ... The middle and upper schools will occupy the other wing of the building. At one end is a large room with French doors opening on a terrace which extends across the entire south side of the building. The interior decorating ... expresses a note rarely attained in a school building. The manual training

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room occupies one basement wing and the domestic science has the other wing (Geneva Republican, December 2, 1927).

On the property were a soccer and football field, basketball court, baseball diamond, and playground for smaller children with swings, slides, rings, and sandbox. In winter the soccer field was flooded for skating, and there was ample additional space for children's projects like gardens and other outside activities (The Geneva Country Day School, n.d.). The building was seen as a place to gather for group or individual work, where each person could move freely about to explore and discover in noisy industry or quiet study, with interesting and beautiful types of art to stimulate observation and appreciation. The out-of-doors was "considered as definitely a place where children may live and work, rest and grow, as the school building" (Ammerman, 1927, p. 5).

This structure, planned by University of Chicago educators and designed by a leading Chicago architectural firm, fit in well with the tenets of progressive education. Proponents of this movement held that children should develop naturally according to the social needs of the community in an environment rich in interesting material and with full opportunity for initiative and self-expression. The health of the pupils was of prime consideration. They needed "much more room in which to move about, better light and air, clean and well ventilated buildings, easier access to the out-of-doors and greater use of it" ("The Principles of Progressive Education," 1927). Traditional school buildings were seen as "mammoth mausoleums" (De Lima, 1926, p. 257) "in a medieval environment. ... Contemporary education required a contemporary architecture." In fact, architecture was seen as "one of the most potent tools in the hands of the progressive educator" (Youtz, 1932, pp. 192-193). Modern child-centered buildings should be imaginatively designed, with flexible divisions and partitions and classrooms connecting to a central study/library. They should provide direct access to the outside and healthy sunlight, a homely and intimate atmosphere with materials on shelves easily accessible to children, and freedom of movement in a tone of harmony and sympathy (Ain, 1932; Pollitzer, 1927; Rugg and Shumaker, 1928; Taylor, 1927; Youtz, 1932). The Geneva Country Day School building -- with its long front columned porch, spacious rear veranda, 48 windows and eight doors, small classrooms on either side of the central library, home-like furnishings, unpretentious small-scale design in a pleasing cottage style -- was carefully planned to match the philosophy of its patrons as well as to carry on the best of modern educational practices.

Today the building stands in its original location, appearing on the outside virtually as it did in 1927. The main features of the inside are still preserved, although carpeting, dropped ceilings, and new wall coverings obscure areas in some places. Therefore, the building would seem to have retained sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and association to meet the National Register criteria.

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Compton, Sally Bangs (daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William D. Bangs). Interview, April 8, 1988.

Cremin, Lawrence A. The Transformation of the School. NY: Vintage Books, 1964.

Crissey, Forrest. "Geneva: An Appreciation." Geneva Republican, November 14, 1919, p. 1.

De Lima, Agnes. Our Enemy the Child. NY: New Republic, 1926.

Ehresmann, Julia, ed. Geneva, Illinois: A History of Its Times and Places. Geneva: Geneva Public Library, 1977.

The Geneva Country Day School. Chicago: R.R. Donnelley and Sons, n.d. (probably 1930; booklet for prospective students).

Geneva Republican, articles on the Little School, Adventure School, Geneva Country Day School, and Fox Valley Country Day School; September 1, 1922; August 31, 1923; September 11, 1925; January 22, May 7 and 28, September 10, 1926; June 10 and 17, July 29, September 23, December 2, and 16, 1927; March 2, May 11, June 8 and 15, December 7, 1928; January 25, June 7, July 26, 1929; January 31, May 30, September 12, November 14, 1930; May 29, September 4, October 2, November 13, December 11 and 18, 1931; September 9, November 4, 1932; January 20, March 24, June 2, 1933; May 18, September 28, November 16, 1934; May 22, 1936; March 12, April 2, 1937; September 9, 1938; September 22, 1939.

-----, articles on the Geneva Public Schools: September 2, 1927; November 17, 1933; November 9, 1934.

-----, articles on William D. Bangs and Herbert P. Zimmerman: November 14, 1930; April 2, 1937.

Johnson, Walker, AIA, associate, Holabird and Root, and past member, Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council, interview, May 19, 1988; letter, February 21, 1989.

Lindeman, Eduard C. "The Future of Private Schools." Progressive Education 13, January 1936, 12-14.

Pollitzer, Margaret. "A Child's Size World." Progressive Education 4, April-May-June 1927, 101-104.

"The Principles of Progressive Education." Progressive Education 4, April-May-June 1927, inside cover.

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Section number 9 Page 2

Mavrogenes, Nancy A. The Geneva Country Day School. Geneva, 1988 (18 page manuscript available at Geneva Historical Museum).

Rugg, Harold and Ann Shumaker. The Child-Centered School. Yonkers-on-Hudson, NY: World Book, 1928.

Taylor, Katherine. "The Cooperative Planning of a School." Progressive Education 4, April-May-June 1927, 92-95.

Wilson, Richard G. "Holabird and Root: Century of (Intermittent) Progress." AIA Journal, February 1983.

Youtz, Philip N. "School Buildings that Educate." Progressive Education 9, March 1932, 190-194.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Adventure. Geneva: Geneva Country Day School, 1919 (school newspaper, available in Geneva Historical Museum).

The Adventurer. Geneva: Geneva Country Day School, 1933 (school newspaper, available in Geneva Historical Museum).

Ain, Gregory. "Progressive Architecture for the Progressive School." Progressive Education 9, March 1932, 195-202.

Ammerman, Kathleen J. The Adventure School, 1927-1928. Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1927 (booklet for prospective students).

Carlisle, Bella G. "The Kindergartens of Geneva." Geneva Republican, August 3, 1912, p. 1.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.2 Acre

UTM References

A 16 | 390460 | 4637430
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____ | _____ | _____

B _____ | _____ | _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____ | _____ | _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated building lies on property at the southeast corner of the intersection of South Street and Western Avenue in the City of Geneva, Illinois, and is 269 feet wide along South Street and 200 feet deep in the north-south direction.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the front, or north 200 feet of recorded parcel #12-10-101-001, which is 790.84 feet deep, totally. The width of the property in the east-west direction is 269 feet. The south 590 feet of the parcel has been excluded because it has been developed to include a public swimming pool complex and paved parking area. This is the property historically associated with the Geneva Country Day School

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy A. Mavrogenes/Member, Board of Directors

organization Restorations of Kane County, Inc./Caroline Simpson, Pres. date April 14, 1989

street & number 8 Indiana Street telephone (312) 232-4388

city or town St. Charles state Illinois zip code 60174



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 37127

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. For further information call 202/343-9542.

SEP 01 1989

WEEKLY LIST OF LISTED PROPERTIES

8/21/89 THROUGH 8/25/89

KEY: Property Name, Multiple Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Certification Date, Reference Number, NHL status

CALIFORNIA

Orange County

Huntington Beach Municipal Pier

Main St. and Ocean Ave.

Huntington Beach 8/24/89 89001203

Ventura County

Women's Improvement Club of Hueneme

239 E. Scott St.

Port Hueneme 8/21/89 89001150

CONNECTICUT

Fairfield County

Ball and Roller Bearing Company

20--22 Maple Ave.

Danbury 8/25/89 89001087

ILLINOIS

Cook County

Bohlander, Jacob, House

316 N. 4th Ave.

Maywood 8/21/89 89001113

Kane County

Geneva Country Day School

1250 South St.

Geneva 8/21/89 89001111

Knox County

Walnut Grove Farm

Knox Station Rd., 1 mi. S of Knoxville

Knoxville vicinity 8/24/89 89001114