

## HISTORIC SCHOOLS OF WYOMING



Laramie East Side School (1892) (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

**Rheba Massey, Mary Humstone, and Clayton Fraser**

**Edited by: Judy K. Wolf**



Casper Central School, ca. 1891

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Rawlins Public School, ca. 1880

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*Historic Schools of Wyoming* explores the development of the public educational system in Wyoming from the Pre-Territorial Period to the Post World War II Period (1850-1960), and the development of Wyoming's private, parochial, state and federal schools during the same period. From modest, one-room schoolhouses such as the Clearmont School in Sheridan County to Collegiate Gothic landmarks such as Casper's Natrona County High School, Wyoming's twenty-three counties display an array of historically and architecturally significant school buildings that represent the evolution of educational methods and systems, as well as the development of communities in the state.

This booklet is drawn from a larger study, *Places of Learning, Historical Context of Schools in Wyoming* and represents a summary of the main historical narrative presented in that historic context. The reader is directed to the larger study, which includes an extensive bibliography, to explore this topic in depth.



Arvada School, 1897 (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

## I. Introduction

The American educational system was well established by the time Wyoming became a territory. The founding fathers based the new Republic on the concept of an educated citizenry, with Thomas Jefferson as one of the strongest advocates. He argued that the citizens of a republic must understand the workings of their government and the responsibilities of citizenship, and be informed enough to elect good leaders. With the passage of the Land Ordinance of 1785, public lands were set aside for the support of public education. Starting with Ohio in 1803, all new states admitted to the Union were granted one section of each township (Section 16, often referred to as the “school section”) to be used for the benefit of public education. When California entered the Union in 1850, Congress doubled the school grant to two sections per township (Sections 16 and 36).

The notion of the “common school,” where children of different backgrounds and economic status would come together and learn common values and a common body of knowledge, was developed by educational reformers of the mid-19th century. Control of schools and school financing was vested in local boards elected by the people. Common schools were free, and paid for by property taxes, so that the entire community had a stake in the education of its children, not just their parents. These early common schools were only loosely regulated by state governments. States eventually began to exert more control, however, and by the 1860s most states had a superintendent of instruction charged with administering educational laws, setting standards, collecting statistics from local districts, and promoting educational reforms.



Laramie West Side School, ca.1900 (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

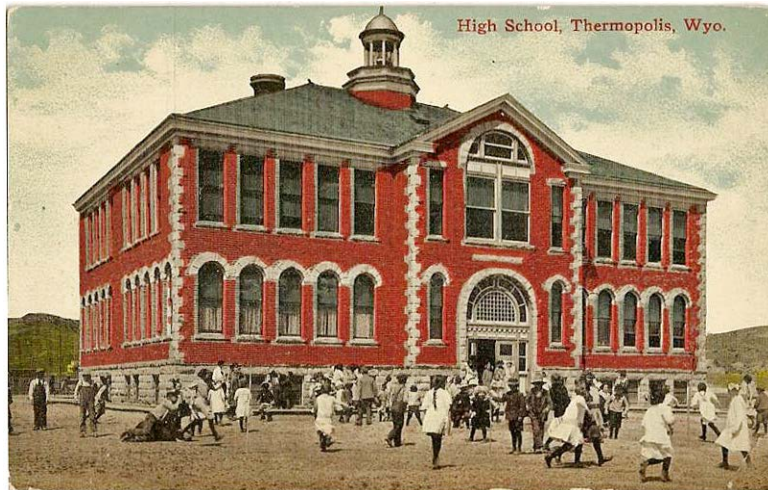
Aside from its role in helping to fund education through land grants and requiring each state to adopt a system of free public education, the federal government played a limited role in public education until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the federal government was directly involved in building, funding and controlling schools on military posts, Indian reservations and, during World War II, internment camps. In addition, private and parochial schools continued to play a limited role in American education, although their importance was reduced as the public school movement grew.



Rock Springs District 4 School, Sweetwater County, 1915

By the time Wyoming became a territory and organized its first educational system, a pattern of local school districts with state oversight had been firmly established. Both federal government and private schools were also in existence before Wyoming became a state. Wyoming's earliest schools were held in buildings constructed by the federal government or by private individuals at Wyoming's early frontier forts. As the region was settled and Wyoming became a territory,

citizens in the nascent towns formed de facto school districts to build small frame schools. The First Territorial Legislature in 1869 initiated the system of public education that still exists, in modified form, today. Ranching and mining communities established rural schools in bunkhouses, homestead shanties and the back rooms of saloons. Rudimentary log and frame one-room schoolhouses eventually appeared as the territory's earliest dedicated school buildings. These were replaced incrementally in the early 1900s by frame buildings with heating, patented desks, and free textbooks. Meanwhile, in Wyoming's cities and towns, handsome elementary, junior high and high schools of brick and stone were constructed to house the growing population of students. These schools were definitive statements of the communities' belief in the education of their children and the future of Wyoming.



Thermopolis High School, ca. 1915

By the late 1910s, rural schools were undergoing standardization to provide a better and more consistent education for Wyoming students. As roads were improved and funding for bus transportation was provided by the state, students were encouraged to attend schools in the larger towns, and rural school districts were encouraged to build "consolidated schools" to replace the scattered one- and two-room schoolhouses. By the Post-World War II period, most of Wyoming's students were attending schools in the larger communities that served the rural areas, and Wyoming's landscape was dotted with the abandoned one-room and standardized schools of its earlier years.

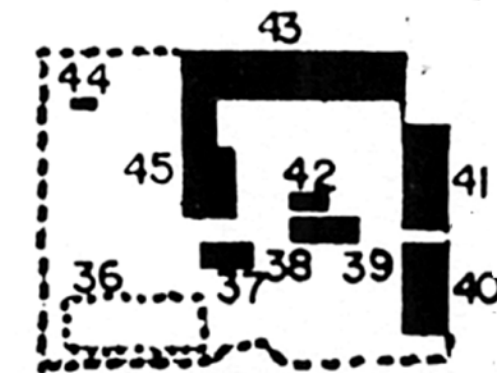


Carter Schoolhouse (1860), Fort Bridger, Uinta County (State Historic Preservation Office)

## II. Pre-Territorial 1850-1868

In 1850, the area that would become Wyoming featured an aggregate population of some 400 Anglo-Americans, the overwhelming majority of whom were adult males. At the time these were grouped principally in three areas —around Ft. Laramie, around Ft. Bridger, and in a scattering of homesteads along the North Platte River in present-day Platte and Goshen Counties. During the decade, two of these three settlements would establish schools, both at military forts.

The Department of the Army had by that point established a tradition of holding schools at many of its garrisons. The first school in Wyoming was established in 1852 for the children of officers and traders at Fort Laramie by the Post Chaplain, Rev. Richard Vaux, with the assistance of his daughter Victoria. It was an army school such as might be conducted at any frontier outpost, located in a building later used as a laundry. Judge W.A. Carter established Wyoming's second school at Fort Bridger in 1860. Carter started the facility for his own children but allowed other children to attend class as well. The Carter schoolhouse still exists and is part of the Fort Bridger National Historic District. It is the only surviving school from the pre-territorial period in Wyoming.



Judge W.A. Carter's Complex 2009, Fort Bridger's Post Sutler in 1860, Uinta County

- |                        |                          |                       |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 36. Carter's Residence | 37. Freight Wagon Shed   | 38. Milk House        |
| 39. School House       | 40. Post Trader's Store  | 41. Mess House        |
| 42. Bath House         | 43. Pony Express Stables | 44. Thornburg's Grave |
|                        | 45. Buggy Sheds          |                       |

The one civilian school that was established in Wyoming in the pre-territorial period was located in Cheyenne, the region's first major settlement along the transcontinental railroad. Cheyenne typified the end-of-tracks towns that followed the railroad's progress. The first buildings were crudely built of logs, and these were joined by an array of tents, shanties, and prefabricated frame buildings, many of which had been erected, dismantled and re-erected at different locations as the railroad moved westward. Only three months after the town was platted—and a month before the arrival of the railroad's construction crew—the local newspaper began pushing for a school. Cheyenne's provisional city government appointed a "superintendent of common schools" and formed a committee to design and build a schoolhouse for the school-age children in town. They acquired a lot on 19<sup>th</sup> Street and had plans drawn for a 24x40 foot building. Typical of boomtown Cheyenne, the school was a wood frame structure, one story with a moderately pitched front gable that sheltered a single-leaf front entrance. The new schoolhouse had no discernible architectural style, but it did follow prevailing architectural standards for lighting and ventilation, with large windows on the side walls and a twelve-foot ceiling height. Like almost every other structure in the hastily built town, the school went up quickly. Costing \$2,235 to build, it was dedicated on January 5, 1868.



Cheyenne, 16<sup>th</sup> Street Buildings (1867) (Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources)

Cheyenne's school was a de facto school district, using monies from private donations and subscriptions. As the first school in Wyoming to offer tuition-free classes open to all children, it was the closest thing to a public school. With some 112 pupils vying to get in, the public school was overcrowded from the start, prompting some parents to withhold their children. In response to overcrowding in the public school, private schools immediately sprang up, beginning in January with a "Select School" taught by Joanna Kelly in her parents' house.

Cheyenne's first school and the improvised facilities at Forts Bridger and Laramie represented the first attempts to offer education in the region. The structures were makeshift, the curricula minimal, but these were important first steps in Wyoming's educational history.





East Side School (1876), Laramie, Albany County, 1938 (Ludwig Svenson Collection #30697, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

### **III. Territorial Era 1868-1890**

On July 25, 1868, President Andrew Johnson signed the Organic Act creating Wyoming Territory. By this time most states in the North and West had passed laws calling for public-supported schools where education was compulsory. The first school law in Wyoming Territory, which took effect on December 10, 1869, followed this trend in stipulating that schools be supported by general taxation rather than voluntary contributions or subscriptions, as Cheyenne's first school had been.

In the legislative session of 1873, a new school code was adopted, which appointed the State Librarian to ex officio State Superintendent of Public Instruction, with responsibility for general supervision of all the district schools of the territory. The State Superintendent was required to file all of each county's reports transmitted to him by the county's school officers each year, and to report annually to the Legislative Assembly on the condition of public schools. The 1873 act also included the state's first provision for compulsory education, and attempted to create some standards for teachers in Wyoming schools. The 1873 School Code remained relatively unchanged through the territorial and early statehood periods.

Public schools continued to be established in towns along the Union Pacific Railroad during the Territorial period. Like Cheyenne's first school built the year before, Laramie's 1868 facility was a simple frame structure funded by a de facto school district, using monies from private donations and subscriptions. In this, it could not truly be considered a public school supported by taxation revenues, but it did have the distinction of being the first schoolhouse built after Wyoming became a territory. Laramie was followed in 1868 by Rawlins, whose citizens also raised funds for their first school through private subscriptions. Rather than build a schoolhouse, the townspeople rented a one-room frame building in the spring of 1869, where a single teacher taught five students. The westernmost of the early railroad towns in Wyoming Territory, Evanston, was the last to establish a public school during this first territorial wave. Another subscription-supported facility, Evanston's school opened in December 1870 in a rented room

above a saloon, accessible by an exterior wooden stairway. Of the major railroad towns, neither Rock Springs nor Green River had yet to establish schools. However, by the end of the Territorial Period, the major railroad towns had built stone and brick schools to replace their early frame buildings.



Rawlins, ca. 1890 (high school at right) (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

The School Code adopted by the First Territorial Assembly allowed for the establishment of secondary schools, and the first high school was established in Cheyenne in 1875, followed by Laramie in 1878, Buffalo in 1881, Newcastle in 1889, and Rawlins in 1889.



Central School (1871), Cheyenne (Wacker Collection, Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources)

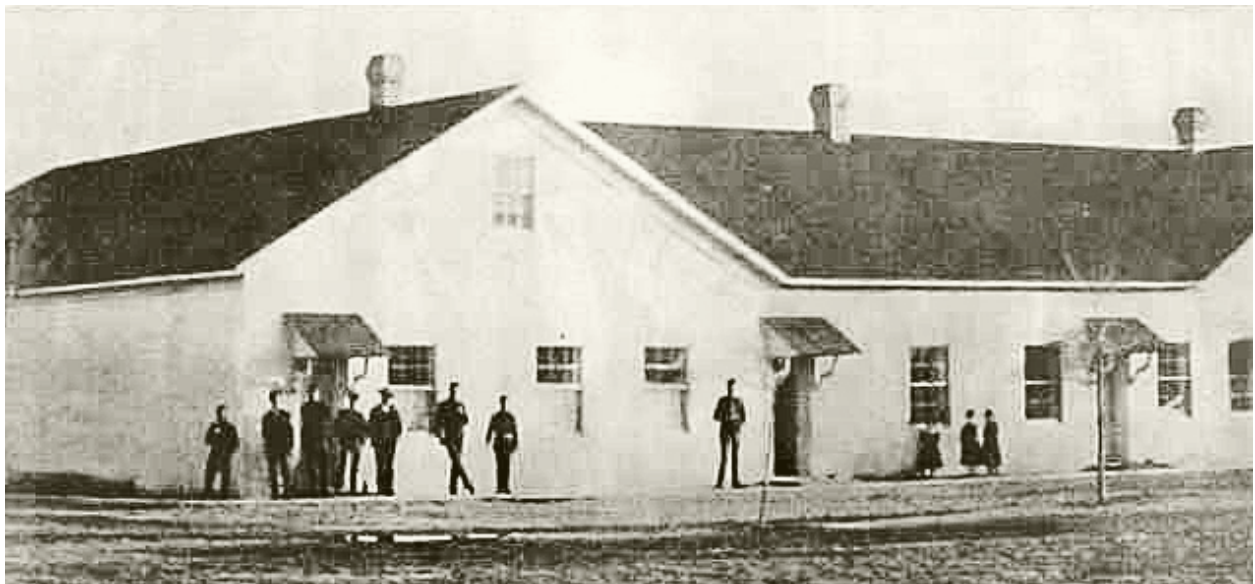
Rural schools established in the Territorial period might be located in a log building with a sod roof, an upper room of a railroad section house, a rented building, a spare room on a ranch, the vacant office of a mining company, a blacksmith's shop, the basement of the town hall, or a sheep wagon. The first rural school established north of Fort Laramie in 1884 was on the ranch of Henry L. Read. Mrs. Read was the teacher and Mr. Read adapted a 12' x 14' log cabin with a

dirt floor to be used as a school. The desks were made of packing boxes and the dirt floor was eventually improved by sewing gunny sacks together and laying them on the dirt like a carpet, staking them down with wooden pegs. Building an actual log school building constituted a major step forward. As populations shifted, schools were moved to where they were needed, using teams of horses to roll or skid them to their new locations. The log schools were often replaced with a frame building as the school developed. When these log or frame school buildings passed their utility as schoolhouses, many were torn down and the lumber used by the farmer or rancher for outbuildings.



School wagon, Grant, ca. 1900 (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

Several private schools had opened in Wyoming Territory by 1870. The 1870 census listed four public schools in the territory and five day and boarding schools. The public schools that year employed four teachers who managed 175 pupils; the private schools employed eleven teachers for 130 pupils. The territory's first private school situated outside the Union Pacific corridor was opened at South Pass City in 1870 by James Stilman, who charged a group of about twenty students \$1.00 per week for schooling.



Fort Laramie's Administration Building, ca. 1890, Goshen County

Federally controlled schools also continued to open at the army posts through the Territorial period. Fort Phil Kearney, Fort Fetterman, Fort Fred Steele, and Fort D.A. Russell operated schools, most of which were housed in buildings designed for other purposes, such as a chapel or library. Fort Laramie's administration building, an L-shaped lime-grout structure, was built in 1885. The building housed the post adjutant's office, library, and an auditorium as well as the school classroom. Soon after the post was sold at public auction in 1890, the building was stripped of all hardware and lumber. It still exists as a ruin, with thick masonry walls varying in height from 10 feet to 14 feet.



Fort Washakie's First Post School (1879), Fremont County (Richard Collier, 1985, State Historic Preservation Office)

Fort Washakie's first post school was constructed of locally quarried sandstone in 1879 by garrison labor using a standard military plan, and also incorporated a chapel and a library. The schoolhouse later became the administration building for the Wind River Agency located on the west side of the parade ground at the intersection of Washakie and Second Streets. It was considered one of the core contributing buildings to the Fort Washakie Historic District until it burned in 2004.



University of Wyoming, ca. 1900 (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

At the end of the Territorial Period, the University of Wyoming was founded in Laramie and \$50,000 was appropriated by the Ninth Territorial Legislature for the construction of a university building, which commenced almost immediately. University Hall (now Old Main) welcomed its first students in the fall of 1887.



Newcastle Elementary and Secondary School (1892), Weston County (J.H. Mayberry, early 1900's)

#### **IV. Early Statehood Era 1890-1915**

On November 5, 1889, voters of Wyoming Territory accepted a constitution devised by the state constitutional convention and on July 10, 1890, Wyoming was admitted to the Union. The state constitution and the first session of the state legislature adopted the basic structure and organization of the territorial education system with one significant change: the new state constitution stipulated that the office of state superintendent of public instruction be an elected position, along with four other elected state officials. The new constitution also established two funds, the Permanent Fund and the Common School Fund, to manage income from the state school lands (Sections 16 and 36 of each township).

As public education developed, the number of schoolhouses in the state was consistently lower than the number of schools being taught, indicating that schools were regularly housed in buildings other than schoolhouses. In 1890, only seventy per cent (198) of the state's 282 schools were taught in schoolhouses. This percentage remained more or less constant until 1910. The number of schoolhouses doubled between 1905 and 1915, and by 1915, the percentage had increased to 95% (1,043 school buildings for 1,100 schools).

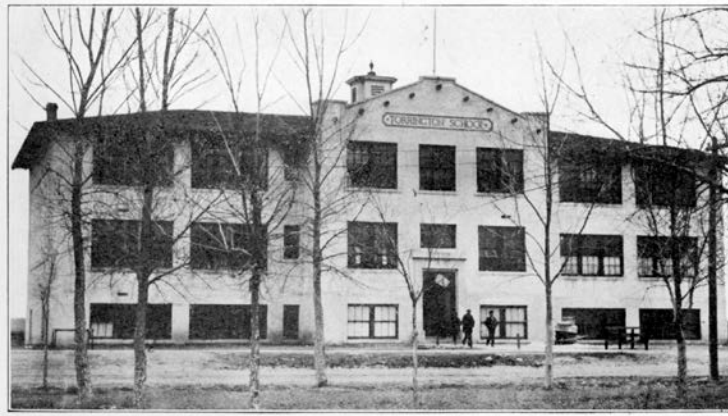


Pinedale School, Sublette County, ca. 1910 (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)



Hudson Elementary School (1914), Fremont County (Richard Collier, 2001, State Historic Preservation Office)

While rural schools were updating from log to frame, one-room schoolhouses, the schools in town were updating their frame schools to brick schools with raised basements. New high schools were also established in Lander in 1890 and Sheridan in 1893. By the turn of the century high schools had been established in every county. Examples of extant high schools from the early statehood period include the Evanston (2<sup>nd</sup>) High School (1914), now used as school district administration offices; Torrington School and Dormitory (1908), now vacant; Washington School in Laramie (1911), now apartments; and the Lusk High School (1910), now the Elks Lodge.



Torrington High School

Torrington High School (1908), Goshen County (Superintendent of Public Instruction Biennial Report, 1918)

Wyoming was slow to embrace the concept of kindergartens. Wyoming's first recorded kindergarten was established in Sundance in 1892. Occupying one room of a four-room schoolhouse, it apparently operated only a brief period. This was followed by the initiation of kindergarten classes within existing schoolhouses in Casper (1892) and Rawlins (1894). In 1895 the state legislature recognized the importance of kindergartens and empowered each school district's public trustees to establish free public kindergartens for children between the ages of four and six; but by 1916, there were only nine public kindergartens in the state, located in Carbon, Converse, Fremont, Goshen, Hot Springs, Lincoln and Sweetwater Counties.

Transportation presented a severe problem for Wyoming's rural schools due to the extreme weather, the poor roads, and the long distances between families. In 1894, the Sheridan County school superintendent reported that the county had 32 schoolhouses spread out over 2,100 square miles, noting that, "Broncos are plentiful, and although saddles are sometimes lacking, the average Wyoming boy or girl will make a distance of four or five miles to a schoolhouse in less time than an Eastern child would traverse half a dozen blocks. Now and then you will see a cute little cart with two or three children within, headed for a distant school house."



Wilson children riding to school, 1905

The weather and remoteness of the school determined the length of its school year. Some of these schools were only able to operate in the summer months. In 1912, Carbon County operated summer schools in seven districts, with some of those beginning in spring and continuing until December. Carbon County also had a "traveling school," moved from one ranch to another, with



a session of three months at each ranch. All pupils boarded at the ranch where the school was being held, then moved with the school to the next ranch.



Jelm-Frank Smith Ranch School (1900), Albany County (Mark Junge, 1970s, State Historic Preservation Office)

During this period, women teachers outnumbered their male counterparts by more than a 5:1 ratio. Rural school teachers might be products of their same schools, a “school marm” from the East, or a mother living on an isolated ranch. In addition to job opportunities, women often came west seeking religious or social freedom, seeking romance as engendered by popular fiction of the period, or seeking marriage, given the encouraging number of eligible bachelors out on the ranches or in towns. Teaching comprised one of the only respectable professions available to women in Wyoming. Schoolhouses usually numbered among the earliest buildings in the nascent towns, after the brief hell-on-wheels period passed, and the territory was desperate for teachers to occupy them. A public school represented culture in places that had little else, and, as symbols of learning and moral rectitude, teachers were usually counted among society’s upper strata.



Buffalo school teachers (1891)



Beaver Creek School ca. 1896. This was the first school in District Number One, Weston County. Teacher Elizabeth Lisa McLaughlin is pictured along with the Thompson, Brown, Coates, and Fawcett children who attended the school located on the Thompson place.



American Mine near Colorado-Wyoming Border: Miss Martha Moore, Laramie teacher on horseback, was teaching at Howell Ranch, 1903 (Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources).

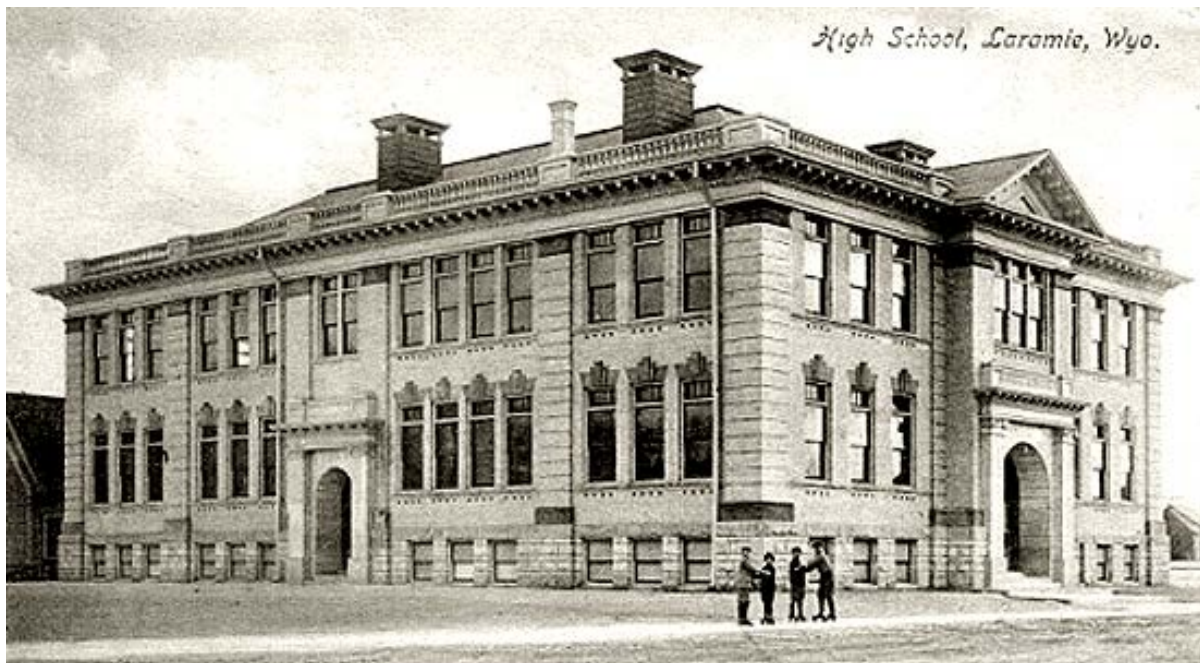
Many women found frontier life too daunting and returned east. Those who stayed often discovered that the job entailed more than bookwork. Teachers boarded with local ranchers, lived in the backroom of the school, or lived in "teacherages," a small log cabin or frame building constructed beside the school. Teachers typically cleaned their schools, stoked the coal stoves, and tended to all kinds of emergencies since the children's homes were often several miles from school. Some teachers even had to haul water to the school.



1

Valley School (1915) and Teacherage (1936) (State Historic Preservation Office)

Education in the early statehood period was distinguished by rapid growth, both physical and administrative, as the state developed from a scattering of frontier settlements to cities and towns connected by rail and stage lines to each other and the rest of the country. With this development came increasing expectations for the state's children. Despite this growth, the state remained relatively unsophisticated in the quality of its education well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It would not be until the Progressive Era that Wyoming would begin to catch up with the rest of the country in terms of the content of its education and the quality of its school buildings.



Laramie High School, ca. 1915 (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

## V. **Progressive Era 1915-1930**

During the Progressive Era, the State of Wyoming began several initiatives to improve the quality of education and keep up with national trends, starting with the appointment of a School Code Committee, charged with studying the educational needs of the state and making specific recommendations for a complete revision of the existing code. This committee requested the assistance of the federal Bureau of Education, which conducted a survey and made recommendations, organizing the results into a report entitled “Educational Survey of Wyoming,” published in 1916.

As a result of the bureau’s findings, there was a complete revision of the existing school code. The legislature created a new State Department of Education run by a non-partisan Board of Education, which was empowered to hire a professional executive secretary with the title of Commissioner of Education. The new law also created several new boards and departments, and revised standards for curriculum, teacher certification, school attendance and school buildings.



Lander High School (1920), Fremont County

After World War I, Wyoming's population soared as new settlers poured into the state. Wyoming saw a 12% increase in school enrollment between 1918 and 1920, and 183 new school buildings were built during that period. By 1919 there were 400 school districts in Wyoming, and a reported shortage of teachers, especially in rural schools. During the period 1915 – 1930, school enrollment increased by about 50%, from 37,718 pupils in 1915 to 54,505 in 1930. Wyoming's population increased from 145,965 in 1910 to 225,565 in 1930. There were only 27 towns with a population of over 1,000 in 1920.

Wyoming made great strides in improving educational opportunities for its children by accrediting high schools and junior highs, improving transportation and rural schools, and extending education to all who could benefit from it. The state began a system of transporting pupils to school which laid the groundwork for consolidation of school districts and schools which continued over the next 75 years. The Standard School program provided an incentive for rural districts to upgrade their buildings and provide an environment more conducive to learning. The incorporation of features such as natural lighting and higher ceilings created the type of one- or two-room school building still found in rural areas throughout the state.



Douglas High School, ca. 1920

Education in the schools was also broadened by increasing the duties of the State Department of Education. The Department of Vocational Education was added in 1917, a “Director of Special Classes” (later State Director of Special Education) was added in 1919, and in 1921 the Division of Civilian Rehabilitation was added for the retraining of children and adults who had become disabled.



Sheridan High School (1926)

During this era, architects and educators in Wyoming and throughout the country began to apply a more scientific approach to the design of school buildings; school districts from the smallest rural district to those in the major cities benefited from bulletins, pattern books and architect designs which gave them more attractive and efficient school facilities. Although Wyoming laws did not govern the construction of school buildings, the State Board of Education became increasingly concerned about the quality of the school facilities being built in the state, and it encouraged a more formal approach to design through circulars and bulletins distributed to school districts. Some of the state’s most impressive high schools, such as Natrona County High School in Casper, Pine Bluffs High School, Lander High School, Central High School in Cheyenne, and Sheridan High School were built during this period, as was McCormick Junior High in Cheyenne, and elementary schools such as Yellowstone, Lowell and Roosevelt in Rock Springs, South Side (now Nellie Iles) in Laramie and Churchill, Gibson-Clark and Johnson schools in Cheyenne. City and town schools built during the Progressive Era represent a range of popular early 20th century styles such as Classical Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Collegiate Gothic. Their plans reflect changes in curriculum and the role of schools in the community, especially the development of special facilities for science, music, and art classes and the introduction of new classes in vocational education, home economics, physical education, and special education.



McCormick Junior High (1929), Cheyenne (Jim Flesher, 2010)

The role of the school expanded considerably during the Progressive Era. Vocational education and special education were added to the core curriculum. Students played an active role in the war effort during World War I, and schools offered Americanization classes to help immigrants learn English and earn citizenship. Thus schools dating from this period represent significant social, cultural, and community development themes in addition to their significance in education and architecture.



Casper High School Mechanical Shop, Natrona County (Superintendent of Public Instruction Biennial Report, 1926)



Parco Elementary School (1936), Sinclair, Carbon County (Mary Humstone, 2005)

## VI. Depression Era: 1930-1945

Two major national events greatly influenced the development of Wyoming schools in the period 1930 – 1945: the Depression and World War II. Wyoming's economy felt the impact of the Depression through decreases in oil and agricultural production, retail business, and tourism. For the first time in the state's history school enrollment dropped. Wyoming saw a significant drop of \$1 million in school expenditures for the 1932-33 school years (from \$5.9 million to \$4.8 million), as taxes for the support of schools fell by 12% and the income from the Permanent Land Fund dropped by 14%. The *Wyoming Educational Bulletin* noted in December 1933 that educational programs had been “alarmingly curtailed” in communities throughout the state.



Hawk Springs School (1939), Goshen County (Mary Humstone, 2007)



Wyoming was just recovering from the effects of World War I when the Depression put a halt to most school building. By late 1931, the University of Wyoming's building program was put on hold. Roosevelt's New Deal programs eventually eased this distress, despite Wyoming's initial reluctance to take advantage of the federal government's largesse. By the mid-1930s, schools were being built and improved with the help of New Deal programs such as the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The University of Wyoming received loans from the Public Works Administration that covered up to 45% of the total proposed cost of construction projects and they resumed building. Public schools built under these programs had the advantage not only of funding, but also of expertise from nationally recognized architects. As Wyoming examples of a nationally significant theme in American history, the state's New Deal school buildings have significance beyond their role in education and community development. Extant examples of New Deal schools in Wyoming include the Lingle-Fort Laramie Elementary School (1934), South Elementary School in Lander (1935), Sinclair Elementary School (formerly Parco Grade School; 1936), Evanston [Third] High School (1937), Hawk Springs School (1939), and Boulder School (1939). Schools with significant additions funded through the New Deal include Nellie Iles School (formerly South Side School), Laramie High School (now Laramie Plains Civic Center), and Lincoln School in Laramie; Fort Laramie School; and Bighorn Academy in Cowley. WPA murals can still be seen in the auditorium of the Laramie Plains Civic Center and in the (new) Torrington High School.



WPA Mural, Torrington High School, Goshen County (Clayton Fraser Collection)

In 1940, as the economy was beginning to improve, Wyoming celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To show how far the state had come, 1940 biennial report of the State Board of Education featured photographs of typical pioneer (log) schools, and compared them with “A Modern Wyoming High School” (Laramie High School, the former East Side School). The celebration did not last long, however. Soon Wyoming, like the rest of the country, was preparing for war, and the war effort once again dominated education.

Only a few schools were actually constructed in Wyoming during World War II; however, many Wyoming high schools played an important role in preparing students for military service and work in the defense industry. Schools dating from this and earlier periods may have facilities such as shops, laboratories and farm buildings that reflect the changes in curriculum due to the

war. These schools also shed the traditional architectural styles for the Art Deco and Moderne styles that were popular from the 1920s through the 1940s and more representative of the forward looking school in the industrial age. A modern exterior implied a school that was up-to-date and incorporated the latest trends in education. Features include vertical piers with stepped caps picked out in a contrasting material (often terra cotta), stylized, angular patterns in terra cotta, especially around the main entrance and as friezes below the cornice, and a generally flat surface.



Albin High School (1942), Laramie County (Mary Humstone, 2007)

On the interior, schools were responding to increasingly diverse curricula, with the addition of science laboratories, art and music studios, auditoriums for concerts and theater productions and gymnasiums to accommodate the focus on health and physical fitness. These new facilities were used by the community-at-large as well as students, making the school building central to community life.



Dean Morgan Junior High School (1951), Casper, Natrona County (Mary Humstone, 2007)

## **VII. Post World War II and Cold War Era 1946-1960**

Once it recovered from the war, Wyoming, like the rest of the country, set out to rebuild and modernize its schools and prepare its students for the “atomic age.” In the 1950s, the State Department of Education, in cooperation with the University of Wyoming, junior colleges, school boards, teachers, students, and the general public, completed evaluations of all schools in the state. One thousand educators were involved in this ambitious project, which included site visits to 568 of the state’s public schools. Their reports provided an analysis of the community, its economy, current and projected population, school district organization, administration, finance, curriculum, and school facilities, and included recommendations in each of these areas. The reports are valuable documents for analyzing specific school buildings, as well as learning about Wyoming communities and their schools in the 1950s. Below is an excerpt from the 1957 report on the Worland School District:

The New Eastside and Southside Schools are quite a contrast to the three older buildings. They have all the features of a modern, well equipped elementary school. Their sites of eight and six acres respectively are in line with present day thinking. The locations of these buildings present a pleasing and inviting picture. The classrooms in these buildings are large, well lighted, and attractive. The corridors are wide and quite well lighted. The auxiliary rooms are sufficient, well-planned and conveniently located. The location of a lunchroom in each building is most commendable. The only feature that may be criticized is the fact that the Southside School has only two toilets for 345 pupils. Worland may well be proud of these two school houses and should work towards the day when all of its grade pupils will be housed in comparable buildings.

These schools, built in 1953 and 1952 respectively, still stand relatively unchanged in Worland and are two of the state’s best remaining examples of post-war elementary school architecture.



East Side Elementary School (1953), Worland, Washakie County (2006)

These reports are an indication of the increasingly active role in public education played by the University of Wyoming's College of Education, which had a mission of not only educating the state's future teachers but also providing assistance to schools through its extension program, and conducting research designed to improve curriculum and teaching methods. The "School Service Bureau" of the College of Education conducted studies, evaluated schools, developed curriculum materials and published a series of "School Service Bulletins" on topics such as aviation education, the impact of World War II on the teaching of social studies, how to conduct secondary school assemblies and recommendations for school buildings.



Arvada Elementary School and Gym (1948), Laramie County (Misty Moore, 2007)

Starting in the Progressive era, the curriculum of Wyoming schools had begun to expand to encompass such areas as vocational education, home making, vocational agriculture, physical education, and health and safety. These new programs started in the high schools, but by the 1940s even elementary school students were provided with workshop as well as classroom space, with moveable tables and benches and cupboards for the supplies needed for a variety of activities including cooking and building projects as well as the more traditional art work, music, and physical education. Gone were the immovable chair-desk combinations in favor of more flexible classrooms. The new moveable furniture also allowed more flexibility for smaller schools, so that classrooms could double as places for community gatherings.



Laura Irwin Elementary School (1958), Basin, Big Horn County (Mary Humstone, 2007)

By 1960, school architecture had changed from outward looking to inward looking. Instead of elaborate exterior ornamentation, many schools were designed with a modern aesthetic that emphasized simplicity, lack of ornamentation and massiveness. The school began to resemble a fortress rather than a cathedral for learning. The grand entrance of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century school was replaced by a simple door that might lead to an interior atrium or courtyard. The school districts focused on interior changes that kept pace with rapidly changing theories in pedagogy.

The federal School Lunch Program, which encouraged schools to provide a nutritious, warm, noonday meal for students, resulted in the construction and/or enlargement of school cafeterias and lunchrooms, adding to the large amount of space already allocated for non-classroom activities such as physical education, school assemblies and theater productions. The school site also expanded during this period, to incorporate ever more elaborate sports facilities such as stadiums, tracks, and grandstands.

The vast majority of schools in Wyoming dating from the historic period covered by this context were built in the period 1946-1960. While many of these were remodeled in the 1970s in an attempt to make them more energy efficient, there are also a significant number of school buildings from the late 1940s and 1950s that retain their integrity and are excellent examples of Modernist school architecture. In addition to the two elementary schools in Worland (Southside Elementary and Eastside Elementary) discussed above, examples include Dean Morgan Junior High School (1951) in Casper, Storey Gymnasium in Cheyenne (1950), Sheridan Junior High School Gymnasium (1949), and Slade (1955) and Beitel (1952) elementary schools in Laramie.



University Hall "Old Main" (1887), University of Wyoming ca. 1900 (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

## **VIII. University of Wyoming and Community Colleges**

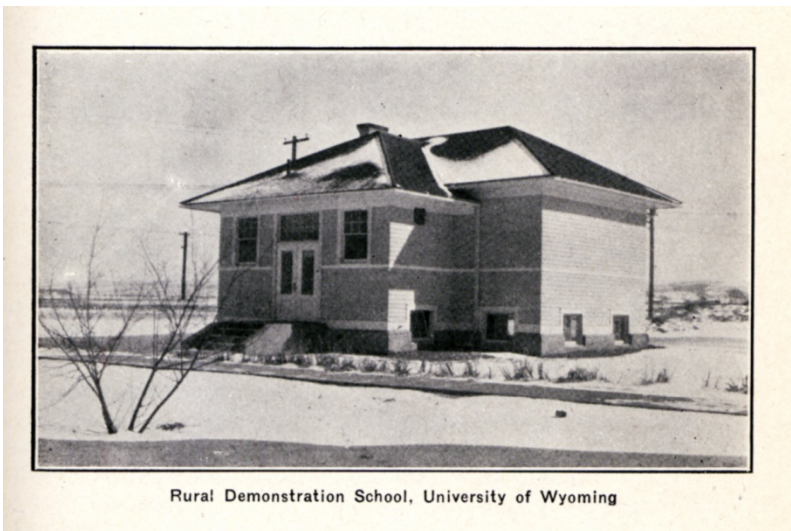
### **University of Wyoming**

In 1886, the Ninth Territorial Legislature of Wyoming passed a bill officially declaring the territory's intent to found the University of Wyoming in or near Laramie and authorizing formal action to organize a university. This law also provided for operating income through an annual tax levy of one-fourth mill on all taxable property in the territory and appropriated \$50,000 for the construction of a university building, which commenced almost immediately. The cornerstone of University Hall (now Old Main) was laid in the summer of 1886, and the university welcomed its first students in the fall of 1887. The first women's dormitory, Merica Hall, was built in 1908; and the second women's dormitory, Hoyt Hall, was built in 1916. Both of these grey pressed brick buildings with limestone and terra cotta trim were designed by Wilbur Hitchcock, Cheyenne. When Wyoming entered the union in 1890, only thirty-nine students were enrolled in the university, but by 1915 enrollment had grown to 234. During that same period the university campus expanded from 20 to 54 acres, and from one to eight major buildings.



Hoyt Hall (1916) ca. 1920, University of Wyoming (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

The university played an important role in the development of the state's public school system, first through its training of teachers and later as a research and outreach institution as well. In 1917, the College of Education built a Rural Demonstration School on the Laramie campus to train teachers for rural schools and to demonstrate what a model rural school should look like. The rectangular, hip-roofed building was described as "modern and complete in every way."



Rural Demonstration School, University of Wyoming

Rural Demonstration School, University of Wyoming, Albany County (Superintendent of Public Instruction Biennial Report, 1922)

The growth of the university paralleled the growth of high schools in Wyoming, whose enrollment more than tripled during the Progressive Era. Recognizing the significance of this trend, UW president Arthur Crane successfully lobbied the state legislature in the 1920s to increase the amount of royalties paid to the university from oil revenues on university-owned lands, thus amassing a building fund that allowed expansion of the campus to meet the growing needs.

Crane initiated UW's first formal campus planning process, enlisting the help of Laramie architect Wilbur Hitchcock and the Denver-based landscape architecture firm of McCrary, Cully,

and Carhart to create a master plan to guide development of the “Greater University” over the next 25 years, including buildings, landscaping, walkways, roads, and utilities. The 1922 plan established a quadrangle of buildings on the perimeter of an open space, later known as Prexy’s Pasture (“Prexy” was the nickname given to college presidents at the time). The placement of buildings around an open area was a popular feature of campus planning which reflected early-twentieth century ideals of community and fellowship in higher education.



University of Wyoming Library, ca. 1925 (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

To standardize the architectural design of the campus, Hitchcock collaborated with noted New York architect Raymond Hood. Their aim was to create a design vocabulary that would allow variety in building styles while providing continuity in massing and materials. To harmonize with the local landscape, all buildings were to be constructed of native buff-rose-colored sandstone from the university’s quarry and buff-colored brick, with stepped rooflines that mimicked the outline of Wyoming’s mountains. These guidelines influenced the design of campus buildings for the next forty years or more.

Hitchcock continued to be the architect for campus housing. The first Men's Residence Hall (McWhinnie Hall) was designed by Hitchcock and built in 1928. This Gothic Revival style building included buttresses, tall and narrow arched windows, and an arched and vaulted entry. Hitchcock also designed Fraternity Park in 1930 that was divided into two groups of student dwellings, one for men and one for women, separated by a central mall containing tennis courts. His final design for housing was Knight Hall, a Collegiate Gothic style women's dormitory completed in 1940.

By late 1931, the economic impact of the Depression had reached Laramie and the university building program was put on hold. However, thanks to loans from the Public Works Administration (PWA) that covered up to 45% of the total proposed cost of construction projects, the university was able to resume building in just a few years. The new Liberal Arts Building (now Arts and Sciences Building) was designed by William Dubois and completed in 1936. The four-story building, designed in the Depression Moderne style, consists of a large auditorium surrounded by classrooms. It was featured in *Public Buildings*, the 1939 report on the architecture of the Public Works Administration.

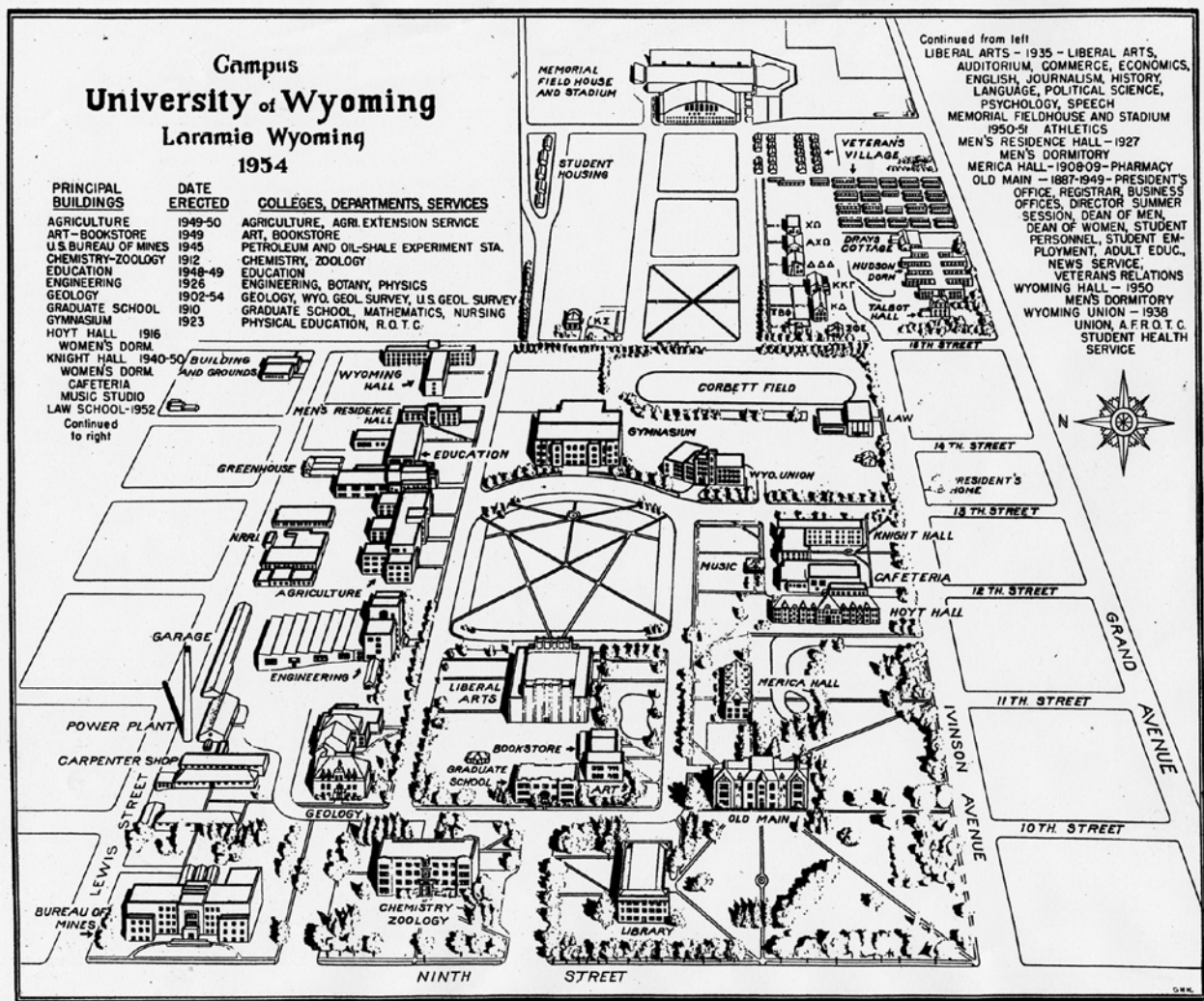




Liberal Arts Building, University of Wyoming, Albany County, 1936 (Clayton Fraser Collection)

With the advent of World War II, the University of Wyoming became a center of military training and preparation. After the war, the return of veterans resulted in a dramatic growth in enrollment which in turn heightened the need for more housing and academic facilities. Temporary housing for returning veterans was supplied in “Veterans’ Village” in the southeast section of Fraternity Park, consisting of “Butler huts, prefabricated houses, row apartments and plain trailers,” designed to supply 1,000 housing units for single and married veterans.

The first permanent post-war improvements to the campus came in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and the greatest building boom occurred in the mid-1960s. The 1960s building incorporated new housing units for students that included apartments for married students and men's and women's dormitories. The new buildings added to the campus since the end of World War II reflect a growing divergence from the architectural design tradition established by Wilbur Hitchcock and Raymond Hood in the mid-1920s, although up until the 1970s west campus buildings continued to respect the traditional architecture in their scale and use of compatible materials.



University of Wyoming Campus 1954

The University of Wyoming campus includes architect-designed buildings in styles ranging from Victorian-era Eclectic to Expressionist, making it the most varied collection of high-style architecture in the state. In addition to its architectural significance, the University of Wyoming is important for its role in educating the state's students, and its role in educating the state's teachers.

### *University of Wyoming (Knight) Science Camp*

Samuel H. Knight (1892-1975) started the University of Wyoming Summer Science Camp in 1925 and served as its director until his death. Knight conceived of the idea of a geology field camp in 1923, and selected land for a permanent camp about 40 miles west of Laramie in the Medicine Bow National Forest. In 1929, construction began on the main lodge, a one-and-a-half-story, 50' by 100' log building. The building was built by faculty, staff, and students.



University of Wyoming Science Camp, Albany County, ca. 1930 (American Heritage Center #ah100534, Digital Collection, University of Wyoming)

From 1937 to 1939, Works Progress Administration crews also assisted with construction at the camp. Forty log dormitory cabins, four lecture and laboratory buildings, and a hydro-electric plant that furnished power for lighting and electrical appliances were added.

During its fifty years of operation, the Science Camp attracted thousands of students from around the nation and the world. The camp was discontinued after Knight's death in 1975, and the property is now in private ownership.

### **Wyoming Community Colleges**

Wyoming's seven community colleges date from 1945 to 1969, and are strategically located to serve all counties of the state. They reflect the huge increase in college enrollment after the war, spurred in part by the GI Bill. Several colleges initially opened in high schools before acquiring and building their own campuses.



Casper College, Natrona County

Casper College, established in 1945, opened its new campus in 1955; the buildings, designed by Goodrich & Wilking of Casper and Robert Wehrli Associated Architects, were inspired by the International style. The main building, a two-story sandstone building, features a flat roof and horizontal bands of windows. Goodrich & Wilking also designed Sheridan College's first campus building the Whitney Building, which opened in 1959. Northwest College, established 1946, finally acquired its own campus and began a building program with the construction of the Nelson Performing Arts Center in 1960. A year after Central Wyoming College was established in 1966, the University of Wyoming leased its Sinks Canyon experimental farm to CWC and the college's Field Station was established. CWC's first campus buildings in Riverton were built in 1968. Eastern Wyoming College, established 1948, constructed its first campus buildings in 1968. Western Wyoming College, established 1959, began construction on its campus buildings in 1969. Laramie County Community College, established 1968, has its main campus in Cheyenne, a Laramie campus and outreach centers at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne and in Pine Bluffs where the college leases space in the 1929 Historic Pine Bluffs High School, listed on the National Register.



Western Wyoming College, Rock Springs, Sweetwater County

All of these colleges have buildings that are substantial works of architecture that warrant consideration for historic and architectural significance in the future; however, only the campuses at Casper and Sheridan, the Nelson Performing Arts Center at Northwest College, and the Central Wyoming College Field Station at Sinks Canyon are currently old enough to be considered for the National Register of Historic Places.



Wind River Industrial School for Indian Children (1884) (Denver Public Library)

## **IX. Federal Government Schools**

In addition to guiding the educational efforts of the states and funding specific educational programs to be carried out by states or local school districts, the federal government built and ran its own schools. Schools were established by the U.S. military at the early Wyoming forts. From 1871 to 1960, the federal government also built and operated schools on Indian reservations and internment camps in Wyoming.

### **Indian Schools**

Schools for Indian students were often established, built, and operated by religious organizations, with support from the federal government. Indian schools in Wyoming were all established on the Wind River Reservation north of Lander, where Shoshone Indians have resided since 1868 and Arapaho since 1877. Although it has been documented that school was first held on the reservation in 1871, the first known building constructed as a school was the one-and-one-half story adobe building constructed in 1884 on Trout Creek, southwest of Fort Washakie. Father John Roberts was the first superintendent. This government boarding school, named the Wind River Industrial School for Indian Children, enrolled about fifty Shoshone and Arapaho boys and girls the first year. A new government boarding school (Wind River Industrial School for Indian Children) was built in 1892 and the former Trout Creek adobe government boarding school building was used as an agency office until it and many other agency buildings were destroyed by fire in 1906. In 1940 the Fort Washakie Government School (Wind River Government Boarding School) changed to a day school, and in 1955 its lands and buildings were transferred to Fremont County School District #21. At this time, the school building was torn down and replaced with a new school building, Fort Washakie Elementary School, which is operating today.



Wind River Industrial School for Indian Children, Fremont County (J.E. Stimson, 1903, Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources)

School buildings were also constructed on the reservation by the Episcopal and Catholic churches. Father John Roberts of the Episcopal Diocese established "The Roberts Episcopal Mission Boarding School for Shoshone Girls" (also called the Shoshone Agency Boarding School) in 1887. Chief Washakie of the Shoshone Indians donated land for the Shoshone Agency Boarding School and a two-story building was constructed of bricks made on the grounds of the mission. The original building included the dormitory and chapel; the classroom was added later. To combat homesickness, a circular cabin of logs in the fashion of a tipi was built in the mission yard, and the girls were allowed to practice their native songs and dances in the tipi during the hour between supper and evening prayers. The school operated for 55 years, until 1945, and the building, which is still standing, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.



The Roberts Episcopal Mission Boarding School for Shoshone Girls, Fremont County (Mark Junge, 1972, State Historic Preservation Office)

Between 1910 and 1917 Rev. Roberts constructed the new St. Michael's Mission and Arapaho school. The mission buildings were placed in a circle: the church, Our Father's House (the 1900 log Episcopal Church which was moved to the new mission grounds in 1920), a two-story boys' dormitory and dining room, a two-story school building, and several cottages where groups of girls lived. Today there are eleven buildings remaining on the site; the school burned down in 1953, and the boy's dormitory burned down in 1956. St. Michael's Mission was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.



St. Michael's Mission, Fremont County (State Historic Preservation Office)

In 1884, Father John J. Jutz, a Jesuit priest, began building a mission house at St. Stephens, with timber hauled from the mountains 35 miles away and bricks made by hand on site. Soon after the mission house was completed, a generous gift was received to help finance the construction of a convent, completed in 1888. It was a large three story brick building with a basement where the earliest students boarded and attended school. In 1975, almost one hundred years after the school was established at St. Stephens, the mission administration was forced by lack of funds to cease operations, and control of the facility was transferred to the St. Stephens Indian School Educational Association, a local Native American corporation. The convent building is still standing and the school is now a K-12 school that blends academics with pride and respect for Native culture.



St. Stephens Convent and Boarding School, Fremont County (Richard Alessandro, 1983, State Historic Preservation Office)



Heart Mountain High School Students, Park County, ca. 1943 (Clayton Fraser Collection)

### **Internment Camp Schools**

On December 7, 1941, the United States was surprised by the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese Empire. Within two months of Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which gave the Army power to uproot both aliens and citizens of Japanese descent from their homes, for the professed purpose of wartime necessity. The federal government tried to locate sites in the interior of the country for open-gated resettlement communities, but state governments resisted and instead demanded incarceration in “concentration camps” with guard towers and barbed wire. These camps were constructed to include barracks for the internees, kitchens, recreation centers, schools, health centers, and other buildings needed for their incarceration. Internees were held until January 2, 1945, when they were released to find homes and jobs and try to rebuild their lives.



Arriving at Heart Mountain, Park County, ca. 1943 (Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources)

On August 12, 1942, the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Park County, Wyoming, received its first Japanese-Americans internees. Heart Mountain became Wyoming’s third largest city with nearly 14,000 internees in its tar-paper barracks surrounded by barbed-wire enclosures.



Internment camp schools were run by the federal government, which hired the principals and teachers. Classes at Heart Mountain were conducted starting in October, 1942 in six-room barracks, with each room heated by a coal stove and lighted by a single light fixture hanging from the exposed rafters. Initially there were five elementary schools at Heart Mountain, but these were eventually consolidated into two schools, Lincoln and Washington Schools. A new high school building was completed on May 27, 1943, and was constructed for the most part by the internees themselves. The one-story, E-shaped building was frame construction sheathed with gray wallboard, with an interior finished in plywood and celotex. The building housed 39 classrooms, a library, a home economics room, a machine shop, a wood shop and a combination auditorium/gymnasium which seated 700 for basketball games and 1,100 for stage productions.



**Heart Mountain School's Concrete Vault** (State Historic Preservation Office)

Most of the land at the former Heart Mountain Relocation Center is now under cultivation, and few buildings remain. However, a concrete records vault believed to be part of the former high school still stands on private land. A portion of the Heart Mountain Relocation Center site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a National Historic Landmark.



State Industrial School (1915), Washakie County (Clayton Fraser Collection)

## X. State Government Schools

As early as 1886, Wyoming recognized the need for schools to educate students with mental or physical handicaps. The territorial legislature that year created a commission authorized to establish a school for the blind, deaf, and dumb in the territory. The commission purchased a block of land in Cheyenne in 1887 and erected a building for the school at 604 E. 25th Street, which is still standing. The building was cottage style 53 x 29 feet, and thirty-seven feet high from the concrete foundation to the apex of the ventilator. The school never opened, however, and the property was instead used for other governmental activities. A separate school for the deaf was not established in Wyoming until 1963.



Original School built for the Blind (1887), Cheyenne, Laramie County (Richard Collier, 2009, State Historic Preservation Office)

As Wyoming's educational system developed and education became more universal, the needs of these students became more apparent. The 1907 legislature passed a law calling for the creation of the "Wyoming Home for the Feeble-minded and Epileptic." The school opened in

Lander in 1912 as the “Wyoming School for Defectives.” In 1919 the facility’s name was changed to the Wyoming Training School; it is now known as the Wyoming Life Resource Center. The campus just east of Lander contains many Colonial-Revival-style buildings dating from 1912 through the 1960s.



Wyoming State Training School (1912), Fremont County, 1935 (Clayton Fraser Collection)

In 1911, the Wyoming legislature passed a law establishing a “Reform Institution,” originally called the Wyoming Industrial Institute, to serve and house young male felons. The school, now known as the Wyoming Boys’ School, has operated on the same site near Worland since 1915.



Wyoming State Boys School, ca. 1920, Worland, Washakie County (Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources)

A Girls’ Industrial Institute (Wyoming Girls’ School) was opened in Sheridan in 1923. Although no longer operated by the State Board of Education, these four institutions have

provided educational opportunities to Wyoming children since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Of the three, only the Wyoming Training School retains its historic campus.



Wyoming Girls School (1923), Sheridan, Sheridan County (Clayton Fraser Collection)



Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School (1952), Rock Springs (Mary Humstone, 2007)

## **XI. Parochial and Private Schools**

More than twenty private and parochial schools were established in Wyoming between 1868 and 1960. The Catholic Church has maintained the largest number of parochial schools in the state, with ten schools (excluding Indian schools) opened between 1878 and 1960, five of which continue to operate today. Other parochial schools were built by the Baptist, Congregational, Episcopal, Latter Day Saints, and Disciples of Christ churches; however, none of these is in operation today.

### **Catholic Schools**

The Roman Catholic Church began establishing schools in southern Wyoming soon after the arrival of the Union Pacific Railroad. Although many of these were short-lived, one church established in Cheyenne in 1886 (St. Mary's) continues to operate a grade school today. The Academy of Holy Child of Jesus' constructed their school just east of the Capitol in 1886. In 1933 the school changed hands with St. Mary's Parish establishing St. Mary's Academy in the building. This building was demolished in 1952 and a new grade school and high school were built, and these were demolished in 2009 when the property was transferred to the state. A new school was built several blocks east of St. Mary's in 2008.



Wyoming State Capitol, foreground; Academy of Holy Child of Jesus (1886), background (J.E. Stimson, 1906, Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources)



Academy of Holy Child of Jesus (1886), Cheyenne, Laramie County (J.E. Stimson, 1906, Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources)

Most of the existing Catholic schools in the state date from 1951 to 1956. During this period the number of Catholic schools in Wyoming almost doubled, due in large part to a \$3,000,000 building program begun in 1947 under the auspices of Patrick Aloysius McGovern, bishop of the Diocese of Cheyenne from 1912 to 1951. New school buildings were built in Cheyenne, Laramie, Rawlins, and Rock Springs, and additions to the Casper and Sheridan elementary schools were constructed. Three of these mid-20<sup>th</sup> century schools and one gymnasium were designed by the architectural firm of Kellogg and Kellogg of Cheyenne and Rock Springs, who also designed public schools, government buildings, and several buildings on the University of Wyoming campus. Currently there are eight Catholic schools in Wyoming that are run by the diocese: Gillette's John Paul II School, Riverton's St. Margaret's School, Sheridan's Holy Name School, Casper's St. Anthony Tri-Parish School, Rock Springs Holy Spirit Catholic School,

Torrington's St. Joseph Children's Home School, Laramie's St. Laurence School, and Cheyenne's St. Mary's School.

### **Other Parochial Schools**

Several other parochial schools opened but none are operating today. The buildings of three of those schools, however, are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Big Horn Academy was organized by the Latter-Day Saints Church Board of Education and opened in Lovell in 1909. The school later moved into the 1907 stone schoolhouse built by the Mormons in Cowley. In 1916, this school was replaced by a new building built from stone quarried from the hills to the north of town. The Academy was operated as a church school until 1924, when its facilities were transferred to School District No. 28 and it became Cowley High School. In 1983 the Big Horn Academy was closed.



Big Horn Academy (1916) and its Cowley Gymnasium (1936), Cowley, Big Horn County (Richard Collier, 1985, State Historic Preservation Office)

St. Matthews Church in Laramie operated two successful boarding schools, the Cathedral School for Girls and the Cathedral School for Boys. Jane Ivinson Hall Cathedral School for Girls was opened in the Edward Ivinson Mansion in Laramie in 1921. The Ivinsons' spacious home and carriage house constructed in 1892 were remodeled for the school. In 1924 a third building, Virginia Cottage, was built, adding a gymnasium, recreation hall, stage, dressing rooms, rooms for music students and a dormitory to the girls' school campus. The school closed in 1958 and was purchased by the Laramie Plains Museum in 1972.



Jane Iverson Hall Cathedral School for Girls, Laramie, Albany County (State Historic Preservation Office)

Sherwood Hall, the Cathedral School for Boys at Laramie, opened in 1924. Sherwood Hall, on the grounds of St. Matthew's Cathedral, was designed by architect Walter Thomas of Philadelphia and erected under the supervision of Wilbur Hitchcock of Laramie. The L-shaped building is built of native stone and stucco-covered clay tile and is Gothic Revival in style. The building, now known as Hunter Hall, is a contributing building in the St. Matthew's Cathedral Close Historic District.



Cathedral School for Boys, Sherwood Hall, Laramie, Albany County (State Historic Preservation Office)

### **Private schools**

Judge W. A. Carter established in 1860 Wyoming's first private school for his children at Fort Bridger. In 1869 George Lancaster established another private school in Laramie, but closed after a few years. In 1875, 25 pupils were enrolled in the private school of a Miss Ellis in Cheyenne, and in 1876 Miss Annie B. DeLany opened a "select day school" at the Rectory School House in Cheyenne, for children between six and 12 years old. Miss DeLany also



announced that on Saturdays she would conduct a “class for little girls in sewing, embroidery, miniature dress making, and general deportment.”

The Valley Ranch School for Boys at Valley, Park County, began in 1922 as a college preparatory school, and was the first ranch preparatory school in the northwest. The school was founded by Irving Larom, a 1913 graduate of Princeton University, who believed that providing an eastern curriculum in a western setting would be of interest to young men who wished to combine riding, fishing and hunting with a first-class education. Larom purchased the former Leg Creek School building in Valley in 1919 for his school, and the school operated for 12 years until the Depression forced its closure.



Cheyenne High School, ca. 1910

## XII. School Architecture

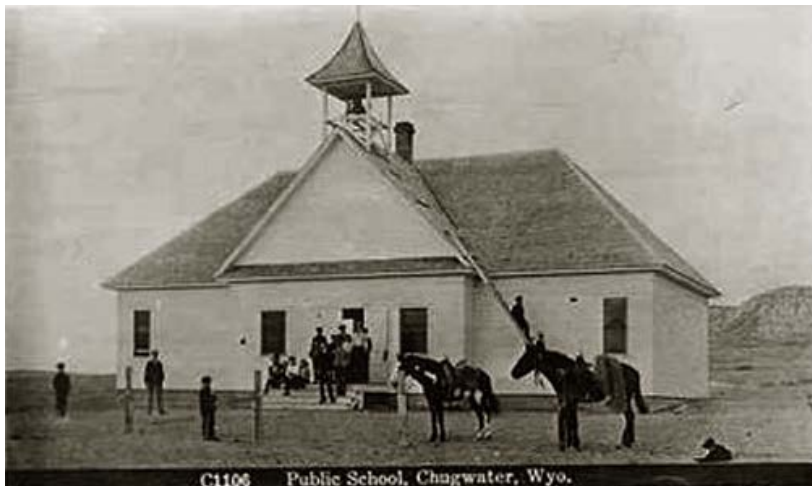
Facilities for educating children—schools— have been in existence in America since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. During the 1830s, reformers began campaigning for better educational facilities. Among the earliest and most influential of these was William A. Alcott, who published his *Essay on the Construction of School-Houses* in 1832. Alcott's model classroom has served since that time as the generally accepted prototype for school buildings, both rural and urban: a rectangular space roughly 25' by 35', characterized by large windows and high ceilings, individual students' desks arranged in lines facing the teacher, and open settings with adjacent playgrounds. His school is generally considered to be the characteristic form of American schoolhouse, recognizable to the present.



South Pass School (1910) (Jack Boucher, 1974, State Historic Preservation Office) and Classroom, South Pass City, Fremont County (Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources)

As settlement in America continued westward in the mid-19th century, newly formed school districts could refer to an expanding array of pattern books in designing their schoolhouses. Interiors tended to be simple, vernacular spaces, featuring open classrooms with high ceilings—up to ten or twelve feet—surfaced by plaster, wood planks or pressed metal sheets. Floors in all but the meanest schoolhouses were wood planks, and the walls were typically plaster or boards, often lined with baseboards, chair rails and/or vertical-plank wainscots. Windows and doors were wood, with double-hung sash and paneled doors set in simple woodwork frames. Blackboards made of slate stone slabs, painted wood or liquid slate—a skim top coat of dense plaster, usually painted—often lined the back and side walls. The spaces were typically filled with rows of desks facing blank or blackboard back walls.

The exteriors were, like the interiors, simple. Most rural schools were simple rectangular boxes, single story with few, if any, projections or wings to complicate their footprints. Applied ornamentation was generally viewed with a degree of suspicion—an act of unnecessary extravagance on behalf of the school district. Materials on the exterior walls included horizontally placed logs (both round and hewn), clapboards or cove siding installed over balloon or platform frames, brick masonry, or combinations of the above. The schools tended toward symmetry, with a single-leaf entrance centered on the front wall, windows aligned singly or grouped on the side walls and blank rear walls.



Public School, Chugwater, Platte County (<http://www.wyomingtalesandtrails.com/swan2.html>)

Roofs were typically moderately pitched front gables or hips, sheathed with wooden shingles and displaying moderate overhangs with plain-board rafters and eaves. These roofs were generally punctuated with masonry or iron pipe chimneys centered on the ridge line, and sometimes with wood frame bell towers or cupolas toward the fronts. Most 19<sup>th</sup> century rural schoolhouses eschewed architectural features beyond modest entrance surrounds or gable treatments.



Buffalo Central School, 1886

Wyoming's early schools followed these architectural trends. While Wyoming's rural one-room schools almost universally featured vernacular construction and design that lacked architectural features, the town schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century displayed much faster evolution and much greater diversity. The first generation schools, illustrated by the rough frame buildings in Cheyenne, Laramie and Rock Springs, were typically makeshift affairs, built by emerging school districts or through popular subscriptions. The second generation, as illustrated by the Central Schools in Cheyenne, Casper, Buffalo, and East Side School in Laramie, were often larger, more substantial and, with architects' involvement in the design process, more stylistically sophisticated. Many primary and secondary schools in the towns were two stories in height. And they tended to rely more on masonry construction, either brick or stone. Their exterior walls were punctuated at regular intervals by large multi-pane windows with double-hung wooden sash. The typical town school featured a symmetrical configuration, with a single- or double-leaf main entrance centered on the façade. This was often enframed by a decorative wood surround with transoms and/or sidelights and capped by prominent three- or four-story central tower. Both primary and secondary schools were organized spatially with classrooms aligned symmetrically along double-loaded hallways that extended the depth of the buildings. Most importantly, the school districts had begun employing architects to design their buildings, with the result that they displayed a wide range of architectural expression.



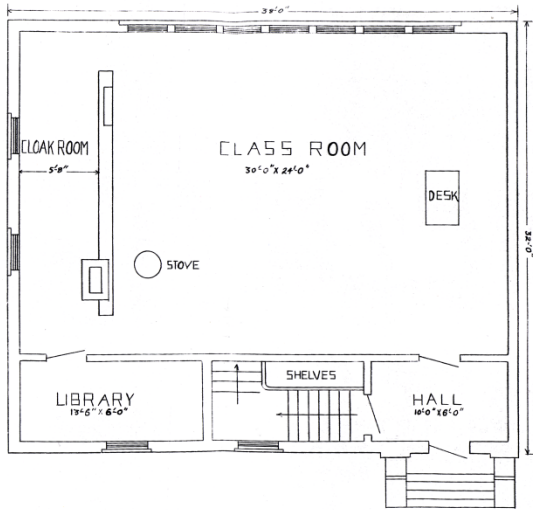
Rawlins High School (1887), with rear addition under construction, 1916 (Wyoming State Archives)

Richardsonian Romanesque and Chateausque architectural styles were employed by some early Wyoming architects for school buildings. Developed by architect Henry Hobson Richardson, Richardsonian Romanesque featured bold forms and robust detailing, with an emphasis on ponderous weight created by massive masonry walls and steeply pitched rooflines. Rawlins High School, designed by Denver architect Fred E. Hale, erected its Richardsonian Romanesque sandstone three-story building in 1887. Hale also constructed Old Main (1887) at the University of Wyoming, in the Chateausque style.



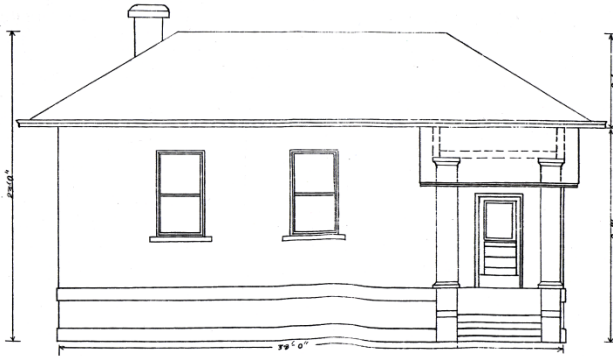
Old Main (1887), Laramie, Albany County (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

In 1919 the Better Schools Conference issued its first bulletin of “Building Suggestions for Rural and Village Schools” to the county superintendents and rural district boards of Wyoming. The bulletin featured a standard design for a 32’ by 38’ rectangular frame structure with a hipped roof, a corner entrance that had a small “hall” or entrance vestibule, a cloakroom and a small library, a 24’ by 30’ classroom with a free-standing woodstove and brick chimney in the rear corner; and a bank of double-hung windows on one side of the classroom with two windows on the back and other side.



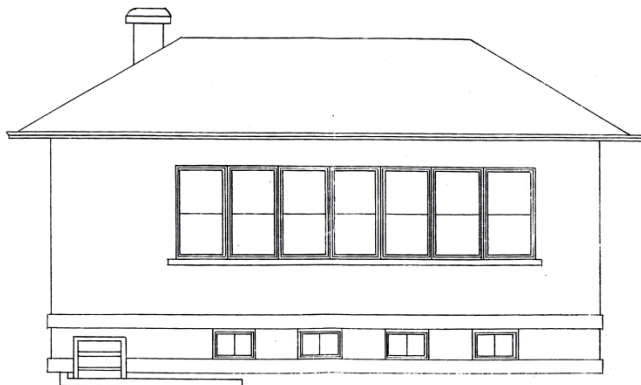
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Standard School Floor Plan, 1919



FRONT ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

Standard School Front Elevation, 1919



REAR ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

Standard School Rear Elevation, 1919

School design, long the purview of the local districts, had by the 1920s become more professionalized in the state, with architects involved in the development of many of the state's high schools and even some of the urban elementary schools. The Natrona County High School

is an imposing Collegiate Gothic edifice designed in 1924 by Garbutt, Weidner & Sweeney, Casper's most prominent architects. The ascendance of the Collegiate Gothic style coincided with a rapid expansion of college campuses that occurred after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, making it the style of choice among campus architects throughout the country. The style eventually filtered down through secondary and elementary schools and enjoyed long-standing popularity among American architects.



Natrona County High School, Casper (Clayton Fraser Collection)



Mabel Fincher School (1940), Cheyenne, with Art Deco details (Jim Flesher, 2010)

The Great Depression placed enormous financial pressure on Wyoming's school districts; however, the Work Projects Administration and the Public Works Administration contributed massive amounts of money toward building schools in Wyoming. Architects during the Depression worked in a range of stylistic modes for Wyoming's schools that ranged from the venerable Classical Revival and Collegiate Gothic to a new style that resulted from the hybridization of classical and modern motifs. Generally termed the starved classical style or

Depression Moderne, it embraced the tenets of the emerging Art Deco and Moderne styles (and a decade later the International style), to form buildings with modern sensibilities that were relatively unembellished by ornamentation and austere compared with their classical predecessors. The most outstanding example of a school rendered in this Depression-era style was the Green River High School, a large, two-story, flat-roofed structure, with banks of double-hung and glass block windows and a stylized terra cotta entrance surround.



Lincoln High School (1942), Green River, Sweetwater County (Mary Humstone, 2007)

World War II effectively slowed school construction in Wyoming, but after the war, new schools were built in large numbers across the state. These generally featured a new streamlined aesthetic, with an emphasis on horizontality, flat roofs, large banks of aluminum-framed windows, and—as always—relatively austere use of applied ornamentation. Numerous schools in Wyoming remain from this period, which continues in modified form to the present.



South Side Elementary School (1955), Worland, Washakie County (Mary Humstone, 2007)





Evanston Grade School, ca. 1890

### **XIII. Timeline of Wyoming School History**

- 1852 First recorded school in Wyoming established for the children of officers and traders at Fort Laramie.
- 1860 Judge W. A. Carter established Wyoming's second school, a private school, at Fort Bridger.
- 1868 Wyoming Territory created on July 25, 1868 by the Organic Act, which stipulated that sections 16 and 36 in each township be reserved for purposes of public schools. The first "public" school – available to all students but paid for by subscription - opened in Cheyenne.
- 1869 Subscription public schools opened in Laramie and Rawlins. First Territorial Assembly passed school code creating system for public schools. Office of county superintendent of schools was created, and the territorial auditor was designated "ex officio" superintendent of public instruction.
- 1870 Subscription public school opened in Evanston, and private school opened at South Pass. Census listed four public schools and five day and boarding schools in the territory.
- 1871 Office of state superintendent abolished; county superintendents reported directly to governor. First report on public education made to legislature. First school for Indian children opened by the Episcopal Church in an old log building at Fort Washakie on the Wind River Indian Reservation.
- 1873 New school code adopted by state legislature, with state librarian new ex-officio superintendent of public instruction. Law also provided for compulsory education for all children ages seven through sixteen and annual teachers' institutes. Territory reported total of eight public schools and three private schools.
- 1875 First public high school in Wyoming organized in Cheyenne.
- 1878 East Side School opened in Laramie. The two-story brick school is now the oldest public school in the state. Territory reported 2,090 students taught by forty-nine teachers in twenty-five school buildings.

- 1879 Fort school established at Fort Washakie.
- 1884 School building for Shoshone and Arapaho students, a one-and-a-half-story adobe building, constructed on Trout Creek southwest of Fort Washakie on the Wind River Indian Reservation.
- 1886 University of Wyoming founded in Laramie. Legislature appropriated \$50,000 for construction of University Hall (now Old Main). First (private) kindergarten established in Cheyenne.
- 1887 Forty-two students, ages 12 to 23, entered the University of Wyoming, which had a faculty of seven professors. A Preparatory School was founded at the university to provide secondary education for students not served by a high school in their home area. The Roberts Episcopal Mission Boarding School for Shoshone Girls was established on the Wind River Reservation.
- 1888 The Sisters of Charity from Leavenworth, Kansas arrived to start an Indian boarding school in their convent at St. Stephens on the Wind River Indian Reservation. The school was run by the Catholic Church until 1975.
- 1890 Wyoming became a state. State constitution required the office of state superintendent of public instruction to be one of five statewide elected positions.
- 1891 Wyoming State Teachers' Association established. It was reorganized in 1904 and still exists as the Wyoming Education Association.
- 1895 Five high schools in the state were listed as being accredited by the University of Wyoming: Buffalo, Cheyenne, Evanston, Rawlins and Sundance. Legislature provided for establishment and financing of public kindergartens.
- 1899 State Board of Examiners created and charged with preparing uniform examinations for teacher certification.
- 1900 High schools had been established in every county in the state.
- 1901 Legislature provided for free textbooks in all public schools. Uinta County erected twenty new rural school houses, fourteen of them frame buildings.
- 1905 Statewide, 18,902 students attended 716 schools, taught by 797 teachers.
- 1910 Statewide, 24,584 students attended 1,004 schools, taught by 1,109 teachers. Work began on a new school for Arapaho children at St. Michael's Mission.
- 1911 Legislature mandated the establishment of the Wyoming Industrial Institute (now Wyoming Boys' School) in Worland for delinquent boys. Institute opened in 1915.
- 1912 "State School for Defectives" (now Wyoming Life Resource Center) opened in Lander.
- 1913 12th Legislature provided for the creation of School District Boundary Boards and a fairer distribution of the county tax to rural districts; made it compulsory for all teachers to attend the County Teachers' Institute; and required the state superintendent of public instruction to prepare a course of study for the state with the county superintendents responsible for seeing that all schools used it.
- 1914 Park County reported that five wagons were being used to transport 125 pupils to a consolidated school in Powell.
- 1915 School Code Committee established by legislature to study school conditions and recommend legislation. The Department of Public Instruction published Building Suggestions for Rural and Village Schools and a Department of Rural Education was established at the University of Wyoming to train teachers for better rural schools. Classes were established in Rock Springs, Kemmerer, Superior, Cheyenne and Sunrise for foreigners wanting to become U.S. citizens.
- 1916 Newspapers throughout the U.S. gave prominence to the "Wyoming Plan" high school military training program. U.S. Bureau of Education completed the Educational Survey of Wyoming that reported the state's lack of standards, inadequacy of school laws, and certain constitutional limitations.

- 1917 New State Department of Education and non-partisan Board of Education established by the legislature. Passage of the Smith-Hughes Act provided federal funds for vocational education; a Department of Vocational Education was established within the State Department of Education, and Lander began construction of the state's first vocational high school. The UW College of Education built a Rural Demonstration School on the Laramie campus to train teachers for rural schools.
- 1918 "Better Schools Conference" held in Laramie, resulting in standardization guidelines for rural schools. 276 teachers enrolled in summer school program offered by University of Wyoming's College of Education. State superintendent of public instruction directed war work in the schools, including Food Conservation, War Savings, Liberty Bonds and Junior Red Cross work.
- 1919 Rural school standardization program created; Royal Valley School in Niobrara County was the first school to achieve the "Standard" designation. State reported a serious shortage of teachers with 227 schools without teachers by Oct. 1, 1919. Division of Special Education created, and Director of Special Classes hired. State Department of Education began publication of the monthly Wyoming Educational Bulletin.
- 1920 Twenty schools met the requirements and received the yellow and brown shield inscribed with the words "Standard School." Establishment of the Oil Royalties Fund by the U.S. Congress provided a return of 37.5% to the state, half of which went to public schools. Legislature began effort to increase high school enrollment by mandating that school districts without a high school pay for their students to attend high school in another district.
- 1921 Legislature passed a Consolidation Law and provided for Americanization education. The first statewide record of school bus transportation showed 159 bus routes transporting 2,118 children. Civilian Vocational Rehabilitation Division was established to provide educational help to handicapped youth and adults.
- 1922 State Board of Education adopted first accreditation standards for high schools, and 38 schools were accredited. Sixty-four rural schools were classified as Standard Schools. University of Wyoming adopted its first campus plan which established a quadrangle of buildings on the perimeter of an open space, later known as Prexy's Pasture.
- 1923 Legislature established the Girls' Industrial Institute (later Wyoming Girls' School) as a school for delinquent girls. The school opened in Sheridan in 1925.
- 1924 Passage of the Snyder Act of 1924 required the Office of Indian Affairs to reorganize all its day schools and smaller reservation boarding schools on a six-grade basis to facilitate the transfer of Indian pupils from the federal schools to the state public schools. The new Natrona County High School opened in Casper.
- 1925 Division of Rural Education created in the State Department of Education. UW's Knight Science Camp was established in the Medicine Bow Range west of Laramie. State Board of Education adopted standards for junior high schools. 220 out of the 1,226 rural schools were designated "Standard."
- 1928 Wyoming was third in the nation for percentage of students enrolled in high school.
- 1929 Position of State Supervisor for the Deaf and Blind established within the State Department of Education. McCormick Junior High School, the first school building in Wyoming designed specifically as a junior high school, opened in Cheyenne.
- 1930 State reported 141 accredited high schools. Forty-two percent of rural children were transported to school.
- 1931 Standards for "Superior" rural schools were established. Four schools achieve Superior designation.
- 1932 State Board of Education revised its standards for high schools and junior high schools. Commissioner of Education inspected 127 high schools to determine their classification and to decide which were entitled to state aid from the Government Oil Royalty Fund.

- 1933 Public Works Administration established as part of President Roosevelt's New Deal. In six years, Wyoming received funding for 29 educational facilities projects.
- 1934 Wyoming reported a total of 385 school districts. There were 1,033 rural schools--934 one-room schools, 349 "Standard Schools" and 4 "Superior Schools."
- 1935 Works Progress Administration (WPA) established as part of President Roosevelt's New Deal. WPA funded the construction of 21 new schools and school additions in Wyoming, and 92 school reconstruction/improvement projects. Legislature established first equalization fund to help poorer districts provide adequate education.
- 1936 Students enrolled in vocational agriculture programs performed 167 services for farmers and 125 services for communities. The Liberal Arts (now Arts and Sciences) Building at the University of Wyoming was completed with help from a loan from the PWA.
- 1938 First "Wyoming Trade School," an all-day trade school organized by the University of Wyoming's Engineering Department, opened in Laramie.
- 1939 The Wyoming Union on the UW campus was completed by WPA workers aided by UW students.
- 1940 Congress provided a grant to the State Department of Education to fund "National Defense Training in the Trade and Industrial Field."
- 1941 "Victory Corps Program" launched to train out of school rural youth for the defense industry. By 1944 this program was known as the "Food Production War Training" program and had expanded to courses focusing on repair of farm equipment and commodity production.
- 1942 Schools for Japanese youth internees opened in six-room barracks buildings at Heart Mountain Relocation Center, Park County.
- 1943 High school enrollment dropped to its lowest level since 1930, as young people left school to work or join the armed forces. UW enrollment dropped to 662 from a pre-war high of 2,110.
- 1945 Future Homemakers of America clubs established for high school homemaking pupils.
- 1946 National School Lunch Act passed by Congress to ensure all students received at least one nutritious meal per day.
- 1947 Counties were pressured by the legislature to adjust of school district boundaries to create a more equitable tax base; eight such reorganizations are completed by 1948. Wyoming School Lunch Program established in the State Department of Education.
- 1954 State Department of Education adopted criteria for classifying all types of elementary schools (rural, town and urban. 15 junior high schools are accredited by the state.
- 1955 In a continued effort to equalize educational opportunity, the State Department of Education established a new School Foundation Fund to distribute funds to needy districts.
- 1957 Wyoming legislature passed the Emergency School Construction Act (SL 1957, Ch. 95), which allocated \$1 million for school construction.
- 1958 National Defense Education Act (NDEA) provided funding for education to improve American students' skills in math, science, and engineering at all levels, from elementary school through college. Wyoming school districts are eligible to apply for funding from the program the following year.
- 1959 Legislature created the Wyoming School for the Deaf in Casper. A school building for deaf students was finally constructed in 1963.
- 1960 State Department of Education, in cooperation with the University of Wyoming and other partners, completed a comprehensive survey of all schools in the state. Overview Magazine announced that Wyoming was 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation in school accomplishments, based on 20 points of educational measurement. Eighty one-room schools closed between 1958 and 1960.

- 1981 East Side School in Laramie was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The threat of demolition rallied citizens who pressed the county to create the Laramie Plains Civic Center in the building.
- 2002 Legislature created the School Facilities Commission, providing state control of school construction for the first time in the state's history.



Teacher and students outside Teton School, Teton County (Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum)



"This Place Matters" Natrona County High School (Mary Humstone, 2010)

## SCHOOL PRESERVATION

### **XIV. Historic and Present Roles of Schools in Wyoming Communities**

The school has always played a central role in the life of the community. Citizens came together to form a school, taxed themselves to build and support a school, participated in decisions about the school building, and often helped to maintain and repair it. Parents could decide to move a school from one area to another based on where the pupils lived, or could decide to open a school in the bunkhouse of their ranch. Because of this, they considered the school theirs and not just a building owned by the county. Especially in rural communities, schools have traditionally been the center of social life. Often the school was (and still is) the only building large enough

to accommodate religious services, plays, dances, fund raisers, weddings, funerals, club meetings, voting, and other community endeavors.

The Territorial Legislature of 1876 formally acknowledged the central role of the school building by granting to the local school districts the authority to use public school buildings for other than regular day school purposes. Community use of school buildings has been justified as a way to allow the community to reap the greatest possible return on its investment of tax dollars to build schools, and as a matter of economic efficiency to avoid building duplicate community facilities such as gymnasiums and auditoriums.



Amerization Class, 1925-26, South Superior, Wyo.

Amerization Class, South Superior, Sweetwater County, 1925-26 (Superintendent of Public Instruction Biennial Report, 1926)

In the Progressive era, schools were routinely used for evening classes for immigrants, who received training in English and American citizenship. As the state's vocational education programs expanded, so did after-school and weekend use of school facilities for adult vocational education classes such as vocational agriculture, industrial trades and home economics.

Today, in larger towns, use of the school by the community has declined for a number of reasons. Many larger towns in the state have their own auditoriums, events centers, recreation centers, senior centers, community centers, and other facilities, so that the school is no longer the only option for recreation and large community events. Safety concerns have discouraged use of school buildings by non-school groups. In some communities, even voting, traditionally an activity that took place in schools, has been moved to other locations. The demise of neighborhood schools has also contributed to this trend. Large consolidated schools on the outskirts of town (often referred to as "sprawl schools") are not convenient for neighborhood social and political events.

In cities and towns that have retained their older, multi-story school buildings, the school has taken on added architectural importance as a local landmark and symbol of the community.

Natrona County High School (NCHS) in Casper, with its Collegiate Gothic tower, is perhaps the state's finest example of this. Typical of high schools of the 1920s and 1930s, NCHS has a handsome auditorium that is still commonly used for concerts, theater and other community events.

In most rural areas and small towns, the school remains the center of community life, and there are a number of small communities in Wyoming – Arvada, Albin and Granger to name a few – that are threatened with extinction due to the closing of their school or the replacement of their commodious older school building with a smaller building that lacks a large assembly room.

Once a school is no longer used as a school, its fate is uncertain. Especially in cities and towns, school buildings represent a significant investment of state and local funds and an attention to architectural style and detail that makes them stand out as community landmarks. Once the school has closed, the school building becomes a good candidate for adaptive use. About 60 of the 400 Wyoming school buildings included in the "Historical Context Study of Schools in Wyoming Database" have been adaptively used. A sampling of uses includes fraternal organizations (Green River, Lusk, Lander), community centers (Pine Bluffs, Laramie, Ralston), youth center (Evanston), school district administration (Cheyenne, Evanston), Boys and Girls Club (Laramie), residences or apartments (Laramie), mixed commercial use (Green River), Head Start (Rock Springs), senior center (Newcastle, Green River), healthcare facility (Cheyenne) and church (Casper). Some former public schools are used as private schools or alternative schools.



Ralston Community Hall, Park County, former school, 1914 (State Historic Preservation Office)





Former Green River elementary school, now a Masonic Lodge (Mary Humstone, 2006)

In the past, when a rural school was abandoned, local residents would often acquire or move the building for a residence, business, ranch outbuilding, or for use by an organization such as the Grange. While some rural schoolhouses have been adapted for mundane uses such as bunkhouses, chicken coops, or even a “windbreak,” others have been moved to museum grounds, where they are restored and used to interpret local school history. The Little Blue School located at Five Mile Flat in Sheridan County was moved to the grounds of the Tongue River Elementary School in Ranchester and outfitted by local residents with early school furnishings such as desks, pictures, books, maps, and other teaching aids. The school is used as part of the teaching program in Sheridan County, especially for fourth grade students studying Wyoming history. Other examples of rural schools moved to museum grounds are found in Lander, Big Piney, Fort Bridger and Centennial.



Owen School (Little Blue School), Moved to Ranchester, Sheridan County (Wyoming Cultural Sites Inventory Form, 1981, State Historic Preservation Office)

Several rural schools continue to play an important role as centers of community. An example of this is the Delfelder Consolidated School of Fremont County. After the school closed in 1929, the school building served as a community social center. In 1940 local residents formed the Delfelder Hall Association to acquire the Delfelder School for the use and benefit of the community. In addition to social events, the school building has been used as a polling place and for regular meetings by extension clubs, 4-H, and the Grange, which obtained a long-term lease on the building in 1968. The Delfelder School was listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its long history as a rural community meeting house, as well as its history as an early educational institution in the Riverton Valley.

Another example of a community use of a former rural school is the Pioneer School in Park County, one of the state's first Standard schools. The original school, built in 1914, was a one-story, wood-frame building with a raised concrete basement and a single large classroom. In 1953 a two-room teacherage was added to the building, with a combination living room and kitchen and a separate bedroom. In 1970, the school district deeded Pioneer School to the Pioneer Service Group to be used as a community center. The old Standard school has hosted benefits, reunions, and wedding and anniversary receptions, and still serves as a gathering place and landmark tying the community to its past.



Pioneer School (1914), Park County (State Historic Preservation Office)

With the creation of the Wyoming School Facilities Commission in 2002 and the subsequent evaluation of all district-owned school buildings in the state, many schools have been closed and many older school buildings have been demolished. Wyoming communities face difficult choices about what to do with the older and historic school buildings that remain.



Demolition of Sheridan High School (Mary Humstone)

## **XV. Impacts and Threats to Schools**

Wyoming's historic school buildings are threatened by a lack of participation in the decisions about school facilities; changes in enrollment resulting in school consolidations and closings; a general lack of awareness of preservation techniques; deferred maintenance of school buildings, and a lack of knowledge about the history and importance of schools. Following is an analysis of these impacts and threats.

- ***Lack of community voice in school facilities decisions***

Traditionally, citizens of a community taxed themselves to raise money to build or repair a school, so all the residents had a stake in the school building, and most were at least aware of what was being proposed. With the change in Wyoming from a district-based to a state – based system of school construction funding, citizen input is no longer required in decisions about school facilities.

- ***School consolidation and school closings***

School consolidation has been a controversial issue since the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and proposals to close and/or consolidate schools still threaten small communities trying to preserve their school as the center of community life. These issues often pit parents and teachers against state administrators and school district officials. Closure of a school often marks the beginning of the end for small communities.

- ***Lack of awareness and preservation experience***

Over the years, most Wyoming school buildings have been updated by remodeling and additions, and in the process the historic character of many of the state's oldest schools has been destroyed. A school with a construction date of 1915, such as the Lucerne Elementary School in Hot Springs County, may actually look like a school from the 1970s, with only a small area of brick wall and a window or two indicating that a portion of the building existed almost 100 years ago. There is a lack of awareness of the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings* and other sources that provide information on how to restore and adaptively reuse historic schools, while maintaining their historic character.



Lucerne Elementary School (1915), Hot Springs County (Mary Humstone, 2007)

Unlike some other states, Wyoming lacks figures on the comparative costs of renovation of schools versus new construction. Statements about the costs of renovation, the ability to insert new systems (especially new technology) into older buildings, and energy costs may be based on assumptions rather than actual investigation by a qualified preservation architect. Those who have not had direct experience with successful rehabilitation of older buildings often find it difficult to imagine that a rundown building with old-fashioned furnishings and fixtures can be renovated to serve the district's educational goals as well or better than a brand new building. Concerns about materials such as asbestos and lead paint, or the size of classrooms, or the lack of electrical outlets, can appear overwhelming to those who are not aware of how these deficiencies can be remedied.

- ***Deferred maintenance***

Most older school buildings in Wyoming suffer from deferred maintenance. Funding for maintenance has traditionally been problematic, since citizens are often less willing to tax themselves to pay for maintaining an existing building than for building a new building.

Communities that take over old school buildings struggle to raise the money to do needed repairs, as well as pay for regular maintenance.

- ***Lack of Historical Information***

Decisions about the fate of a school are often based on incomplete information about its history. It is difficult to piece together the history of individual rural school buildings in the state, or even in a single county. Schools are used for other functions, moved, and not referred to by specific names. Only a small percentage of older school buildings in Wyoming cities, towns and rural areas have been surveyed and evaluated for historic significance, making it difficult for citizens and officials alike to make informed decisions about which buildings are worth preserving.



Johnson Junior High School, Cheyenne, 1976

## **XVI. Is Your School Historic?**

For many people, their personal memories and those of their parents and friends are enough to make a school building important and worthy of preservation. However, memories alone do not constitute historic significance. The historic context of Wyoming schools attempts to go beyond the individual memories to the role that schools have played in educating Wyoming's children and adults, serving as centers of community life, and providing models of architecture that often enhance the built environment of the community. The historic context on Wyoming schools may be used to document why your school is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as well as why it is important to preserve it on the local level. The following schools are listed individually on the National Register or listed as contributing buildings to a National Register District and their nomination forms can be used as sources for historical documentation.

<b>County</b>	<b>Listed on National Register</b>	<b>Listed in a National Register District</b>
Albany	East Side School	
Albany	Lincoln School	
Albany.	Ivinson Hall Girls School	
Albany		Cathedral School for Boys (Sherwood Hall)
Big Horn	Lower Shell School	
Big Horn		Big Horn Academy and Cowley Gym
Carbon		Sinclair Elementary School
Crook	Sundance School (Old Stoney)	
Fremont		Fort Washakie Fort School
Fremont	St. Michael's Mission	
Fremont	Shoshone Episcopal Mission	
Fremont	Delfelder School	
Fremont		1970 South Pass Historical Site School (now archeological site)
Fremont		1910 South Pass Historical Site School
Laramie	Park Addition/Chaplin School	
Laramie	Corlett Elementary School	
Laramie	Deming/Miller Elementary School	
Laramie	Hebard Elementary School	
Laramie	Cheyenne High School/Central High	
Laramie	Storey Gymnasium	
Laramie	Mabel Fincher (Triumph High School)	
Laramie	Old Pine Bluffs High School	
Laramie	Lulu McCormick Junior High	
Laramie	Churchill Elementary School	
Laramie	Johnson Junior High	
Natrona	Natrona County High School	
Natrona	Roosevelt High School	
Park	Pioneer School	
Park	Ralston Community Clubhouse	
Sublette	Daniel School House	
Sweetwater	Reliance High School	
Teton	Teton Science School	
Uinta		Fort Bridger's Carter School House



To be determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register, a school must be at least 50 years old, unless it has exceptional significance on a local, state or national level, and it must meet one or more of the four NRHP eligibility criteria, and retain sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance. Most schools are considered eligible for listing on the National Register for their association with public education, community development in Wyoming or for their architectural importance. We want to preserve those buildings that represent the typical educational practices and school designs of their era. A school may also be eligible for its association with a prominent educator; if an important event occurred at the school; or as an archeological site that may yield important information. It is important to note that a site or building listed on the National Register is not protected from demolition. Property owners and communities must provide legal protection for the property. See the National Register website for information on surveying a historic property and completing a National Register form.

To determine whether your school may be considered eligible for listing on the National Register, ask these questions:

1. When was the school constructed? Is the school very old (built before 1910)? Most of these schools have been demolished and the school would be a rare find from that period.
2. Under what circumstances was the school built? Was it built by a rancher for use as a school on his ranch or a mining company for the children of miners?
3. What was the function of the school and its area of influence? For example, was it built to be used as an administration building with classes held for the children of soldiers that included children in the surrounding countryside?
4. If it is a one-room country school, does it have architectural embellishments such as round arch windows or doors, a cupola, or other unusual features? Or, can it be linked to a known plan book design?



5. Does the school have an unusual design (architectural form, plan, structure, or decoration)?
6. Was the school designed by a nationally prominent architect? Or, was it designed by a locally or regionally prominent architect such as Kellogg and Kellogg; Arthur Garbutt; Charles Murdock; William Dubois; S. R. DeBoer; Wilbur Hitchcock, among others?

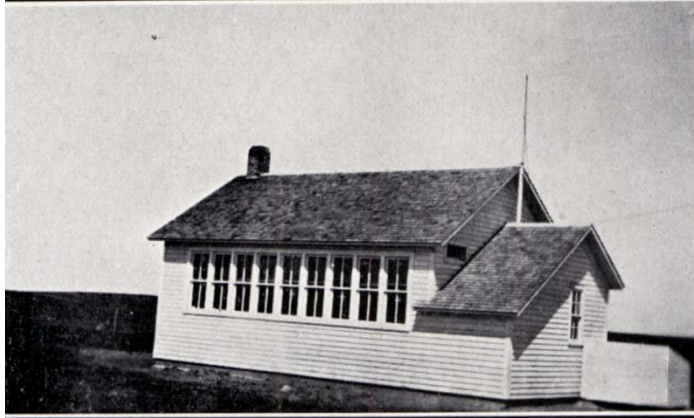
7. Did the school play an important role in the educational development of a definable region? Is the school one of the early consolidated schools (pre-1925), or a Wyoming Standard School?



Miller Consolidated School, Laramie County

Miller Consolidated School, Laramie County (Superintendent of Public Instruction Biennial Report, 1924)

8. Was the school built specifically for special educational purposes or practices (vocational school, Indian boarding school, parochial school, or private school)?
9. Was the school the location of a significant historic event?
10. Did any of the teachers or administrators in the school have a significant impact on the local, state, or national educational system?
11. Was the school or an addition to the school built using New Deal-era funding or labor (WPA or PWA)?
12. Did the school typify the type of architecture of the region or represent a broader stylistic group such as standard schools of the 1920s and 1930s? How many other school properties are there in the area with the same design or building materials?
13. Does the school site have other buildings or features such as a teacherage, outhouse, stable, playground equipment, fences, athletic field, gymnasium, water wells and pumps, etc.?
14. Do the interiors of the building retain historic features such as blackboards, auditoriums, cloakrooms, lunch rooms, theaters, New Deal murals, etc?



The First Standard School in Wyoming—Royal Valley School,  
Niobrara County.

Royal Valley School, Wyoming's First Standard School, Niobrara County (Superintendent of Public Instruction Biennial Report, 1920)

15. How do other schools in the area compare in their levels of integrity? Have other schools been moved and this is the only one in its original location? Have the other schools had original windows replaced with modern windows and this school retains its original windows? Have alterations and/or additions been made to the building before it was 50 years old? Older schools are often adapted to meet the needs of new educational trends and technology. For example, libraries, gymnasiums, and spaces for the performing arts and building trades were often added to existing schools in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. These alterations and additions are often an important part of the building's history and may have significance in their own right.
16. What historical themes are represented, and how does this property fit within its given theme(s)? For example, if the school was built for the children of a particular rancher on the ranch itself, then it could represent the themes of education, architecture, and ranching.
17. What is the time period of its significance? For example, a rural school could have been built in 1914 and used as a school until 1924. Then it was abandoned and used for storage by a local rancher. The period of significance for the school would be 1914-1924 when it was actually used as a school.
18. Does the site of a school that has only ruins or been demolished have the potential to yield important information that may add to the knowledge of that particular resource?



Ham's Fork School (1897) Ruins, Lincoln County (Wyoming Cultural Sites Inventory Form, 1983, State Historic Preservation Office)



Laramie High School (1940)

## **XVII. How to Preserve Wyoming's Historic Schools**

### ***1. Conduct an inventory of your community schools and nominate schools to the National Register of Historic Places***

School surveys can be conducted on a city- or county-wide basis. The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office (WYSHPO) has created a simple survey form available on the SHPO website that can be used by volunteers with little or no experience in describing historic buildings. If you have a Certified Local Government in your community, this organization may be able to provide assistance. A survey will identify all of the school buildings in your area built within a certain time period, and provide information such as date of construction, builder, original use, other uses, size, shape, roof type, plan, materials and architectural features. Don't forget to survey schools built in the recent past (after World War II). Most of Wyoming's surviving older schools date from this period, and even if they don't seem historic to you now, many are already 50 years old.

Based on the results of the survey and using the National Register criteria of eligibility you can evaluate your schools to see if they are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Wyoming SHPO can help with this process.

Surveying and evaluating school buildings helps to determine which buildings are worth preserving. Other factors also need to be considered, including condition of the building, intended use, and availability of funding. A survey and evaluation of existing school-district-owned buildings will also be very useful to your local school district and the School Facilities Commission as they make decisions about which schools to renovate and which schools to demolish and replace. For buildings that are no longer used as schools, listing in the National Register of Historic Places can make them eligible for federal rehabilitation tax credits and grants.

***2. Raise general awareness in your community about the value of historic school buildings and opportunities for preservation.***

**To raise awareness:**

1. Alert your local school officials, governmental officials, planning department, Chambers of Commerce, and historical societies of the SHPO's website and the *Historical Context Study of Schools in Wyoming*, to help raise awareness of the importance of historic schools.
2. Inform your local school district about the SHPO's Historic Architecture Assistance Fund and encourage them to apply for a grant to hire a preservation architect to assess older schools and offer recommendations for adapting an older building to meet current educational facility requirements.
3. Encourage your local museum or historical society to develop a program on historic schools for local school children.
4. Encourage your local museum or historical society to include tours of rural schools as part of their monthly or annual programs. This is a good way to encourage research on schools and even preparation of a local guide to historic school buildings.
5. Include a session on school preservation at meetings, workshop and other gatherings. A 2006-2008 Wyoming Humanities Forum presentation entitled "Beyond Classrooms: Schools as Centers of Community," is an example of this type of program.
6. Promote an oral history project on area schools in your local museum or historical society, and transcribe and publish the results locally. Conduct interviews with former and current teachers and school administrators as well as former pupils.

**Opportunities for preservation:**

The best use for any historic building is its original use. Although it is often assumed that an older building cannot meet modern educational needs, this is not necessarily true. A thorough investigation and analysis of an older school building by an experienced preservation architect is an important first step in saving a school. This initial analysis can provide the community with information about how an older school building can be upgraded to meet current standards, and

what the approximate cost will be. Costs of renovation are often exaggerated by architects and engineers who are not experienced in renovating older buildings. Typical building assessments point out what is wrong with a building, instead of emphasizing its potential.

Two bulletins published by the Council of Educational Facilities Planners International (CEFPI) can help with this investigation and analysis: *Appraisal Guide for Older and Historic School Facilities* (2005) and *A Primer for the Renovation/Rehabilitation of Older and Historic Schools* (2004). Both are available from CEFPI. Also useful in making the case for renovation of an existing building are case studies of successful school renovation projects from other communities. Although no school districts in Wyoming have completed thorough renovations and upgrades of historic school buildings, schools in nearby states such as Nebraska, Colorado, Montana, and Idaho can provide comparable models. Boise High School in Boise, Idaho provides an excellent model study and other case studies are available online at the National Trust for Historic Preservation's *Historic Neighborhood Schools Success Stories* webpage. Another good source of case studies is the publication *Renovate or Replace*, published by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in cooperation with several other state agencies.

### *Adaptive Use*

Considering Wyoming's history of boom and bust cycles, it seems unwise to remove the possibility of using existing school facilities for educational or community purposes in the future. If a school building is no longer needed by the school district, it should be considered for adaptive use. Wyoming has many pre-1960 school buildings that are currently vacant or underused, as well as numerous examples of schools that have already been adaptively used. Most of these buildings were well built and have many more useful years of life.

By far the most popular adaptive use for school buildings is the one that many schools were designed for—that of community center. The Wyoming legislature recognized this need when it established a community facilities fund to facilitate community use of former government buildings. The Wyoming Business Council's Community Facilities Grant and Loan Program (CFP) provides grants to rehabilitate schools and other public facilities for community use.



Peak Wellness Center, Cheyenne (Mary Humstone, 2009)

An excellent case study of adaptive reuse by a Wyoming school is Cheyenne's Peak Wellness Center Family and Youth Facility (former Churchill School, 1911). The two-and-a-half-story Churchill School is the oldest public school building remaining in Cheyenne. The tan-brick masonry building was built in 1911, with a west wing comprising a gymnasium/auditorium and six classrooms added in 1951. With its solid masonry construction and simple but imposing Classical design, the school building reflects the importance that early 20<sup>th</sup> century residents of Cheyenne attached to places of learning. The original school building was the first of many schools designed by prominent Cheyenne architect William Dubois, who incorporated design features promoted by educational reformers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century such as wide hallways, high ceilings and plenty of natural light. The original building contained four large, well lit classrooms on each floor and the basement. According to a local resident whose father worked on the building in the 1930s, the school was originally built without plumbing and students used outhouses behind the building until indoor plumbing was added in the 1930s. The 1951 addition was designed by Cheyenne architect Morris Kemper.

Churchill School was used as an elementary school until 2005, when it was closed by the school district and students were transferred to a new elementary school near F.E. Warren Air Force Base. The building was purchased by Peak Wellness Center for its youth and family facility, and after an extensive renovation the facility opened in 2009. Although the school building had been remodeled several times and many original features had been removed, Peak Wellness made an effort to retain what remained, especially the maple wood baseboards, door and window surrounds, transoms, and doors. These features, along with the high ceilings, large windows and wide corridors, give the interior the look and feel of a historic school building. To update the building, new heating, plumbing and electrical systems were installed, plaster was removed and replaced with drywall, windows were replaced, and large classrooms were divided into offices and meeting rooms. The space formerly occupied by small teachers' offices was used for installation of an elevator. The 1951 addition was also renovated and is used for a reception/meeting area, offices, and consultation rooms.

Peak Wellness director David Birney said that the nonprofit organization chose Churchill School because of its prime location in a neighborhood close to downtown, where most of its patients live. Although building a new facility on the outskirts of town might have cost less initially, Peak Wellness would have sacrificed convenience and the recognition that comes with location in a recognized local landmark (Churchill School is listed on the National Register of Historic Places). The organization's commitment to being a good neighbor is appreciated by the local neighborhood and by Churchill School alumni, many of whom attended the facility's open house in March 2009. "People were grateful that we kept the old school," said Birney, "and many have come by just to see it and relive their school days." Stephen Miller, a nearby resident, praised Peak Wellness for working closely with the neighborhood during the rehabilitation process. He says that the rehabilitation of Churchill School is "a great benefit to the neighborhood, Peak Wellness and the community" and notes the increased pride and interest in maintaining older buildings, inspired by the Churchill School project.

### **What to do if your school is threatened**



Often decisions about the fate of older school buildings (and other historic buildings) are made by school district and school facilities officials without the input of the local community. If you learn that your school is threatened with replacement and/or demolition, there are steps you can take. Citizen actions can change the outcome of building decisions. The earlier you get involved, the better. Let the school district and the School Facilities Commission know of your concerns. Ask them to hire a qualified historical architect to assess the building before any decision is made. The SHPO's Historic Architecture Assistance Fund may be used for this purpose. If the school is no longer owned by the school district, contact the owner to find out what is planned for the school. Find others who are interested in working with you, and contact the organizations listed below for additional help.

In the publication, "A Roadmap for Saving Your School," the National Trust for Historic Preservation recommends six basic steps:

1. **Get familiar with the process.** Learn how decisions are made, and when. Learn about the evaluation process that is used to determine which schools get saved, and which are demolished.
2. **Understand the perspective of the educator and the community.** Schooling our children is a sensitive issue, and advocates for historic schools need to be sensitive to the needs of students, parents and educators. Many people opt for a new school because they don't realize that they can get the new features they want in an older building. Many parents have legitimate concerns about health hazards such as lead paint and asbestos that need to be addressed.
3. **Plan for obstacles and success.** Any type of community advocacy project takes a lot of work, and there will be setbacks along the way. Seeking help from local, state, and regional preservation organizations can provide a needed boost.
4. **Confront the challenge.** There are reasons why district officials and parents want a new school. You must first understand these reasons before you can take the next step.
5. **Make a case for renovation.** There are many good arguments for saving an older school building, ranging from community continuity and tradition to green building. A few of these are listed below, and many more are contained in *A Roadmap for Saving Your School*. Find the ones that apply to your situation and use them strategically.
6. **Develop a communications campaign.** Myths about old buildings abound, and the best way to dispel them is through a well organized communications campaign. Decide on your message and stick with it.



Pine Bluffs High School (Mary Humstone, 2006)

## Talking Points for Preserving Your School

### *Community issues*

- Many of these schools have functioned as neighborhood centers and town gathering places for decades. Schools serve as anchors for local communities and sites for community events.
- Historic school buildings instill a sense of tradition in students and continuity within the community.
- Older schools are often unique examples of a community's heritage, one of a town's most timeless landmarks.
- Soaring windows, elegant wood or terrazzo floors, distinctive exterior and interior brick and terracotta work, and many other examples of fine craftsmanship are irreplaceable features no longer considered affordable within today's budgets.
- When a school cannot be renovated for education, it can often be adaptively used and its presence in its neighborhood maintained.



Wilson School (1931), Teton County. Decommissioned in 1999, the school has been restored and is now a community center with part of the facility housing a pre-school (Sara Adamson, 2011)

### *Practical issues*

- Renovating historic schools is an economically responsible use of state funds that preserve's community and state history while providing first-class educational facilities. In most cases, renovation costs less than new construction.
- The Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI) has developed tools for assessing older schools to determine whether they will meet both technical and educational standards. CEFPI is a highly regarded leader in the school construction field.
- Renovation is good for economic development, generating more jobs in the immediate community because it is more labor intensive than new construction. Renovation saves on costly materials that need to be imported from outside the state.
- Renovation is recycling, and conveys an ethic to students and the community that we care about the natural environment enough to avoid the waste of good resources; recycling building materials by using existing buildings makes for a more sustainable state.
- New construction neglects the environmental costs of disposing of demolished schools.
- New construction is not maintenance free. While maintenance costs may diminish for a year or two after a major construction project (new or renovated), deferral of maintenance is how all buildings deteriorate. Most new school buildings actually require more maintenance over time, since they lack the quality construction of an earlier era.
- Assessing a historic school for rehabilitation potential is a small investment that can result in significant cost savings, especially since infrastructure and roads are already in

place. Many new schools are being built where larger parcels of land are available, requiring large expenditures for roads and other infrastructure improvements.



Crook County High School “Old Stoney” (1923), American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

## **XVIII. Resources for Preserving Historic Schools**

### **[Alliance for Historic Wyoming](#)**

This statewide nonprofit preservation organization has a “Historic Schools” section of its website and can provide assistance in preserving historic schools.

### **[One-Room Schoolhouse Center](#)**

Provides resources for those interested in learning more about early education in the United States and an excellent compilation of historical one-room school resources that are available on the internet.

### **[Open Directory Project](#)**

Provides links to histories of various U.S. one-room schools.

### **[National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities](#)**

The National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities presents a number of articles on the pros and cons of reusing historic schools. While the articles are written for education agencies, they present an interesting view of the benefits of preservation. Of special interest is Constance Beaumont’s article *Historic Neighborhood Schools Deliver 21<sup>st</sup> Century Educations*, which debunks the myth that historic schools cannot meet modern educational standards.

### **National Institute of Building Science**

Provides information on preservation and modernization of historic neighborhood schools.

### **National Park Service: Preservation Briefs**

Working with older buildings inevitably involves important decisions about how to treat historic building fabric. The National Park Service's *Preservation Briefs* provide guidance on preserving, rehabilitating, and restoring historic properties. The Briefs are fully illustrated and easy-to-read. Administrators of historic schools can find information about cleaning, repointing, and removing graffiti from historic masonry (Numbers 1, 2, & 38); repairing roofs or selecting replacement roof materials (4, 19, 29 & 30); repairing historic wood and steel windows (9 & 13); adding on to historic buildings in an appropriate manner (14); and making sure historic buildings meet current building codes (3, 24, 32, 37 & 39).

### **National Park Service: Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties**

The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* promote responsible preservation practices for historic properties. Each of the four treatments (Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction) is presented with basic philosophical *Standards* that guide that treatment and *Guidelines* to help historic building guardians make decisions regarding treatment.

### **National Park Service: The Good Guides**

The Good Guides are tutorials and pamphlets developed by the National Park Service over the years to assist professionals, building owners, governmental agencies, and preservation organizations. Many have since been updated for use online and are presented on their website.

### **National Trust for Historic Preservation: Historic Schools Initiative**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation endorses using historic schools for modern educational facilities rather than abandoning them for new "big box" buildings. Their web site includes a number of popular publications, including *Why Johnny Can't Walk to School*, which discusses the damages of sprawl and protecting historic neighborhood schools; and *A Roadmap for Saving Your School*, case studies of successful school preservation projects in other states. It also includes *Model Policies for Preserving Historic School*.

### **Preserving Pennsylvania's Historic and Neighborhood School Buildings**

Provides examples of public initiatives to save and restore Pennsylvania's school buildings.

### **Saskatchewan's One Room School Project**

Provides an interesting historic documentation of a one room school.

### **Save Our Land Save Our Towns**

*Renovate or Replace? The Case for Restoring and Reusing Older School Buildings.*

### **Teaching with Historic Places: Historic Schools Day**

Through the Teaching with Historic Places program, the National Park Service, in conjunction with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, provides lesson plans that integrate National Register-listed historic places and local history. The Historic Schools Day lesson plans involve researching the history of local schools and education. Of particular interest might be *The Freeman School*, which uses a one-room schoolhouse in Nebraska to teach about the sense of community found in these icons of the settlement era

### **The History Channel**

The History Channel provides annual grants for programs on exploring and preserving significant aspect of community history through its “Save Our History” grant program.

### **University of Wyoming American Studies program**

This program is a good resource for names of people and projects around the state who are dealing with preservation of historic schools.

### **Why Historic Schools are Important to Preserve**

Smart Growth America's site discusses the role of schools and community design and convenience.

### **Wyoming Business Council**

Provides information on their Community Facilities Grant and Loan Program.

### **Wyoming School Facilities Commission**

Provides information on procedures, rules, regulations and policies for the planning, assessing, financing, construction and maintenance of school buildings in the State of Wyoming.

### **Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office**

Contact the SHPO for information on the National Register of Historic Places and information about the Historic Architecture Assistance Fund.



Laramie High School graduating class 1884

### Acknowledgement of Support

The development and printing of this publication has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior.

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First-grade students and teacher on front steps of Casper Central School (1894)