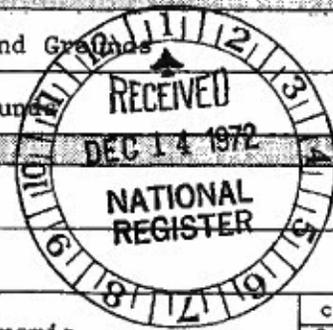


NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Wyoming	
COUNTY: Laramie	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER JAN 29 1973	DATE



1. NAME

COMMON: Wyoming State Capitol Building and Grounds

AND/OR HISTORIC: Wyoming Capitol Building and Grounds

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 24th Street and Capitol Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne

STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56 COUNTY: Laramie CODE: 021

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
--	---	--	---	-----------------------------------

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: State of Wyoming

STREET AND NUMBER: 24th Street and Capitol Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Laramie County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: 19th Street and Carey Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Wyoming Recreation Commission - Survey of Historic Sites, Markers & Mon.

DATE OF SURVEY: Summer - Fall 1967 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Wyoming Recreation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Wyoming

COUNTY: Laramie

ENTRY NUMBER: JAN 29 1973

FOR NPS USE ONLY

DATE: JAN 29 1973

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)							
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed		
	(Check One)				(Check One)			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site			

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

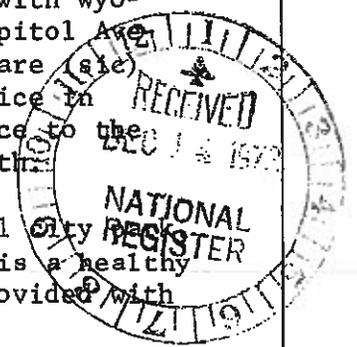
The city of Cheyenne, a city of approximately 50,000 people, is the capital city of Wyoming. Located along the eastern fringe of the Rocky Mountains, Cheyenne is many miles away from the majority of the state's citizens. A glance at a map of Wyoming would suggest to the casual observer that the city certainly is not, geographically, in a central location to perform the services required of state government. Yet, for several reasons which are not necessary to explore at this point, Cheyenne has remained Wyoming's capital city since the earliest days of the territorial period.

The visitor to Cheyenne is able to recognize the Wyoming State Capitol Building by the structure's lofty, gold-leafed dome and pinnacle, visible for miles in any direction. One hundred miles to the south, and also along the eastern fringe of the Rockies, is the Colorado State Capitol Building in Denver, a building in design similar to the Wyoming Capitol Building and also owning an imposing dome covered with gold leaf. However, unlike the Capitol Building in Denver, the one in Cheyenne has not yet become lost in a maze of skyscrapers which increasingly penetrate the downtown Denver skyline. Since 1888 the Wyoming Capitol Building has been, and still is, a dominant structure on the Cheyenne skyline, in addition to being historically one of the most important buildings in the state.

Located just north of the geographical center of the city, the Capitol Building is in a commanding position athwart Capitol Avenue*. It is bordered respectively, by 25th and 24th streets on the north and south, and by Central and Carey avenues on the east and west. In its particular location the Capitol Building is complementary to the Union Pacific Depot located ten blocks south on Capitol Avenue. The two buildings are on opposite ends of a north-south axis formed by Capitol Avenue. This axis is a gentle gradient, sloping just slightly from the Capitol Building to the Depot, and was once bordered with trees. At one time there were parks located adjacent to the Depot and Capitol Building, and according to an article in the July 23, 1890 Illustrated Edition of the Cheyenne Daily Leader, the surroundings of the Capitol Building possibly may have been more impressive than today.

In all Cheyenne, which is preeminently a city of handsome buildings, no structure compares in massiveness and beauty with Wyoming's statehouse, a noble structure at the head of Capitol Avenue. At the foot of this broad, tree fringed throughfare (sic) is the splendid Union Pacific passenger depot, an edifice in character essentially (sic) a cross match companion piece to the palace like home of the rulers of the young commonwealth.

Immediately in front of the statehouse is the beautiful city aptly described as the municipal pleasure ground. It is a healthy young forest with lawns dotted with flower beds and provided with



*The original name of Capitol Avenue was Hill Street but that name was changed by the Cheyenne City Council on May 3, 1887, about two weeks prior to the laying of the corner stone of the Capitol Building.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

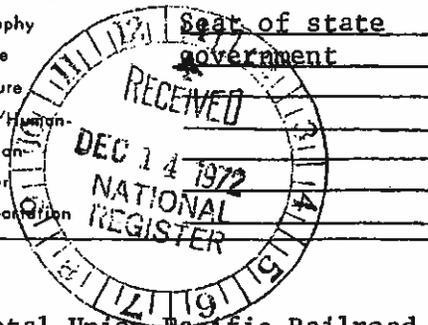
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarianism | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Born in 1867 in the path of the transcontinental Union Pacific Railroad, Cheyenne soon laid claim to a higher status than older Wyoming settlements such as those at Fort Laramie, Fort Bridger, and the mining town of South Pass City. The reason for the growing importance of Cheyenne at that time was that the city had, in the transportation and supply industries, a solid economic base. A major military post nearby, Fort D. A. Russell (today Francis E. Warren Air Force Base), and the cattle industry of the surrounding area were two other factors which helped to provide a sound basis for economic growth. In 1867 Cheyenne was the county seat of Laramie County, Dakota Territory and was growing rapidly, although two years later Laramie County was still not yet the most populous area of the state. The Organic Act of Wyoming which established Wyoming Territory on July 25, 1868, required a census to be taken for the purpose of apportionment. The apportionment was necessary for an election, in September of that year, of officials who were to organize territorial government the following spring. In that census it was found Laramie County contained 2,665 people, and Carter County (Western Wyoming) including an unorganized part of the territory contained 2,862 people. Nevertheless, Laramie County was given four representatives while the more populous entity received three. Including those from the rest of the state, a total of 13 representatives met in the House of Representatives in that first year of territorial government. In the other legislative branch, the Council (Senate), there were nine members, three from each of the areas of Laramie County, Albany and Carbon Counties combined, and Carter County and the unorganized area.

John A. Campbell, the first governor of Wyoming Territory, chose Cheyenne as the site of the temporary capital*. From 1869, the year in which the first territorial legislature met, until 1886, their biennial meetings were held at various Cheyenne locations including the Laramie County Courthouse. At the first session the two branches of the legislature even met in separate locations in the city, two rooms having been rented on Sixteenth and Seventeenth Streets. It was not until the late 1880's, the last years of the territorial period of Wyoming history, that a permanent structure was built for use by the territorial government.

*See footnotes addendum.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See addendum

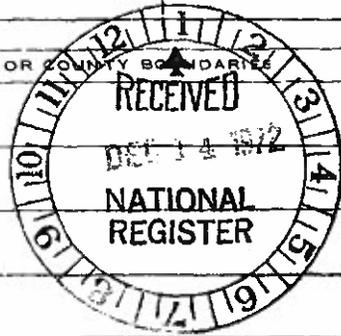
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41° 08' 25"	104° 49' 11"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 4 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Mark Junge, Historian

ORGANIZATION: Wyoming Recreation Commission DATE: Oct. 20, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: 604 East 25th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Cheyenne STATE: Wyoming CODE: 56

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Paul H. Westcott</u></p> <p>Title <u>Wyoming State Liaison Officer</u></p> <p>Date <u>October 24, 1972</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>Robert Van Urtley</u> Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date <u>1/29/73</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>Wendy S. Smiley</u> Keeper of the National Register</p> <p>Date <u>11-26-73</u></p>
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Physical Appearance - 2

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NATIONAL REGISTER

other adjuncts which challenge the admiration of the visitor posted in the Capitol. To the left of the latter is the Academy of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, a substantial structure of impressive dimensions, and beyond this, a little to the south, shadows of the Capitol dome play upon the Laramie county hospital, half obscured by trees and shrubbery. Capitol surroundings contribute in no small degree to its attractiveness.

Since those early Cheyenne days the two parks which were a reflection of civic pride have been displaced by buildings. Trees no longer line Capitol Avenue, and several historic buildings have also been removed from that thoroughfare. Yet, despite the changes Capitol Avenue remains a major transportation artery in the city--a central, connective route through the major commercial and administrative ganglion of Cheyenne.

The Capitol Building is situated on approximately three-quarters of an acre of ground, on rectangular city blocks 141 and 142, the total area of building and grounds amounting to about four acres. It is part of a fourteen acre, state government complex of buildings including the State Supreme Court Building, the State Office Building, the Travel Commission Building, and a building presently under construction which will eventually house the state departments of Health, Education and Welfare. Four blocks southeast of this complex, on 21st Street and Evans Avenue, is the Wyoming Governor's Mansion which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Upon the spacious, landscaped south lawns of the Capitol grounds are various memorials, among the most prominent being a statue of Esther Hobart Morris, located directly in front of the main portico or entrance of the building. The statue, a replica of one located in Statuary Hall in Washington, D. C. is a tribute to a Wyoming woman who played a role in the Woman Suffrage movement during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. To the east and west of the Capitol Building are flower beds where once stood reflecting pools. A wrought-iron fence once surrounded Capitol building and lawns, but today fine trees--blue spruce and elm--line the grounds between sidewalk and street, with some blue spruce gathered in clusters at the corners of the lawns. The ground immediately north of the building and extending to the sidewalk is occupied by a parking lot for officials of state government.

The Capitol Building itself is a three and one-half story structure, about 300 feet long by 83 to 112 feet wide exclusive of approaches. The height of both the center and wings from ground to roof is about sixty feet although the distance from the grade of the building to the top of the spire on the

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Physical Appearance - 3

dome is 146 feet*. The basic material used in the construction of the first two courses or platform of the building is sandstone quarried at Fort Collins, Colorado, and the superstructure is of grey sandstone from quarries at Rawlins, Wyoming. Dozens of rectangular, French plate glass windows are functional in providing light and ventilation for the building, and are also an aesthetic aid in imparting a vertical appearance to the masonry into which they are set. Other basic construction materials utilized in the building are: concrete in foundations, floors, and walls; cast and wrought iron in portions of the exterior framework and both interior and exterior decorative work; yellow and white pine, also in the framework; and copper which, until 1900, provided the original sheathing for the central dome.

The style of architecture ascribed to the Capitol Building by its architect is French Renaissance, a style typically adopted for public buildings of the period. Generally, the building is reminiscent of the nation's capitol building and as such is similar to other state capitol buildings. In conception and design the building is not unique. However, regardless of the style of architecture after which it was patterned, the building is functional, while also employing decorative features without being pretentious.

The dominant feature of the three-story building is its central section which, with its impressive south portico and its dome, looks very much like the Hotel des Invalides of Paris. Such a dome has, historically, assumed the importance of a tower, and was used especially in churches of the late French Renaissance style. The broad south portico or main entrance is surmounted by two groups of four Corinthian columns, above which is the building's main cornice. Above the cornice, in turn, is an arch topped by a triangular pediment and finally, a chimney stack. Major pillars and pilasters elsewhere on the exterior of the building are also capped by cornice, pediment, and chimney stack. Two other entrances, similar to the main portico but less elaborate, are on the north and west ends of the building.

Despite its lack of overall height, the Capitol Building presents a lofty and somewhat Romanesque appearance due to a number of characteristics: the pillars and pilasters topped by ornate Corinthian capitals; the triangular pediments; the fenestration; the chimney stacks; and the storeyed, double-columned lantern capped by dome and pinnacle. Hexagonal, skylight cupolas surmounted by flagpoles, one cupola being located on each building wing, further add to the vertical appearance of the building. In contrast to the vertical upward lines of the building, the grey sandstone, ashlar construction accentuates the overall length of the building from east to west. Horizontal lines of sandstone

*The top of the spire, or pinnacle, is about twenty feet higher than the second highest building in downtown Cheyenne, the recently constructed O'Mahoney Federal Building (1964) located two blocks south.

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Physical Appearance - 4

blocks are reinforced by other construction features such as: wide steps leading to the bold, main portico; balustrades located on both the main portico and lantern tower; and string courses or mouldings whose slight projection call attention to a crowning, decorative cornice above.

In several ways the building is not typical of the French Renaissance style of architecture. The overall appearance of the building, for example, is probably more regular and symmetrical than structures typical of that style. The typical, high mansard roof was rejected in the design of the Capitol Building in favor of a low-hipped, low-vaulted roof. Also, the arched, attic windows of French Renaissance style are, in the Capitol Building, found below rather than above the cornice.

Within the Capitol Building the immediate, main attraction is again the central portion of the building, the rotunda, consisting of a circular hall thirty feet in diameter and fifty-four feet in height from floor to stained-glass dome above. The attractive interior dome is mounted upon an arched, stuccoed ceiling upon which at one time were painted intricate festoons. The ceiling has since been repainted and is now adorned by decals which display, for example, the seal of the State of Wyoming. Above the stained glass, and not visible from the floor below, is the airy lantern which allows light to penetrate the stained-glass below. A mellow light from that glass canopy is diffused downward, shedding within a warm glow upon cherrywood staircases, wainscoting, window frames, and doors. Standing on the main floor of the rotunda, one can view stuccoed, interior walls, cast-iron pillars with decorative stucco volutes, and a cornice two feet in depth. All of these features are painted in various shades of pastel, and their combined appearance is typical of the style termed Louis XIV.

Placed upon the walls of the broad, main entranceway to the rotunda are three, carved, marble plaques commemorating the three separate commissions responsible for the construction of the building. Randomly placed on rotunda walls are bas-relief, bronze memorial plaques, some of which are in remembrance of particularly outstanding figures in Wyoming history such as Francis E. Warren, Joseph M. Carey, and John B. Kendrick. Other articles of interest in the rotunda are two fine mountings: a bison, an animal once common to Wyoming; and an elk, a game animal today found in many places in the state. A large state flag, approximately 12 feet high by 18 feet long, which prominently displays the outline of a bison, hangs in the north end of the rotunda from the balcony of the second floor.

Upon entering the main floor rotunda the visitor may encounter, upon his immediate right, three rooms set aside for the governor, including a reception room, public office, and private parlor. A similar suite of rooms to the left

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Physical Appearance - 5

or west are occupied by the Secretary of State. Other suites of rooms on this floor accommodate various elected officials of state government including the Auditor, Treasurer, and Superintendent of Public Instruction. Also on the main floor are found the offices of the Land Commissioner and the Department of Administration and Fiscal Control. Originally, however, the east half of both the first floor and basement was occupied by a 15,000 volume public law library. These rooms, like those of the Governor and Secretary of State, are handsomely furnished in oak and butternut wood, and contain heavy, plate-glass windows, fireproof vaults, cloak rooms, lavatories, and fireplaces, the latter serving only a decorative purpose today. Originally, the fireplaces were only semi-functional, as heating was produced by steam with a hot-air discharge system. Heating is still provided by steam but the generating plant is in the basement of the State Office Building, one block southeast. Lighting was provided originally by both gas and electricity, although some of the original furnishings, such as chandeliers, have since been removed to be replaced by fluorescent lights.

Broad hallways, like the rotunda entranceway, are eighteen feet in width and extend through the length of the east and west wings. Where the two hallways join the central rotunda, elaborate, grand staircases ascend to the second-story hallways, and from the landing of the second story, cherrywood, box stairwells ascend to the third floor. From the third floor, iron stairs not visible to the casual visitor extend upward to a platform where one can look through dormer windows, located just below the dome, and easily view the length of Capitol Avenue to the Union Pacific Depot, and beyond. Interior balconies and wooden balustrades on both the second and third floors overlook the rotunda below, contributing to an appearance of depth, and are easily visible to the visitor who peers upward from the tiled floor of the rotunda.

The second floor of the Capitol Building originally contained a supreme court room 36 by 40 feet, and 26 feet in height, in which was once temporarily assembled the Territorial House of Representatives. Today the remodeled room is the office of the Legislative Services Agency. On the opposite or south end of the second floor is a room whose first function was to serve as the Council Chamber until chambers were built in the east and west wings for the two houses of the legislature. Today it contains the offices of the Attorney General. Other offices are occupied by the State Board of Charities and Reform. Probably the main attraction in the rotunda of the second floor, to the visitor, are oil paintings of early Wyoming frontiersmen and pioneers which hang upon the wall and which were done by Ruth Joy Hopkins.

The western half of the west wing on both the second and third stories is occupied by the Senate chamber, gallery, lobbies and anterooms, while the same area of the east wing was similarly designed for the House of Representatives. Similar in appearance, the two chambers differ mainly in decorative

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Physical Appearance - 6

aspects. Each chamber ceiling contains a large section of stained glass into which are set emblems of the Great Seal of the State of Wyoming. On the walls of the senate and house chambers hang a number of paintings, among which are several by the famous Western artist, William Gollings. The two paintings by Gollings in the Senate Chamber are entitled, "The Smoke Signal" and "The Wagon Box Fight", and that in the House Chamber is entitled, "Emigrants on the Platte." Eight murals, four in each chamber, were painted by Allen True, the themes of the paintings being mainly those associated with pioneer life in Wyoming. A number of other paintings, especially portraits, may also be found in both chambers, and in the lobbies of the chambers may be found many frames containing small, individual photographs of members of past state legislatures.

Third floor space not occupied by the Senate and House is taken up by various offices, including those of the Department of Agriculture. Finally, to complete a general picture of interior use of the Capitol Building, the basement of the building contains more offices, and other rooms such as vaults, rest-rooms, and a cafeteria.



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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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Statement of Significance - 2

In 1885 Francis E. Warren (R), in his first term as governor of the territory, repeated the familiar complaint that Wyoming Territory owned no public buildings. In his message to the Ninth Territorial Legislature in 1886, Governor Warren pointed out that Wyoming wealth and population had tripled in the past six years, and he therefore recommended the establishment of two public institutions, an insane asylum and a school for the deaf and dumb. With the approval of the United States Congress, the legislature provided for not only those institutions but a capitol building and a university building as well. Approved by the Governor on March 4, 1886, the act provided for the construction of a capitol building at Cheyenne at a cost not to exceed \$150,000*.

With the advice and consent of the Council the governor was directed to nominate a capitol commission of five to direct the construction of the capitol building. The basic tasks of the Commission were to procure a suitable building site within the city, to secure the services of a competent architect, and to award a contract for the construction of the building. The commissioners appointed by Governor Warren were: Erasmus Nagle, chairman; Charles N. Potter, Secretary; and Nathaniel R. Davis, Morton E. Post, and Nicholas O'Brien. The March 4 act also specified that the building should be completed within eighteen months after the passage of the act "or as soon thereafter as the same can be done", in anticipation of the meeting of the next legislature in January, 1888. Actually, however, the contract with the builder provided that all of the building except for the tower was to be done by January, 1888. On April 9, 1886 the capitol building site was selected, and eventually purchased at a cost of \$13,100.00. On May 17 plans for the building were awarded to David W. Gibbs and Co. of Toledo, Ohio, and on May 19 a contract to provide heating and ventilation for the building was made with Isaac D. Smead and Co., also of Toledo. A contract for the construction of the building was made with Adam Feick and Bro. of Sandusky, Ohio on August 31, 1886, for \$131,275.13. The terms of that contract provided that work be commenced thirty days thereafter, and ground was formally broken on September 9, 1886.

On Wednesday, May 18, 1887, a proud day was experienced by the citizens of Wyoming Territory in the ceremony of the laying of the Capitol Building cornerstone. The Cheyenne Democratic Leader, reporting the event, stated:

*It was also directed that not more than \$25,000 worth of bonds could be issued at one time, payable twenty-five years after the date of issue, although the territory was given the option of redeeming one-tenth of the bonds at the end of fifteen years and one-tenth annually until all were paid. The total proceeds from the sale of the bonds ultimately came to a total of \$157,695.00, almost all of that total being spent by the first Capitol Building Commission.

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(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance - 3

"A brighter morning never dawned over the Magic City of the Plains' than that of yesterday. At an early hour everybody was astir. Before the morning had advanced flags and streamers were displayed from every public building in the city, and also from many places of business and private residences, especially along the proposed line of march. Long before 9 o'clock there were many hundreds of people on the streets awaiting events.

Marching in the parade that afternoon were an estimated 2,000 men while double that number watched along the parade route. One of the most impressive groups among the marchers was that of 500 members of the Seventeenth Infantry from Fort D. A. Russell. The parade ended at the capitol building where another 3,000 people had gathered, and where preparations had been made for the cornerstone ceremony. Seated on a platform of honor on the building site were national, territorial, and civic officials, including three members of the Capitol Building Commission. One commission member, Charles Potter, was in charge of the ceremony and another, Nathaniel R. Davis, was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Wyoming and in charge of placing the stone in its final position at the building's main entrance. Into a copper box which was placed into the cornerstone went a host of documents and rosters which are interesting by their selection. A few of the documents included were: the Session Laws for 1886, Governor's reports for the 1881-1886 legislatures, a roster of territorial officials, and the charter and ordinances of the city of Cheyenne. Also included were documents which, by their nature, reflect political, economic, and social priorities of the period. Deposited in the box, for example, were: proceedings and membership lists of several fraternal orders in the state, a list of members, by-laws and reports of the Wyoming Stockgrower's Association of 1886, along with that organization's Brand Book; and 1886-87 timetables of the Nebraska and Wyoming divisions of the Union Pacific Railway. The Cheyenne Democratic Leader mentioned that Judge W. L. Kuykendall read in a loud, clear voice the list of articles which had been contained in the box "with exception of some which had been placed in the box by parties for their own amusement or for reasons best known to themselves (and of which no mention was made in the schedule)." Through an oversight, the names of the building's architect and contractor were not included among the list of items deposited within the cornerstone. Addresses were made to the gathering by Hon. Joseph M. Carey (R) and Governor Thomas Moonlight (D) and were later abstracted for readers of the Democratic Leader. The paper referred to Carey's address as "a very able effort" and called that of Moonlight an "eloquent speech." Music and a benediction concluded the formal exercises, whereupon an informal barbecue followed. "Before the feast was over", stated the Leader, "4,000 people had tasted the barbecued meat, eaten corner stone pickles and drank lemonade never intended for a circus,...."

Although the building was not completed in time for the Tenth Territorial Legislature to meet in its proper chambers, it was able to accommodate the

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(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance - 4

legislature, anyway. The portion of the building designated for temporary use by the House was the Supreme Court Room and the rooms ultimately intended for the Agricultural Department were used by the Council. On March 29, 1888 the First Capitol Building Commission, having apprised their successors of their obligations, delivered to the Second Commission the possession of the building, records, and funds amounting to \$4.30.

In 1887 President Grover Cleveland appointed Thomas Moonlight the seventh Territorial Governor of Wyoming. Moonlight served until after the inauguration of President Harrison in March, 1889. During his tenure in office Governor Moonlight experienced some difficulty with the legislature, one notable example of it being that concerned with public buildings. The Tenth Legislature had continued the work of the previous legislature by authorizing an appropriation of \$215,000 for public buildings. Of that total, \$125,000 was earmarked for the addition of wings to the Capitol Building, additions whose need had been anticipated even prior to the construction of the first portion of the building**.

But Moonlight, who had fallen out of grace with the Republican element of the legislature and was slowly turning his own party against himself, was against the expenditure. The ostensible reason for his opposition was not hard to predict, since the disastrous winter of 1886-87 had brought hardship to the livestock industry, an industry which was an important economic pillar of Wyoming. Moonlight, in his long message to the legislature, placed stress upon the need for economy and for strict accountability in all appropriations. Later, in his veto of the omnibus public buildings measure he spoke out against a proposed increase in the mill levy.

"A few years ago the levy was considered very high for all purposes at two mills on the dollar, and business was then prospering and men were

*In September 1889 the Supreme Court Chamber was also the meeting place of the Wyoming State Constitutional Convention.

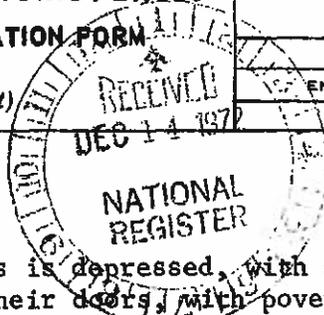
**This idea is expressed on pages 9 and 10 of the Final Report of the First Capitol Building Commission.

"We shall have about \$125,000.00, probably not to exceed that sum to use at present in the building; but the idea expressed by the building commission is to have the plan of the building include a wing on each end, ultimately to constitute the two ends of the building, but not to be built now; so that the entire building, if constructed, would cost from \$200,000.00 to \$250,000.00, our idea being to build now only the main center and one wing on each side of the center."

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making money. Now that business is depressed, with cattle companies breaking up and banks closing their doors, with poverty staring many a good man and woman in the face, and the list of uncollected taxes in the county for 1887 covering a whole page of the county paper, it is proposed to add to the already oppressive burdens of taxation, and for what purpose? The Capitol Building as it stands today is large enough for all the requirements of the territory for at least six years to come. The expenditure of a few thousand dollars to complete it within and fit it for occupancy would be wisely spent, and would receive the hearty endorsement of all the people, but I do not believe that the expenditure of \$125,000 will meet the approbation, at this time, of one-third of the people. I am compelled to present these ugly facts, so that the issue may be fairly presented. Were I to enter into the details of the financial condition of nearly all the counties, and present the rate of taxation now and what must follow, the picture would startle the thinking tax-payer looking to the Tenth Legislative Assembly for prudence and economy in dealing with the property of the citizens for public purposes."

To Moonlight, however, possibly the most antagonistic portion of the bill was the designated method of appointing the new capitol building commission. The governor was to nominate the members of the second commission and the Council was to confirm their nominations, but if the nominees were unacceptable, the Republican-dominated Council could refuse their confirmation. In the event of such a refusal the Council provided that the original building commission would be continued and invested with all of the powers and duties of the second commission. Moonlight's response to this tactic was a stubborn insistence upon the appointive power of the governor. As he put it,

"If this means that unless the Council shall confirm the nominations invited by section 3, then the old members of the commission shall hold over for another two years, the same question is here presented which forced itself upon the executive in the live stock commission bill and which, in effect, enables the council to dictate the appointment by simply refusing to confirm any and all nominations. The principle involved in the second attempt of the Legislature to restrict the appointing power and to deprive the executive of the functions and prerogatives which have received the sanction of many years and of all political parties, I shall at all times vigorously defend without fear or favor."

Nevertheless, the Moonlight veto of the public buildings bill was overridden by a two-thirds vote in both houses. After the passage of the bill the governor appointed Lawrence R. Bresnehan, George W. Baxter, Andrew Gilchrist,

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Arthur Poole, and John C. Baird to the new commission. The Council, however, rejected ex-Governor Baxter and at first refused to confirm the appointment of Mr. Bresnehen. Eventually, the issue was settled with the appointment of Thomas A. Kent in place of Mr. Baxter. The new commissioners, all from Cheyenne, within their own organization elected Bresnehen chairman and Baird secretary. D. W. Gibbs and Co. again furnished the plans for the east and west wings of the Capitol Building and Moses P. Keefe was awarded the contract to build them for \$117,504.00. On April 4, 1890 the wings were completed and accepted by the Commission, and a little more than three months later, on July 10, 1890, Wyoming became the 44th state in the Union. According to historian I. S. Bartlett, time demonstrated that there was reason in Governor Moonlight's rejection of the public buildings bill, since the expense of the bond issue for building construction proved a heavy burden to the new state.

By 1913 state government had grown to the limit of the ability of the Capitol Building to physically contain it. In that year Governor Joseph M. Carey (D) stated:

"The question of obtaining sufficient room to do the work that is required under the direction of the state officers has become a serious one. Every portion of the capitol is now occupied. Some of the space used is not at all adapted for the work for which it has been assigned. Some rooms have been secured outside of the capitol, but this is not satisfactory, for the business done by the state should be concentrated. The State Library has grown far beyond the dimensions of the rooms that are accorded to it. The library has become a very valuable one, but much that is of value is hidden or packed away for the want of the necessary space for its use. The rooms occupied by the Land Department are so crowded that the work cannot be well done, leaving out of consideration the unhealthy condition that necessarily prevails where so many are employed in so small a space. This department should now have as many square feet as are included in one-half of the lower floor of the capitol...The records of the land and engineering departments are so important that no chance should be taken of their destruction by fire."

Because of the crowded situation, a third phase of construction in the history of the Wyoming Capitol Building was authorized by an act of the 1915 Legislature and signed by Governor John B. Kendrick (D) on February 19, 1915. The act provided for a special levy of three-eighths mill tax on each dollar of assessed valuation. The tax monies provided by the levy were to constitute a fund in the state treasury to be used by a third Capitol Building Commission for the addition of further east and west wings to the building. The

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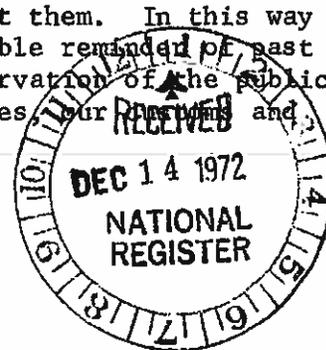
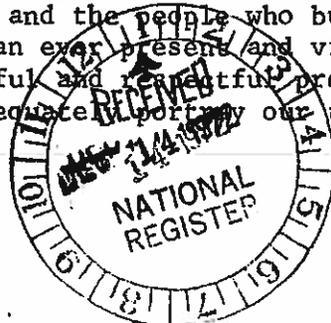
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three-man commission was composed of: Robert B. Forsyth, Herman B. Gates, and James B. True. A Wyoming pioneer citizen and architect from Cheyenne, William R. Dubois, was engaged by the Commission to design the wing additions, which was done by Dubois in a style consistent with the original architecture. The construction contract was awarded to John W. Howard, and the job was completed late in 1917 at a cost of \$140,790.00.

Possibly not for many years to come will a detailed history be written of the physical growth of state government. Since the completion of the last phase of Capitol Building construction in(1917,) the need for physical space has increased with the continued growth of state government, with the result that other state buildings have been built or leased to provide additional space. In 1937, during the administration of Governor Leslie E. Miller (D), the State Supreme Court and Library Building was built. The building stands just south of the Capitol Building, on two blocks of land which once constituted the west half of Cheyenne's city park. Sixteen years later, during the administration of Governor C. J. Rogers, the State Office Building was erected just southeast of the Capitol Building. Central Avenue, which borders the Capitol Building on the east, separates the grounds of the two newer buildings. Today, late in 1972 under the administration of Governor Stanley K. Hathaway, construction is underway on a new state office building to house mainly the departments of Health, Education, and Welfare. Other agencies of state government such as those of the Highway Department, Game and Fish Commission, and the Recreation Commission remain situated apart from the central state government complex.

Although the Wyoming State Capitol Building is not an outstanding architectural accomplishment, it is a fine example of a popular style of architecture, and ought to continue to attract the attention of visitors to Cheyenne. Certainly it is the dominant and most interesting piece of architecture in the increasingly crowded, state government complex. According to Frederic H. Porter, former Wyoming State Preservation Officer of the American Institute of Architects, although the design of the Capitol Building is typical of its period, it is still necessary to recognize the importance of that fact.

"We must respect this style and manner of our houses of State and honor their creation and the people who built them. In this way can there always be an ever present and visible reminder of past glories--by the careful and respectful preservation of the public edifices which so adequately portray our times, our resources and our fashions!"



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Historically, the Capitol Building is of great importance since the history of the building is concomitant with that of the state. For 84 years it has been the seat of Wyoming government, both territorial and state. The particular type of state which is Wyoming has been partly determined by Wyoming state legislators and other public officials who have made their influential decisions at the Capitol Building. Therefore, the Capitol Building deserves both the recognition and protection of the National Register of Historic Places.



FOOTNOTES ADDENDUM:

*It is interesting to note that Cheyenne is still the "temporary" capitol of Wyoming. In November, 1889 a state constitution was approved by Wyoming citizens and on July 10, 1890 Congress accepted Wyoming into the Union as a state. In Section 23 of the state constitution provision was made for a future election to determine the permanent location of the capitol, although it was not until fourteen years later, in 1904, that the contest developed. When it had ended, not enough votes had been cast for any one location and Wyoming still owned, technically, only a temporary capital in the city of Cheyenne. From time to time until the present day, the suggestion has been tendered to establish a permanent location for the capital, but to no avail, and thus Cheyenne remains and probably will continue to remain the de facto capital of Wyoming.



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