NPS Form 10-900
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Wyoming State Capitol Building and Grounds

and/or common Wyoming State Capitol Building and Grounds

2. Location

street & number 24th Street and Capitol Avenue ___ not for publication

city, town Cheyenne ___ vicinity of

state Wyoming code 56 county Laramie code 021

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	_X_ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
_X_ building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	_X_ yes: restricted	_X_ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name State of Wyoming

street & number 24th Street and Capitol Avenue

city, town Cheyenne ___ vicinity of state Wyoming

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Laramie County Courthouse

street & number 19th Street and Carey Avenue

city, town Cheyenne state Wyoming

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wyoming Recreation Commission--Survey of Historic Sites, Markers, and Monuments
~~National Register of Historic Places~~ has this property been determined eligible? _x_ yes ___ no

date Summer/Autumn 1967; January 29, 1973 _X_ federal _X_ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Wyoming Recreation Commission, Interagency Resources Division

city, town Cheyenne, Wyoming; Washington, DC state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
X excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
___ good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Today's visitor to Cheyenne recognizes the Wyoming State Capitol 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 in Denver, a building in design similar to the Wyoming State Capitol and also owning an imposing dome covered with gold leaf. But, unlike the Capitol 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 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 is in a commanding position athwart Capitol Avenue.[1] 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 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 to the Depot, and was once bordered with trees. At one time there were parks located adjacent to the Depot and Capitol, and according to an article in the July 23, 1890, Illustrated Edition of the Cheyenne Daily Leader, the surroundings of the Capitol 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 a cross match campanion piece to the palace like home of the rulers of the young commonwealth.
>
> Immediately in front of the statehouse is the beautiful city park aptly described as the municipal pleasure ground. It is a healthy young forest with lawns dotted with flower beds and provided with other adjuncts which challenge the admiration of the visitor posted in the Capitol. The Capitol surroundings contribute in no small degree to its attractiveness.

Since those early Cheyenne days the two parks have been displaced by buildings. Trees no longer line Capitol Avenue, and several buildings have also been removed from that thoroughfare. Yet, despite the changes Capitol Avenue remains a major transportation artery.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1886-present **Builder/Architect** David W. Gibbs & William Dubois
Builders: Adam Feick & Bro. (1886-88)
Moses B. Keefe (1888-90)
John W. Howard (1915-17)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

CRITERIA OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wyoming State Capitol is of national significance in the history of our nation in politics/government under criteria (A). It "is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained"; and (3) "that represent some great ideal of the American people." The capitol building is of regional significance under criterion (B), as it embodies the "distinguishing characteristics" of an architectural type that represents a significant, distinctive, and exceptional entity.

STATEMENT OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Wyoming was at the forefront of the women's suffrage movement in this nation. The first victory for women's suffrage in the United States occurred in the Territory of Wyoming. With admission to the Union, Wyoming became the first state to enfranchise women. Esther Morris, who had heard Susan B. Anthony lecture in Illinois prior to moving to Wyoming, became a force behind the effort and personally lobbied, with the aid of legislators' wives, members of the territorial council. In 1869 a bill granting suffrage to women in the Wyoming territory passed by a vote of 6 to 2 in the council and 6 to 4 in the lower house. Arguments of the disastrous results of allowing women to vote were refuted by the 1870 Wyoming elections which went smoothly with women adding a element of dignity to the voting procedures.

Wyoming's initiative with political equality for women gained national attention in 1889 when Wyoming applied for admission to the Union. Since Wyoming was expected to add strength to the Republican Party, Democrats opposed the admission on the grounds that admitting a full suffrage state would encourage other states to extend the vote to women. As heated arguments ensued in Washington over Wyoming's policy of women's suffrage and as chances for achieving statehood seemed in question, Joseph M. Carey, the territorial delegate in Washington, telegraphed the Wyoming legislature that women's suffrage may have to be abandoned to gain statehood. The legislature responded: "We will remain out of the Union a hundred years rather than come in without the women."[5]

In 1890 the U.S. Congress finally voted for Wyoming's statehood, but the controversial provision for women's suffrage resulted in a close vote in the House with 139 in favor and 127 opposing. Utah and Colorado soon followed Wyoming's lead and granted women the vote. Although it would be several decades before the list of women's suffrage states would grow significantly, the issue gained national attention and became widely discussed. Between 1870 and 1910, there were 480 separate initiatives in 33 states to amend state constitutions to grant women the vote. The fear that Wyoming's provision for women's suffrage would start a trend did prove to be the case.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 4 Acres

Quadrangle name Cheyenne North, Wyoming **Quadrangle scale** 7.5

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	13	515140	4554130
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification The property referenced includes the Capitol Building and the immediate grounds bounded on the east by Central Avenue, on the north by 25th Street, on the west by Carey Avenue, and on the south by 24th Avenue.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

The National Register form prepared by Mark Junge has been revised and reformated to address
name/title the issue of the property's national significance by Dr. Page Putnam Miller, Director
of the National Coordinating Committee for Promotion of History, Edwin C. Bearss of the NPS.
organization History Division, National Park Service **date** February 6, 1987

street & number P.O. Box 37127 **telephone** (202)343-8163

city or town Washington **state** DC 20013-7127

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title **date**

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: **date**

Chief of Registration

GPO 894-788

The Capitol is situated on approximately three-quarters of an acre, on rectangular city blocks 141 and 142, the total area of building and grounds amounting to about four acres. It is part of a 14-acre state government complex of buildings including the State Supreme Court Building, and the Barrett, Herschler, and Hathaway buildings.

Upon the spacious, landscaped south lawns of the Capitol grounds are various memorials, among the most prominent being a statue of Esther Hobart Morris, directly in front of the main portico or entrance of the building. The statue, a replica of one located in Statuary Hall in Washington, DC, is a tribute to a Wyoming woman who played a role in the Woman Suffrage movement during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The grounds also contain a statue dedicated to those who participated in the Spanish American War and a replica of the Liberty Bell. John W. Snyder, Secretary of the Treasury under President Harry S Truman, presented the bell to the people of Wyoming as an inspirational symbol of the United States Bond Independence Drive which occurred in 1950. During the drive, the bell, its dimensions identical to the original in Philadelphia, was displayed in every part of the state. The most recent addition to the grounds is a bronze sculpture titled "The Spirit of Wyoming." It is located between the Capitol and the Herschler Building (completed and occupied in 1985) to the north. Sculptor Edward J. Fraughton conceived it as a symbol representing Wyoming. It praises a people, past, present, and future, and illustrates the struggle of animal and man against nature and time.

To the east and west of the Capitol are flower beds where once stood reflecting pools. A wrought-iron fence once surrounded the 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 plaza and entrance to an underground parking facility.

The Capitol 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 60 feet, although the distance from the grade of the building to the top of the spire on the dome is 146 feet.[2] The basic material used in 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 verticle appearance to the masonry into which they are set. Other 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 sheathing for the central dome.

The style of architecture ascribed to the Capitol by its architect is French Renaissance, and is reminiscent of the nation's capitol and as such is similar to many other state capitols. In conception and design the building is not unique. 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 Paris France's Hotel des Invalides. 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 bulding.

Despite its lack of overall height, the Capitol presents a lofty and somewhat Romanesque appearance because of 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 flagstaffs, one cupola being located on each building wing, further add to the verticle 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 blocks are reinforced by other construction features such as: wide steps leading to the bold, main portico; balustrades in 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 more regular and symmetrical than structures typical of that style. The typical, high mansard roof was rejected in the design of the Capitol in favor of a low-hipped, low-vaulted roof. Also, the arched, attic windows of French Renaissance style are, in the Capitol, found below rather than above the cornice.

Within the Capitol the immediate, main attraction is again the central portion of the building, the rotunda, consisting of a circular hall 30-feet in diameter and 54-feet in height from floor to stained glass dome above. The attractive interior dome is mounted upon an arched, stuccoed ceiling upon which are painted intricate festoons. 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 the 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 Louis XIV style.

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. Another article of interest in the rotunda is a fine mounting: an elk, a game animal today found in many places in the state. During the recent renovation, the bison which formerly stood in the rotunda was relocated and positioned in the first floor's west corridor.

Upon entering the main floor rotunda the visitor may encounter, upon his immediate right, offices set aside for the governor, including a reception room, public office, and private parlor. A similar suite of rooms to the left 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 main offices of the Attorney General. 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, plateglass windows, fireproof vaults, cloak rooms, lavatories, and fireplaces, the latter serving only a decorative purpose today. Originally, the fireplaces were 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 flourescent lights.

Broad hallways, like the rotunda entranceway, are 18 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 the 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 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 hearing room for the Appropriation Committee. 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 are 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 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 principally 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 staff and committee offices. Finally, to complete a general picture of interior use of the Capitol, the basement of the bulding contains additional offices occupied by the Attorney General, and other rooms such as vaults and restrooms.[3]

Beginning in 1974, the Capitol was systematically modernized. Sheet metal ceilings were replaced with fire rated construction and surfaced with acoustical tile. Modern lighting standards were met in office illumination and light intensities were increased for television requirements in the House and Senate Chambers. Heating, plumbing, and air conditioning systems were modernized along with the electrical systems. All woodwork was stripped, stained, and varnished. Cornices of pre-cast plaster were installed in offices that originally had stamped sheet metal ceilings as well as some other offices.

Where the legislators would allow it, wood floor joists were replaced with steel joists, elsewhere wood flooring was replaced with thin concrete slabs (excepting for the marble surfaced floors). Only the first phase portion of the building had wood floor joists.

All walls (and the ceiling of the Rotunda) were repainted. Colors were coordinated, stencil designs were reproduced. Stencils were made, copying a Roman Fasces design which was uncovered when remodeling the original Supreme Court Room area, and used on the third floor public corridor.

Attention was given to lighting fixtures. In public corridors, free hanging 48" flourescent lights had replaced the original incandescent fixtures. The old fixtures were located in the attic of the Capitol, as well as in outlaying storage buildings. Suspended fixtures now visible in the Rotunda area are original. Throughout the building recessed, flourescent fixtures have augmented illumination. It is interesting to note that some electrical wiring was installed in the original building as was also found to be the case for gas piping.

Exterior work included restoration of masonry work, reguilding of the dome and repainting of sheet metal surfaces to match the stone color. New bronze anodized windows and basement entrance doors replaced original (painted wood). The main entrance doors are originals.

Always, the materials, designs and patterns, were carefully matched to original designs.

The renovation was completed in 1980 at a cost of $7 million, and was under the supervision of the distinguished firm of Hitchcock & Hitchcock Architects, P.C. of Laramie, Wyoming.[4]

BRIEF CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

A. The 1886 Appropriation Enables Work to Begin

At first home only to the Indian, during the 19th century Wyoming experienced the coming of the fur trapper and trader, the western-bound emigrant who used the land only as a passageway, and several army outposts. It was not until after the Civil War that Wyoming found it necessary to organize a government.

The coming of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1867 caused towns to spring up along the right-of-way in the southern portion of what is today Wyoming. Grenville M. Dodge, chief engineer of the UP, laid out Cheyenne in July, 1867. A year later, President Andrew Johnson signed the organic act separating the area from Dakota Territory and forming Wyoming Territory. Almost another year passed before the territorial government organized on May 19, 1869.

With its economy bolstered by the railroad, the cattle industry, and nearby Fort D.A. Russell (today's Francis E. Warren Air Force Base), Cheyenne quickly grew into the territory's largest city and became the logical choice for the temporary seat of government, a selection made by John A. Campbell, the first governor of Wyoming Territory.[6] 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 met in separate locations in the city, two rooms having been rented on Sixteenth and Seventeenth Streets. It was not until the late 1880s, the last years of the territory, that a permanent structure was built for use by the territorial government.

In 1885 Francis E. Warren (R), in his first term as governor of the territory, repeated the familiar complaint that Wyoming owned no public buildings. In his message to the Ninth Legislative Assembly in 1886, Governor Warren pointed out that Wyoming's wealth and population had tripled (though the latter had not yet reached 50,000) in the past six years, and he recommended the establishment of two public institutions, an insane asylum and a school for the deaf and dumb.[7] He also noted that "It would afford greater convenience to the public if the various territorial offices could be brought together in a central location." He concluded his remarks stating any expenditure for public improvements would be regarded as "an investment for which the people have something to show in the nature of assets--not to be counted as a loss, but an available resource. It is better for the territory to own property than be compelled to pay a high rate of interest for the use of it."[8]

The legislature agreed and passed a bill authorizing the construction of a Capitol with the cost not to exceed $150,000.[9] Warren signed the bill on March 4, 1886, and then appointed a five-man Capitol Building Commission. The commissioners elected Erasmus Nagle, a leading Cheyenne merchant, as chairman.

The March 4 act 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 assembly in January, 1888. On April 9, 1886, the capitol building site was selected, and eventually purchased at a cost of $13,100. On May 17, plans for the building were awarded to David W. Gibbs & Co. of Toledo, Ohio, and on May 19 a contract to provide heating and ventilation for the building was made with Isaac D. Smead & Co., also of Toledo. A contract for the construction of the building was made with Adam Feick & 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 broken on September 9, 1886.[10]

B. Laying the Cornerstone

Wednesday, May 18, 1887, was a proud day for the citizens of Wyoming Territory as the cornerstone was to be laid. The Cheyenne Democratic Leader commented upon what was "the occasion of the greatest military and civic demonstration ever witnessed in the history of the city." The planning committee for the celebration invited "all residents and citizens of the territory," and expected contingents from Nebraska and Colorado as well.[11]

Preparations for the celebration took weeks. A large workforce constructed a make-shift cook house, a series of temporary tables west of the Capitol sufficient to seat 400 people at a sitting, and farther west a 50-foot long barbecue pit, five feet wide and four and half feet deep. An 80-foot shed covered the pit.

The celebration was a success. The day dawned blue and by afternoon a few white clouds appeared to temper the sun's rays. Cheyenne banks and businesses closed their doors at noon and at 1:30 p.m. a grand parade began. According to the Sun, United States troops from Fort D.A. Russell, bicyclists, bands, firemen, territorial and city officials, many different societies and the Grand Lodge Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Wyoming and other Masonic bodies marched through Cheyenne's streets, past flag and bunting covered buildings, ending the parade at the partially finished Capitol.

As the crowd gathered, the Masons took their positions on a temporary platform built at the cornerstone to the left of the Capitol entrance. The cornerstone, a fine piece of Rawlins sandstone, hung suspended by a derrick. Scooped out of its under surface was sufficient space to admit a copper box sixteen inches in length, twelve inches wide,

and seven inches deep. In it were placed items such as the laws of Wyoming, an impression of the great seal of the territory, various territorial newspapers, timetables of the Union Pacific Railway, and several photographs. After a short prayer, Judge W.L. Kuykendall of the Masonic Lodge read the entire list of items, "with the exception of some which had been placed in the box for their own amusement or for reasons best known to themselves (and of which no mention was made in the schedule)."

After the cornerstone was in place, Grand Master Nathaniel Davis conducted the masonic ceremonies usual to such occasions. Judge Joseph M. Carey followed with a stirring speech on the early history of Wyoming and remarked that the Capitol should be "devoted to those of wisdom, good government and righteous law, which hereafter shall be enacted within it." Territorial Governor Thomas Moonlight then, according to the Sun, "made a very happy address which was frequently interrupted by applause."

After the official ceremony, the crowd thronged to the barbecue just west of the Capitol. The menu consisted of pork, mutton, bread, "cornerstone pickles," lemonade, and roast beef. The Sun reported "the fare was unusually good and tasted all the better from the fact of keen appetites and being eaten out-of-doors. Several hours were thus occupied, relays of people rapidly following each other." That evening, the Irish Benevolent Society hosted a ball, at which the dancing "was kept up until an early hour."[12]

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 legislature, anyway. The portion of the building designated for temporary use by the House was the Supreme Court Room while the rooms ultimately intended for the Agricultural Department were used by the Council. But, by the time the Capitol Building Commission submitted its final report on March 31, 1888, the Territorial Assembly had passed a bill providing $215,000 for construction of additional public institutions. The amount included $125,000 for adding wings to the Capitol. The Assembly now encountered a roadblock.

C. The 1889-1890 Addition

In 1887 President Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, had appointed Thomas Moonlight the seventh territorial governor of Wyoming. Moonlight served until after the inauguration of President Benjamin Harrison (a Republican) in March, 1889. While in office Governor Moonlight experienced difficulty with the legislature, one notable example of this being concerned with the appropriation of $215,000 for public buildings.

The disastrous winter of 1886-87 had brought hardship to the cattlemen, an industry that was an important economic pillar of Wyoming, and Moonlight, in his long message to the legislature, placed stress upon the need for economy and for strict accountability in all appropriations. In his veto of the omnibus public buildings measure he spoke out:

> 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.[13]

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 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.

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 reluctantly appointed the second Capitol Building Commission. The second commission, following their predecessor, selected David W. Gibbs as the architect. They then chose Cheyenne contractor Moses P. Keefe's bid of $117,504 for construction. The commission accepted the additional wings on April 4, 1890, and resolved, "we believe in this building are to be found greater room and comfort and more elegance and taste, than in any other structure of like cost in the United States." The completion of this building in 1890 could not have been more appropriate, since, on July 10, of that year, Wyoming became the 44th state in the Union.[14]

D. The 1915-17 Addition

By 1913 state government had grown to the limit of the ability of the Capitol 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 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.[15]

The legislature did not grant Carey's request, however, and it was not until 1915 that the Wyoming Senate and House took action. In January of that year, Governor John P. Kendrick (D), in his message to the legislature, reiterated Carey's plea for more space and added, "the congested condition of the capitol building, as suggested by Governor Carey at that time as a serious and urgent need, has today become an absolute and imperative necessity, and it is extremely important that prompt measures should be taken to relieve this condition."[16] The legislative body concurred and it provided for the building of additional wings.

The third Capitol Building Commission designed William Dubois of Cheyenne as the architect for the additions. On September 6, 1915, the commission awarded the building contract to John W. Howard, also of Cheyenne, who had bid $140,790. Howard completed the two wings by March 15, 1917.

These additions serve both chambers of the Wyoming legislature. The Senate meets in the west wing and the House of Representatives in the east. Each chamber contains four murals painted by Allen True at a cost of $500 each. The murals represent various themes in Wyoming's history. The Senate displays "Indian Chief Cheyenne," "Frontier Cavalry Officers," "Pony Express Rider," and "Railroad Builders--Surveyors." "Cattlemen," "Trappers," "Homesteaders," and "Stagecoach" appear in the House. The ceiling of each chamber features beautiful stained glass, with the seal of the State of Wyoming in the center.

E. The Capitol as an Architectural Expression

Although the Wyoming State Capitol is not an outstanding architectural expression, it is an excellent example of a popular style of architecture, and attracts the attention of visitors to Cheyenne. It is the dominant and most interesting piece of architecture in the increasingly crowded state government complex. Frederic H. Porter, a former Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer, noted: 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 customs and our fashions![17]

Historically, the Capitol is of national and regional significance because the history of the building is concommitant with that of the state. For almost 100 years it has been the seat of Wyoming government, both territorial and state. Wyoming's particular character has been largely determined by Wyoming state legislators and other public officials who have made their influential decisions in the Capitol.

THE EQUALITY STATE

A. The 1869 Enfranchisement of Women

The Wyoming Territorial Assembly at its first session in 1869 enacted legislation granting sufferage to women. The bill was drafted by Territorial Secretary Edward M. Lee and introduced by William H. Bright, president of the 9-man Council. Territorial Governor John A. Campbell sat on the legislation for four days while he debated what to do. Two of the three justices of the territorial supreme court encouraged him to sign the bill, and so did a few prominent Cheyenne women. Mrs. Morton W. Post later told Susan B. Anthony that she and several friends met at her house, went in a body to the bachelor governor's residence, and obtained his signature on the bill by threatening to stay until he had signed. Campbell was not yet a suffragist but decided that the experiment was justified.[18]

B. Additional Rights for Women

The sufferage act was one of several laws enacted by the 1869 Assembly that addressed women's rights in a positive manner. Two laws, copied from Colorado statues with a few changes in wording, gave rights which were in advance of those in many states and territories. One of these gave married women control of their separate property, permitted them to work in trades or businesses, and allowed them to control their own earnings. The other provided for equal treatment of husband and wife in the distribution of an intestate's property. A third protection, which was far from universal in 1869, was given to Wyoming wives by adoption of a provision that a mortgage on the family homestead would not be binding on the wife unless she had freely and voluntarily signed it.

Also, the legislature was in advance of the rest of the country in forbidding discrimination on account of sex in the pay of equally qualified school teachers. Possibly in this instance, as in the suffrage act, the legislators were making a special effort to attract women to the territory.[19]

C. Suffragettes Urge Women to Emigrate

Although the publicity given Wyoming for its suffrage leadership would in time become legendary, it initially commanded little notice. The first press releases were brief, even in Susan B. Anthony's suffrage newspaper, the Revolution. The eastern papers had no correspondents in Cheyenne. Disbelief, skepticism, and a "what's-going-on-here" tone characterized some of the reports. Editors were inclined to dismiss as inconsequential a bill passed by a small legislature in a far off western territory, where there were few women. The editors knew about Wyoming, but their newspaper stories about Wyoming highlighted railroad construction, end-of-track towns, prostitutes, vigilantes, and warfare along the Bozeman Trail.

Suffragists meeting in the East complimented Wyoming on its enlightenment. Miss Anthony urged women to emigrate to Wyoming, make a model state out of it, and send a woman to the U.S. Senate. She would go herself, she said, if she did not already have commitments to lead the reform movement in the East. In June, 1871, Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Miss Anthony finally found time to travel west and lecture in Cheyenne.[20]

D. Esther Morris' 8 1/2 Months as South Pass City Justice of the Peace

The press notices reporting the adoption of the woman suffrage act were followed a few months later by two other announcements. As Territory Secretary, Lee became acting governor whenever the governor left the territory. When Governor Campbell was back East in February, 1870, Lee struck another blow for the suffrage cause. He appointed three women to fill justice of the peace vacancies. As it turned out, only one qualified and served. This was Esther Morris of South Pass City, the 57-year-old wife of a poor provider, who divided his time between mining and running a saloon in the village of 460 people.

The "first woman judge" was a colorful character whose activities inspired better copy than the spare announcements that had followed the passage of the woman suffrage bill. Ultimately she would be proclaimed Wyoming's outstanding deceased citizen by the Wyoming Legislature in 1955 and would have her bronze statue placed in Statuary Hall, Washington, DC, with a replica placed in front of the capitol in Cheyenne.

Almost six feet tall and weighing upwards of 180 pounds, the nation's first woman judge was called "manish" by contemporaries. She was outspoken and blunt in conversation, though in no sense a militant suffragist or forerunner of the suffragettes.

Justice Morris' term of eight and one-half months ended in November, 1870. Her docket book, preserved in the Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, shows that she handled only twenty-six cases, twelve criminal and fourteen civil, involving mainly assault and battery or the collection of small debts.[21]

E. The 1889 Constitutional Convention

Some score of years later, in 1889, two years after the laying of the capitol cornerstone, recently appointed Territorial Governor Francis E. Warren announced plans for a constitutional convention. Coincidentally, Amalia Post and a few friends called a convention of Cheyenne women to discuss their representation in the convention and protection of their rights. With Amalia Post presiding, the 100 women present voted respectfully to ask favorable consideration of a resolution: "That we demand of the constitutional convention that woman suffrage be affirmed in the state constitution." The women's convention took no position with respect to representation, although Ms. Post said she trusted that women would have fair representation. Her trust was misplaced, since no woman was elected, although three in Laramie were candidates.

The threat to equality, in 1889, lay in the fact that most men and not a few women almost certainly would have given up woman suffrage if it had come to a choice between that and statehood. Five territories--North and South Dakota, Montana, Washington, and Idaho--were preparing to seek statehood just ahead of Wyoming. Each of the five had more people than Wyoming, and a better claim to recognition. The five in their constitutional conventions rejected proposals that woman suffrage be included in their constitutions. In all, one of the factors contributing to defeat was fear that the U.S. Congress would not admit a state with woman suffrage in its constitution. Since no state represented in Congress had woman suffrage it was assumed that strong objections would be raised. [22]

The delegates to the constitutional convention convened in the new capitol in September, 1889. One of the delegates, a Cheyenne lawyer proposed that woman suffrage be submitted to the voters as a separate article. He argued that the electors had never had an opportunity to vote on woman suffrage. He and some petitioners whom he represented were afraid that either the voters would reject the constitution with woman suffrage in it, or the Congress would. In the debate that followed, two members of the convention advocated staying out of the Union forever rather than give up woman suffrage. The proposal for a separate referendum lost by a vote of 20-8 in the committee of the whole, and the constitution with woman suffrage in it was submitted to the electors in November, 1889, and received their approval by a majority of three to one.[23]

F. Wyoming Becomes the 44th State

As anticipated, strong oppostion was encountered in the U.S. House of Representatives. A member from Georgia argued that suffrage was intended for men, not women and children. Another congressman from Georgia said he had learned that women in Wyoming bought and sold votes. Other objections came from members from Tennessee, New Jersey, and Illinois. Most of the debate centered on woman suffrage, although questions were asked also about the sufficiency of the territory's population. After two damaging amendments were defeated, each by only six votes, the House on March 26, 1890, passed the statehood bill, 139-127, with 63 members abstaining. The Senate later approved, 29-18, after listening to complaints about small population and woman suffrage, and President Benjamin Harrison signed the bill on July 10, 1890.[24]

Wyoming had sought statehood at the right time. As a result of victories in 1888, the Republican party had control of Congress and the presidency for the first time since 1876. Even more important for Wyoming, it was the Republican party. During most of the territorial period there were a few more Democrats than Republicans in Wyoming, but, in 1888, Republicans won most of the legislative seats and reelected Joseph M. Carey delegate to Congress. Also, two-thirds of the men electd to the "nonpartisan" constitutional convention in 1889 were Republicans. GOP congressman could feel reasonably confident that Wyoming would become a Republican state. Wyoming was fortunate also that the Republican party was more sympathic to woman suffrage than were

the Democrats. Had there been Democratic control of Congress in 1890, almost certainly Wyoming would have had to give up either woman suffrage or statehood. Given a choice, the Wyoming electors probably would have taken statehood. It seems likely, however, that with Democrats in control of Congress, statehood would have been postponed, since the thought of adding another Republican state would have been abhorent.

The friendly majority in Congress made it possible for Joseph M. Carey, Wyoming's Repubican delegate, to declare flatly and confidently, without contradiction, that the territory had between 110,000 and 125,000 people. Carey knew better, but he knew also that no official count had been made since 1880. Soon after statehood, the 1890 census reports would be released and would show the population to be only 62,555.[25]

G. Suffragettes Hail a Breakthrough

Wyoming's progress toward statehood was watched closely by the two national suffrage associatons, the American and the National, which merged in 1890 to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). When the Wyoming constitutional convention approved woman suffrage, the Woman's Journal trumpeted, "This is the greatest event that has occurred in American history since the Declaration of Independence and the adoption of the Federal Constitution.... It establishes for the first time in history a true Republic."[26] Similar expressions followed the achievement of statehood on July 10, 1890. At Wyoming's statehood celebration, Therese A. Jenkins gave one of the two major addresses.

In 1891, the call for the 33rd annual national suffrage convention proclaimed, "Wyoming, all hail, the first true republic the world has ever seen."[27] The suffragists now stepped up their activity with the result that Colorado became the second suffrage state in 1893, Utah the third in 1896, and Idaho the fourth, later in 1896.

The Wyoming House of Represenatives aided the suffrage crusade by adopting the following resolution in 1893:

> Resolved that the possession and exercise of suffrage by women in Wyoming.... has wrought no harm and has done great good in many ways; that it has largely aided in banishing crime, pauperism, and vice from this State...has secured peaceful and orderly elections, good government, and a remarkable degree of civilization and public order...not one county in Wyoming has a poor-house... our jails are all empty, and crime, except that committed by strangers in the State, is almost unknown...we urge every civilized community on earth to enfranchise its women without delay...we request the press throughout the civilized world to call attention of their readers to these resolutions.[28]

"Equal Rights" appeared on the state seal, and "Equality State" became first the unofficial and later the official nickname. Wyoming was the first state to elect a woman to state office--Estelle Reel, state superintendent of pubic instruction in 1894, and Wyoming shares with Texas priority in electing a woman governor; both elected women to head their state governments in 1924.

H. Nellie Tayloe Ross: The Nation's First Elected Woman Governor

Mrs. Nellie Tayloe Ross' election illustrates the penchant of political leaders to capitalize on the popularity of a man who dies in office by substituting his widow. Governor William B. Ross, a Democrat, died suddenly on October 2, 1924. He had served almost two years of the four-year term to which he had been elected in 1922. Under Wyoming law it was the responsiblity of the voters to elect someone on November 4, 1924, to serve the remaining two years of the term. The two major parties held special conventions in mid-October to nominate their candidates. The Democrats chose Mrs. Ross; the Republicans nominated a Casper attorney and former speaker of the state house of representatives, Eugene J. Sullivan. While Sullivan campaigned during the three weeks available, Mrs. Ross stayed home, letting her friends campaign for her. She announced that she planned to continue her husband's programs and policies. She won handily, although the Republicans, as usual, won control of both houses of the legislature, and elected their candidates for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives.[29] Without much question, considerations of charity, sympathy, and chivalry had prevailed in the election. Trained as a kindergarten teacher, Nellie Tayloe Ross had given little encouragement to activists or female "office seekers."

Governor Nellie Tayloe Ross had little influence in the Republican-controlled legislature and on state boards, on which she served with the other four elective state officeholders, all Republicans. With some plausibility Wyoming claimed that she was the nation's first woman governor, because she was inaugurated before Governor Miriam A. Ferguson of Texas, after both had been elected on the same day.

After two years of satisfactory performance in difficult circumstances, Mrs. Ross lost in a bid for reelection. By this time the emotional appeal associated with her election in 1924 had dissipated. Republican women who had been involved in the state's subdued promotion of woman's rights spoke out against her for the first time in 1926. Therese A. Jenkins, who had been identified with woman's rights since her address at the statehood celebration in 1890, wrote an "open letter" which was circulated statewide: "What has Mrs. Ross done to particularly deserve the votes of women? Has she ever, since coming to Wyoming, taken any interest in Woman's Suffrage? Has she ever been a delegate to a Woman's Suffrage Convention, to a WCTU meeting?....she was elected.... purely on the basis of sympathy and charity.... Now, that issue is dead...." And so it was. Most of the Republicans who had voted for Mrs. Ross in 1924 for their own party's candidate in 1926.[30]

ENDNOTES

[1]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 before laying of the corner stone of the Capitol.

[2]The top of the spire, or pinnacle, is about twenty feet higher than the second highest building in downtown Cheyenne, the O'Mahoney Federal Building located two blocks south.

[3]The information found under item "7. Description" is an edited and updated compilation of the data entered under this section of the National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form prepared by Mark Junge, a historian with the Wyoming Recreation Commission, in October 1972. New information found in the National Historic Landmark study was provided by Ms. Betty Giffen long-time State Receptionist, Dr. Robert D. Bush and the staff of the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, and President of the Wyoming Senate and Secretary of the National Park System Advisory Board John Turner of the Triangle X Ranch, Moose, Wyoming.

[4]Ltr., Hitchcock and Hitchcock to E.C. Bearss February 1, 1987.

[5]Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle (New York, 1972), p. 178. Flexner notes that the Wyoming State Archives have no record of this message; however, their records for this period are incomplete. Flexner relied on The History of Women's Suffrage, Volume Four, which was published in 1904, for information on this telegram.

[6]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 premanent location for the capital, but to no avail, and thus Cheyenne remains and probably will continue to remain the de facto capital of Wyoming.

[7]T.A. Larson, History of Wyoming (Lincoln, 1965), p. 145.

[8]Ibid.; Sheila Sundquist Peel, "The Wyoming State Capitol," Annals of Wyoming, LVII, No. 1, p. 36.

[9]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.

[10]Peel, "The Wyoming State Capitol," pp. 37-8; D.W. Gibbs & Co., Specifications for the Erection and Completion of a Capitol Bulding for Wyoming Territory to be Located in Cheyenne. Toledo, 1886.

[11]Cheyenne Democratic Leader, May 18, 1887.

[12]Ibid., May 19, 1887; Souvenir and Official Guide of Laying of the Cornerstone of the Capitol of Wyoming (Cheyenne, 1887), pp. 1-12.

[14] Cheyenne Daily Leader, July 23, 1890; Larson, History of Wyoming, pp. 155-7.

[15]Larson, History of Wyoming, pp. 388-90; Marie H. Erwin, Wyoming Historical Blue Book: A Legal and Political History of Wyoming, 1868-1943 (Denver, 1946), pp. 1365-69.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Interview, Frederick H. Porter with Mark Junge, October 23, 1972.

[18]T.A. Larson, Wyoming: A Bicentennial History (Nashville, 1980), pp. 79-81; Ida H. Harper, Life and Works of Susan B. Anthony, 3 Vols. (Indianapolis, 1898-1908), Vol. 1, p. 387.

[19]Larson, Wyoming: A Bicentennial History, pp. 81-2.

[20]Ibid., 82-3; Larson, History of Wyoming, p. 87; Women's Journal (January 22, 1870), p. 20.

[21]Larson, Wyoming: A Bicentennial History, pp. 83-5.

[22]Larson, Wyoming: A Bicentennial History, pp. 98-9; Lewis L. Gould, Wyoming: A Political History, 1868-1896 (New Haven, 1968), pp. 108-12.

[23]Larson, Wyoming: A Bicentennial History, p. 99; Gould, Wyoming: A Political History, pp. 42-43. In its month of deliberations, the convention, except for the women's suffrage issue, showed little originality, taking most of the Wyoming constitution from the documents in effect in North Dakota, Montana, and Idaho. The delegates did break new

ground in the section on water rights where, following the advice of territorial engineer Elwood Mead, they wrote a provision for state control of Wyoming's waters that based the right of prior appropriation on the criteria of beneficial use. They also provided the governmental structure to administer the principle.

[24]Larson, Wyoming: A Bicentennial History, p. 99; Gould, Wyoming: A Political History, pp. 114-15.

[25]Larson, Wyoming: A Bicentennial History, pp. 99-100.

[26]Women's Journal 20 (September 28, 1889), p. 305.

[27]Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper, eds., History of Woman Suffrage, Vol.IV, 176.

[28]The full text of the resolution appears in Woman's Journal 25 (August 18, 1894), p. 328.

[29]Larson, Wyoming: A Bicentennial History, p. 102.

[30]Ibid., pp. 102-03.

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