THE WIND WHISPERS THEIR NAMES:

A Brief History of Depression-Era Federal Projects in Wyoming, 1929-1943

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Cover: Wyoming Supreme Court and State Library Building, detail. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2010.

I have finished one day and what a lovely day. The new Court House is such a beautiful place to work and every one here seems glad to have me. I really feel again like a human being on an office job. Thanks for giving it to me.

Fanny M., a WPA worker in the Historical Records Survey in Casper, to WPA administrator Mrs. McIntosh, February 3, 1941, in WPA Project Files, Reel 214.

* * *

With much pride he took me to Ten Sleep when I was 17 yrs old to see what they had created. Dad died in 1977. With much pride, in 1997 I took my daughter and grandchildren and stood on the dam at Meadowlark Lake. The wind whispers their names.

"Linda," daughter of a CCC enrollee, discussing her father's pride in the work he and other young men had done on one of the Depression-era federal work projects in Wyoming. Source: This was posted in a collection of biographical statements from and about CCC enrollees (and other CCC personnel) at the James F. Justin Civilian Conservation Corps Museum, An Online Museum of Histories, Biographies, and Photographs Regarding the CCCs.

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Preface

Virtually every town and city in Wyoming, and many rural areas as well, can point to significant buildings and structures and other historic resources associated with federal projects that were designed to put people to work in the Depression and, at the same time, to build up the state's and the communities' public infrastructure and facilities. From the construction of the huge Kendrick Irrigation Project, to the building of roads and courthouses, to the construction of schools and military facilities and hospitals, to the expansion and installation of utility systems, to the creation of public art, to the development of Wyoming's national parks and national forests, the tangible fruits of the projects launched during the Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt administrations are everywhere in Wyoming and they endure.

In an effort to understand these material resources, and where they fit in our understanding of the past, the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office contracted and oversaw the preparation of an historic context study of the federal projects in Wyoming in the years of the Great Depression. The results of that study included the publication of a book, *Building Up Wyoming: Depression-Era Federal Projects in Wyoming, 1929-1943*,[1] a Multiple Property Document Form to facilitate the nomination of eligible properties associated with those federal projects to the National Register of Historic Places, and an Evaluation and Management Guide to help resource managers determine which of those properties have historical or architectural significance and then how to manage those that do. The publication you hold in your hands is an extension of that project with a goal of increasing awareness of those Depression-era resources and their historical significance.

To become aware of those resources and how they might be important involves understanding them in their historical context—the patterns of history from which they emerged. Rather than studying them as isolated buildings or events or places, this effort seeks to connect the local and the national, to connect the parts with the whole, to connect the multitude of buildings, objects, structures, and other resources with each other, and to connect them over time. It is when patterns of history emerge that we can see historical context and historical meaning. It is when we find the historical context of particular aspects of our past that the past holds meaning and value for us and is more than just idle curiosity.

This booklet is thus not intended to be a listing of buildings built, roads engineered and improved, dams constructed, parks created, or sidewalks installed, although some of these are discussed. Instead, it focuses on the patterns represented by the different projects and explores their historical significance to show what we can learn from them and from the federal government's response to the Depression in Wyoming. In this way, citizens, students, public officials, businesspeople, and anyone else can hopefully see those resources in their own communities as part of something larger instead of as something isolated, or something of meaning only to the people who built and used the structure. They can plug their local resources into the statewide (even nationwide) pattern and gain a better appreciation of them. By understanding these important resources and their historical significance, people all across Wyoming will be better able to learn from them, respect

1 Michael Cassity, *Building Up Wyoming: Depression-Era Federal Projects in Wyoming, 1929-1943* (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, 2013).

them, and preserve them.

At the same time, it is hoped that this small publication will be a starting point for interested readers, not a finishing point. For a more comprehensive treatment and for a fuller discussion of the issues, the events, the problems, the individual projects, and the patterns discussed here, the reader is encouraged to turn to the larger study, *Building Up Wyoming: Depression-Era Federal Projects in Wyoming, 1929-1943*. In addition to a more complete discussion of the complex subject glimpsed here, a fuller documentation of sources and related material, as well as a bibliography, will be found in *Building Up Wyoming*. The footnotes in this treatment are limited mainly to a few direct quotations.

All the people and public officials who contributed to the preparation of the other studies of Depression-era projects in Wyoming therefore also contributed to this, and their thoughtful and energetic involvement has been appreciated. At the same time, I want to acknowledge the important roles and contributions of Judy Wolf, Mary Hopkins, and Nancy Weidel in the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office in seeing that this study came to life. Their commitment to this project from its inception has been profound and unwavering and I am grateful to them. Judy Wolf, in particular, has guided and helped in all stages of its preparation. The board of the Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund, in support of Wyoming's culture and heritage, provided major grant funding for the preparation and publication of this document and Renée Bovée, the administrator for the board, was helpful and supportive in the application process. That funding and support was crucial and is appreciated.

The events and developments and people that appear in this study were part of an important, complex set of changes in Wyoming and the nation. There was not then universal agreement as to the appropriate course to follow in addressing the problem of unemployment and economic growth, and the entire historical subject remains at the heart of a rich, healthy, and vibrant discussion about the relationship of people to their government and economy. So it is important to note that while many have contributed to this study in all kinds of ways, those people do not necessarily share the perspectives and formulations in the following pages. Further, they are not responsible for any errors of fact or judgment or other deficiencies in this discussion; those are mine alone.

Brickwork on Lander Elementary School (razed, 2011), a Public Works Administration project. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2011.

INTRODUCTION

An Inheritance from Hard Times

We often think of history as something apart from our own lives, something far away, something that happens to, and by, other people, important people, people in the halls of power in government or business. But history is more than that. History happens all around us, all the time. It happens in Wyoming. It happens in our communities. You can see the marks of history on our Main Streets and in our forests and on our streams and rivers. Our history is right here, waiting for us to grasp it and study it so that we can understand better who we are and how we got here. It is an inheritance.

Part of what we have inherited from our history was created during the Great Depression. Wyoming had been a state less than four decades when the Depression hit the nation in 1929. In fact, at that moment Wyoming's economy and social structure were still characterized, often proudly, by a predominantly rural, agricultural population, by small towns, dirt roads, and neighborly association. In some ways, considering the grand scheme of history, it was even a pre-industrial society with personal, familiar relationships. It was also, however, a troubled economy and society. Wyoming's farmers and ranchers had faced stresses constantly as the Agricultural Depression of the 1920s caused them to feel the pinch of hard times ahead of the urban parts of the nation, as Wyoming's coal miners and lumberjacks experienced the growing role of mechanized production and layoffs in their trades, and as merchants in town, in turn, suffered declining sales, on the one hand, and, on the other, increasing pressure from national chains. The Native Americans at the Shoshone Indian Reservation (not yet known officially as Wind River Indian Reservation) were the most left behind of all, living lives with much privation and little hope. And this was the decade *before* the stock market crash of 1929 pushed over a string of dominoes that kept pulling the economy, and Wyoming's people, deeper and deeper into the Great Depression.

It was in response to that economic calamity that the federal government, first under Herbert Hoover and then under Franklin Roosevelt, launched a series of measures to fight the Depression in the nation—and in Wyoming. Basically, both presidents sought to put unemployed people to work. It made sense: Wyoming (and the nation) had a lot of work to be done. And Wyoming (and the nation) had a lot of people who needed work. So a variety of projects and programs were launched to accomplish that work and to hire those people. Along the way, something profound, something of deep historical significance happened: not only were people put to work, and thus given an opportunity again to be productive members of society as they also provided for their own families, but Wyoming was itself changed. Beyond the increased employment and purchasing power that they provided for Wyoming's communities, two distinct legacies of the federal Depression-era projects beckon to us now for examination and study.

One legacy was the physical inheritance from the past, the one that we can see around us. During the Depression hundreds, even thousands, of individual buildings and structures were added to the state as the federal government worked with town and city

governments, with county commissioners, with school districts, with state agencies, with the university, with the Indian tribes, and through the various federal agencies that operated in the state, to identify and address local needs. With projects proposed by local governments, with local workers paid by the federal programs, communities began to patch up, build up, and change up their public facilities. In virtually every instance, the justification for the projects echoed a standard refrain, though using words specific to its own situation: that without the federal assistance the project would not be possible and that local people needed to be put to work, for both the workers' sake and for the community's sake. The public needed buildings and the public got new buildings.

And the public got all kinds of buildings. It is worthwhile stopping to take brief measure of the full range of such construction—and more. Some were grand buildings or structures and some were modest to the extreme. Some were not buildings at all, but were other kinds of construction. Some were roads. Some were irrigation ditches. Some were utility systems. And some were not even construction, but were clothes sewed, images painted, forest fires and coal fires extinguished, blister rust and bark beetles fought, books mended, food canned, hot lunches served, statistics tallied, studies prepared, and more . . . much more. Wherever you go in Wyoming, you will probably be near some of the public works created by federal projects during the Great Depression—even if you cannot see some of them.

But there was something else, even more fundamental, taking place beyond the building of buildings and structures. The second legacy of these projects is that Wyoming's society and economy were being transformed in fundamental ways. In fact, taken together, those projects represented a building, or rebuilding, of the state in its fundamentals—in economic infrastructure, in the system of production, in the social structure, and in the political institutions and their relationships with the economy. The result was, in a technical sense, the development of a "modernized" Wyoming on the one hand, and, on the other, a dismantling or replacing of traditional systems and relationships. However viewed, it is clear that, because of these projects, Wyoming would never be the same. When the winds of despair and the winds of change yielded to the winds of war, Wyoming was a different place.

One way to think of this is as a puzzle with thousands of pieces; the puzzle picture is the whole and the pieces are the multitude of buildings and structures and other works left by the projects. The connections between the many pieces are often difficult to discern, but ultimately they do fit together. Seen in this way, an irrigation project in one part of the state is ultimately connected to the irrigation project in another part and a new post office in one town is part of the same system as the one in another town on the other side of the state. But it's more than that, for the development of city streets and sewers in the state's communities is also connected to the construction of schools and libraries and power plants and lookout towers and airports. They were all, however remote from each other in appearance and use, in location and size, reshaping the economic and even natural environment in which people lived and worked in Wyoming. In one sense, the state was becoming more organized, or some would say industrialized, or at least more connected, more coordinated and synchronized and centralized. One may even look wistfully at some of the aspects of life that were falling by the side—the isolated tie hacks and lumberjacks, the small farmers and ranchers, the small towns, the small banks—and that were being replaced by larger, more centralized private and public institutions. But the nature of the change is clear: Wyoming was coming to resemble the rest of the nation in the sinews of communication and transportation, in the system of production, and in the institutions of trade and exchange.

So when we look at the physical structures and buildings and

other objects left by the thousands of Wyoming workers who created them, we tend first to look at the objects themselves. But we need to look beyond the objects to the people who created them and to the needs that were met (and sometimes created) by them. When we realize that the physical objects are but signifiers of deeper meanings and historical forces, we come to a closer appreciation and understanding of the transformation of which they were a part. We start to understand how history has shaped the world we live in, right here, right in Wyoming.

The process of change that reshaped Wyoming raised a multitude of questions, and those questions are important as historians and citizens contemplate the inheritance of the Depression-era work projects. When you look at the buildings and structures left by the work projects, consider these points:

- A fundamental question was how to help people who were out of work through no fault of their own, who were out of work because of a national economic downturn and could not find work. What were the alternatives to work projects? Direct relief? Do nothing? What were the consequences and implications of those systems of addressing the problem of unemployment?
- While many of the structural changes in the economy brought greater centralization of both public and private economic activity and institutions, there were also pushes toward greater decentralization. Where do the work projects fit in that framework?
- The programs associated with the Hoover administration and with the New Deal sometimes seemed to encourage a definition of the problem facing the nation in the Depression as one of *overproduction* (for example, in industry or agriculture, where, it was argued, excess production glutted markets and reduced prices and profits) in which the appropriate response would be to tighten production controls to increase prices and profits. At other times, they reflected the view that the problem was actually one of *underconsumption* where producers could not profit because the public could not afford to buy what was produced, and the appropriate response to that perception would be to stimulate purchasing power. Which were the guiding assumptions of the various work projects?
- Was the priority of a particular project to put people to work or was it to create a public infrastructure or creative product? While the two goals are by no means mutually exclusive, placing a priority on one or the other does lead to different systems and organization of work, different numbers and kinds of workers employed, and even different kinds of projects.
- While "conservation" was often a goal of work projects, sometimes that conservation involved development instead of preservation. What impact did the work projects have on the natural resources of Wyoming?
- Although construction work is possibly the activity most commonly associated with the federal work projects, what about those other people out of work who were not suited for construction work or who had something different to contribute to the community?
- The various public works programs evolved over time, even in a short period of time, so that a particular program was not the same in 1935 as it had been in 1933 (or 1930) or the same as it would be in 1938 (or 1942). How did those programs change over time? Did they become more (or less) centralized in structure and operation? Did they become more (or less) industrial and construction oriented?
- An often overlooked contribution of the work projects focused on military and defense activities and there is often a fine line separating public, civilian activities and military operations.

How large a role did military goals play in the work projects in Wyoming?

The issues involved in understanding the past are rich and complex and it is essential that we avoid reducing the discussion to slogans or categories and that we likewise avoid the distortion of those issues by partisan posturing. The answers to these questions are not simple and they cannot just be "looked up" or responded to with knee-jerk reflexes. They need to be investigated, explored, contemplated, and returned to now and again in project after project, in building after building. It takes time and it requires honest inquiry. The rewards, however, of examining the products of the public works projects are large and they consist of much more than developing a list of buildings or roads or other physical features. The rewards include an understanding of an important part of Wyoming's past, a part of the past that leads directly to our own lives in the twenty-first century. The real question is not whether we can afford the time and effort to look closely at this part of our history, but whether we can afford not to. It is a matter of taking our inheritance seriously.

1. The Winds of Despair, 1929-1933

The New York Stock Exchange was a long way from Wyoming, but when the stock market crashed at the end of October 1929, it suddenly seemed very close. The crash unleashed a set of forces that pulled the economy downward, gaining speed and wreaking havoc throughout the nation—including in Wyoming. Had the economy been strong in its fundamentals, the blow of the stock market crash would have been less pronounced, but the economy was already fragile, especially in Wyoming, with an ongoing crisis in agriculture, weak consumer purchasing power, and limited opportunities for independent businesses to compete with nationwide businesses. Plus, the banking system was especially vulnerable to the winds of economic ruin, because of both the integrated nature of the banking system and the speculative investments of bank assets. The wind blew in a storm of trouble for the banks, and everybody else, in 1929.

The Depression Comes to Wyoming

Banks across the nation had been in crisis during the 1920s, but especially distressed were the small banks in the rural states and in the small towns of the rural states. Sixty-seven communities in Wyoming lost at least one bank during the decade and it appears that more than a hundred banks (out of around one hundred fifty) in Wyoming closed their doors; at the same time, only thirty-two banks opened. Then, in an ongoing banking crisis between 1929 and 1933, the entire money supply of the nation, already painfully tightened, shrank by more than a third, thus placing additional pressure on everybody who depended on the banks in any way,

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: Thurman Arnold, former Mayor and State Senator, Laramie, Wyoming

A prominent attorney in Laramie, Thurman Arnold became dean of the West Virginia University law school and then joined the law faculty of Yale University. In 1938 he became the Assistant U.S. Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice.

> *Practically no one in the year 1927—when I left Laramie—had any notion of the financial catastrophe that lay so close ahead. Illegal merger followed merger. Giant corporations continued to absorb local industry, draining off to the big cities the purchasing power of the West and the South.*

Source: Thurman Arnold, *Fair Fights and Foul: A Dissenting Lawyer's Life* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1951), 33-34.

directly or indirectly. Then, between the stock market crash of 1929 and the inauguration of Franklin Roosevelt in March 1933, another twenty percent of the commercial banks in the U.S. suspended operations and even more disappeared because of consolidations and mergers and voluntary liquidations. In Wyoming more and more banks were closing their doors and Wyomingites were suffering as a result of lost savings and checking accounts and from loans that could not be made, renewed, or extended. They also suffered additionally and indirectly when their neighbors were hit by the bank closings that sent shock waves rippling through local economies and the whole state.

As the banking system collapsed, the assets of businesses, consumers, and governments were lost either (1) through the closure of banks and their inability to pay or (2) through the loss of value when the markets became glutted with securities. The spiral continued downward and along the way businesses closed, employees were laid off, public and private spending was slashed, and the economy ground down to a slower and slower pace. By 1933 around a fourth of the nation's labor force was out of work and unable to find a job. When workers in the cities could no longer afford to buy groceries, that was a serious hardship for them; it also represented a serious blow to the producers of those groceries—and that included the farmers and ranchers in Wyoming.

The core problem was insufficient demand to keep the economy operating at the level that was needed. Factories were idle, plants were operating at only a fraction of capacity, and without demand there was no interest in expanding production. In February 1933, the Wyoming Extension Service estimated that demand in the economy—as measured by industrial activity and by factory payrolls—had fallen to sixty percent and forty percent, respectively, of what they had been between 1923 and 1925. The economists at the Extension Service wanted to be optimistic but acknowledged that there were dark days ahead: "in view of the fact, however, that a large portion of the reserve purchasing power of the consumers has been exhausted, their savings depleted, and an accumulation of indebtedness built up during the last three years of the depression, improvement is not likely to reflect higher prices of agricultural products before the latter half of 1933, and then only in moderate proportions."[2] The lack of consumer purchasing was killing Wyoming farmers and ranchers. And what was true of agriculture was just as true of other products from Wyoming, like coal and gasoline and timber. When people in the cities were unable to purchase the Wyoming grain, wool, and meat, and the Wyoming coal and gasoline that they needed for their families, Wyoming's workers in the refineries, oil fields, forests, coal mines, and farms and ranches were also unable to provide for their own families. In a continuing downward spiral, the worse the Depression became, the more powerfully the forces of decline fed on themselves; declining demand led to even less demand, pushing the economy even further down with no end in sight.

The problem of the Depression in Wyoming was not just an abstraction. It involved real people with real lives and real problems in the communities and countryside of the state from one end to another. Unemployment climbed to about twenty thousand in 1933 (around 22%, using the 1930 census enumeration of 92,451 gainful workers in the state). Aside from the personal problems that unemployment caused, and aside from the business closures and reductions that it represented, it also meant that spending was down in the state and that local and state tax revenues therefore also declined. One reduction led to another reduction and private sector cutbacks generated cuts in public services which then hit

2 A. W. Willis, "Wyoming Agricultural Situation for 1933," Wyoming Agricultural Extension Service Circular No. 45 (February 1933): 6.

people and businesses dependent on public expenditures.

Schools in Wyoming responded mainly by cutting teaching positions and salaries and by reducing school terms. At a time when the number of students in schools was increasing (as sometimes happens when jobs are not available), the number of teachers in the state fell by nearly ten percent between 1930 and 1933. The University of Wyoming reduced faculty salaries, left vacant faculty positions unfilled, barred married women (including the dean of women) from employment, and closed a dormitory. And with each reduction, with each unfilled position, with each saving in public expenditures, that money no longer circulated through the economy to the merchants and lenders and suppliers who depended on it.

All across the state Wyomingites had trouble getting by with the dwindling resources they had. Incomes were reduced almost everywhere, and people could trim their discretionary spending (if there was any), or completely eliminate it, but the rent or the mortgage was a necessity and so too was food. Clothing could sometimes be made to last longer than in better times, but even so, some articles were necessities in Wyoming winters. What they were to do was far from clear. It was also abundantly clear that the growing numbers of unemployed people were out of work and living in despair because of a national economic decline, and not because of their personal shortcoming—not because they were lazy or spendthrifts. Indeed, in some instances, such as the farmers and ranchers who received low prices on their marketable goods, their very talent and discipline in producing what some saw as excessive, market-glutting amounts, may have been partly responsible for their low incomes. Telling them to work harder was not the solution.

If the problems were society-wide, and not of the individuals' own making, however, society at large also did not have much in the way of solutions to the problems of the people who were out of work. There was no such thing as unemployment relief, unemployment offices, or other public assistance programs. While cities and counties sometimes put the unemployed to work for short periods in clean-up campaigns or other projects, for the most part Wyoming's relief system was limited to a voluntary system of neighbors helping neighbors, of communities helping their citizens and those passing through, and of charitable organizations responding to the economic calamity in the same way they previously had come to the rescue in times of natural disaster. This was, in fact, the way the rest of the nation coped with the crisis.

Herbert Hoover and his Hope for Voluntary Cooperation

The man who happened to be president of the United States when the Depression settled over the nation appeared to have exactly the right background for dealing with this situation. Herbert Hoover had made his reputation first as the Great Engineer because of his successful mining ventures and then as the Great Humanitarian because of his leadership of the food relief program in post-World War I Europe. Hoover had made clear his thoughtful commitment to the ideals of American individualism (he even wrote a book with that title) and he had the confidence of the American people when the crisis set in. Hoover's approach was more complex than is often appreciated, for Hoover not only valued the freedom of American individualism but also emphasized the social responsibility that goes along with it: "What we need today is steady devotion to a better, brighter, broader individualism—an individualism that carries increasing responsibility and service to our fellows," a spirit in which "we will glorify service as a

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: President Herbert Hoover

President Hoover's first order of business in dealing with the Depression was to urge businesses to not lay off workers and to refrain from lowering wages. He asked that they do this, and they promised to do so, which they did for a short while.

> *The first [need] was to uphold the standards of real wages. The second was to uphold the buying power of our working people until the cost of living had diminished. The third was to prevent that thing which had happened in every previous depression in our history, and that was an immediate attack upon wages as a basis of maintaining profits. This proposal had the sympathetic support of the employers of the country, and for nearly two years they maintained the standard of wages . . . in the face of disappearing profits.*

Source: Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Great Depression, 1929-1941* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1952), 312.

part of our national character." A product of an Iowa agricultural community, his sentiments echoed those of many Wyomingites, viewing (and valuing) farming as a way of life, not just a business, and praising the way in which rural people had traditionally come together to help each other when in need.

Herbert Hoover encouraged that spirit of social responsibility in the nation as he set about addressing the problem of the Depression. He drew upon his philosophy of community responsibility, where those who had been blessed by the community now needed to help out those in need, where the well-to-do should help the poor, where the strong should save the weak. Hoover called upon the employers of the nation to keep production and employment up—to not lay off workers—and to not cut wages, so that people would not only be able to provide for their own needs but would have the money to keep up the demand necessary for the economy to operate. As for helping those who were out of work, Hoover again called upon the national spirit of social responsibility, encouraging people to contribute through local organizations for the relief of the distressed.

At first the business leaders pledged their support, but before long they hedged their commitments and began to pursue exactly the cycle of layoffs, plant closings, and wage reductions that they had promised Hoover they would resist. As businesses cut back their spending on all the factors of production, their workers and suppliers and distributors and other beneficiaries found themselves out of contracts, out of work, out of money, and that meant that the other businesses in the economy that depended on them were also forced into cutting back. As purchasing power diminished, so too did the economy further dry up. Hoover, meanwhile, watched all this with alarm and with some bitterness too, but was remarkably subdued in his response to those who had broken the promises he carefully extracted from them to build a strong economy, and

who now moved quickly to save themselves at the expense of the nation. So despite Hoover's efforts otherwise, the economy continued its downward spiral.

Similarly, Hoover's hopes for the same system of voluntary cooperation to help the people out of work, the people hungry for food and desperate for shelter, were also shattered. Hoover often cited statistics demonstrating the success of voluntary contributions, but the reality was more desperate than he acknowledged. In fact, Walter Gifford, who headed up this effort, consistently advised Hoover that the relief needs of the nation were being adequately met by this voluntary effort, but when questioned by Congress, Gifford could not state how many people were out of work, how many families needed relief, what amount of money was necessary to help them, what standards were being used in distributing relief, or what the resources of the communities were. As with the effort to get the economic leaders to voluntarily accept their responsibility in sustaining a vibrant economy, getting those who had benefited from the economy to voluntarily help those who did not also fell short.

In contrast to Herbert Hoover's preference for voluntary cooperation to address the nation's problems, there were others who called for forceful government action, and some of those people were the very business leaders who declined to act voluntarily. In fact, they wanted the government to help them keep prices up and wages low—exactly the opposite of what Hoover had in mind. In particular, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the president of General Electric pushed a plan for economic rejuvenation in which the federal government would permit businesses to cooperate to reduce competition and set prices and wages at profitable levels without fear of enforcement of the antitrust laws. Where Hoover viewed competition and small business as the backbone of freedom and democracy, the business community, at least the national businesses, saw competition as the problem and wanted

Bridge construction near Jackson, Wyoming" March 17, 1932; National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 30, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads. Photo identifier, 292828.

to eliminate it. Fundamentally, they proposed that businesses be permitted to combine, to operate as a single unit in the economy, to set production levels and quotas for individual plants, and to set and enforce with the power of law what they called "a fair price." Hoover rejected the plans, calling them "the most gigantic proposal of monopoly ever made in history."

When Henry Harriman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce persisted, Hoover said, "I informed [Harriman] that if this plan were put into practice it would, through the creation of monopolies, drive the country into the Fascism of which it was mostly a pattern, or toward Socialism as the result of public exasperation."[3] Hoover, far from believing that the problem was

3 Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Great Depression, 1929-1941* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1952), 335.

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: Col. Arthur Woods, adviser to President Hoover and Chair, President's Emergency Committee for Employment

Colonel Arthur Woods, Hoover's close assistant and chair of the President's Emergency Committee for Employment in autumn 1930, made an explicit link between improving the nation's transportation infrastructure and providing employment. Woods observed:

> *. . . carrying out a broad and comprehensive public roads program at a time like this is one of the soundest procedures to meet a situation of depression because it not only employs labor and materials necessary in actual construction, but also utilizes a background of additional labor to provide the materials and the effective completion of such a program. It is estimated that for every man actually employed in working on a road, three other people become gainfully employed as a result, not only in the supplying of materials and equipment, but in other industries all along the line.*

Source: "Three Types of Highway Building Favored by the President's Emergency Committee for Employment," *American City*, 43 (December 1930): 158.

excessive competition, believed there was too little of it and too much coercion and constraint of smaller businesses in the business community, a factor which both reduced consumer purchasing power and inhibited individual small business opportunity, and he increased enforcement of the antitrust laws. Hoover was opposed to a centralized planning structure, whether in the private or public sectors, and he was committed to a competitive economy that both protected the public and opened opportunities for the entrepreneur.

Public Works and the Hoover Administration

This pattern of urging voluntary action to maintain production and consumption on the one hand, and rejecting coercive schemes that threatened individual liberty and responsibility on the other hand, however, was not Hoover's only approach to alleviating the economic crisis. He actually did embark upon programs to reverse the cycle and to help those in desperate need. These programs were limited and they were tempered by his distrust of strong centralized government and business and by his fear of government relieving the affluent of their moral and economic responsibilities to the less fortunate in society. But he pursued government action in several ways that affected Wyomingites.

Convinced that it was important to stimulate the economy with construction projects and jobs, Hoover called upon state and local governments to accelerate their plans for public works, thus boosting the construction sector of the economy; then he provided loans through the Emergency Relief and Construction Administration. In fact, communities around Wyoming took up that challenge and built a variety of public buildings, like courthouses, in the depths of the Depression. Largely invisible because they were not part of an official federal program of construction, these buildings remain an important legacy of the Hoover years.

Federal Building in Casper, constructed 1930-31, an example of increased construction in the Hoover administration. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2012.

A larger effort in Hoover's public works program was federally financed and undertaken, but it too is often difficult to see. He did not create new agencies or new programs; instead he poured money into existing agencies, like the Forest Service and the National Park Service (NPS) and the Treasury Department so that they would expand and accelerate their construction activities. One substantial part of Hoover's public works program was the expansion and acceleration of highway construction. Highways were still in their early stages of development in the nation, but during the Hoover administration the federal government offered

a new, emergency boost to state highway-building efforts. Herbert Hoover, sometimes against the advice of his cabinet, made road construction a priority, one that was welcomed in Wyoming. Hoover increased public road construction in 1930, asking Congress to appropriate an additional $75 million in 1930 and $150 million the next year. The Wyoming legislature in 1929 authorized a major bond issue for highway construction, and the bond issue was approved in the November elections. As one student of the program observes of Wyoming's 1931 road-building program, "the program gave jobs to several thousand men who otherwise would have joined the ranks of the jobless."[4] In 1932 the superintendent of the state highway department eagerly looked forward to an additional emergency appropriation for highway construction in Congress since it would, he said, allow Wyoming to hire another thousand people to work on highways for nine months.

Perhaps more noticeably, but still often forgotten, the Hoover administration also moved aggressively to expand the construction of federal buildings in the nation, including in Wyoming. In the spring of 1931 almost three million federal dollars were set aside for Wyoming projects including such diverse features as new quarters at Fort F. E. Warren (as Fort D. A. Russell had recently been renamed), new post offices, offices for the Veterans Bureau, and facilities in the national parks. Casper dedicated a new Federal Building in 1932 and another new Federal Building in Cheyenne was also authorized and funded in 1931. New post offices in Green River and Thermopolis had been authorized in 1929, and Newcastle and Torrington were added the next year. The construction of the iconic Veterans' Hospital in Cheyenne may have been the largest federal building project in Wyoming initiated during the Hoover administration, a project that was completed during the term of his successor.

Another federal presence in Wyoming, the national parks, also took on new life during the Hoover administration with surges in funding for construction—roads, trails, buildings and other improvements—at Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, and the perilous and challenging Red Lodge to Cooke City Road, also known as the Beartooth Highway, began in the Hoover administration. The third NPS unit in Wyoming, Devils Tower National Monument, had a tiny staff but managed to hire local crews to perform bridge repairs and riverbank stabilization as well as constructing concrete barriers in the Belle Fourche River to manage the river's course, in the process helping out "many who would have otherwise been charges of charity at this time."

In later years Herbert Hoover pointed out that his administration had spent more on public works than all the other administrations total over the previous thirty years, including building the Panama Canal. Even that much, however, was not enough to stem the tide of the Depression and through March 1933, when Hoover left office, the nation's economy continued its downward slide. In fact, that is largely why Hoover left office then. He lost the election the previous November to someone who promised, vaguely, more government action.

4 Paul Andrew Hassler, "Some Effects of the Great Depression on the State of Wyoming, 1929-1934," M.A. Thesis, University of Wyoming, 1957, 33-34.

2. The Winds of Change, Part I: 1933-1934

The eyes of Wyoming turned to Washington, D.C., in the spring of 1933 to see which way the wind would blow now, to see what the new president, Franklin Roosevelt, would do about the deepening Depression. The answers were not always clear since the New Deal did not move in a single direction, a complex situation which neat and tidy generalizations cannot capture. Historians usually refer to the First New Deal of 1933 and 1934 and the Second New Deal of 1935-1938 as separate—even conflicting—sets of legislation, goals, and programs. Moreover, even within the First New Deal itself, the measures taken were not exactly consistent and sometimes seemed to work at cross-purposes with each other and thus made different marks on Wyoming.

Control and the Economy

When it came to regulating the economy in 1933, a pattern did emerge, and that was the very pattern of centralized control and consolidation that Herbert Hoover had rejected. In banking, which had been at the core of the crisis, new legislation brought stability to the system by separating commercial and investment banks to prevent banks from speculating with depositors' funds and by guaranteeing, within limits, the deposits in banks that belonged to the new Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. This stabilized the banking system but it did not bring back the small banks that had already disappeared. In industry, the pattern of centralization was even more pronounced. Where Herbert Hoover had angrily rejected the plans offered by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and others to establish a centralized planning system in which business would be free to set prices higher and lower wages to boost profits, the new president accepted the idea and created the National Recovery Administration, explicitly suspending the antitrust laws (which had encouraged competition). While Wyoming's public leaders, like Governor Leslie Miller, were trying to restore competition and reduce prices to levels that the public could afford to pay, the federal government was enforcing higher prices. Price competition had been the main vehicle by which small, mom-and-pop businesses in the state could compete with the national businesses and chains; and consolidation meant the decline of competition. Instead of prices being too low, many people in Wyoming believed that they were too high, especially as the Depression deepened and purchasing power shriveled even more.

As with banking and industry, so with agriculture: the initial programs of the New Deal encouraged the largest operators. The traditional Wyoming system of independent homesteaders providing for themselves on the land by growing a diverse range of crops and livestock in a relatively self-sufficient way was increasingly undermined by the growing commercialization and mechanization of agriculture; so Wyoming's farmers and ranchers found themselves, to varying degrees, with increasing debts and increasing vulnerability to global markets. Wave after wave of foreclosures and other distress sales, record low crop and livestock prices, mortgages that had to be paid, and taxes that came due each year meant that in the 1930s it was all the harder to make a living on the land in Wyoming.

The core idea in the New Deal response to this—as with other problems in the economy—was that *overproduction*—excess production that led to glutted markets—had led to

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: Leslie Miller, Governor of Wyoming. December, 1933.

> *There is abroad in our State a condition arising from long continued unemployment and the ravages of drouth more acute than is generally realized and I have been convinced of late that as public servants we have failed to measure up to our responsibilities in these matters. Prior to last spring, by act of Congress certain funds had been made available to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation for loans to states for emergency relief purposes, which loans would have to be repaid out of future federal aid road appropriations. Wyoming was the single State in the Union which refrained from borrowing any of this money and in this fact we took considerable pride for some time. I have been wondering recently whether we are entitled to indulge in that feeling of pride. As a result of surveys which I have caused to be made through reliable agencies, there are now being revealed thousands of cases of undernourished children, and likewise, many cases indicating a lack of proper clothing for both children and adults.*

Miller's address to the Wyoming legislature is quoted in T. A. Larson, "The New Deal in Wyoming," *Pacific Historical Review*, 38 (August 1969): 255.

reduced prices and profits. The solution by that reasoning was for the government to provide incentives—benefit payments—to farmers and ranchers to take acres out of production and to thin herds down to smaller size. The program did reduce production and it did, probably, increase prices that producers received. There were critics, people who pointed out that the market was not really glutted and prices were not too low in a nation where so many people were hungry and doing without. These people argued that the problem was not overproduction so much as it was *underconsumption*—that something needed to be done to stimulate demand instead of making goods more expensive. Plus, they argued, the new system of agriculture benefited the large producers more than the small; the more acres that a farmer could take out of production, the higher the subsidy; the more cattle or sheep to be sold to the government, the higher the payment received. If the farmer or rancher had only a small operation with a hundred, or a few hundred, acres, or with a single flock of sheep or small herd of cattle, then that operator, who operated on a shoestring anyway, would receive only a small payment. The result of this program was to actually increase the consolidation of farms, to reward and encourage the largest farms and ranches, and to increase the pressure on the smallest operators already struggling with Depression and drought.

The Problem of Unemployment

Then there was the problem of unemployment. Whatever the benefits of the New Deal's early programs directed at agriculture, industry, and banking, they clearly did not address the problems of the masses of people out of work and unable to find jobs or to get by until they did find jobs. So, in a separate effort, the Roosevelt administration launched new programs to provide assistance and

to provide jobs—not necessarily the same thing.

The fastest way to get money into the hands of people needing help was just to give it to them. In the early months of the New Deal the government set up a system of relief, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), under the leadership of Harry Hopkins. While the Hoover administration had made available to the states $300 million, much of which was never loaned, the FERA had $500 million to provide in grants. Wyoming politicians often boasted of their reluctance, even refusal, to accept assistance from the federal government during both the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations, but the state did receive relief funds from both administrations.

This relief, *direct* relief, was often called a dole and no one liked the dole—not the people opposed to government handouts, not the social workers who dispensed it, and not the people who received it. It was accompanied by a means test which carried with it an inevitable humiliation—the object in that, unlike every other test that a person endured, was to prove how much a failure you were and how you could not make it on your own without assistance. This was distasteful to everyone involved. In fact, from the very start of the dole, the agency dispensing funds sought to come up with some kind of an alternative that provided relief, but with more dignity to the recipient and with more value to the community. The alternative to *direct relief* was *work relief* whereby people would work for the money they received. Work relief had two advantages: (1) people would earn their money instead of receiving a handout, and (2) the public would benefit from the projects worked on by those people.

Before Franklin Roosevelt had been in office a full month, Congress created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), or, officially, the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW), program to put unemployed young (mainly young, at any rate) men to work in the cause of conservation in the nation. Communities

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: Robert Fechner, Director of Emergency Conservation Work

One of the CCC projects in Wyoming attracted national attention when CCC Director Robert Fechner prepared his report covering the first two years of CCC work in the nation:

> *An unusual project engaged in by the CCC was an attack on the coal bed fires in Campbell County, Wyoming. During the summers of 1933 and 1934 a camp under the jurisdiction of the General Land Office was established. One of the jobs was the control of a fire 2,000 feet in length mentioned by the Sawyer Expedition of 1865. Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees constructed a temporary bridge with a 64-foot span to reach the blaze. The other coal beds worked on were generally twenty-five to forty-five feet in thickness, and the fires in some cases were 1,000 feet in length along the outcrop. Thus an opportunity was had for the first time to develop and test out on a large scale the technique of controlling coal bed fires.*

Source: "Two Years of Emergency Conservation Work (Civilian Conservation Corps): April 5, 1933 -March 31, 1935," report prepared by Robert Fechner, Director of Emergency Conservation Work, April 5, 1935.

This logo sometimes used by the Public Works Administration suggested its modern engineering approach to public works. Source: *America Builds: The Record of PWA* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939), frontispiece.

across Wyoming, and the nation, clamored for camps to be located near them. As early as April 1933, the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce had written the regional forester for the Forest Service in Washington, D.C. asking that the needs of the Cheyenne area be considered in reforestation projects using unemployed workers. Other communities also sought federal projects. Twenty-four CCC camps were up and running in Wyoming by August 1933, with camps attached to the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and the General Land Office, and possibly one on the Wind River Indian Reservation (known as Shoshone Agency until 1937).

In addition to the young men who signed up, the ECW also hired local labor for camp construction—thus putting even more people to work. Moreover, supplies would be purchased locally as much as possible. Even more local people would be hired to supervise the work on the ECW projects, again increasing the impact on unemployment and local economies. The next year more camps were added in Wyoming as the CCC program grew, and now included work for the Bureau of Reclamation and work on Wyoming's state parks.

Most of the early CCC camps were assigned to the Forest Service and the National Park Service and both agencies now had manpower to move forward with a long list of projects including fighting forest fires and preventing damage due to disease and insects, building administrative and residential buildings, lookout towers, trails, roads, and bridges, as well as planting trees. They also used the CCC for constructing picnic shelters, restrooms, and fireplaces, and providing water access; and CCC workers provided labor for the construction or repair of related road systems. One major and ongoing project removed dead timber from around Jackson Lake where the enlarged lake (after 1916) had flooded shoreline timberland.

The CCC did not finish its work in the first summer, or in the second summer. Those projects would continue in the coming

years in the 1930s, but in the case of the CCC they would continue with widespread support from the nearby communities, from the state, and from the nation. The Emergency Conservation Work program, the Civilian Conservation Corps, was making a difference.

The other new work program set up early in the Roosevelt administration had public works, rather than employment, as the main goal: the Public Works Administration (PWA). Administered by the Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes, the PWA would become one of the premier construction programs of the Depression. Some of the millions of dollars of PWA money in Wyoming went into road construction but the major PWA effort involved construction of dams that would allow for the irrigation of land in the North Platte River drainage above and below Casper, an idea that had been around for a long time but that had not received sufficient support in Washington to proceed. Pushed by Senator John B. Kendrick, the program secured the support of President Roosevelt and in October 1933 contracts were let to start the first stages of construction of what became known, after the senator's death the same year, as the Kendrick Project—Alcova Dam and Seminoe Dam and Power Plant—which would ultimately irrigate 50,000 acres of land. While the huge project was popular in Wyoming and obviously contributed greatly to the economic development of the region, it did not, however, make a dent in unemployment. Clearly some people were put to work initially, like engineers and other professionals, but the early PWA projects as a rule did not focus on creating jobs so much as creating dams and roads.

The impact on unemployment by the PWA and CCC was not inconsequential, but the need was much greater than the remedies offered. The Civilian Conservation Corps was a key program in the First New Deal, a program that helped develop the state's natural resources and a program that helped the young men who enrolled and also their families. But the nation's unemployed numbered around 15 million and the CCC in its first years put about 250,000 to work. In 1933 Wyoming hosted fewer than 5,000 CCC enrollees. Although the number of enrollees seems to have grown the next year, it still did not absorb the unemployed of the nation, the state, or the local communities. And the PWA, despite its contributions to road construction in 1933 and despite its promise of jobs and expenditures of funds on the large dams in Wyoming, was yet to realize that promise.

But unemployment was a problem every day and had been for several years. Plus, unemployment was a problem not just for those people out of work, and not just for their families; it was a problem for the merchants whose business was to sell groceries and gasoline and clothes and cars to those people, and it was a problem for the people who needed to sell or buy houses, and it was a problem for state and local governments that depended on the taxes unemployed people would pay if they had jobs, taxes that would support roads, schools, and the everyday functions of government.

As the winter of 1933 approached, the need in Wyoming was great. Winter in Wyoming can be a challenge under the best of conditions and, given the circumstances of hunger and lack of shelter and heat and clothing, the months ahead looked especially grim. In November, Roosevelt created by executive order a new agency, the Civil Works Administration (CWA), with a goal to put four million unemployed Americans to work immediately. Nationally, that goal was not achieved until after the middle of December, but Wyoming reached its goal early and then expanded enrollment so that by January 1934 the CWA employed more than 10,000 workers in the state. The CWA was a major step in work relief in the nation and in Wyoming.

Not long after starting to work, the Civil Works Administration in Wyoming moved from the capitol to the Wyoming Governor's

Mansion where it remained. The state administrator invited applications and proposals for work projects, and the state office was quickly flooded with requests from communities. The goal was to transfer all the able-bodied people on the relief roles to the CWA, and the administrators in Cheyenne and around the state worked feverishly to meet that and other goals. Will Metz, the state administrator of the CWA, commended them: "Due to a special type of loyalty on the part of the CWA administration employees, normal hours of work were completely disregarded, and the entire state quota of 3250 men was at work December 10, 1933, five days before the national dead line set by Harry L. Hopkins." That "special type of loyalty" was not an institutional loyalty but a loyalty to community and neighbors—even if the community and neighbors were spread all across the state.

Between November 1933 and April 1934, the CWA undertook hundreds of projects, probably in every community and in almost all the rural neighborhoods and the multitude of school districts in the state. Ordinarily the sponsoring agency—a county government or a town or city—saw its own needs and also saw the available pool of local labor and put the two together. The sponsoring government body would provide a general plan and outline of the project, provide tools and equipment, and sometimes materials, and the CWA would provide pay for local unemployed workers to do the work, and sometimes also supply materials. With the CWA, the New Deal had finally arrived in Wyoming.

Many of the CWA projects involved road and street improvement, and also some highway work, mainly making repairs to existing roadways to eliminate hazards or build bridges or just make them more usable. Ordinarily they were either in or near towns, where grading and graveling city streets was important, or on county roads. And parks were frequent projects. Many Wyoming communities had started work on prominent Washington Parks a few years earlier to commemorate the two hundredth birthday of George Washington, but often they lacked resources to bring the parks to completion; now the CWA provided workers to get the job done. All across the state, from Green River's Island Park and Kemmerer's Triangle Park to Garden Creek Falls at Casper to Cheyenne's entire park system, CWA workers landscaped, fertilized, built up, and otherwise improved the state's municipal parks.

The state's many school buildings, and their infrastructures and surrounding grounds, had long suffered from the lack of resources. Now the CWA pitched in to repair, rehabilitate, and upgrade them. The CWA installed or improved the plumbing, painted walls and varnished woodwork, and repaired windows and doors. From Cheyenne to Jackson, from Opal to Acme, from Jireh to Greybull, and from Otto to Fossil, schools had local CWA workers on the job. At Manville, the application for CWA funding noted how the school desperately needed repairs, but "due to the financial condition of the district, it was impossible to do the work." The Bitter Creek School in Sweetwater County used CWA labor to add a drain and cesspool. At Upton the CWA built equipment for a science laboratory, and perhaps even more noticeably, installed plumbing at the high school. In Uinta County the schoolhouse at Hilliard asked for, and received, the digging of a water well. So did Washam, in Sweetwater County, where the CWA dug a short tunnel into the hillside to tap into a spring in the mountain to provide water for the school. In this, it is important to remember, the schools served not only as places of education but as community centers, places where local neighborhoods and townships would gather for recreation, for resolving issues, for coming together as neighbors.

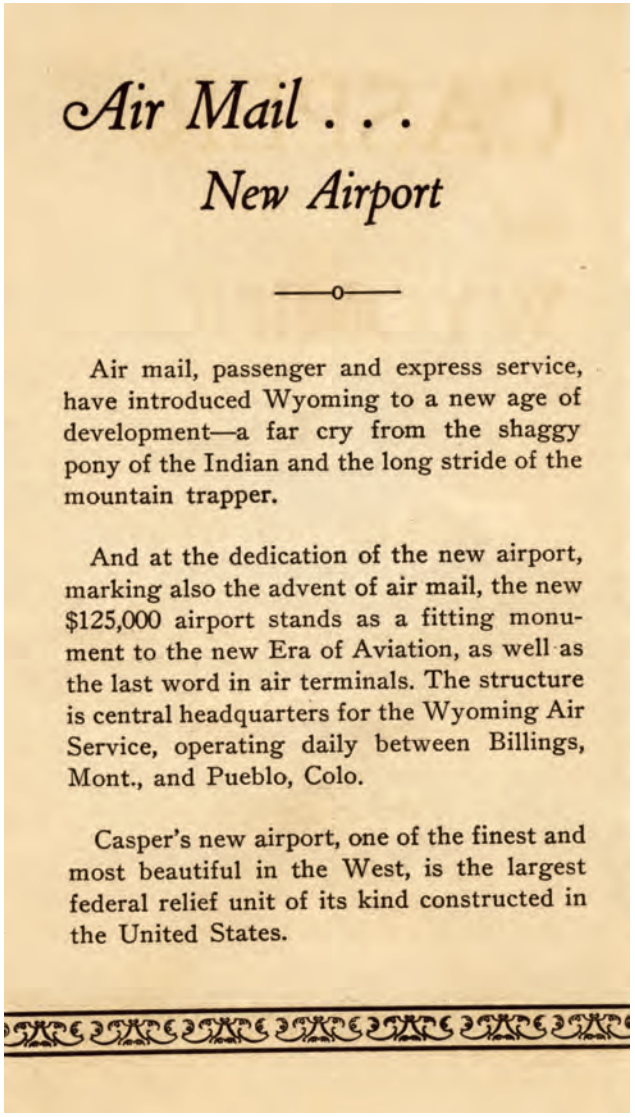
In community after community local CWA workers converged on Wyoming's courthouses, city halls, libraries, jails, fire stations, schools, and public buildings of all kinds during the winter of 1933-1934, but most of these were already standing structures

in need of repair although some new town halls or "community buildings" also appeared, such as the community halls at Recluse and Farson. In Arvada, the town received a new community hall, and in Shell the CWA constructed a log "community house," a building that was "equipped with a fine dance floor."

It was the beginning of the "Air Age" and all around Wyoming, the CWA embarked on the construction of a "great number of high class airports and landing fields." Airports in communities like Sheridan, Rock Springs, and Buffalo were expanded and the project at Casper brought to completion an ongoing effort that had been stymied by budget cuts for several years. New airports appeared at Rawlins and Gillette and Laramie. In addition, airport work at Cody, Meeteetse, and Powell promised to open that region to air traffic. And a proposal for a new Frank Mondell Airport at Newcastle began to take shape under the CWA. Two years after this CWA work, Albert Park, who had served as Chief Engineer for the Wyoming CWA, told of this accomplishment, saying, "Forty airports, some with hangars, were constructed."

In other instances, CWA projects were not actually construction oriented, or even used to improve physical facilities of any kind. In an era before photocopy machines, CWA workers in Cheyenne made copies by hand of tract books in the land office. Other CWA workers gathered information, county-by-county, about farm tax delinquency, farm land values, and living and housing conditions. In at least two counties CWA workers were used to rehabilitate school and library books so that they could be used more. The uses to which CWA funds and workers were put seem to have been limited mainly by the imagination of the local governments proposing them.

The Civil Works Administration was never intended to be a permanent agency and its particular purpose was to see as many unemployed people as possible through the winter of 1933-1934, and it clearly succeeded in that mission. A multitude of projects



Air Mail . . .

New Airport

Air mail, passenger and express service, have introduced Wyoming to a new age of development—a far cry from the shaggy pony of the Indian and the long stride of the mountain trapper.

And at the dedication of the new airport, marking also the advent of air mail, the new $125,000 airport stands as a fitting monument to the new Era of Aviation, as well as the last word in air terminals. The structure is central headquarters for the Wyoming Air Service, operating daily between Billings, Mont., and Pueblo, Colo.

Casper's new airport, one of the finest and most beautiful in the West, is the largest federal relief unit of its kind constructed in the United States.

This excerpt from a brochure distributed at the 1934 dedication of the Casper airport indicates the significance attached to the project in Casper. Brochure from Michael Cassity collection.

suddenly appeared all over the state, small projects, labor-intensive projects, projects responding to specific local needs (in terms of the skills and numbers of local unemployed people needing work and also in terms of public infrastructure needing development), decentralized projects, neighbors working with neighbors, building up their communities, building up Wyoming. By the middle of January 1934, CWA employment in Wyoming reached its peak of 10,738 workers. But in the middle of February the CWA began to reduce its activities, and its jobs, and by the middle of April, the CWA had been shut down in the nation and in Wyoming.

As the CWA closed down, it could look upon its accomplishments in several ways, and not least was the extensive addition, improvement, and enhancement of the roads, parks, water and sewer systems, public buildings, airports, and other tangible products in the state. But the significance of the CWA was greater than the construction projects themselves. Farmers and ranchers in the state deeply appreciated the improved transportation opportunities, but the state administrator of the Wyoming CWA operations, Will Metz, was especially sensitive to the cooperation the agency received with the Wyoming business community and with the impact of the CWA projects on Wyoming business. At the end of the project, Metz reported that interviews had been conducted with "hundreds of the various firms in Wyoming" and that they reported increases in their business as a result of CWA projects: "Retail trade was probably increased about forty percent, on the whole, with food and clothing firms enjoying much higher increases. The immediate stimulation noticed when Civil Works was started and the drop in retail sales as CWA was tapered off, would indicate that CWA was the chief factor which brought about the improvement in business conditions." Metz got his information not from Washington but from Wyoming business people who reported their increase in sales as the CWA program ramped up and their declining revenues as the program dropped workers from the payrolls.

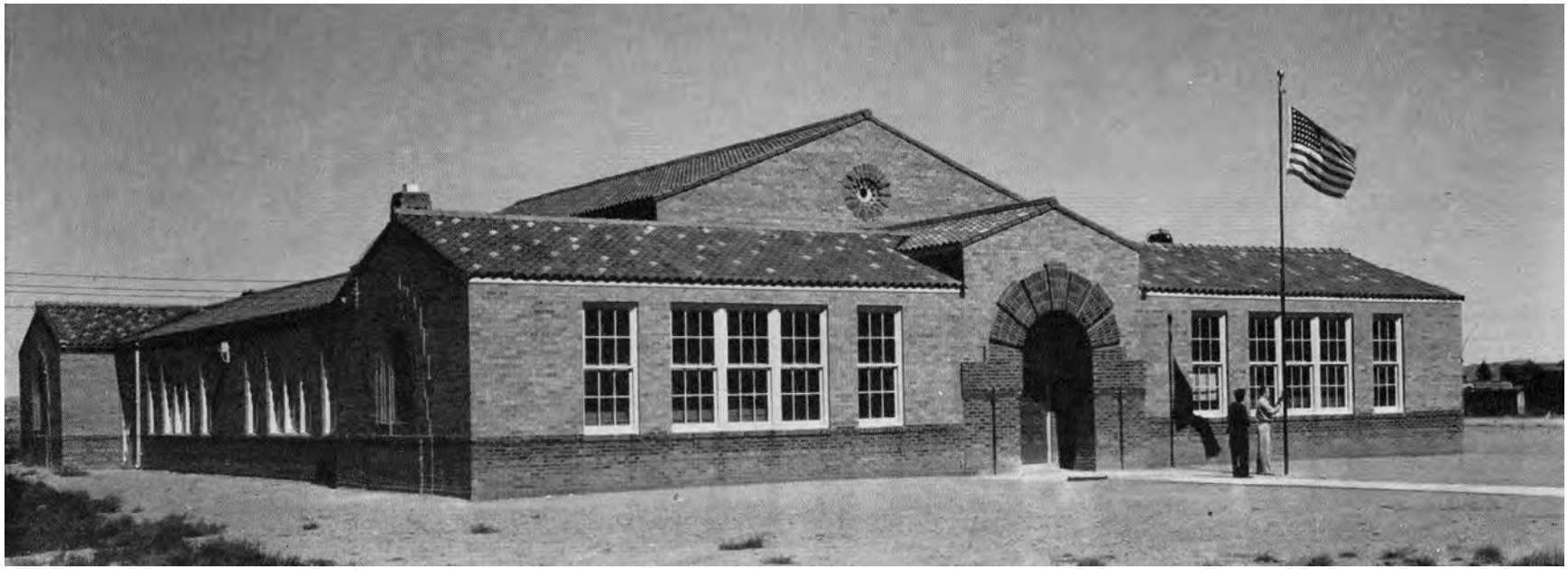
The CWA had a perceptibly large impact since it was, in truth, the first major work relief program to hit the Wyoming communities since the start of the Depression four years earlier. And the CWA money was mainly spent on wages which were then spent almost completely in the communities, rather than on materials that benefited businesses outside the state. Although it ended early in 1934, the Civil Works Administration provided an example of what could be done, given focused priorities of (1) putting people to work, (2) stimulating the economy, and (3) building up the public infrastructure. In that way, the CWA would prove to be a model for future work relief efforts.

After the CWA ended, the state continued some of the CWA-type projects, on a reduced scale, using FERA funds in what was usually known as the Wyoming FERA. In two instances it expanded the kinds of work projects offered. In its brief life, the CWA had not developed an official program for women who needed employment, although there were a few instances of such local efforts. Under the Wyoming FERA the state launched such a program and by May 1935, eight counties had work projects for women. In those projects, hundreds of women learned how to make mattresses and clothing and how to sew, both for their families and as a job, and other skills. Similarly, in addressing the problem of unemployed transients, the Wyoming FERA established Transient Centers initially at Casper, Cheyenne, and Rock Springs and two camps at Mountain Home in Albany County and Mountain View in Uinta County. In each instance the homeless people who registered there were provided some modest assistance in the form of temporary lodging and meals, but they were also expected to work, especially if they remained a week or more. So work projects emerged at each location.

By the end of 1934, with the dismantling of the CWA program that had put thousands of Wyomingites to work over

the previous winter and without a major new program to replace it, large questions loomed over the economy and how to address the problem of unemployment. There were signs, however, that change was in the air. Even the Public Works Administration, moving forward with its big dam projects on the North Platte, began to respond to the wider need for jobs—not just building important infrastructure. In 1934, the PWA approved construction of the Liberal Arts Building on the campus of the University of Wyoming. This was important not just because the university had long sought this building, but because it signaled a shift in direction by the PWA. Big as it was, the Liberal Arts Building was much smaller than the dams being built. This was a sign that in the future the PWA would be sponsoring more projects, smaller projects, projects that put more people to work.

As 1934 drew to a close, the New Deal had plainly come to Wyoming, but the future of the economy and of work relief in Wyoming was far from certain. The New Deal's programs, including its work relief programs, had barely gotten started. The CCC put to work some, mainly from out of state, and the PWA was moving forward with two big dams and gave signs of starting others, but the impact on Wyoming unemployment so far was slim. The most ambitious public works program, the Civil Works Administration, had put ten thousand unemployed to work during the previous winter, but then had shut down. As cold weather set in, highway workers moved back onto the unemployment lists and there was no way of knowing exactly what the future would hold—in Wyoming or the nation. As it turned out, larger changes and larger programs were right around the corner. The winds of change were starting to blow in a different direction.



The new (1936) PWA school in Parco "replaced a leased 4-room dilapidated wooden structure and two apartments rented for classrooms in an apartment building." The new building, by contrast had "eight classrooms and a centrally located combination playroom auditorium with clerestory windows. The construction is semifireproof, the walls being brick and the roof wood covered with Spanish tile. The exterior walls are faced with two colors of brick, the darker shade being used for a base and trim around the entrance and certain windows." Photo: C. W. Short and R. Stanley-Brown, *Public Buildings: A Survey of Architecture of Projects Constructed by Federal and other Governmental Bodies Between the Years 1933 and 1939 with the Assistance of the Public Works Administration* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939), 174.

3. The Winds of Change, Part II: 1935-1938

President Franklin Roosevelt started 1935 with two related goals. He wanted to take the employable people off the relief rolls. And he wanted to put them to work on a "single new and greatly enlarged plan" to undertake emergency public works in the United States, a public works program that went beyond the normal building operations of the government. The cluster of programs that Roosevelt launched, and expanded, in 1935 would be known as the Second New Deal and it included some of the hallmark programs of the Roosevelt administration and also left some of the most enduring marks on Wyoming. In doing this, Roosevelt relied first on existing efforts, but he also developed new programs to expand the size, the focus, and the nature of work relief.

Different Directions for Work Relief

One of the existing work programs, and one that is often overlooked, was the Department of Agriculture's Range Improvement Plan. That program in particular reshaped part of Wyoming's landscape with the development of water resources on the land. County agricultural extension agents paid ranchers to contour their land, dig out springs, construct earthen reservoirs, and make other improvements to the rangeland to increase grazing. In 1935 this was augmented with the new Resettlement Administration (designed to help out the poorer and smaller operators) and the various programs turned farmland into grazing land, moving many off the land they had worked—leaving a different mark on the land.

The Public Works Administration remained a central and important part of the New Deal's work programs in Wyoming. With two major dams on the North Platte River, the Kendrick Project was a prime example of the way the PWA conducted its projects and saw its contribution to the public infrastructure. In the sense that the PWA contracted its work to private firms and provided economic opportunities for countless other people and businesses through the irrigation and electrical power to be made available, the PWA would ultimately make an enduring contribution with the big dam projects, but it remained slow in building and in hiring. But it was changing and starting smaller projects, so that by 1936 the PWA in Wyoming was building not only schools (notably at Parco but other communities too), but also post offices (Gillette, Kemmerer), waterworks (Medicine Bow, Buffalo, Lovell, Sundance, Sheridan, and more), courthouses (Worland), and other public facilities that previously would not have been included in the program because they were not big enough.

Impressive and important these projects were, some in a utilitarian way, some architecturally, and all of them socially. But the new Supreme Court and State Library Building in Cheyenne stood out as a monumental achievement, not the least because it had been accomplished during the economic gloom of the Depression. The Public Works Administration in the Second New Deal demonstrated greater flexibility and agility as it responded to the social needs of Wyoming, as it endeavored to put more people to work in Wyoming communities, and as it sought to stimulate the economy through its contracts and construction projects. And it should be remembered that it had a different focus and priority from other work relief projects: making public improvements,

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: Floyd Dominy, Campbell County Agricultural Extension Agent

Floyd Dominy graduated from the University of Wyoming and soon took a position as Agricultural Extension Agent for Campbell County. In addition to his regular duties of offering advice to farmers and ranchers, Dominy, like other agents, also administered the various range improvement programs, provided emergency crop loans, drought relief, and oversaw resettlement efforts. The drought relief effort meant that he was the one who shot the cattle to reduce the herds and paid the ranchers $8 per head destroyed. Arriving in Campbell County in 1934, he left in 1939 to take a position in Washington, D.C. as regional administrator of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. Just over a decade later he became Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation and built, most notably, Glen Canyon Dam. Because of his later prominence he reflected on his Campbell County years in the New Deal. John McPhee interviewed Dominy and wrote about him that "Ranchers got up at four in the morning, and sometimes Dominy was outside honking his horn to wake them. He wanted them to come out and build dams—dams, dams, dams." Dominy was not modest about his accomplishments and his methods:

> *The government was paying farmers fifteen cents a cubic yard to move dirt. Hell, I wasn't going to pay fifteen cents if it cost ten. I said to those ranchers, "I'm going to pay you cost—nothing more." Naturally, they bellyached. But with my relief allotment stretched further I could build a lot more dams. . . .*
>
> *Campbell County was my kingdom. When I was twenty-four years old, I was king of the God-damned county.*

Sources: John McPhee, *Encounters with the Archdruid* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971), 157; Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water* (New York: Viking Penguin Books, 1986), 226.

in time of economic emergency, that would, as its Wyoming director said, "remain as distinctive and enduring additions to our National wealth."

The first two years of the Civilian Conservation Corps had been successful by most accounts and by 1935 the CCC program had established itself as a popular program and as a vital resource for land managers who needed workers. As it happened, the program needed to be renewed that year. When it was renewed—and expanded—the CCC reached a peak with thirty-two camps in Wyoming, but then it dropped to probably eighteen camps the next year and fifteen in 1937. The numbers of camps and enrollees in the state are difficult to calculate with precision, but it is clear that the CCC provided a much needed resource for the communities of Wyoming. From their perspective, the main problem with the CCC camps and enrollees was that there were not enough of them to go around. Communities protested and complained to their congressional representatives, and they lobbied officials asking for more enrollees and more camps.

Wyoming Supreme Court and State Library Building, a PWA project completed in 1937. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2010.

After two years of trying to get a camp located in the Bridger Valley, for example, a group of civic, business, and agricultural leaders begged for a CCC camp to be located nearby to build dams to control flooding on the Black's Fork or Smith's Fork of the Green River and help about two hundred family ranches.

Much of the CCC work took place on land managed by the Forest Service. There the CCC workers planted trees, hundreds of thousands of them by 1936, and they did much more than that. They also transplanted beaver populations to new habitats and they conducted wildlife surveys. They constructed and maintained phone lines in the federal lands where they worked. They also built fire lookout towers and ranger stations, built and maintained trails, and performed the usual road construction and maintenance. Protecting and maintaining the commercial timber of the forests, however, was a primary focus; even in the 1930s the damage caused by the bark beetle was extensive, and the CCC was a welcome resource in that battle. This appears to have been a mission everywhere the Forest Service was located in Wyoming. Just considering the forests of Wyoming *east* of the continental divide, the Forest Service had controlled 180,000 acres for insects

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: Francis Williams, Director of Wyoming Public Works Administration

Although accurately identified as promoting the vast infrastructure projects like the Kendrick Irrigation Project with its big Alcova and Seminoe Dams, the Public Works Administration, by 1935 and 1936, had begun to sponsor smaller, though still substantial projects like schools, local water systems, post offices, and other widely dispersed buildings and structures. In this report from 1936, the Wyoming director of PWA operations was careful to justify the smaller projects as being as important as the large ones.

> *The majority of our citizens are aware of the larger undertakings of P.W.A., having been impressed by the magnitude of such projects as Boulder Dam, Grand Coulee and Bonneville Dams, and Wyoming's Casper Alcova project – yet I venture to assert that the significance of Boulder Dam is no greater than that of the smallest schoolhouse project in Wyoming or the least pretentious water system constructed here by P.W.A., even though the number of individuals benefited is more limited.*

Source: Francis Williams, in *Report of the Proceedings of the Statewide Coordination Meeting of Federal Agencies Operating in Wyoming* (Casper: National Emergency Council, 1936), 13-B.

as of autumn 1935. In addition, the Forest Service put the CCC to work fighting white pine blister rust, a fungus, by getting rid of the plants that served as alternate hosts to the fungus—one plant at a time. A labor-intensive task, like many other CCC projects, this one also covered thousands of acres in the state. In addition, the CCC in the national forests worked to improve stock ranges through, as one report explained, "the extermination of forage-destroying rodents, the control of insect pests, the eradication of poisonous plants on hundreds of thousands of acres and the revegetation of depleted ranges." The CCC built livestock corrals, drift fences, campgrounds, bridges, and driveways for sheep and cattle operations to facilitate their use of the national forest land. In promoting commercial timber production and enhancing the grazing potential of the same forest resource the CCC endeavored to build up the forests, to make them more productive as an economic resource.

Fires, of course, constituted the most dramatic threat to the forests and were a standing part of the mission of most Forest Service CCC workers whatever the assigned project of their camp and company. And fires happened everywhere and often, probably more often than in other years because of the serious drought turning the forests into tinder waiting for a spark or a lightning strike. From the Black Hills to Jackson Hole, and from the Big Horn Mountains to the Medicine Bow Range, CCC enrollees were pulled from other assignments to fight fires, not just on the particular forest where they happened to be working. Where there were fires in the 1930s there were also CCC workers. The hours were long, incredibly long, optimal wind conditions for containing and suppressing the fire were often during the night, and food and sleep were both sparse. This was not a job for the faint of heart.

It also carried grave danger. The most spectacular, and tragic, instance demonstrating that danger came in a fire in the Shoshone National Forest in August 1937. A lightning strike August 18

along Blackwater Creek, about forty miles west of Cody and south of the highway to Yellowstone, appears to have smoldered for two days before being spotted. CCC crews from Wapiti and Tensleep, and from other agencies—the National Park Service in Yellowstone, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Division of Grazing—responded, delayed by the distance in reaching the fire and by available communication, but began their assault as they arrived. On August 21, as the crews worked to contain the fire, the wind suddenly shifted, and with it the direction of the fire. Some firefighters were able to withdraw to safety, but the raging fire completely blocked the exit from a canyon where others had sought refuge or water. Escape was not possible in any direction and the fire moved in on them in that narrow enclosure. They were completely trapped in the inferno. Seven men died in that ravine and eight more were killed elsewhere on the fire; another thirty-eight were seriously injured. The CCC made an important contribution in fighting that fire and others in the state. The CCC enrollees sometimes paid a dear price in their efforts.

The National Park Service is the other large agency widely identified with Civilian Conservation Corps activity during the Depression. The NPS continued to draw upon the CCC resources in the years 1935-1937, and their work in Grand Teton, Yellowstone, and Devils Tower filled a critical need for the agency. In contrast with the national forests where development of harvestable resources was often a given, the internal struggle within the NPS over the mission and purpose of the agency simmered (and sometimes boiled), a conflict between preservation and development. In this conflict the CCC represented a significantly enlarged manpower for the NPS; as the Park Service deployed its CCC workers, it generally used them to develop the facilities and land that it managed.

Less visible but nonetheless important was NPS cooperation with Wyoming state parks. The Depression caused the state parks

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: C. J. Olson, U.S. Forest Service

At a meeting of representatives from the various federal agencies and programs in Wyoming in 1936, C. J. Olson reported on the status of CCC work in the national forests of Wyoming, and he indicated the range of CCC work:

> *The use of CCC labor in preventing and suppressing forest fires has materially reduced losses from fire. The tree destroying insects which are present in all timber stands and which annually destroy more timber than is destroyed by fire, have been successfully combated and if control measures can be followed up, can be kept under control. Many necessary administrative buildings for rangers and for fire and other guards have been constructed. The improvement of recreational facilities has been a major undertaking. The use of forests for recreational purposes has brought many out-of-state visitors into the State.*

Source: C. J. Olson reporting for the Forest Service in *Report of the Proceedings of the Statewide Coordination Meeting of Federal Agencies Operating in Wyoming* (Casper: National Emergency Council, 1936), 7A-B.

CCC forest fire work near Esterbrook, August 1936. The fire crew is from Camp BR-9 at Guernsey Lake. Photo: Monthly Camp Report, ECW Camp BR-9, Record Group 115, Entry 21, National Archives and Records Administration, Rocky Mountain Region, Denver.

to lag far behind the national parks in most regards. And the National Park Service had expertise upon which the states could draw. With that knowledge and with the CCC labor at hand, state park development moved quickly and forcefully, although mainly in the shadow of development in their counterpart national parks. For example, on Casper Mountain, the CCC improved camping and picnic grounds and also worked on Rotary Park near Garden Creek Falls in the summer and in the winter did North Platte riverbank work and cleanup work at the reconstructed Fort Caspar. At Guernsey Lake, the National Park Service and the Bureau of Reclamation put the CCC to work developing recreational facilities, and this included buildings that became showcases for their architectural qualities.

One of the major deployments of the CCC in Wyoming in the middle of the decade, however, came with the creation of a new federal agency, the Division of Grazing, or, as it would later be known, the Grazing Service and then the Bureau of Land Management. Where federal land policy had been historically focused on encouraging the settlement of public lands under the various homestead laws, the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 reversed course and closed most of the public domain to homesteading and focused on managing the land as a productive resource instead.

Monument to firefighters killed in Blackwater Fire, 1937. The monument itself was also built by CCC workers. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2010.

The Division of Grazing had the mission to "stop injury to the public grazing lands by preventing overgrazing" and to stabilize the livestock industry. This was a huge mission but the personnel resources of the new division were meager, so they used CCC labor to do the work. With Division of Grazing camps at Basin, Farson, Worland, Split Rock, Big Piney, and Frontier, and perhaps other locations also, as well as the associated side camps to which the main camps temporarily sent temporary work crews, the Division of Grazing CCC was a new force on the public domain, on the public lands outside the national forests and parks, and in Wyoming. They built substantial stock watering reservoirs, cut and creosoted fence posts for drift fences, built truck trails, classified lands, and embarked on other projects designed to improve cattle and sheep grazing on the public domain.

In Wyoming, the CCC was busy during 1935-1938, the years of the Second New Deal. The ECW workers provided crucial labor resources for the National Park Service, for the Forest Service, for the Bureau of Reclamation, for the General Land Office, for the Division of Grazing, and for the state parks. They left marks on the land in ways that were sometimes small and sometimes large. They built dams. They dug wells. They installed drift fence. They built bridges. They launched

Museum, Guernsey State Park, constructed by CCC workers. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2010.

campaigns to eradicate rodents and predators by spreading poison. They constructed or improved existing roadways and truck trails. They built everything at state parks from fireplaces and drinking fountains to at least one museum in the state. They fought fires in the forests, in abandoned coal mines, and in coal seams.

The WPA Goes to Work

The work relief programs that had been started already continued and expanded, but in 1935 Roosevelt also embarked upon a major new program to provide work relief to the unemployed of the nation—including the unemployed of Wyoming. As the president pondered how to expand the job creation effort, he had two models in front of him: (1) the big projects, with small

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: Division of Grazing CCC Camp DG-52, 1938

Organized at Fort Devens, Massachusetts in the summer of 1938, Company 2132 traveled to Wyoming and was immediately assigned to the Division of Grazing near Worland. The group reported:

> *Among the first of its projects will be the building of adequate reservoirs for stock-watering purposes on the famed Worland-Big Horn Mountain stock trail. The economic objective of this enterprise is the lessening and eventual elimination of sheep losses sustained along this stock trail in severe drouth years. Such losses have aggregated five per cent. of flock totals. Permanent stock watering places are to be built to replace the old range practice of hauling water to the distant herds.*
>
> *Thus, one of the newer CCC companies will be serving to the utmost the principles for which the first companies were organized more than five years ago. The construction of adequate public stock trails is a task that the stockmen have been unable to undertake on their own account, the cost being prohibitive and the work of a community wide character.*

Source: "History of Company 2132, Camp DG-52-W, Worland, Wyo.," in *History of the Civilian Conservation Corps: Colorado and Wyoming District* (Pueblo, Colorado: O'Brien Printing Company, n.d.), 90-91.

numbers of workers, generally launched by the Public Works Administration, and (2) the multitude of small projects with many more workers that the Civil Works Administration had exemplified. After much internal debate in the White House, the president chose to push especially the program that provided many projects with many workers. The Works Progress Administration, created in May 1935, was obviously different from the PWA (at least, at the beginning) because the WPA would undertake smaller projects than the PWA and it was also distinctive in the matter of creating jobs. The PWA generally contracted out its construction projects and the contractors hired the people they needed and wanted; often these were highly skilled and sometimes they left other jobs to hire onto the work project. On the other hand, the WPA hired and supervised workers directly, especially those people on the relief rolls, people who were capable of working but who had not been able to find employment. These people would gain jobs and they would contribute to society by helping build up Wyoming's infrastructure.

As soon as the Wyoming WPA set up its headquarters in August, applications poured in seeking funds. Shortly afterwards, the WPA started putting people to work in Wyoming on a variety of locally-tailored projects that were formulated and applied for by local sponsors. The primary requirement that they had to consider in developing their applications was the available labor supply—i.e., the skills and numbers of unemployed local people who would be put to work in the projects. And they put many of them to work. Six months after the start of the WPA as a functioning agency in the state, Wyoming had 5,720 people working on WPA projects throughout the state.

The WPA projects resemble many of the CWA projects that had been undertaken in the winter of 1933-1934; in fact, a number of proposals returned to those same projects to revive the earlier projects, to continue them, to expand or extend them, and to carry

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: WPA Project Proposal, South Superior

WPA projects were proposed by local governments and, to be awarded funding for workers, had to justify the public benefit to be achieved. South Superior proposed, and secured, WPA funds to widen, grade, and gravel the streets of Superior. The justification for the project was familiar. Note also the date; this application had been prepared and received even before the WPA was fully operational in its Wyoming headquarters.

> *Nothing need be said about the necessity for street work in these coal camps because the lack of surfaced streets is so painfully obvious. According to the press, this project has received Washington approval and when official notice is received in this office work will be started immediately.*
>
> *A new road is needed to the school house, as the school house sits on top of a hill and in the winter time the present road becomes blocked with snow and made dangerous with ice to the extent that it is impossible to drive to within a reasonable walking distance from the building. Mr. McClellan, the engineer, will this week run a survey of the possible routes for a road up this hill and the best and most economical route will then be selected.*

Source: Wyoming WPA Project Files, Reel 104, Unnumbered project for Superior, July 13, 1935, Document #351.

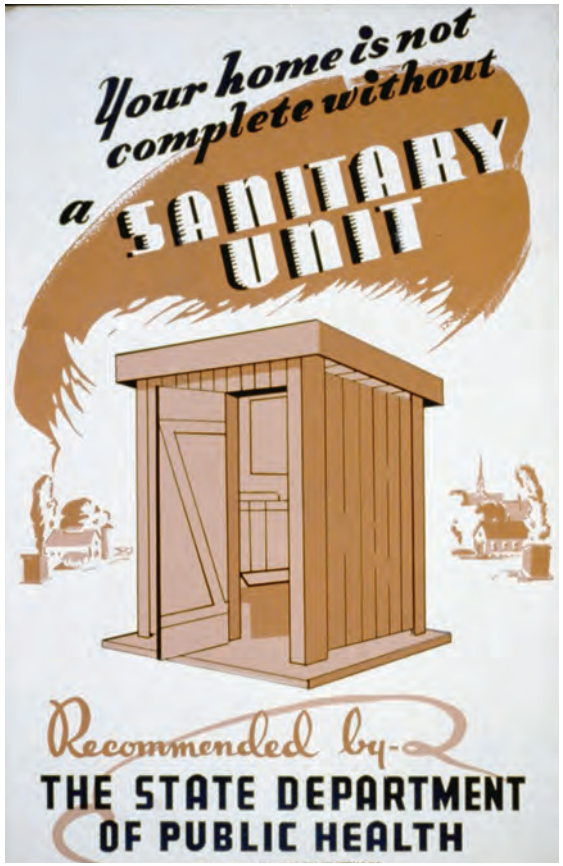
WPA sign. National Archives and Records Administration.

them on in other communities. But the WPA also moved into new areas with new projects. Roads and more roads were needed all over the state and the WPA helped add them. And that especially included city streets that were graveled or oiled or otherwise surfaced in virtually every community. And then there were the related water and sewer systems in the communities, essential elements of an enhanced utility infrastructure just coming into being in many parts of the state. More work went into city parks, recreation facilities of all kinds—from playgrounds to a reconstruction of Fort Caspar as a museum facility, swimming pools, band shells, tennis courts, and even golf courses. And these buildings had multiple uses, like the community hall at Dayton: "Need for a building for community gatherings. Gymnasium for the school children. Stage for community plays. Meeting place for the town council." And projects included additions or improvements to the National Guard armories in several communities. On a smaller scale individually, but more numerous and possibly the most widespread of all, the WPA's "Community Sanitation Project" addressed a fundamental fact of life in Wyoming in the rural areas; it encouraged, by example and sometimes by installation, the construction and use of a more sanitary form of outhouse. The State Department of Public Health sponsored the project and by the spring of 1936 it was active in sixteen Wyoming counties and planned to move into the remainder shortly. "The old insanitary outdoor toilet is one of the major items in sanitation that has never been successfully attacked in the past," lamented the state health officer, referring to the existing outhouses of the state as "prolific sources of filth born diseases."

On top of these projects, the WPA carried out flood control projects around the state with a priority on channeling floodwaters and heavy runoff with ditch construction and by widening and riprapping stream banks, and with other development of the drainages. Crow Creek in Cheyenne and Bitter Creek in Rock Springs received notable attention, but other streams in towns throughout the state also found WPA workers working to control their flows. As extensive and ubiquitous as the WPA parks and playground projects were, the flood control and soil erosion projects involved with streambed reinforcement actually consumed even more money and worker hours.

And then the airports, many of them begun under the Civil Works Administration, received an additional boost with the WPA. In fact, like the roads of the state, the more the airports were improved, the more traffic they attracted, and the more traffic they received, the more improvement they needed. The dynamics of airport growth, once unleashed, were powerful. Across the state, WPA workers drained, filled in, and leveled runways, added new ones, paved old ones, built hangars and administrative buildings, added beacons, and made other improvements.

In the various WPA projects developed for Wyoming's counties and communities building, repairing, and maintaining roads and bridges, installing sewer lines and water mains, building and developing municipal parks, improving airports, and protecting the communities from floods, the WPA was changing the physical



The WPA not only built thousands of modern, sanitary outhouses in Wyoming, but it also helped promote the use of the improved units. Note that the background shows a small town. The poster was created by the WPA Federal Art Project. Credit: Work Projects Administration Poster Collection, Library of Congress.

WPA workers on street at Crow Creek construction site in Cheyenne, April 30, 1938. Photograph by E. Schuler, WPA photographer; courtesy the Wyoming State Archives, WPA Collections.

WPA sewing room, Wheatland. Wyoming State Archives, WPA Collection, #24056.

landscape of Wyoming in the middle of the 1930s. At the same time, as WPA officials made clear, their first priority was to put to work people who needed jobs, who wanted jobs, and who could not find jobs.

People other than construction workers were also out of work and the WPA in Wyoming moved to put those people to work as well. There had been a few projects for women under the CWA and more in the FERA work, but under the WPA specific programs were set up to provide jobs for them. Once the project took off in the autumn of 1935, the WPA put to work up to 1,229 women who

were creating literally thousands of clothing items of all kinds for needy families. Much of this was done with cotton cloth but each establishment in the state also included a group that specialized in working with wool. In these sewing rooms, the emphasis was on the development of skills as seamstresses so that the women would be able to find employment in that line when there was demand, and that further meant each woman acquiring the skills involved in sewing complete projects from start to finish—in contrast to performing just one part of the item to be added to other parts that other women would be sewing. As director Margaret Sowers reported, "I have always instructed our seamstresses that they should make these clothes with as much pains as though they were sewing for themselves." They took pride in the quality of the clothes they made, but they also wanted them to be unidentifiable as sewing room products. In order to avoid any stigma attached to wearing those clothes, which would be possible if the clothes were, through their uniform appearance, associated with sewing room production, the WPA ordered material in small quantities. Sowers explained how this worked: ". . . no two bolts of the same kind are ordered. The children cannot be picked out in the communities by their clothing."

In addition, the state WPA set up canneries at several locations in Wyoming employing women and this was related to a hot lunch program in some schools (providing lunches to more than 600 children in its first winter). Plus the women's program of the WPA employed registered nurses in a project that emphasized childcare and more worked as "visiting housekeepers" to "homes where the mother was ill, and in motherless homes." The women's program of the WPA had serious limitations. It was small in the number of projects it sponsored and also in the number of people it put to work. And it generally restricted its work to traditional conceptions of women's roles. Those facts notwithstanding, this was a considerable improvement over previous efforts where opportunities simply did not exist for women on work relief projects or existed in only isolated instances.

White-collar workers constituted a smaller part of the workers on relief than they did of the general population, but they remained important and had valuable skills to offer. These included generally "persons in the professions—engineers, teachers, musicians, artists, clergymen, nurses, etc.—as well as proprietors, managers and officials, and office and salesworkers." So the WPA devised projects for these people. Working with state agencies, the WPA provided professional and clerical people, or others with office, instructional, and administrative skills, to perform commercial, agricultural, and natural resource research and surveys. By the spring of 1936, six or seven months after starting up, the Wyoming WPA projects employed a total of 336 professional and technical workers (including architects, draftsmen, technical engineers, teachers, and others), 357 office workers (including bookkeepers, accountants, auditors, clerks, stenographers, typists, and others), and 364 project supervisors and foremen.

Drawing upon unemployed people with specific skills and backgrounds where they could make a different contribution to the state, the WPA's Statewide Historical Project launched a program with individuals poring over records in courthouses and elsewhere in the state, making extensive lists of what was located there and sometimes annotating those lists or even copying materials in longhand to assure their preservation, and, at the same time, researchers in local WPA offices wrote reports, interviewed pioneers, gathered information about the economy, culture, history, physical features, and attractions of the different parts of the state. By March 1936 the WPA had at least thirty-one writers and editors at work on these projects. In addition, where the Civil Works Administration had put a few artists to work in 1933-1934, the WPA's Federal Art Project went further. Employing artists, the project provided art instruction, encouragement, and appreciation;

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: C. B. Lund, Wyoming National Youth Administration

Addressing the distinctive needs of young people in the Depression, C. B. Lund (who held a senior, but unidentified, position in the Wyoming NYA organization) explained the enduring marks left on the state's youth by unemployment and how the NYA addressed the issue.

> *For a number of years young persons had been unable to secure employment through the usual channels and had been congregating on farms and in small towns. School officials and community leaders were very much aware of the dangers to youth morale and the inevitable future social costs. . . . A way was opened to provide youth with constructive work activities as well as to enable them to earn a minimum wage to care for their immediate needs.*

Source: C. B. Lund, *Final Report, National Youth Administration for the State of Wyoming* (Denver: War Man-Power Commission, Bureau of Training, 1943), [31].

WPA worker tabulating wool data, Albany County. Photo: Wyoming State Archives, WPA Collections, P894/148.

slow to start, it would take off and flourish only later.

One particular group emerged as a focus of attention as the new WPA started up in 1935: young people, people who had never found a job. Thus was created, within the WPA, the National Youth Administration (NYA). The task was not just to put young people to work. The circumstances of the Depression actually had a complex, and even unending, impact on youth. Many were not able to continue their education because of the need to earn a living for themselves and their families. But once they dropped out of school they were not able to find jobs, and thus were even more frustrated in their lives and aspirations, a frustration that would shadow all their endeavors for years and years. So the question was first how to help them stay in school, whether high school or

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: Susan Archuleta, Participant, National Youth Administration, Rock Springs

Susan Archuleta grew up in Rock Springs, where her father had taken the family so he could work in the mines. When he died and left a widow and eight children, she records, "there wasn't any welfare. My mother took in washings to make a living, and our job was to pick up the washings on the way home from school. . . . Then, at night, we'd help iron and fold them." During the Depression, Susan Archuleta signed on to work with the National Youth Administration, which accepted females. Although the NYA increasingly focused on construction, especially in its early years young women were otherwise employed:

> *When I was a teenager, the Depression began to take a turn. Franklin Roosevelt was elected, and the works projects started. The boys and young men who'd been laid off at the mines went to the CCC camps, and the girls joined the NYA. When school was over, we'd go and work right there in the school building. We'd help out in the office, do filing and other things. Actually, we didn't do much work—it was our first job. But we learned a lot. It was a good experience.*

> *They paid us about twenty-one dollars a month. Out of that we got five and the other sixteen was directly issued to our parents. The same was true of the boys working in the camps. . . . . If a man with a lot of children was unemployed, he was given preference over someone who had less children. They also had projects for women who were widows. They made quilts and mattresses. Those programs were great. Everybody got a chance to work.*

Source: Nan Elsasser, Kyle MacKenzie, Yvonne Tixier y Vigil, *Las Mujeres: Conversations from a Hispanic Community* (New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 1993), 36-37.

college, and then, if they were out of school and unemployed, how to help them gain skills so that they would be employable. Thus the NYA was structured in a decentralized way with an in-school program and an out-of-school program, both directed at the state's youth, both based on "learn by doing," and both working with existing institutions in the communities such as schools, local governments, and civic organizations.

Initially most of the people put to work in the NYA were young women, and they performed clerical tasks—a sort of female counterpart to the CCC. One part of the NYA provided jobs for students at the university, ideally doing work related to their education goals, to enable them to remain in school. The NYA program was popular in Wyoming, growing from 2,766 students receiving aid in the 1935-1936 school year to 4,126 in the 1936-1937 school year. An additional number had attended classes or activities sponsored by the NYA, increasing the number benefited directly by a large measure. And, as with other programs, but especially those involving young people, one NYA report added, "the indirect benefits cannot be estimated."

One especially neglected part of the Wyoming population received some attention from the WPA—and other programs—in the middle of the decade. Life at the Shoshone Agency had been bleak and impoverished for years and the privation had been intensified by the agricultural depression of the 1920s and by the Great Depression even more. Government programs to provide help, when they existed, seemed always to come slower to the reservation, if at all, when compared to other parts of the state, as in assistance with irrigation development. Work was slow to begin on the Wind River Irrigation Project on the reservation, but funds came for construction of the Washakie Reservoir, for digging a canal to divert water from Dinwoody Creek to remote farmlands, and an additional lateral opening up 3,300 acres, and to repair and upgrade previously constructed irrigation features. By 1936, one report calculated that this work "has been the means of extending relief to some 2,000 Indian people who have had little except hardship and whose condition has been made considerably worse due to the general depression." It also noted the broader benefits of the program "to Fremont County and the State in supplying work for needy people, who are not connected with the reservation." Additional programs, including a separate Indian CCC operation and WPA crews, worked on range improvement, the construction of a community and recreation hall, and also provided jobs for women on the reservation in a hide tanning project and a cannery. Put together, these programs made a difference on the reservation not only on the physical landscape but on the people too. The reservation superintendent reported about the people there in 1936, "Unquestionably, they are better dressed, better fed and are gradually stepping forward and aspiring to a higher and more wholesome standard of living."[5] After years of the Depression the federal public works projects were starting to make a difference on the reservation—and throughout Wyoming.

5 Forrest Stone in *Report of the Proceedings of the Statewide Coordination Meeting of Federal Agencies Operating in Wyoming* (Casper: National Emergency Council, 1936), 20 C, D.

4. From the Winds of Change to the Winds of War

When Franklin Roosevelt visited Casper and toured the numerous work projects there in September 1937, clear signs of recovery were spreading across the state. In 1936 the faculty salary cuts at the university had been restored and the State Planning Board, examining data collected in 1937, found a steady annual increase in Wyoming farm income, in electrical power generation, in discretionary spending on items like passenger cars and life insurance, in the volume of checks drawn through Wyoming banks, and more. "With the trend lines of these separate business indications pointing generally upward," the board reported, "Wyoming in this phase is in a very healthy financial condition."[6] The economy still had not recovered to its 1929 level but it was growing steadily in Wyoming.

Work Relief and Recession

It was thus no surprise that when President Roosevelt arrived in Casper he was greeted by an enthusiastic crowd. Downtown merchants closed their doors, declaring "an informal city-wide holiday" while the president was in town. A full-page ad in the local newspaper greeted Roosevelt as seventy-two local businesses, merchants, and civic leaders thanked him for the good example he set in his administration. But Roosevelt carried mixed news to the ten thousand people who gathered at the Burlington station to hear him speak. In the first place, he congratulated them on the work they had done in initiating and pushing forward, with the help of the federal government, on those many local work projects. In just the past year, he told the crowd, the number of people on relief in Wyoming had declined from 11,000 to under 6,000. Secondly, though, the president wanted to balance the budget by cutting spending; he told the people in Casper that funding for the work projects was going to be cut soon, even right then. This was of huge significance, for basically Roosevelt said that he was going to cut spending on exactly those programs that had made such a difference. What this meant, however, was that the projects would be cut back, that people on those work projects would be laid off, that the businesses that depended on the wages paid to the relief workers would have less business, and that the economy would contract instead of expand.

In fact, the administration did proceed to cut spending on work projects and some other programs in an effort to cut the deficit. Just as the increase in spending had stimulated the economy, this reduction dampened and slowed down the economy. Along with the drain from taxes that workers now paid into Social Security and with a tighter monetary policy that made money and credit harder to come by, the impact of the reduction of the fiscal stimulus proved severe and the nation entered a recession *within a depression*.

The recession had national consequences—industrial production declining by a third, durable goods production by more than half, profits by more than three-fourths, payrolls by over a third, and industrial stock averages by more than half—and it was also felt in Wyoming. Communities and businesses around the state either witnessed in their own neighborhoods the setbacks caused by removing this government stimulus or feared

6 Wyoming State Planning Board, *Coordination Survey* (Cheyenne: State of Wyoming, 1938), 222-30.

the impending cuts and their consequences. Just as they had clamored for CCC camps to be located near them, the communities and businesses now protested when those camps were about to be removed. Along the North Platte in eastern Wyoming and western Nebraska, for example, the Associated Chambers of Commerce wrote Washington asking for "President Roosevelt to take the steps necessary to return to the Bureau of Reclamation its just and equitable portion of the C.C.C. camps allotted under the appropriation for C.C.C. camp work."[7] It was clear to those businesses that the impact of the work projects was not just in the digging of ditches; the benefits filtered throughout the local economies.

In the winter of 1937-1938 Wyoming families and communities agonized over the economic downturn, and so did the White House. Finally, in the spring of 1938, the president reversed course and announced two initiatives. One was to restore funding for the various public works programs that he had cut or planned to cut, thus preventing or undoing the lay off of the federal workers who would then have had to return to the relief rolls; he was returning to the fiscal stimulus that had helped the economy grow. Headlines across Wyoming greeted the resumption of spending and identified local projects that would be approved or allowed to continue. The other action was to renew the enforcement of the antitrust laws to generate competition in the economy so that prices would come down. This move was also close to the pulse of Wyoming for leading this antitrust effort were two Wyomingites: former Laramie mayor and state legislator Thurman Arnold was the new head of the antitrust division of the Justice Department and Senator Joseph O'Mahoney was named chair of a new committee investigating concentrations of economic power in the nation. In short, and especially because of the renewed fiscal stimulus, the economic slump was reversed and the economy began to grow again.

An Evolution of Public Works Projects

In this environment, the Public Works Administration projects led the way with tangible, material achievements. By the spring of 1938 even the largest projects were nearing completion. In February 1938 Alcova Reservoir was ready to be tested and the waters began to fill the canyon behind the dam. Dam construction was completed on May 8, 1938 and by June the reservoir had about two-thirds of its capacity of water. At the Seminoe site, by December 21, 1938 the dam was completed, and by April 1939 the first storage began in the reservoir. By August of the same year the Seminoe power plant sent its first surge of power to Casper. But those projects included more than the dams and reservoirs. The Kendrick Project actually extended for miles and miles beyond the dams with canals and ditches and tunnels and check gates to carry and control the water from the reservoirs for irrigation and also with roads and power lines; more work was involved in the clearing away of debris and timber and the preparation of recreation sites. Moreover, once the contract work was completed on the project, the rest of the work was done directly by labor hired by the Bureau of Reclamation.

But the PWA had also begun moving in the direction of smaller, though still substantial, projects elsewhere in the state. In 1937-1939 the PWA constructed the Wyoming Union at the university in Laramie and also built, improved, or added on to a significant number of public schools around the state, compiling an impressive record of building projects. In March 1939, a major

7 This resolution, dated January 29, 1938, can be found in the Joseph C. O'Mahoney Papers, Box 193, ECW Camps, 1938, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

City / County Building (Casper and Natrona County). Photo: Michael Cassity, 2010.

PWA report on its accomplishments indicated that the agency had undertaken a total of fifty-eight Non-Federal projects in the state, thirty-three of which had been completed. The courthouses of the state especially stood out—literally. The massive courthouse in Rawlins and the equally imposing City-County building in Casper showed that the PWA also reflected a new modernistic style that made them contrast with the old Classical or Neoclassical buildings previously built. With the courthouses, with the schools, with the other projects, the PWA was making its mark on a number of Wyoming communities and almost every county in the state.

The other programs continued, or resumed, their projects vigorously in 1937 and 1938. With fluctuating numbers, the CCC remained a critical element of the workforce used by the Forest Service and the National Park Service in all the resources that they managed in the state. The CCC camps assigned to work on state parks in the state declined in number but the number assigned to the

George Vander Sluis, *Farm Scene*, 1942, oil on canvas mural, U.S. Post Office, Riverton. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2009. Used with the permission of the United States Postal Service®. All rights reserved.

Forest Service remained steady. But the Bureau of Reclamation CCC camps increased, and the focus shifted from Guernsey Lake to Veteran and new camps opened on the Shoshone Project and at Alcova. As for the WPA projects, they were numerous, they were all over, and they became increasingly visible in every community—in the parks, in the public buildings, in street building, in sewer and water system installation or expansion, in irrigation ditches, and in the plethora of other construction activities that had been identified with WPA work. The WPA women's projects expanded and so did the projects on the Wind River Indian Reservation.

Two notable programs represented significant expansion of the public works programs in 1937 and 1938. One was the public art program and the other involved identifying and examining the state's archaeological resources. The federal art projects in Wyoming, including those sponsored by the WPA and the Treasury Department, had a slow start. But by 1937 or 1938 they represented a significant innovation in the state in the involvement of art and artists with the local communities, in the content of

Eugene Kingman, *Cretaceous Landscape* (1938), in Kemmerer, Wyoming, U.S. Post Office. In addition to depicting the prehistoric landscape and its fossilized remains, important to the area, the border below the painting provides a cross section of the nation's geologic structure, showing Wyoming directly beneath this painting. Used with the permission of the United States Postal Service®. All rights reserved. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2011.

the art, and in the additions the art made to public buildings. The goal of the WPA art project in Wyoming was ambitious: "to employ needy unemployed qualified artists, including painters, sculptors, graphic artists, craftsmen, art teachers, art lecturers, museum workers, and photographers." In a half dozen Wyoming communities new federal art galleries drew crowds and offered courses to help people become familiar with art and also displayed the work of New Deal artists. For example, in Rock Springs, the gallery director reported that sixty-two exhibits had been displayed at the gallery in the Washington Grade School building and that attendance over a period of two years amounted to 20,429 visitors. In Laramie, the gallery on the campus of the university drew national attention. *Time* magazine, in a report on the Federal Art Project, described the Laramie gallery glowingly: "Laid out by experts from Washington, such a Federal art gallery as that in Laramie, Wyo. has all the elegance of Manhattan's Museum of

National Youth Administration workers applying stucco to North Casper Clubhouse, September 1939. Courtesy the Wyoming State Archives, WPA Collections.

Modern Art."[8] In addition to art sponsored by the WPA, a separate project in the Treasury Department produced yet more art, often murals, for some of Wyoming's post offices, again featuring Wyoming subjects. One account estimates that the WPA artists in Wyoming produced around 150 pieces in all media; the Treasury Department's art was in addition to that number.

From three quarters of a century later, it is easy to take for granted the federal galleries and the art, but at the time this was not just part of the New Deal, but was a very big deal in fundamental ways. A report on the galleries in 1938 described "the long felt need" of Wyoming's communities for art: "Before these Federal galleries were established, Wyoming did not have even an art exhibit hall suitable for exhibitions of art. A professional gallery did not exist in Wyoming. The F. A. P. can take credit for establishing the first art gallery. Incidentally, it might be mentioned that a relatively few people of the state had ever seen an art gallery."[9]

The launching of the Wyoming Archaeological Survey as a WPA project in the autumn of 1938 also charted a new path for the Wyoming work relief projects. An archaeological survey was believed to be long overdue since so much in the state remained "unknown" scientifically and since out-of-state institutions dominated what effort there was to study (and collect) archaeological artifacts and materials. From its very beginning the archaeological effort demonstrated broad support, including from groups and agencies that did not always have archaeology in their mission but that recognized the importance and potential of the survey.

The mission of the survey explicitly embraced the need to employ "needy persons" in exploring, surveying, and mapping of sites and also in the documentation of that field research. It was ambitious as an archaeological project, and it was also an ambitious work relief project, employing 125 people who ranged from researchers and typists to cooks and drivers and general laborers. The archaeological survey focused its efforts on sites in a half-dozen locations around the state and set up laboratories in

8 "Art: In the Business District," *Time*, September 5, 1938, 38.

9 E. E. Lowry, "A Review of the Federal Art Galleries in Wyoming," hand written date of 3-25-38, copy in Herbert Dieterich Papers in Wyoming State Archives.

Laramie and Casper. The final 1941 report of the project looked to the future, anticipating additional sites to be examined and it also brought perspective onto the efforts of the survey: "Wyoming as a whole has barely been scratched. The state is one of the richest areas of the Great Western Plains in the material culture of the Indians who once lived here."[10] With the art projects and the archaeological survey at the end of the 1930s, it is clear that the WPA was alive and moving forward, but also evolving in ways and with dimensions that were not obvious. The WPA was, at any rate, not the same organization it had been when it first took to the field in 1935.

An Evolution of Work in Work Relief

The process by which the various programs of the New Deal evolved over time has been too frequently neglected. But just as some kinds of projects were added and others were dropped, the work itself was changing, some of it in very subtle ways and some of it in fundamental contours, direction, and materials. Even the work for the young—those employed in the CCC and the NYA—was becoming heavier, and also following an industrial model. Increasingly, and especially in the irrigation work, the CCC boys were doing heavy construction. If it had ever been light, it was no more; their work was now very much like that of workers on the WPA and PWA projects. Both the Bureau of Reclamation and the Division of Grazing CCC camps increased in number, and their work intensified with Division of Grazing reports listing, for example, in addition to trail work, "road repair and construction,

10 Ted C. Sowers, *The Wyoming Archaeological Survey: A Report* (Laramie: University of Wyoming, 1941), 30.

Voices of the Depression in Wyoming: Director of Civilian Conservation Corps, 1940

By the end of the decade, the young men of the CCC were increasingly doing work in projects requiring heavy construction. As with other work relief projects, this was becoming more industrial in its organization and less relief in its objective.

> *Several heavy construction jobs were completed by the enrollees during the year, such as construction of the Alkali Creek inclined drop on the Shoshone project in Wyoming, involving production of 1,800 cubic yards of concrete aggregate and placing of 95,000 pounds of reinforcing steel, 1,100 cubic yards of 6-inch concrete lining, and 1,900 linear feet of 6-inch vitrified tile. On the Heart Mountain Canal on this same project four large timber bridges were completed on the new operating road, consisting of rock masonry abutments and piers, log stringers, and 3-inch by 12-inch flooring.*

Source: *Annual Report of the Director of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1940* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1940), 44.

reservoir and dam construction, rip-rapping, the development and servicing of spring water, land conservation, construction of 'cutting' corrals." Even the Forest Service CCC crews were building substantial, engineered dams and also ranger stations and other buildings. The CCC, once heralded as returning the youth of the cities to the wholesome outdoors for the preservation of nature and natural resources, was, in fact, becoming industrialized. To add to the change, in 1937 the requirement that families be on relief in order for the young men to qualify for CCC enrollment was removed; it was becoming increasingly a work force, not a work relief program.

The National Youth Administration, to take another example, had been created to attend to the special relief needs of the nation's young people, needs that were different from those of the rest of society. In 1939, however, "relief" was eliminated from its mission and it became, in the words of a Wyoming NYA report, "more and more . . . a basic youth program to provide training through supervised employment, counseling and guidance." The object of the program now was training, and especially training in construction.

The shift to an industrial model and goal of production can also be seen in the women's sewing program of the WPA in Wyoming. The project to put women to work in the creation of clothing, comforters, and other household sewn items in the middle of the 1930s was initially characterized by its decentralized, almost individualistic, structure, its training function to prepare women for such work at home or for positions in the private sector as seamstresses. Its emphasis had been on quality, worker pride, and individual responsibility in the production of these items. An additional benefit, of course, was that the articles they made would then be distributed to others in the community. As the project evolved, however, changes were made in the priorities, processes, and purposes of the sewing rooms, and those changes came within just a few years. At the end of the decade, the program closed down the rooms in Wyoming's small towns and consolidated them in the larger communities. The sewing rooms themselves came to resemble small factories using an industrial system of production. No longer did an individual seamstress complete a variety of sewing projects from start to finish; now output could be increased with production focused on limited patterns and garments using workers "on a group plan." Plus, where previously the material had been mixed and varied so that the clothes for people on relief would not be readily identifiable, the clothes were now made of the same material. And where trained home economists had been the preferred supervisors in the sewing rooms, that too changed, and they were replaced by "qualified production persons . . . as technical supervisors."

There was another dimension of change too. Not only were the work projects becoming industrialized, they were also becoming militarized. Long before the United States entered World War II, work projects focused more and more on defense needs and installations. Some of this was subtle. During the 1930s this consideration of the military implications of transportation networks remained in the background of a number of projects, but it was there nonetheless. Virtually every agency was able to justify its activities in terms of national defense, some more convincingly than others, and fairly typical is the language used by the Grazing Service as it explained how its use of the CCC to build roads contributed to the nation's defense; even minor roads and truck trails could serve, it said, "with but little additional work on them, as important links to be utilized in National Defense plans by supplementing main highways, as well as opening up vast areas in which resources of valuable minerals may be tapped."[11]

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11 Grazing Service report in *Annual Report of the Director of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1940*

Post gymnasium, Fort F. E. Warren. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2012.

CCC Company No. 4821 in military formation in parade in Powell, May 15, 1941. Photo: Record Group 115, Records of the Bureau of Reclamation, ARC Identifier, 293555, National Archives and Records Administration, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, Denver.

Or consider the CCC and the NYA. In its early years the CCC raised eyebrows and concerns with the administration of camps by army officers and its organization along frankly military lines. The fears of regimentation of labor and the militarization of the nation's youth faded, though, with assurances that there would be no military training in CCC camps. By 1939 that had changed and the administrators of the CCC emphasized how the CCC

(Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1940), 49.

Row of kitchens, among the first buildings to be constructed, and constructed by WPA workers, at Camp Guernsey. WPA medallion is above door in first building. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2012.

contributed to the national defense "by teaching discipline, by improving the physical condition of young men, by training them in skills which would be useful in an emergency." And, at the end of 1940, a year before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the National Youth Administration in Wyoming converted "all of its facilities and efforts to the training of war workers."

The other side of this focus was that the projects that did not establish their importance in terms of national defense began to close their doors. One after another, the projects shut down, often, but not always, after being starved of resources, which were increasingly in short supply because defense projects had first call on them, and of workers too, which also were not as available as they had been.

The contrast with the defense projects grew starker day by day, year by year, well before the war. A robust build-up and modernization of Fort F. E. Warren had been underway in the 1930s and the post theater was constructed in 1938; it was followed by the base gymnasium and the medical detachment quarters or barracks—all WPA / PWA projects, all major buildings, and all well before U.S. entry into World War II. This concentration of construction dwarfed the only similar cluster of public works buildings in the state, those at the university in Laramie. In addition to Fort F. E. Warren, and in addition to WPA work on the armories around the state, in 1939 the state began construction of a statewide training site for the National Guard. The original proposal by the National Guard to the WPA was for a temporary camp, Camp Guernsey. This quickly changed, however, and by March 1939 the proposed camp was no longer temporary in any sense, but a permanent training and administrative facility being built from scratch next to the town of Guernsey. And the WPA provided workers and funds for this construction.

At Fort F. E. Warren, where construction had been underway already, the beginning of a peacetime draft in 1940 meant more soldiers at the fort, which meant even more construction. Nearly three hundred new buildings were constructed, putting 4,546 workers on the payroll at the peak of building, and more buildings were to come. And private contractors, using a cost-plus arrangement in which contracted amounts were flexible and the government was billed for costs plus profits, took on more and more of the construction work instead of the workers being hired directly by the government. To some degree, a similar experience emerged with the construction of the Casper Army Air Base where four thousand men erected hundreds of buildings and their infrastructure.

The final major work project undertaken was that of the "relocation" camp for Japanese Americans at Heart Mountain. Not ordinarily identified as a work relief project, the Corps of

Engineers contracted construction of the camp which drew workers from nearby work projects, and the center put to work WPA administrators to run the camp; plus, Heart Mountain internees dismantled CCC camp buildings and moved them to the main center and internees also took on construction work, including some of the work on Shoshone Project canals that had been slated for CCC work.

In important ways the government construction that took place in World War II in Wyoming represented not so much a termination of federal work projects as it did a transformation of them. They were already becoming both militarized and privatized. The essentials were otherwise there—centralized planning, the flow of federal funds to targeted areas of the state, hopeful employment opportunities in particular communities, and the creation of a permanent dependence on federal military expenditures. In critical ways the New Deal in Wyoming continued during the war as massive government spending, a planned economy, and full employment finally ended the Depression. In the process, the Wyoming landscape was being shaped not just by the addition of new buildings, dams, highways, canals, and other projects, but by social, economic, and political forces that emphasized centralization, consolidation, and business growth with the federal government as chief agent of change. Wyoming had changed dramatically from what it was when the nation's economy, undermined by the structural weaknesses in the 1920s, began its downward spiral in 1929 into the depths of the Depression; and it had changed in ways that were both for the better and for the worse. Change itself was one of the new constants and in the future Wyoming would continue to be transformed.

It is the nature of that transformation that calls for our attention as we see the buildings and other structures the work projects left in Wyoming. For that transformation was sometimes subtle and sometimes bold but always powerful. It was a matter not just of putting people to work, and a matter not just of constructing new features in the landscape of the state, as important as both of those were. It was a matter of raising the promise of restructuring the economy so that people would be able to find work in their own communities and states, living productive and satisfying lives, contributing to their neighborhoods, participating meaningfully in society, and living and working with dignity, fulfilling the birthright of freedom where public and private institutions operated in the interest of people like themselves.

Like messages in bottles that wash ashore on distant beaches, the cornerstones of some New Deal buildings communicate a sense of social values and purpose and priority from times past, leaving important clues to the legacy of the changes of the Depression years. Cornerstone, Liberal Arts (Arts & Sciences) Building, University of Wyoming, Laramie. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2014.

CONCLUSION

Public Works and Historic Preservation in Wyoming

Between 1929 and 1943 a multitude of federal projects and programs in Wyoming endeavored to fight the Depression, put people to work, and build up the commercial, social, and cultural aspects of life in Wyoming. In the process they added literally thousands of buildings and structures, monumental and utilitarian alike, in the state's towns and cities and rural areas, changed the landscape of the forests and plains, connected different parts of the state with better roads and highways and connected different parts of towns with better streets; they built up the national parks and national monument and built new state parks, dammed and controlled the riverways, and irrigated lands thirsty for water; they fought forest fires and planted trees, multiplied and improved city parks, upgraded the state's schools, introduced public art around the state, brought electricity to the countryside, and modernized the utility systems of the state. And more.

Some of the products of those public works projects products were short-lived, like the clothes and food produced for immediate use by people who needed them, and others, like the forest fires and coal fires fought and the shorelines cleared of timber, were never intended to produce anything new and just to preserve or restore what was already there. But many of the projects did in fact leave a legacy in the form of physical buildings, structures, objects, and other remnants of productive, constructive, or creative effort. Of those, some have disappeared into the mists of time as they were worn out or worn down, rebuilt or replaced, burned up or torn down. Too many have been destroyed or neglected beyond repair. But some of these buildings and other structures from the federal Depression-era projects remain. Some are landmarks while others are right in front of us and we do not see them, either because we take them for granted or because we do not understand their origins. In any case, these remnants are resources from the past and deserve appropriate attention, recognition, and protection.

Depression-era Resources as Community Resources

Small or large, architectural treasures or modest, functional constructions, located downtown or deep in a forest, a great many of these buildings and other structures served as important community resources when they were constructed. Indeed, to justify their projects the public officials who came up with the proposals—county commissioners, city officials, school boards, other local and state agencies—had to explain how the community (however defined—nearby ranchers, a neighborhood, citizens of the state) would benefit. Those sponsoring agencies then usually had to commit their own resources to the work—oftentimes materials and tools, frequently supervision. The result of the work, whether it was a courthouse or a community clubhouse or a city park or a fairground or an airport or sewer system or a post office, was invariably a community resource, something that would enhance, in one way or another, life in Wyoming. Likewise with the projects on the extensive federal land in the state: whether

Detail from frieze of City – County Building (Casper – Natrona County) in Casper. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2010.

the projects were ranger stations or national park kiosks or lookout towers or range dams or administrative facilities, they were designed to serve a broader community, a public purpose. They too were community resources, and sometimes the community was national.

They were also community resources in that they provided jobs for the unemployed in the community, for neighbors who were out of work through no fault of their own, for people who wanted to make a contribution to society and wanted to support their families. Sometimes these were all wrapped together, as when the Albany County Planning Board sought to take 576 workers from the relief rolls and put them to work improving the county road system; among the various justifications it listed for that project, the board noted that the project would improve the roads, decrease the cost of farm to market transportation, and it "furnishes employment for residents in respective locations nearby." The road work project, like the others, was a community resource in which neighbors helped neighbors in direct and indirect ways.

Depression-era Resources as Historical Resources

Those community resources often continue to serve the functions for which they were created—the parks and the meeting halls and the courthouses are still used even if the members of the community are no longer familiar with the programs and projects that brought them into existence. And that suggests another dimension of the value of these remnants of the Depression-era projects: They now serve also as important historical resources, resources that help us understand our past and understand how we got to where we are today—in other words, help us understand Wyoming history. For our history is written not just in the books we read in school and check out from the library; sometimes it *is* the schools and *is* the library buildings themselves. Our history is not just found in the documents in archives; sometimes it *is* the documents and even the archives too. Our history is not just found in the museums; sometimes it *is* the museums. Our history is in our material culture, in the buildings we build and the roads we travel, in the landscape we preserve and the landscape we change. It is on the range where ranchers needed to graze cattle and where they needed dams to hold the water. It is in the fairgrounds and the lookout towers and the armories and the airports and sidewalks and fish hatcheries and band shells. When it comes to Wyoming's Depression-era federal projects, our history is all around us. Our public resources, as it turns out, are also historical resources. We have a choice and that choice is to turn away from our history, ignore it, tear it down, or to hold on to our history, learn from it, value it, and use it.

When considered as historical resources, these buildings and structures and other works are rightly considered important community resources today. And, by the same token, historic preservation may provide the key to fulfilling the promise of those

The marks of the past are abundant in the buildings and structures of the federal Depression-era projects. In this photo of the interior of the armory stable (now Anna Miller Museum) constructed at Newcastle, one mark of the past is the sign indicating the name of the project manager. Another, and perhaps more telling, sign can be found in the marks left by the stone cutter's chisel. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2010.

resources, for the benefits redound to the community in much the same way as they did when they were placed on the ground in Wyoming.

Some of those benefits are economic. Many, probably the vast majority, of the buildings created by the federal projects remain as public buildings—owned and operated and maintained by the cities, counties, school districts, the state, or the federal government. Now around three-fourths of a century old, they do require maintenance and repair and sometimes rehabilitation. But the prudent use of public resources calls for them to be reused and upgraded, maintained and repaired rather than replaced. The

Detail, Pavilion at Sheridan County Fairground indicating its construction by WPA workers. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2010.

benefits of recycling existing structures compared to their periodic replacement every thirty or forty years, as often happens with new construction, are well known. Put in terms of dollars and cents, historic preservation of these public buildings just makes good sense.

Moreover, there is a broader economic significance to preservation. When they were placed in their original locations, often downtown in business districts, the buildings served as anchors for the community and for economic development; they can continue to provide that function. Considering that much new development takes place not in the business districts but on the edges of town or near the interstate, those Main Street anchors are perhaps even more critical today, even more decisive in influencing the direction of growth. Or, in a different vein, schools tend to serve as anchors of residential neighborhoods and the preservation of schools easily translates into preservation of neighborhoods.

These buildings and other works also are, as years go by, increasingly magnets for people who are attracted to them for their historical importance, for their cultural significance, and for their aesthetic or architectural values. Today, public attention to the works created by Depression-era federal projects even constitutes an important component of heritage tourism, something of growing value in Wyoming. Whether people are drawn to the murals in post offices and public art in our libraries, or whether they are examining the details of the frieze on the Supreme Court and State Library Building in Cheyenne, or whether they are drawn to Guernsey State Park, not to camp but to admire the buildings there, this kind of heritage tourism is important in Wyoming. In 2013 the Wyoming State Museum featured a popular exhibit, "Art as Work, Work as Art: Wyoming's New Deal Legacy," that put together not just acclaimed paintings and other fine art but also showed the artistic elements of construction on New Deal projects in the state. In a Wyoming economy where tourism is playing a larger and larger role, the part performed by heritage tourism is not to be underestimated.

There is another reason to hold on to the Wyoming past, and that is one that many Wyomingites feel in their bones. When the buildings and art, and even the sidewalks and picnic grounds, were created by workers of the various federal projects, they were created with pride. And that experience of building something of value became a formative part of their identities. Just as the construction itself endured as a positive feature, so too did the experience. The work experience became a part of family lore, a landmark in personal and social growth. The daughter of one CCC worker recorded how her father, when she was seventeen years old, took her back to the dam at Meadowlark Lake near Ten Sleep, a dam that he and others in his CCC camp had built in the 1930s. It was with the same pride that, decades later, the same woman

Virginia Pitman, *Four Phases of Labor*. WPA painting owned by General Service Administration, on loan to the Wyoming State Museum, and reproduced with permission of Wyoming State Museum. This painting by a Laramie WPA artist was literally rescued from a dumpster where it had been thrown out with other materials from a school building. Photograph of painting courtesy of Mary Hopkins and Richard Collier, Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office.

took her own daughter and grandchildren back to the same dam to share their inheritance, their family legacy, with them. Sometimes the identity and association with the Depression-era projects takes a different turn. A mural in the Riverton post office created by the Treasury Department's arts program shows sheep ranch workers busy pairing newborn lambs with ewes; at least one living citizen can identify her father in that picture of workers and sheep.

It is not just a matter of family pride and identity. The people who wrote WPA into the wall of the Sheridan fairgrounds pavilion felt the same satisfaction and accomplishment, even if they did not sign their individual names to the building. In fact, in a number of these buildings "Wyoming" is written all over them even if the name of the state does not appear, for those buildings sometimes capture in their details unmistakable elements of Wyoming identity.

As common as these medallions may seem to be, they actually exist on a small number of WPA projects, namely those created after 1939. This one is on the old (Huff Memorial) Library Building in Jackson. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2010.

These are not the same buildings that you will find in other places but they are right at home in Wyoming. Look closely at the Carbon County courthouse and ponder the rams' heads that punctuate the walls and windows. Look at the City – County Building in Casper, and study the local history etched into the walls and frieze, and you will see a pageant of history that roots this public building to this particular place on the North Platte River: the soldiers, the Native Americans, the oil industry, the Oregon Trail emigrants. Look at the Eugene Kingman murals in the Kemmerer post office showing an unfolding, dramatic paleontological record of that part of the state. Sometimes members of the community identify with the iconography of the buildings, with the stories told in the murals. They obviously have their limits and, sometimes romanticized or stylized when they were created, the images can appear dated or even archaic. But with mature understanding and exploration, the contemplation can go beyond the images and beyond the buildings themselves to the larger issues of history. At a minimum, where the imagery once sought to portray the past, that imagery now tells its own story from the 1930s. The buildings thus, in a sense, open doors to the past, doors that must ever remain open.

The Preservation Imperative

The fact is that we are losing these buildings and other constructions and creations from the federal projects at an alarming rate. Sometimes they are just in the way of urban, commercial, or other development and of sheer population growth in the state's towns and cities. Even with the best of intentions, in many instances, the buildings and structures are threatened as they age. Sometimes they fall into disuse as populations shift, as local uses and needs change, and as development proceeds all around them. Sometimes they fall prey to the elements, especially if they are no longer used, and sometimes the activities for which they were built have outgrown the physical ability of the building to house them. Sometimes they face "upgrades" that threaten to compromise their historic or architectural integrity and features.

Some have been hauled to the trash, and a few have been rescued from that death sentence. The threats to these resources are many and are always present.

It is not easy, but we must hold on to these community resources, these historical resources. How do we do that? Again, history doesn't just happen in other places with other people. In this case, history is almost literally in our hands, depending on us for our attention and care and vigilance. To hold on to these important resources, we first have to find them and identify them. It's not that they are not there or that they are invisible, it's that we too often don't see them for what they are. We take them for granted. We assume that they have always been there and always will be. Look for them, ask around about them, tell others about them, use them, clean them up, give them the care they need. Investigate them. Research them as school reports and field trips, as newspaper columns, as civic projects. Photograph them. Give them the public recognition they need so that today's younger generation, and future generations too, further and further removed in time from their creation and construction, will understand where and why they were put there and by whom. Express to the officials who operate and manage them your appreciation and concerns for the value and integrity of these buildings and other structures.

Some of them, but not all of them, are historically or architecturally significant and may call for special attention. Which ones? It is not enough to be old. The resource must be historically *significant*. There actually is a system for making this determination and that system helps us assure that we apply the same standards to all of them. The key to this system is determining which are *eligible* for the National Register of Historic Places; they do not necessarily have to be listed, but they must be eligible for listing. That means they must meet specific criteria. The National Register of Historic Places, to quote its purpose, "is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation." The National Register of Historic Places is managed by the National Park Service but every state, including Wyoming, has a State Historic Preservation Officer who oversees the program in that state.

A property listed on the National Register is one that has been determined to be of significance and that possesses integrity. Listing does not limit the ability of owners to use, manage, or alter properties although it does provide recognition and provides one basis for some tax credits and certainly encourages preservation of historic resources. It does provide some protection from federal government actions that would have an "adverse impact" on the resource, but even then the requirement is that the property be managed appropriately, not that it be preserved at all costs; the technical language is to require federal agencies to "take into account the effect of the undertaking." Those adverse impacts can sometimes be mitigated. But it is critical that the Depression-era resources be identified and evaluated early in the planning process; the longer the delay in including them, the more challenging it is to arrive at a workable solution.

The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is committed to documenting, preserving, and promoting Wyoming's heritage with various preservation partners around the state and it can help with the determination of which Depression-era resources are eligible and with the management and preservation of significant resources. But the SHPO, like the resources themselves, counts on people in the communities and in the neighborhoods, people who know about and value the resources they use and live near. Public interest, public concern, and public involvement are essential to the process of historic preservation in Wyoming. Holding on to this legacy of Wyoming history is important and it requires the coordinated effort of all of us. Which, in a way, is appropriate. As with many of these resources that were created in a spirit of neighbors helping neighbors, holding on to them also involves

neighbors helping neighbors, in this instance, helping them to pass on to the future our historical resources, our inheritance from the past. Without that inheritance, all that will be left will be the wind whispering, softer and softer, not only the names but also the legacies of those hard times.

A Timeline of Depression-era Federal Projects in Wyoming

1921 – Agricultural Depression of Twenties begins, lasts until World War II

1922: 9,192 coal miners employed in Wyoming

1920s: 101 out of about 153 Wyoming banks close; only 32 open

1924: In one year, banks close in 30 Wyoming communities, some towns with multiple closings

1929: 5,081 coal miners employed in Wyoming

March 4, 1929: Herbert Hoover inaugurated as president

October 24, 1929: Black Thursday on New York Stock Exchange; one in a series of severe stresses on stock market in late October

1929-1933: "The Great Contraction" in money supply as national banking crisis becomes even more severe; more banks close in Wyoming

1930: 4,693 coal miners employed in Wyoming

January 30, 1931: Leavitt Approach Road Act provides for construction of Beartooth Highway and also road from Yellowstone to Moran

October 1931: Hoover announces Cheyenne as site of Veterans Administration Hospital; construction begins next year

1932: George Washington Parks created in many Wyoming communities

1932: Federal Building in Casper dedicated

February 2, 1932: Reconstruction Finance Corporation provides loans to banks and railroads

July 21, 1932: Emergency Relief and Construction Act provides loans to states and communities for public works construction

November 8, 1932: Franklin Roosevelt elected president

March 4, 1933: Franklin Roosevelt inaugurated as president

March 31, 1933: Emergency Conservation Work Act establishes Civilian Conservation Corps program

May 12, 1933: Federal Emergency Relief Act provides grants for direct relief and provides for states to establish work relief

May 12, 1933: Agricultural Adjustment Act, establishes Agricultural Adjustment Administration

June 16, 1933: Banking Act of 1933 / Glass-Steagall Act, creates Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation to insure bank deposits, prevents commercial banks from investment activities

June 16, 1933, National Industrial Recovery Act establishes National Recovery Administration to prescribe codes of "fair practice"; separate part creates Public Works Administration

August 1933: 24 CCC camps in Wyoming

October 1933: Contracts let for work on Alcova Dam; Seminoe Dam and Power Plant contracted the next year

November 8, 1933: Civil Works Administration created by Executive Order; starts operating in Wyoming one week later with headquarters in governor's mansion; reaches quota of 3,250 workers December 10

1933-1934: Wind River Irrigation Project moves forward with construction of Washakie Reservoir and Ray Lake as PWA projects on reservation

1934: 3,778 coal miners employed in Wyoming

January 1934: Civil Works Administration in Wyoming reaches peak of 10,734 workers put to work

February 15, 1934: Civil Works Emergency Relief Act, provides funds for use by FERA for operating some civil works programs beyond demise of CWA; in Wyoming this is sometimes known as Wyoming FERA, State FERA, or Wyoming ERA

April 1934: Civil Works Administration ends work in Wyoming; state FERA picks up some public works programs

1934: CCC camps in Wyoming increase probably to 24-30 camps

August 26, 1934: Casper airport dedicated. A CWA project, it proclaims itself "the largest federal relief unit of its kind constructed in the United States."

1934: PWA approves construction of Liberal Arts Building at UW; construction begins next year

January 4, 1935: Roosevelt launches Second New Deal with call for large-scale new construction program to take people off relief and put them to work

April 8, 1935: Emergency Relief Appropriation Act ends direct relief by federal government, transferring those functions to states and communities, and provides for new federal work relief effort; President Roosevelt then establishes WPA under Harry Hopkins

April 27, 1935: Soil Conservation Act creates Soil Conservation Service to control and prevent soil erosion

May 1, 1935: Resettlement Administration created by Executive Order to help smaller farmers and ranchers who had not been aided by AAA; Roosevelt appoints Rexford Tugwell administrator

May 11, 1935: Rural Electrification Administration established by Executive Order

June 26, 1935: National Youth Administration begins as part of WPA

1935: Probably 32 CCC camps in Wyoming (peak number of camps)

August 14, 1935: Social Security Act

August 1935: Works Progress Administration begins operating in Wyoming; 5,720 people at work in Wyoming on WPA project by February 1936

1935: Gillette and Kemmerer post offices completed, PWA projects

1936: Roosevelt reelected, carrying Wyoming

1936: Washakie County Courthouse built, PWA project

August 1936: Great Plains Drought Area Committee visits Gillette and examines range improvement work in Campbell and Johnson Counties

1936: Probably 18 CCC camps in Wyoming

1936: Major construction at Fort F. E. Warren includes support of medical detachment, remodeling post gymnasium, telephone system, post magazines, infrastructure

1937: Probably 15 CCC camps in Wyoming

1937: Supreme Court and State Library Building completed in Cheyenne, PWA project

1937: Shoshone Agency renamed Wind River Indian Reservation

August 20-24, 1937: Blackwater Fire in Shoshone National Forest kills 15 CCC and other firefighters

September 24, 1937: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt travel through Wyoming; tour work project sites in Casper area

Autumn 1937: Roosevelt cuts spending, Recession of 1937-1938 begins

October 6, 1937: Wyrulec, based in Lingle, begins as first rural electric cooperative in Wyoming under REA

March 22, 1938: Thurman Arnold becomes head of Antitrust Division of Justice Department

April 14, 1938: Roosevelt rescinds budget cuts, restores and expands work projects; economy grows again

May 8, 1938: Alcova Dam construction complete

June 16, 1938: Temporary National Economic Committee created to investigate monopolies and other concentrations of economic power and to make recommendations to curb them; Senator Joseph O'Mahoney chairs TNEC

1938: Probably 20 CCC camps in Wyoming

1938: National Youth Administration builds North Casper Clubhouse

Autumn 1938: Wyoming Union at UW completed, dedicated at Homecoming

December 21, 1938: Seminoe Dam complete

1938-1939: Major construction at Fort F. E. Warren includes new base gymnasium, medical detachment quarters / barracks, post theater; unique combination of PWA and WPA projects

April 3, 1939: Administrative Reorganization Act of 1939: WPA (renamed to Work Projects Administration), PWA, and Bureau of Public Roads brought under new Federal Works Agency; new Federal Security Agency includes Social Security, NYA, and CCC

1939: Construction of Camp Guernsey begins, a WPA project

1939: National Youth Administration Boy Scout House built at Fort F. E. Warren

1939: 27 CCC camps in Wyoming

1940: Carbon County Courthouse in Rawlins and Casper – Natrona County building, both PWA projects, completed

1940: Roosevelt reelected, once again carrying Wyoming

December 7, 1941: Pearl Harbor attacked; U.S. officially enters World War II

June 8 - September 6, 1942: Heart Mountain Relocation Center constructed

July 29, 1942: CCC Camp BR-102 at Eden Valley closes, probably the last CCC camp in Wyoming to end operation

Autumn 1942: Various former Wyoming WPA administrators begin work as Heart Mountain Relocation Center administrators

March 1943: Wyoming WPA ceases to operate

July 1, 1943: PWA abolished by Executive Order of President with remaining activities transferred to Federal Works Administrator

Acronyms and Abbreviations for Selected Federal and Wyoming Agencies and Programs in the Great Depression

AAA: Agricultural Adjustment Act, Agricultural Adjustment Administration

BPR: Bureau of Public Roads

BR: Bureau of Reclamation

CCC: Civilian Conservation Corps

CWA: Civil Works Administration

DG: Division of Grazing

ECW: Emergency Conservation Work

ERA: Emergency Relief Administration (also FERA, Federal Emergency Relief Administration)

ERCA: Emergency Relief and Construction Act

FAP: Federal Art Project

FDIC: Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

FERA: Federal Emergency Relief Administration (also ERA, Emergency Relief Administration, and, after the demise of the CWA, FERA would often refer to the Wyoming work programs as well as the direct relief it provided)

FHA: Federal Housing Administration

FSA: Farm Security Administration

FSA: Federal Security Agency

FWA: Federal Works Agency

FWP: Federal Writers' Project

HRS: Historical Records Survey

NIRA: National Industrial Recovery Act

NPS: National Park Service

NRA: National Recovery Administration

NLRB: National Labor Relations Board

NYA: National Youth Administration

POUR: President's Organization on Unemployment Relief

PWA: Public Works Administration

PWAP: Public Works of Art Project

RA: Resettlement Administration

REA: Rural Electrification Administration

RFC: Reconstruction Finance Corporation

SCS: Soil Conservation Service

SEC: Securities and Exchange Commission

SERA: State Emergency Relief Administration (also often referred to simply as FERA, but meaning Wyoming's work programs funded by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration)

TNEC: Temporary National Economic Committee

TRAP: Treasury Relief Art Project

USFS: United States Forest Service

WPA: Works Progress Administration (and Work Projects Administration after 1939)

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