

University of Wyoming

Historic Preservation Plan Update

CHAPTER 2 ■ HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

- 2.1 The Early Campus (1887-1917)
- 2.2 Expansion in the Twenties (1917-1929)
- 2.3 The Depression Years (1929-1943)
- 2.4 War and Postwar Expansion (1941-1969)
- 2.5 The Modern University (1969-1992)
- 2.6 Beyond the Centennial (1992-Present)
- 2.7 Conclusion



CHAPTER 2 - HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Walk the halls of many of the buildings on the campus of the University of Wyoming and you walk not just the halls of a building but the corridors of history, past the doors of rooms where instructors guided students into careers and lives to build up Wyoming, past the rooms where administrators and faculty worked through problems of war and depression and the opportunities of prosperity and the dreams of intellectual growth, past the rooms where Wyoming's people and their leaders acquired an understanding of their own values and priorities, an understanding of the world they inherited and the world they would shape. And then walk the campus, past the buildings where higher education in Wyoming has focused since before Wyoming became a state, and you walk with the sons and daughters of Wyoming from the late nineteenth century into the twenty-first.

The buildings and other elements of the campus landscape emerged sometimes slowly and gradually, and sometimes in robust surges, over the past 128 years. Each alteration, large or small, to the built environment of the campus represented an effort to respond to perceived needs of the university community

Historical Overview

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 The Early Campus
- 2.2 Expansion in the twenties
- 2.3 The Depression Years
- 2.4 War and Postwar Expansion
- 2.5 The Modern University
- 2.6 Beyond the Centennial
- 2.7 Conclusion

and to achieve specific goals for the university and its component parts. In order to understand the historical significance of the buildings and other features on the campus, it is essential to explore, at least in their broad outlines, the patterns of change in the physical plant of the University of Wyoming physical plant. This historical context thus seeks to provide a framework to help campus planners and others as they seek to connect particular structures to the larger patterns with which they may be associated.

The University of Wyoming operates not only in Laramie, but throughout the state, with facilities to help fulfill its broad public mission of teaching, research, and service in virtually every part of Wyoming. Especially in its outreach efforts the university sometimes considers the state to be its campus and the university community, in fact, stretches from border to border. While university buildings and structures and other features elsewhere in the state (and, for that matter, elsewhere in Laramie) are important and sometimes of historical significance themselves, this planning effort and this historical context focuses on the core contiguous Laramie campus that stretches north and east from Old Main. Those other physical resources of the university that are not included in this planning document also deserve (and require) attention for their historical significance, and the university's mission statement explicitly affirms the institution's commitment to "responsible stewardship of our cultural, historical, and natural resources." While university planning needs to extend to those off-campus resources the same consideration and sensitivity to cultural and historical values, those additional resources in the state lie outside the current effort.

Two decades have passed since a historical context study was prepared for the University of Wyoming campus and in that time some buildings have been added, some have been removed, and others have been altered. That 1994 context, prepared as part of a Historic American Buildings Survey report, formed the basis of the 1999 campus historic preservation plan.¹ The current historical context retains the basic structure and periodization of the 1994 study with two noticeable revisions. Two distinct periods identified in that report as associated with world wars have now been merged into the periods whose patterns of change they generally anticipated. This revision is advisable both to (1) avoid a proliferation of short periods that do not always reflect distinct and separate periods in the life of the university and its physical plant and (2) underscore essential continuities

¹ Jason Marmor, Historic American Buildings Survey: The University of Wyoming Campus, Laramie, Albany County, Wyoming, HABS No. WY-116, 1994. That HABS report and its historic context provide the basis for the 1990 historic preservation plan by the same author: Jason Marmor, Historic Preservation Plan for the University of Wyoming Campus (April 1999).

represented in the war periods and postwar developments in the university. Where the 1994 context concluded with a post-World War II period (1946-present), this historical context breaks that final period (now comprising 68 years) into additional periods that hopefully capture the patterns of recent changes in the campus. As the understanding and writing of history is an ongoing process that is never frozen in time, it is assumed that future efforts to address the history of the University of Wyoming, writing with greater hindsight, will quite possibly revise the assessments and organization of this document. While that revisionist impulse is always appropriate, it is all the more so when the history involved is an effort to understand a place of higher learning.

2.1 - EARLY CAMPUS

Imagine a clean slate with no writing, no images, no guidance at all as to what might appear on it by virtue of human effort and vision. Then imagine the equally blank ten-acre park east of Ninth Street in Laramie, Wyoming, and the adjoining ten acres recently purchased by the state from the railroad, in 1886. Even a few years later, after the first university building was erected in the center of those several blocks of land, the material prospect of future development was neither clear nor especially bright, but hopes were high. Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard arrived to take her position at the University of Wyoming in 1891. Wilson Clough, who recorded much of the history of the university, wrote that Hebard recalled that upon her arrival there were “no trees, no fences, no grass, no bushes. North of the building there was still a buffalo wallow, and to the east nothing but sagebrush and the city cemetery on the distant slope. And in the midst the tower rose like a beacon light.”²

Rapidly, though not steadily, the university began to take shape as an institution of higher learning (though most of its students were enrolled in preparatory classes that, upon completion, would enable them to sign up for collegiate level work)³ and as an actual campus with more than one building. Launched while Wyoming was still a territory, the university was incorporated by the legislature of the new state in 1891 and funds trickled in, the tiny faculty divided itself into academic departments and programs, and more and more students from places in Wyoming well beyond

² Wilson O. Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964* ([Laramie: University of Wyoming], 1965), 41. The physical plans for the campus were sufficiently unclear, or insufficiently communicated, that University Hall, the building that would become Old Main, was originally staked out facing south; a day or two later the stakes were moved to make it, and the future university, face west. Clough’s single volume represents a compilation of three works by the same author. At the semi-centennial of the university he prepared a history and then added another history of the university during World War II. This volume includes those two volumes, slightly revised and edited, as well as his history of the university since the war. Unless there is reason to draw upon the earlier, independent, studies, this historical context will use the 1965 compilation; when the others are used, they will be specifically noted.



In its early years the city of Laramie looked east to the University of Wyoming campus and the campus, in turn, faced west toward town. University Avenue headed exactly to Old Main. Postcard (1910) from Michael Cassity collection.

Laramie showed up ready to pursue the life of the mind for a few years. In 1893 a second building, for Mechanical Arts, was completed northeast of University Hall. This building, like its nearby predecessor, served multiple functions including not only engineering but also housed the mandatory military training required of land grant universities; it was an armory and in 1894 stored military equipment.⁴ A large wing that dwarfed the original building was added in 1897 to provide a home for the school of mines. Such was the University of Wyoming at the dawn of the twentieth century: all male students wore military uniforms as cadets, two buildings had been constructed, the campus had doubled in size (to forty acres), landscaping was generally performed by agriculture students who worked two or three hours a day, a walk had been installed to Ninth Street, and trees were planted by classes and social organizations. Arbor Day 1897 saw the planting of 160 trees.⁵ The clean slate was blank no more.

In the first decade of the twentieth century the forty acres began to hold more of something resembling a university. The construction of a Science Hall, a central

³ Deborah Hardy, *Wyoming University: The First 100 Years, 1886-1986* (Laramie: University of Wyoming, 1986), 15; see also historian T. A. Larson's description of the university at its founding: "... for many years the availability of college preparatory work at the University made it unnecessary for Laramie to establish a separate high school poorly supported outside Laramie, it would be many years before the institution could live up to its pretensions as a university." T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965, 1978; 2nd edition, revised), 228.

⁴ Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 16, and on the military aspects of the university, 29.

⁵ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 54, 41, 55.

heating plant, and a Gymnasium / Armory (with seating for 1,000!) in the first few years ⁶ was followed by the construction (1908) of Women’s Hall (later, Merica Hall) as a dormitory for women, the better for them to be housed and boarded, and the better for the university to watch over and supervise them, a vigilant eye which was not provided for male students, with a major wing added the next year. In 1910 a Normal School, for the training of Wyoming’s teachers, took its position immediately north of University Hall, now known as Hall of Languages because of its growing dominance by the liberal arts.



Normal School (Education) Building, constructed 1910. Postcard from Michael Cassity collection.

It wasn’t just that buildings were being added, important as that was, but that they were being added with a sense of urgency and with the beginning of a sense of plan. President Merica was the force behind both. The University of Wyoming, he wrote in 1909, “should teach the people of the state that the day of little things has gone by . . . There is no place in the wide, wide world for baby universities. . . . Buildings must rise in a night and laboratories must have no element of incompleteness.” The same year he invited architect William Dubois to submit a plan for the location of all future buildings. ⁷ (Dubois was an important figure in the shaping of the university campus, including individual buildings. He designed Merica Hall and after that Hoyt Hall and Agriculture Hall, and worked with Wilbur Hitchcock on Half Acre Gym; Dubois was also the designer of the Liberal Arts Building in the 1930s.) In 1911 Merica challenged the state boldly, “to maintain a University covering the usual work of a University in

⁶ Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 36.

⁷ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 80. The content and fate of that plan, if submitted, is not known.

certain colleges which it believes are needed for the State or close its doors.”⁸ He called for more land for the university, he called for a hospital for the university, he called for an administration building that would include an auditorium and library, for a second science building, for a veterinary building, for a new power plant, for a museum and for more. He called for more state funds for the university.⁹



University of Wyoming campus between 1910 and 1916, looking from southwest. The tower on Old Main was removed in 1916. Buildings from left: Normal School, Mechanical Arts and Power Plant, University Hall (Old Main), and Women’s Dormitory (Merica Hall). Note red brick of Merica Hall. Postcard from Michael Cassity collection.

Much of the growth and support president Merica sought from the legislature did not materialize right away. In fact, the only new building to be funded immediately was a second science building. The hospital, by various accounts, was either dropped or denied and the city of Laramie planned to build a hospital on Iverson near the university. The other buildings appeared on a gradual schedule. Of those, the most ambitious and prominent was a new Agriculture Hall situated northwest of the Liberal Arts Building, as Old Main was becoming known.¹⁰ In addition one wing (the north wing) of a new dormitory for women, Hoyt Hall, opened in 1916 and the same year plans were begun for a new library and a music hall was approved.

⁸ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 85.

⁹ Perhaps in acknowledgement of the course Merica charted, the university began to provide the president a home near the university, purchasing the house as permanent quarters in 1912—the year Merica submitted his resignation, burned his papers, and left the university. Located at 715 Iverson (originally Thornburgh), the house served as official residence for the university president until after World War II; at that point, as the rest of the campus moved eastward, so did the president’s residence, as the university acquired the house at 13th and Iverson.

¹⁰ Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 79; Hardy writes that by 1920 this change in name had taken place.

Despite these additions, the increase of the physical plant did not exactly keep up with the increase in student enrollment. Between 1913 and 1917 the number of resident college students (a carefully defined part of the campus population) increased from 202 to 335.¹¹ And the “net registration,” which evidently also included both university high school students in Laramie and off-campus enrollment, climbed from 329 to 769. By the time the United States entered World War I in 1917, three decades after the university had started on this land, something resembling an actual campus was taking firm shape. The buildings, most of them using stone from local quarries, were impressive structures that reflected different styles of the day they were individually built and also reflected the growing academic specialization within the university, including a balance between the liberal arts and the land grant fields of agriculture and engineering; they also expressed attempts to provide housing for students, at least for the female portion of the student population.



Agriculture Hall (constructed 1912-1913). Undated postcard from Michael Cassity collection.

The geography of the campus was notable too. When Hoyt Hall opened for women students to occupy in 1916, it was the farthest east of any building, and yet it remained west of Twelfth Street in Laramie. The campus conspicuously occupied the west end of what would in the future be the main campus, and the prominent buildings, including even Agriculture Hall and Science Hall which had drives extending to them, could be most easily accessed from Ninth Street. For that matter, almost all the buildings (Women’s Hall and the new Science Building being the

¹¹ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 93.

2.2 - EXPANSION IN THE TWENTIES

It is always tempting to block off time periods in the past by decades since the numbers are even and decades can be easily remembered. But historical processes seldom conform to the tidiness of calendar dates; moreover, there are seldom clear turning points, or watersheds, which neatly divide history into discrete segments. Because of the forces associated with World War I, however, the people of Wyoming and the University of Wyoming community had clearly entered into a more complex world than the one that had obtained at, and to some degree since, the founding of the university three decades earlier. Academic professionalization and specialization, public need, altered financial circumstance, and national forces unleashed during and after the war all combined to assure that the University of Wyoming would change profoundly in the coming years, and those changes were evident in the physical plant of the young university.

The university had, since its origin, possessed something of a military atmosphere, a quality that owed to the statutory requirement for land grant universities to provide military training. But the war in Europe intensified that aura and even reshaped campus life. The National Defense Act of 1916 created the Reserve Officers Training Corps and allowed for the issuing (instead of cadet purchasing) of uniforms. The university was among the first handful of universities in the nation to apply for and be approved for ROTC activity, with the result that male students had an obligatory two-year participation. (In 1918 ROTC was replaced in the university with the Students' Army Training Corps.) As Wilson Clough records of campus during the war, "Men marched to and fro in uniform over the campus, stood at attention in classes, saluted, jumped at barking orders, or, with distorted faces and strange sounds, thrust bayonets at dummy Germans. Military discipline was the watch word; almost a thing of the past were carefree students, the fraternity and the social life."¹² Other, more subtle changes came too. The university removed the teaching of German from the curriculum, for example,¹³ and the university temporarily switched from the quarter system to the semester. Moreover, the physical campus itself changed. Again, Wilson Clough: "The athletic field [near the gymnasium] became a parade ground and the gymnasium a barracks, its galleries widened to accommodate bunks."¹⁴ A fraternity house in a nearby residential area of Laramie also became barracks and a new building, later called the Commons, was constructed on the north side of the

¹² Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 103.

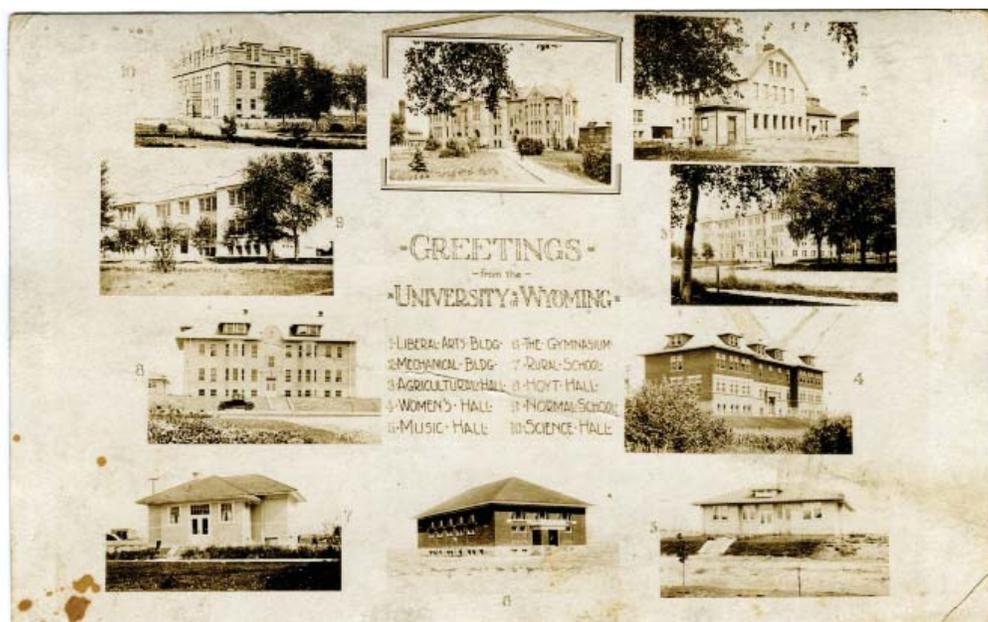
¹³ Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 87.

¹⁴ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 103. On the location of the athletic field, see the photograph in Rick Ewig and Tamsen Hert, *University of Wyoming* (Charleston, South Carolina, Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 104, where cadets are doing physical training on the athletic field.

campus near Science Hall to serve as a mess hall (and prompted vigorous discussion over the appropriateness of both genders dining there). This building, a key facility on campus, would endure as a dining hall until after World War II.

In addition there were other changes to the campus that came during the war, but not as a direct result of the war: the construction of a Music Hall and the building of a Demonstration Rural School, the first of which reflected the growing fine arts component, weak though it was, at the university and the second of which reflected the growing settlement, via homesteading, of the rural parts of Wyoming, the need for public schools in the sparsely populated areas, and the commitment of the university to provide teachers for those people's schools. Plus, the university made at least two additions to the staff during these years. The new fiscal officer after the war was of obvious importance in the management of the various sources of revenues, but the hiring of a "gardener" was deceptive in its subtle importance. For more than simply maintaining the grounds of the campus, the gardener, William Zeller, it appears, was charged with beautifying the campus landscape. This went beyond the cultivation of "war gardens" and one source notes that, "for the first time, the 1918-19 Catalogue boasted that 'with the extension of the system of walks and drives, the grounds are taking on the aspect of the traditional college campus.'"

¹⁵ The president, Wilson Clough wrote, "reported the campus looking better than ever before." ¹⁶



A gallery of campus buildings, 1920. Buildings are numbered clockwise from Old Main (Liberal Arts), top center. H. Svenson photo postcard from Michael Cassity collection.

¹⁵ Marmor, *Historic American Buildings Survey: The University of Wyoming Campus*, 14.

¹⁶ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 101.

While registration dipped lightly during the war, postwar registration surged back and then grew, with almost 500 resident college students (and a net registration of over 1600) by 1920, an increase of about one-fourth, with 700 by 1922, thus doubling the figures of a few years earlier, and stressing the ability of the university to accommodate the students from around the state who converged on the campus. In 1920 president Aven Nelson listed the needs of the university and took note of the growing enrollment and its attendant implications: “Our splendidly increasing student body will not long remain so happy and contented . . . if they find that Wyoming values its dollars more highly than its sons and daughters.”¹⁷ At the top of the list of needs were buildings. The university library had been located in the basement of Old Main and continued to grow beyond the space provided for it. It needed a new building. The Mechanical Arts building was aging and a modern engineering building was needed to replace it. And the gymnasium and armory needed to be replaced.

As the university turned to the state for more support, the response changed the university. Two fundamental developments coincided with this request. The first was the opening of federal lands to mineral production on a lease basis instead of on a claims basis, a statutory revision that enabled and encouraged mineral development on a greater scale than previously. The same federal legislation set the formula for royalty payments to the states, allowing the state 37.5% of the royalties. That new system was one change. The other came when the state of Wyoming created a formula for the division of that money between the competing interests and needs in the state, ultimately allowing a regular (at least when mineral production was sufficient, and with some limits) flow of funds into the university building fund. The long-term implication was not certain, but the immediate consequence was clear: “More funds were provided than the institution had had in its whole previous history,” said president Nelson.¹⁸

So the university began a new building effort. A new power plant near the north side of campus moved the din of power generation away from the academic part of the campus and used tunnels constructed during the war years to pump steam into the other buildings—perhaps an added incentive to keep the buildings close

¹⁷ Nelson is quoted in Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 107.

¹⁸ Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 77; Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 108. The provisions and formula of that law were replaced in 1923 with a different formula which did not place a limit on the total sum that might be received by the university. See the discussion by Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 116-17 and by T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965, 1978; 2nd edition, revised), 431.

in the original section of the campus. Some people evidently marveled at the huge chimney (sixty-five feet tall) that made it the tallest smokestack (and perhaps also the tallest structure) in the state.¹⁹ The addition to Hoyt Hall was finished in 1920-21.²⁰ The new library (later the Aven Nelson Building) near Ninth Street, designed by Wilbur Hitchcock, also provided homes for academic departments when it opened in 1923.²¹ Broadly proclaimed for its beauty and a critical resource for the entire campus community, the library had long been needed, worked for, and waited for. When it was complete, Wilson Clough reported, “To alumni and faculty, as they gazed about the light, spacious quarters, scientifically ventilated and accessible, a dream seemed to have come true. With a home and a trained staff, the library moved into its true place as the center of University life.”²²

Had the library been the only new building started in the early 1920s the building program that produced it would have been important, but two additional major efforts made the construction that much more impressive. One was the Gymnasium / Armory and it opened with basketball games in January 1925. This building, called Half Acre Gymnasium after the measure of its basketball floor, held seating for 4,000, a swimming pool, two gym floors, a rifle range, and a substantial space for the armory.²³ The building, monumental in its proportions and detailing, however, was also significant for its location. Unlike virtually the entirety of the major campus buildings that had previously been located on the west edge of the campus, right off Ninth Street or close to those buildings that were, Half Acre Gymnasium was located far to the east, even to the northeast. Perhaps as a way of staking claim to distant corners or to remove the gym and armory from the academic units, this move in one stroke virtually doubled the space actively occupied by the University of Wyoming campus. Filling in that space would be another matter.

As if to underscore the building activity indicated with these two buildings, yet a third major building also rose on the campus in the early and mid-1920s. The Engineering Building took its place in this move to the east, this time just east of the Science Buildings. In 1927 the Engineering Building was finished, but that

¹⁹ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 112.

²⁰ The 1921 addition to Hoyt Hall is ordinarily used as the completion date for the building, although the date has also been given as 1920 and 1922. Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 112; Marmor, *Historic American Buildings Survey: The University of Wyoming Campus*, 17.

²¹ Eileen F. Starr, *Architecture in the Cowboy State, 1849-1940* (Glendo: High Plains Press, 1992), 60.

²² Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 119.

²³ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 119-20



Half Acre Gymnasium and Armory (constructed 1923). Postcard from Michael Cassity collection.

accomplishment actually included a cluster of buildings and shops. The final complex included four distinct shop units, each with two shops, as well as the main Engineering Building itself. Designed by UW engineering graduate and former faculty member (who left for private practice in 1922) Wilbur Hitchcock and also Frederick Hutchinson Porter of Cheyenne,²⁴ the building represented a significant achievement in several ways. Functionally, the building was critical to the Engineering program at the university. Robert Sutherland, in his history of the College of Engineering at UW, writes, “These shops were an important step forward in giving engineering on campus a sense of solidarity, of joining with the historically more important liberal arts establishment in offering sons and daughters of Wyoming a more complete array of educational offerings. This step forward was further augmented when the beautiful new engineering building was completed in 1927 adjacent to the shops.”²⁵

A five-story sandstone building, this was also significant architecturally and its central tower especially attracted attention. That tower reputedly resembles the tower on the American Radiator Building in New York, a building designed by Raymond Hood, recent mentor to Wilbur Hitchcock. Finally, the Engineering Building was significant for its location. With its inescapable mass and size and linear features, this building conspicuously continued the line of buildings marching east from Science Hall, which no longer faced west. These buildings were facing the south, facing the dormitories across an open area.

²⁴ Hitchcock would die in an automobile accident in 1930; Porter would become the architect for a number of buildings on campus, especially some of the most distinctive and impressive of the post World War II building boom, including Wyoming Hall, Education, Coe Library, Ross Hall, Student Health Services, and the addition to the Hall of Science / Geology Building. See also Starr, *Architecture in the Cowboy State*, 63.

²⁵ Robert L. Sutherland, *History of the University of Wyoming College of Engineering, 1893-1993* (Laramie: Robert L. Sutherland, 1993), 55.

None of this was by accident for there was another development that was generally unseen but of equal importance. With the enhanced revenue prospects early in the decade, the new president of the university, Arthur G. Crane, called for the development of a plan for design and placement of buildings on the campus. The plan, expected to guide campus development for another twenty-five years, was developed primarily by Wilbur Hitchcock and then adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1924.²⁶ The key feature of this plan was the placement of buildings around an open space to form a campus quadrangle; Hitchcock and his colleagues even developed a scale model of what the campus of the future would look like. In addition, Hitchcock and Raymond Hood formulated a general “style” of the buildings, variously called Neo-Gothic or Collegiate Gothic, which endeavored to incorporate the lines and textures and even colors of the regional topography into its features. A concise summary of this style is that of Jason Marmor, in his *Historic American Buildings Survey of the campus*: “The success of the distinctive style which emerged from this process was the result of the deliberate adaptation of architecture to local conditions and building materials.”²⁷ The *Work Projects Administration guide to Wyoming*, produced a decade and a half later, after more of the plan became implemented, described key elements: “Modified Gothic is the dominant architectural scheme, particularly in the newer buildings. Broken perpendicular lines predominate, and the whole gives an impression of mass, suggestive of the natural rock and cliff formations of the area.”²⁸ As for the color and texture of the buildings, that depended upon the materials used and in 1923 Senator F. E. Warren (whether as a personal gift or on behalf of the federal government is unclear) presented to the university title to ten acres north of Laramie that contained a quarry for the rose or buff colored sandstone. That quarry, moreover, provided materials for the buildings and, as Clough notes, “students began to learn the art of stone-cutting.”²⁹ This particular learning opportunity may not have been reflected in the official curriculum of the university.

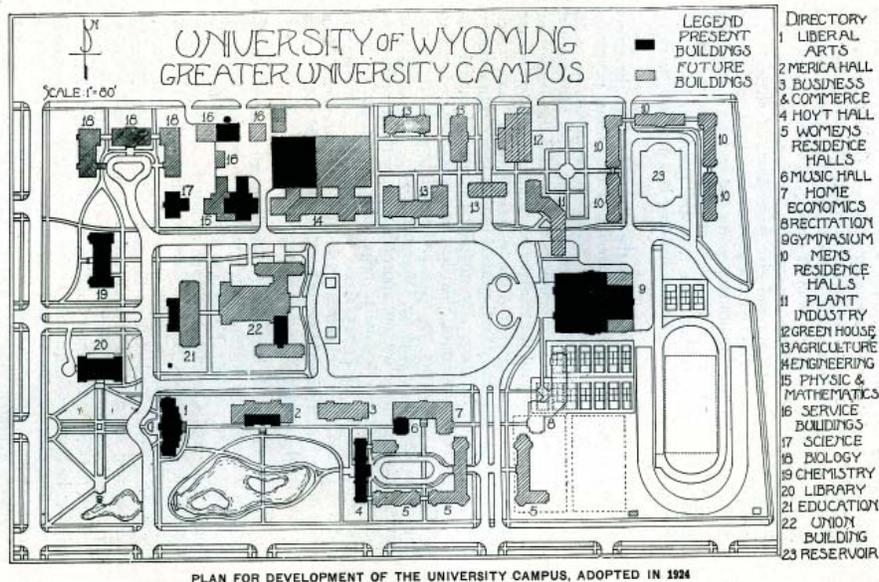
The 1924 plan guided the placement and the design of the Engineering Building and Half Acre Gymnasium. It also generally anticipated the location but not the

²⁶ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 117. Crane observed, “It immediately became apparent that a building plan was essential if construction was not to be piece-meal and haphazard.” In addition to Hitchcock, the formulators of the plan included McCrary, Cully and Cathart, landscape architects in Denver. Arthur G. Crane, “President’s Ten-Year Report to the Board of Trustees,” *Bulletin, University of Wyoming*, XXIX (December 1932), 7.

²⁷ Marmor, *Historic American Buildings Survey: The University of Wyoming Campus*, 18.

²⁸ *Workers of the Writers’ Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Wyoming, Wyoming: A Guide to Its History, Highways, and People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981; reprint of 1941 Oxford University Press edition), 168-69, 202.

²⁹ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 117.



University of Wyoming

1924 Campus Development Plan from Arthur G. Crane, "President's Ten-Year Report to the Board of Trustees," Bulletin, University of Wyoming, XXIX (December 1932), 8.

design of the next building, a men's dormitory—the first such for men on campus. This building (later named for registrar Ralph McWhinnie) resembled the other large academic buildings that preceded it in construction. This was different from the configuration anticipated by the plan; the footprint of the building in the plan suggests a string of "residence halls" in a U shape rather than the single tall building that emerged and thus the resulting dormitory was perhaps more true to the general intent of the building style than to the particulars of the plan. This building too had a tower.

As significant as its striking design and appearance, however, was its location; the men's dormitory was located even farther east along the line that started with Science Hall and Engineering, and, in fact, it was even to the northeast of Half Acre Gymnasium, leaving a considerable gap in the space between the dormitory on the east and Engineering to the west. The reasons for this distant location of course were not specified on the diagram of the university plan. The gymnasium's remoteness from the rest of the campus presumably was due to its athletic and military functions, not exactly mainstream academic endeavors. But the men's dormitory clearly was located farther from the academic buildings than were the women's dormitories, which were next door. In fact, an aerial photograph of campus in 1930 seems to suggest that the men's dormitory was located not just in a remote corner of the campus, but especially far from the women's dormitories, perhaps as far from them as physically possible given the space available for campus expansion. may not have been reflected in the official curriculum of the university.

The 1924 plan guided the placement and the design of the Engineering Building and Half Acre Gymnasium. It also generally anticipated the location but not the design of the next building, a men’s dormitory—the first such for men on campus. This building (later named for registrar Ralph McWhinnie) resembled the other large academic buildings that preceded it in construction. This was different from the configuration anticipated by the plan; the footprint of the building in the plan suggests a string of “residence halls” in a U shape rather than the single tall building that emerged and thus the resulting dormitory was perhaps more true to the general intent of the building style than to the particulars of the plan. This building too had a tower.

As significant as its striking design and appearance, however, was its location; the men’s dormitory was located even farther east along the line that started with Science Hall and Engineering, and, in fact, it was even to the northeast of Half Acre Gymnasium, leaving a considerable gap in the space between the dormitory on the east and Engineering to the west. The reasons for this distant location of course were not specified on the diagram of the university plan. The gymnasium’s remoteness from the rest of the campus presumably was due to its athletic and military functions, not exactly mainstream academic endeavors. But the men’s dormitory clearly was located farther from the academic buildings than were the women’s dormitories, which were next door. In fact, an aerial photograph of campus in 1930 seems to suggest that the men’s dormitory was located not just in a remote corner of the campus, but especially far from the women’s dormitories, perhaps as far from them as physically possible given the space available for campus expansion.



Aerial view of University of Wyoming campus, 1929-1930. Source: University of Wyoming, American Heritage Center, Miscellaneous AHC Collections, Photo identifier 161229.

weakened by a faltering economy in the state and nation. Those strains were felt during much of the 1920s. Despite the general image of prosperity implicit in clichés about the roaring twenties, Wyoming’s economy was in trouble in the 1920s. Oil and coal production declined after the first several years of the decade, farmers and ranchers had faced the bleak circumstances of agricultural depression since about 1923, cities could not keep up with the services necessary to accommodate the growing numbers of people moving from the countryside, small businesses found themselves squeezed on the one hand by chain stores and national companies and on the other hand by declining consumption by those who worked in the oil industry, in the coal mines, on the farms, in the timber industry, and elsewhere.³⁰ The permanent building fund at the university shielded UW from some of those stresses, but even that fund failed to provide enough revenue to fulfill the ambitions of growth and construction on campus. President Crane’s plans had been fulfilled in great measure in a handful of years, but some key projects remained dreams of the future. When the stock market crashed in October 1929, those dreams became that much more difficult to realize.

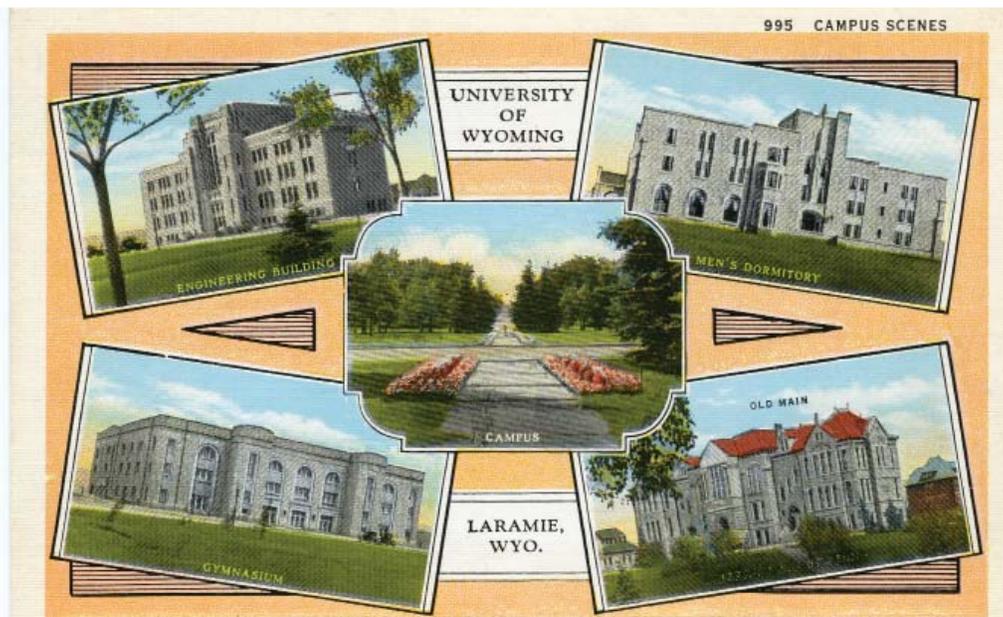
2.3 - THE DEPRESSION YEARS

As the Depression settled deeper and deeper into the state in the years after 1929, the university was hardly exempt from the pressures, but there was a lag in the way it experienced the downturn. For a while enrollment continued to climb, even reaching a high point of 1,400 college students in the fall of 1931. Hidden within that number, however, was a decline in freshman enrollment, an ominous trend for future registration. Even so, the university aspired to more construction in 1930, drawing up a list of projects including, according to Clough, “an enlarged College of Education, a women’s building, a place for the preservation of state historical records and mementoes, and a College of Liberal Arts, this last ‘the largest building projected, with auditorium and student union quarters.’”³¹ Each of those buildings had to wait and the permanent building fund was used to pay off existing building indebtedness instead of initiating new projects, but one plan, not on the main list, could be acted upon more easily. In 1930 architect Wilbur Hitchcock developed a plan for Fraternity Park, a space east of Fifteenth Street that he designed with sororities on the south side of a quadrangle containing tennis courts and fraternities on the north side. One sorority promptly placed its new building there, but the Depression meant that that house would be the only one in the park during most of the following decade.³²

³⁰ For the general contours of society and economy in Wyoming in the 1920s, see Michael Cassity, *Building Up Wyoming: Depression-Era Federal Projects in Wyoming, 1929-1943* (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, 2013), 9-36.

³¹ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 131, 161; Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 102-03.

³² Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 123.



A gallery of major buildings on the eve of the Depression. Sanborn postcard from Michael Cassity collection.

After 1931 the general building program at the university ground to a halt and budget cuts went deeper and deeper into the operation of the school. Wilson Clough wrote a semi-centennial history of the university in the 1930s, the first of several chronicles of UW's development that he prepared, and was thus writing as the events unfolded. He observed, "In March, 1932, the University's budget was slashed nearly \$100,000, faculty were assessed, along with other state employees, for state relief, married women were excluded from employment, faculty travel was restricted, and staff vacancies were not met by replacements."³³ Merica Hall, the first women's dormitory, was closed but reopened in 1932. While it was plain that others in the state suffered the Depression more and that other institutions were hit harder than the university, still the tightened budgets and sacrifices at UW were significant, were deeply felt by some people more than others, and would leave an enduring mark especially on the people denied, or partially denied, education opportunities.

The public works and relief programs of the Franklin Roosevelt administration beginning in 1933 offered some respite for students and also provided some assistance for maintenance, and ultimately expansion, of the university's physical plant. Much of that relief was slow in coming, though. The major early initiative of the New Deal in the direction of work projects, the Public Works Administration (PWA), was large but directed to the vast projects like the construction of Alcova and Seminoe Dams on the North Platte River. Even with that, the funds were sparingly expended and carefully guarded, so that the expenditure did not provide visible

³³ Wilson O. Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1937* (Laramie: Laramie Printing Co., 1937), 161-62, 152.

impact on unemployment. Some federal moneys went for highway and other work, and some funds were made available for direct relief to the unemployed, but it was only in the late fall and winter of 1933-1934 that the New Deal began to hire people who were out of work to perform other kinds of work with the creation of the Civil Works Administration (CWA). The CWA put about ten thousand people to work on a multitude of small projects in the state during the winter of 1933-1934, and that included projects in and around the university but the CWA's role was clearly less at UW than it was in most of the state; it was directed not at building buildings but at repairing them and landscaping their grounds and it was directed not at students but at those who had lost their jobs and were on the unemployment lists. Nonetheless, some students and others were put to work on the grounds of the university.

The administration and the trustees of the university saw the opportunity presented by the Public Works Administration, however, and undertook a campaign to secure a loan and a grant to construct the new auditorium and liberal arts building that they had wanted and had postponed. This turned into a complicated matter requiring first the permission of the legislature in authorizing bonds to underwrite the loan (which permission was soon received), but then the PWA officials disputed the legal right of the university to pledge future income from its land against building indebtedness. To establish that right, the university initiated a "friendly" court case by which it could demonstrate and secure concretely its legal power for such an issuance, and that case went to the Wyoming Supreme Court. In June 1934 that body decided in the university's favor so the administration began a vigorous lobbying campaign in Washington to get the PWA loan, enlisting the help of Senator Joseph O'Mahoney. Finally, in late 1934, the University of Wyoming received a loan of \$300,000 (and some of it a grant) from the PWA to construct what became the Liberal Arts building.³⁴

Even though construction did not begin on this building until 1935, a corner had been turned. In the larger picture, this PWA project was important because, as big as the new building was, it was a small fraction of the size of projects that the PWA had in mind and was accustomed to sponsoring; in the future the PWA would be the agency behind a number of schools and other public buildings in the state. But it was also important from the perspective of the university. Laying the cornerstone of this building meant, first, that after a long dry spell of not building—the seven years since 1928 when the Men's Residence Hall opened—construction was once again taking place on the campus. But it also represented a change in the direction of growth

³⁴ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 138-39; Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 111.

on the campus by placing on the open space something resembling a keystone that would shape the rest of construction there. The new Liberal Arts Building was located at the west end of what was then called the “open range,” and it stood opposite that space from Half Acre Gym. As Wilson Clough observed at the time, “the center of the campus definitely moved eastward, and the ‘open range’ took a more central position.”³⁵

The Liberal Arts Building also was important to the Public Works Administration. At the end of the decade the PWA published photographs and reports of some of its representative and exemplary projects and that volume included the UW Liberal Arts Building. Presenting a photograph of the building exterior and a diagram of its interior, the report noted, “the structure is entirely fireproof and the exterior walls are faced with a rough ashlar of local stone obtained in a quarry owned by the university.”³⁶ A building with four stories and a basement, the auditorium in the center was surrounded by offices and classrooms and provided lobbies on the first and second floors. When it was completed in June 1936 it was the pride of the university, and for good reason. It was one of the largest buildings on campus, and certainly the largest academic building, and it was a structure symbolizing beauty and strength, reflecting fundamental elements in the style suggested by its counterparts north and east of the quadrangle and moving them forward. That it rose from the ground in the depths of the Depression, that it marked a turning point in the direction of the campus, that it marked the beginning of a new phase in the midst of the Depression when the very act of building anything was in doubt, all made it that much more an achievement.

The PWA was not the only public works program to make a contribution to the campus. In 1935, after frustration with that agency’s record in creating jobs and creating them quickly, President Roosevelt created the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and charged it with doing much the same that the short-lived Civil Works Administration had done—perform work on a great many small public projects. Active throughout the state of Wyoming, the WPA left its mark in virtually every county and community, and that includes on the campus of the University of Wyoming. Those marks, however, are often difficult to see for the WPA workers did not generally undertake the construction of buildings, although some modest buildings can be found, but instead focused on the campus landscape.

³⁵ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1937*, 164.

³⁶ 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), 319.

Given the growing number of utility buildings and structures on the campus, necessary to provide garages and services and storage essential to university functions, there is a strong likelihood that WPA projects produced some of them, although there is no master list of projects and products and their identities are not recorded elsewhere. Project records do indicate that the WPA built a one-story building for use as a petroleum laboratory and they show that the WPA developed water for irrigation on campus (a series of ditches provided irrigation for the grounds until sprinklers were installed much later). The WPA also provided clerical workers for programs at the university. One general WPA project on campus, typical of that agency, recorded in omnibus fashion: "Work will permit much-needed general development of the campus of the University. Work consists of construction of concrete curb, gutter and sidewalk, concrete and clay tennis courts; street grading and walling; construction of working 6 inch and 8 inch sewer and manholes; 1 inch, 3 inch, 4 inch and 6 inch water main, concrete irrigation canal, service tunnels, eradication of any [unreadable], grading, and landscaping and all incidental work."

³⁷ Jason Marmor quotes Arthur Crane crediting WPA projects with "undoubtedly [advancing] the development of the campus 10 years beyond what could have been hoped for with state resources alone." Crane actually was quite specific about the contribution: "During the past several years, the planting of shrubbery and trees, improvements in grading, the making of new lawns, the construction of curbs, gutters, sidewalks, irrigations reservoirs and ditches, has been done largely with the help of W.P.A. workers." ³⁸

There was one program where the federal project held a particular connection to the university, though the thread making that connection was not altogether obvious. President Crane had taken a special interest in the welfare of students

³⁷ Wyoming WPA Projects Files, Planning and Control Section, Project Folders, National Archives and Records Administration, Reel 215. Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office and Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

³⁸ Marmor, *Historic American Buildings Survey: The University of Wyoming Campus*, 28. A. G. Crane, *The University of Wyoming, 1940: A Pioneer Comes of Age* (Laramie, Wyoming: University of Wyoming, 1940), 31. One aspect of this work that may, in retrospect, appear to be of less significance than it was at the time was that of irrigation (and irrigation ditches), a feature which is no longer present on campus. Crane explained: "Located as the University is on primitive prairie, all trees, shrubbery and grass must depend upon irrigation. The University now possesses three flowing wells, one of which has been in operation for over forty years. The two newer wells are also equipped with electric pumps for augmenting the natural flow to the reservoirs, water from which is conducted through concrete ditches to all parts of the campus. The entire 96 acres of campus are now under flood irrigation and independent of the Laramie water system, often overloaded during the summer season. Trees and shrubs under flood irrigation have actually shown nearly double the annual growth made by similar trees receiving only the old more expensive hose irrigation." Crane, *The University of Wyoming, 1940: A Pioneer Comes of Age*, 31.



Liberal Arts Building, University of Wyoming, *Laramie, Wyoming*

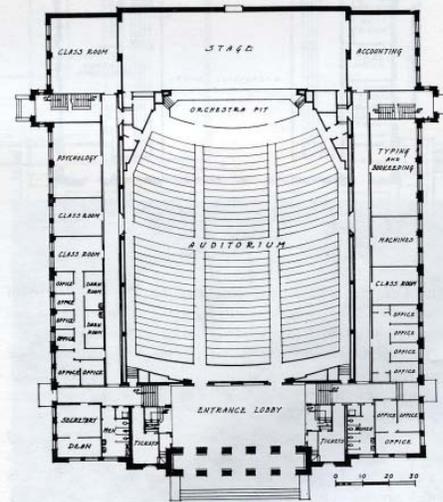
This building houses the entire liberal arts department of the University of Wyoming.

It is rectangular in plan with an auditorium in the center, surrounded with classrooms, and is four stories and basement in height.

The first floor contains the auditorium and its stage, the entrance lobby, offices, and classrooms. Dressing rooms for the stage are in the basement. The second floor has seven classrooms, offices, two political economy rooms, a lobby, and the balcony for the auditorium. On the third floor are seven classrooms, rooms for English, history, Latin, and offices. On the fourth floor are offices and a lecture room.

The structure is entirely fireproof and the exterior walls are faced with a rough ashlar of local stone obtained in a quarry owned by the university. The spandrels and parapet copings are dressed stone.

The project was completed in June 1936 at a construction cost of \$339,311 and a project cost of \$366,775.



319

A major landmark at the university, and a building that shifted the center of gravity for the campus, the Liberal Arts Building was also featured in a volume that showcased select Public Works Administration projects (one of four from Wyoming). Source: 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), 319.

during the Depression and often made a case for assisting them with every means possible. Crane argued that the impact of the Depression on the nation's youth was particularly devastating since the ravaged economy often meant that they had to drop out of high school or college, that they, never having held a job because of their youth, would have trouble getting any kind of employment and thus

would be disproportionately injured by the Depression and that injury would last for the rest of their lives. Early in the New Deal when the government set up the Federal Emergency Relief Administration to provide assistance (in the form of direct relief) to the unemployed, Arthur Crane argued that some of that money should be made available to students. Wilson Clough noted that Crane, who also happened to chair a committee of the Association of Land Grant Colleges, “was in no small way instrumental in persuading the government to apportion some of the federal relief funds to keeping youth in schools and colleges.” He lobbied and argued and presented the particulars and the FERA set aside funds for a student aid program.³⁹ Then, in 1935 when the WPA was created, a new agency within the WPA appeared: the National Youth Administration and its mission was exactly to help out those students, male and female, in the nation. That included students at the University of Wyoming. The projects of the NYA were often small and involved a wide range of work from cleaning and shelving books to landscaping to, ultimately, heavy construction. The university endeavored, as Crane made clear, to put these young people to work in projects related to their academic studies, and several photographs clearly show NYA workers preparing dinosaur bones for a museum display at the university. Other photographs show student workers with shovels and rakes working on landscaping and gardening, and these likely were NYA workers. And immediately south of the new Liberal Arts Building a sidewalk has the initials of about twenty workers and then this imprint in one panel of the sidewalk: N.Y.A. CONCRETE GANG, OCT. 1936.



Etched into a sidewalk near the Arts & Sciences Building, the mark of the National Youth Administration’s work endures. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2014.

Other programs were also there, but the marks are elsewhere, not in the concrete. Another WPA program, the Federal Art Project and its allied efforts in other agencies, put artists to work and that also included putting them to work in Wyoming, and at the University of Wyoming. The Federal Art Gallery in Laramie was described in Time magazine in 1938: “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 Modern Art.”⁴⁰ And the article included a photograph of the Wyoming gallery. Where was

³⁹ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 137; Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 124.

⁴⁰ “Art: In the Business District,” *Time*, September 5, 1938, 38.

the gallery? It was in the second floor lobby of the new Liberal Arts Building. As the director of the Wyoming art project explained, “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.” He also explained that “a relatively few people of the state had ever seen an art gallery.”⁴¹ In a way, when we are talking about the development of the campus of the University of Wyoming we are also talking about the broader social and cultural development of the state of Wyoming.

There was one other major campus project for which the identity is clear and the building itself iconic. The original plan for the Liberal Arts Building included facilities for a student union. While the new building provided many functions, serving as a student union was not among them. In late 1937 and 1938 plans were developed for a union and this time the PWA was more accommodating, perhaps facilitated by president Crane’s trip to Washington to push for the building. Bids were taken and construction of the building, the Wyoming Union, began. By autumn 1938, at the university homecoming, the cornerstone for the new building was laid amidst great fanfare with a procession that started from the Liberal Arts Building and marched to the rising Wyoming Union. With its use of stone from the university quarry, with its considerable size, and with its prominent location on what was becoming the center of the campus, the Wyoming Union became a new focus of attention. As for its style, the campus newspaper in January 1938 commented, “Architecturally the new building will conform to the new campus buildings—the men’s residence hall, the gymnasium, the engineering hall and the new liberal arts building. These structures are suggestive of the natural phenomena of Wyoming—flat-topped surfaced such as are seen in hundreds of Wyoming’s buttes, a rising massiveness of form, irregular surface contours, and the whole creating a general impression of mass.”⁴² In addition to those lines, however, the Wyoming Union also featured a tower in much the same way that the Men’s Residence Hall did. But the union was more than an achievement for the university; as a dramatic and iconic building it represented then, and continues to represent, the contributions and changes of the public works programs of the federal government in the years of the Depression for Wyoming and beyond in addressing the problem of unemployment and building up the facilities and systems to serve the needs of the public.

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² This is from the January 6, 1938 issue of *The Branding Iron*, as quoted in the University of Wyoming Survey Form, Wyoming Union, Section 8, page 2. Wyoming SHPO.

In 1937 the University of Wyoming celebrated fifty years as an operating institution of higher learning just as the state was making visible progress in climbing out of the circumstances of Depression. As Wilson Clough wrote in his semi-centennial history of the university,

Enrollments in its forty-ninth year for the first time passed 1,700. A new liberal arts building and auditorium had centralized its oldest and largest college, and opened new possibilities for its academic and cultural life. Old Main was undergoing renovation towards being fully given over to administration, and a housing campaign promised to add new dormitories in the near future. Campus planning had born fruit in a campus of unique and attractive character, one on which spaciousness left room for growth. Statewide recognition of the institution had never been more encouraging⁴³

A number of signs indicated the achievements, including the buildings that had recently emerged on campus around what was becoming known as Prexy's Pasture. In addition, one focused tribute that attempted to put several themes together appeared inside the new Wyoming Union shortly after it opened. As the union was nearing completion, the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming, representing the students to whom the union in many ways belonged, commissioned a mural to be painted for display in the union. They selected a WPA artist from Utah and his vision captured key elements of the history of the university. Lynn Fausett's large (7'x28') mural, *Western Welcome*, has two main elements, one being the staged-kidnapping of the new president Arthur Crane when he arrived to take the helm of the university in 1922. The other element features the buildings that Crane pushed to completion on campus, the buildings each recognizable and prominent. The mural continues to hang inside the Wyoming Union, that building not the least of Crane's contributions.

The Wyoming Union did not represent, however, a completion of the university's building plans and hopes. Still other buildings were on the list including new dormitories, student health center, new building for the College of Education, shops for Engineering, a wool laboratory, a greenhouse, a power plant, and "reconstruction of Old Main."⁴⁴ In fact, when president Crane submitted this list to the legislature in 1939, he had already received approval from the PWA for each, but the state

⁴³ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 146.

⁴⁴ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 170, notes that the remodeled president's quarters in Old Main were ready for occupation February 16, 1940.

legislature cut the funds necessary.⁴⁵ The only substantial building to emerge from the list, at least in the short run, was a new dormitory for women located east of Hoyt Hall. Built in 1940 and 1941, this dormitory, named for the first Dean of Women, Emma Howell Knight, initially consisted of only one wing of the current building. (It is possible that the sidewalk north of Knight Hall stamped with the WPA initials was poured at this time.) With the opening of Knight Hall in 1941, the wave of construction that had reshaped and redirected the campus in the Crane administration faded to an end. Perhaps the only other gesture in that direction was the university's attempt in 1939 to stimulate construction in Fraternity Park by enlarging the size of lots and also reducing the prices on those lots.⁴⁶ (Previously the lots appeared to be designed for two rows of houses on each side of the park; the new configuration appeared, at least as it ultimately was realized, to reduce the two rows to one.) But that was all. The next construction on the campus, in the early 1940s, had a distinctly military aspect in appearance and function.



Wyoming Union, a Public Works Administration project, nearing completion March 5, 1939. Wire service photo from collection of Michael Cassity.

2.4 - WAR AND POSTWAR EXPANSION

Even before U.S. official entry into World War II, the University of Wyoming took on something of a war footing. As Wilson Clough observed of president Crane as early as 1938, “he was now increasingly aware of the coming crisis and considerably extended his speaking program to include topics on the University’s place in such a time.” In 1939, even before the German invasion of Poland that triggered the beginning of World War II in Europe, Crane had applied for a Civil Aeronautics Authority Pilot Training Course to provide flight instruction for “national defense purposes.” With a long and prominent military presence already on campus, the

⁴⁵ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 162-63.

⁴⁶ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 169.

UW Reserve Officer Training Corps became more rigorous and demanding and in 1940 president Crane stressed to the legislature the “need for a defense program in both military training and the contribution of educational resources.” The university was thus in the midst of preparations for war in January 1941 when president Crane was abruptly fired by the Board of Trustees, a circumstance that complicated the transition and that also meant a loss of the key force behind the building program of the university. Even without Crane’s leadership, however, by graduation in the spring of 1942, Clough writes, “the University was . . . aligned with the war effort.”⁴⁷ A host of programs preparing students and recruits for military service and for non-military work in support of that service began to spring up in various parts of the campus.



The Engineering Building, with its prominent tower, served as a key landmark and monument on campus, even during World War II when this postcard was mailed in October 1943. The writer of the message on the card noted the wartime changes: “The University has opened with approximately 600 civilian students as well as about 1000 soldier trainees. Our Fall enrollment 3 years ago was 2100.” This precision was understandably exact, for the card was signed by Bernice and Ralph E. McWhinnie. Postcard from Michael Cassity collection.

Those programs, and the recruits they brought to campus (at one point nearly 1200 men in uniform on campus⁴⁸), meant additional attention to the new population. The university contracted with the Army (and evidently with the Navy too) to provide instruction and also housing and board for trainees. Some of this was undertaken by shifting one population to another dormitory to make room for another group. So Knight Hall became a barracks instead of a women’s dorm. The Men’s Residence Hall (McWhinnie) now housed men in uniform. Thus the depleted enrollments

⁴⁷ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 160, 166-67, 168, 175, 200.

⁴⁸ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 218.

occasioned by the war were somewhat offset by the presence of trainees in the new military programs. But more was needed, and in 1940 the Cowboy Dorms were constructed near the northwest corner of the campus. These dormitories were simple rectangular barrack-style buildings, and could have doubled for such on a military base except for their fake-log siding. The West Cowboy Dorm (and possibly also the East) appears to have been constructed by WPA workers or possibly even NYA workers, but the documentation of that work is inconclusive. While the mood, appearance, pace, and academic thrust of the campus changed during the war, the enduring alterations to the physical plant were limited mainly to the Cowboy Dorms—and those buildings served as important landmarks in time, if not in space, until they were razed.

A hallmark of effective administration is to plan for future developments so as to be prepared for them—and their consequences—before the actual need. As early as January 1944, well before the allied invasion at Normandy launched an offensive that turned the tide of war, the university had started planning for postwar construction. The board sent a ten year plan costing four million dollars to the legislature; the legislature did not adopt the proposal, but the vision was clear: new wings for the Engineering Building and also for Liberal Arts; new space for Agriculture, Home Economics, and Education as well as an expanded power plant and additional shops.⁴⁹ That list of future needs gained urgency with another development of 1944: the enactment in Washington of the G.I. Bill which foretold the return of significant numbers of veterans seeking education opportunities of one kind or another. And yet another dimension of future needs was signaled in president James L. Morrill's speech before his departure in 1945: he called upon Wyoming to "look beyond regionalism and to the larger University, a University of national dimensions," as Clough summarized it.⁵⁰ These three elements—an ongoing need for new construction, mushrooming enrollments, and the striving for academic excellence of national recognition—shaped the future of the University of Wyoming.

As it happened, in 1942, just as the war effort was getting underway, the university acquired more land to the east of Fifteenth Street. The orphanage known as Talbot Hall (on land situated on the northeast corner of Fifteenth and Grand) and its buildings became university property and the facility was soon remodeled as residential space for faculty and staff; this included also Dray Cottage. In the same location the wood-frame Hudson dormitories were added as residence halls for men, bringing university dormitory capacity for single men to 1200. In addition, the

⁴⁹ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 235.

⁵⁰ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 240.

university created Veterans' Village southeast of Fraternity Park. Veterans' Village had seventy-five prefabricated houses by January 1946 and was projected within two years to have a thousand such units.⁵¹ In addition to the housing, temporary quarters, often of the steel Butler Hut variety, appeared all over campus to provide classroom space; this included three such units directly north of the Liberal Arts Building. The word "unsightly" emerged as a common description both of the individual units and of their proximity to the stately campus buildings so recently erected.⁵²

At this point the university was attempting to catch up to the needs created by the dramatic surge in enrollment instead of preparing for them. In the spring of 1946 the governor and legislature provided approval for the university to issue bonds for three new dormitories and the Federal Works Agency (into which had been consolidated the various public works programs of the New Deal in 1939) provided startup funds for the development of plans and specifications for a new men's dormitory and new buildings for Agriculture and Education.⁵³ In late 1946 the new president, George Duke Humphrey, also initiated plans for a new stadium and fieldhouse, both structures to memorialize the university community's war casualties. This was the beginning of a new wave of construction. As historian Hardy writes, "During the Humphrey administration, central campus took the form it has today; in addition the University acquired its first high-rise dormitories, and its present (though then smaller) football stadium and fieldhouse."⁵⁴

In 1947 the legislature appropriated more money for the university than ever before and a key element of that appropriation was for buildings, including a cafeteria annex to Knight Hall and a new men's dormitory (both designed as self-liquidating—they would pay for themselves). Clough notes that that appropriation also provided funds for the improvement and reseeded of Prexy's Pasture, recently a drill field (and with more changes and "face-lifting" to come in 1949).⁵⁵ So the installation of sprinklers, shrubs, and walks helped transform the pasture into a genuine quadrangle. The legislature, in a special session in June 1948, provided supplemental

⁵¹ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 246.

⁵² See, for example, the photograph of the Liberal Arts Building with three modular units lined up immediately north of that building in Watson A. Bowes and Gerald T. Hart, *An Appraisal of Property and Insurance Study, University of Wyoming* (Denver: Bowes & Hart Valuation Consultants, 1950), 117. A copy of this report can be found in the Emmett Chisum Special Collections, Coe Library, University of Wyoming.

⁵³ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 249.

⁵⁴ Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 172.

⁵⁵ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 272.

appropriations to start the process for constructing new Agriculture and Education buildings, and for the further remodeling of Old Main (in progress and to be completed in summer 1949). Evidently it also provided for the acquisition of more land; at this point the land on campus amounted to about 240 acres.⁵⁶



Knight Hall. Sanborn postcard from Michael Cassity collection.

By the end of the 1940s, after a serious struggle to meet the escalating needs of the university (which also included faculty shortages attempting to meet the needs of the flood of students as well as shortages of library and other facilities), new, permanent buildings began to rise around Prexy's Pasture. The cafeteria addition to Knight Hall opened in 1949 and the dormitory addition in 1950; and the new men's dormitory, Wyoming Hall, located east of the Men's Residence Hall (McWhinnie) opened in 1951. Two parts of a new Agriculture Building, east of Engineering, were ready in autumn 1950. The Education Building, along with its laboratory school, would be ready for classes in 1951. All three of these buildings (Wyoming, Agriculture, Education) were designed by Frederick Hutchinson Porter, as would be others in this postwar surge of construction.

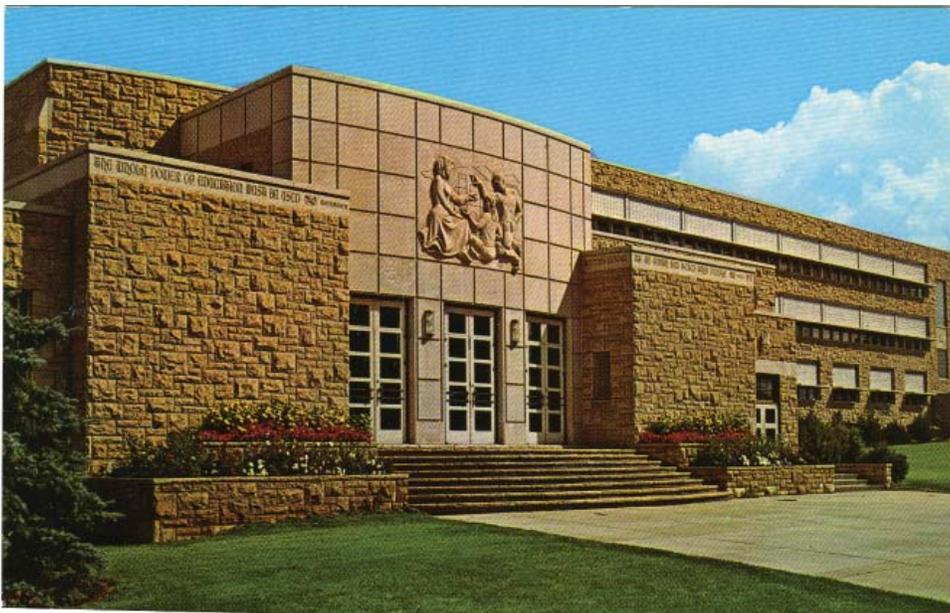
The quadrangle itself, Prexy's pasture, looked completely different from what it had just a few years earlier and it was not just because of the new buildings around it. Not only had it been landscaped, but it now offered parking space along its sides for the postwar automobile culture.⁵⁷ Memorial Stadium and Fieldhouse (also Frederick Hutchinson Porter designs) were to be finished in 1951 and the stadium

⁵⁶ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 268.

⁵⁷ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 272.

was already being used for football games in 1950. (At the laying of cornerstones for these buildings one of the participants was none other than the Acting Governor of Wyoming, Arthur G. Crane.) And to put the growth of athletic facilities into context, that growth had generally been post World War II. As historian Deborah Hardy notes, “Football in Wyoming had barely ranked as a living sport before Duke Humphrey became president.”⁵⁸

There was still more construction on the way, and a new Law School building was started on Iverson in 1951-52. In 1955 the legislature approved a plan for sixty married student apartment units.⁵⁹ And the 1955 bequest of William Robertson Coe made possible the construction of a new library; his funds were matched by the state and the Coe Library began to take form east of Knight Hall at the corner of Thirteenth and Iverson in 1956 and opened for use in autumn 1958.



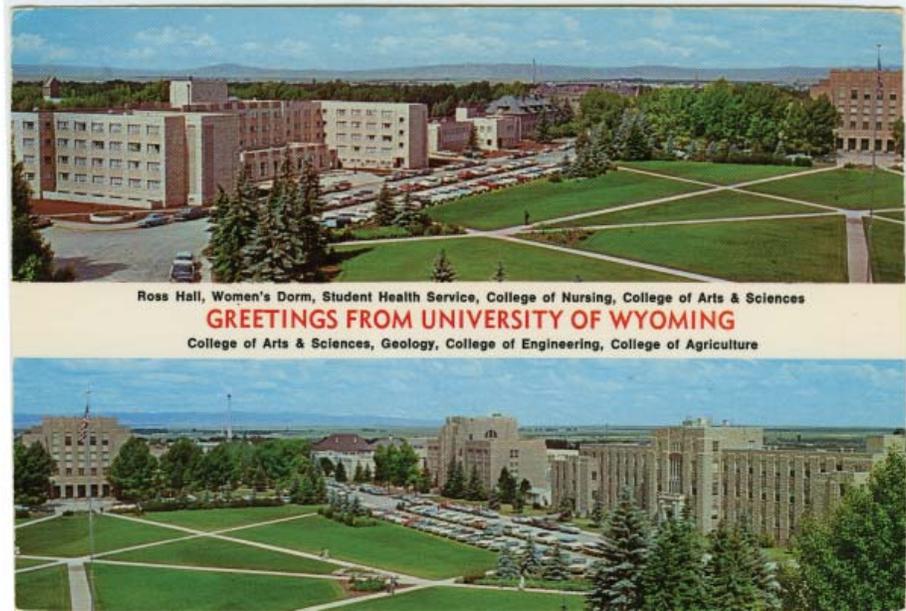
Completed in 1951, the Education Building helped enclose the quadrangle. Noble Post Card from Michael Cassity collection.

Lest it be thought that the expansion of the university was simply in bricks and mortar (or in sandstone ashlar), the same dramatic expansion was evident throughout the university. The value of buildings had quadrupled, it is true. At the same time, however, half the degrees the university had granted in its entire history had been awarded in the decade after World War II and the university enrollment in 1955-1956 was nearly 3,000. New academic divisions and colleges had been created, had divided, had reorganized, and the academic structure of the university had generally been completely overhauled. As of 1956 the Liberal Arts Building became the Arts and Sciences Building.⁶⁰

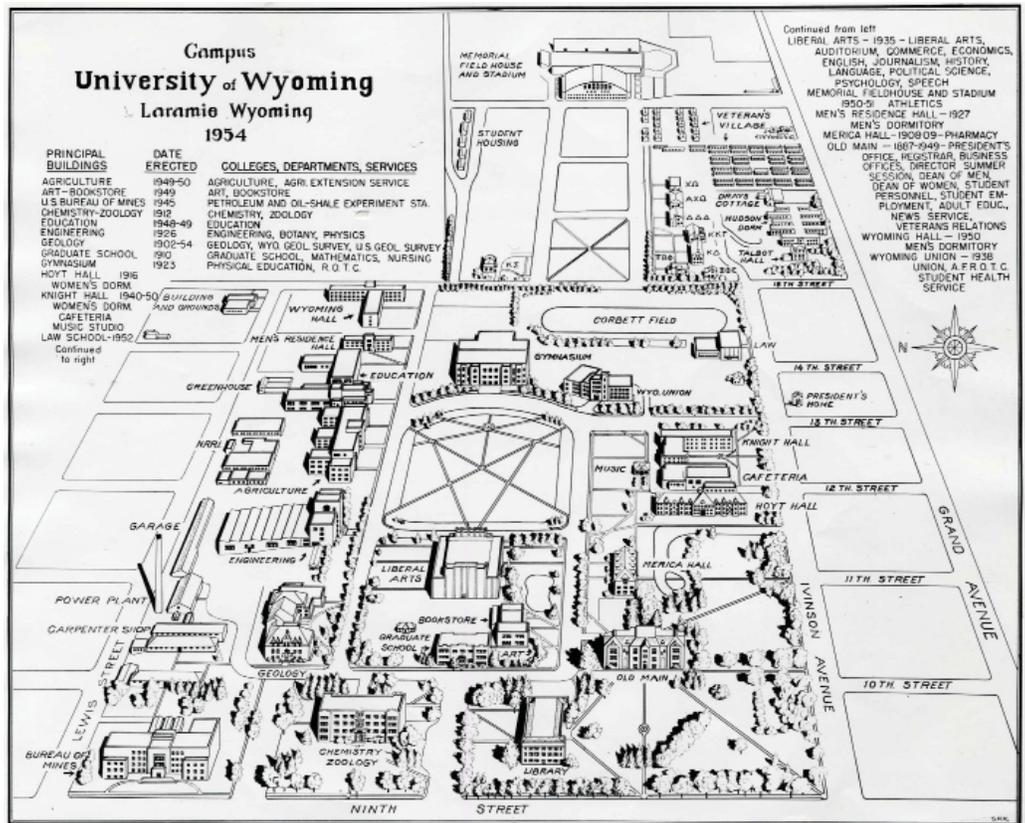
⁵⁸ Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 199.

⁵⁹ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 284.

⁶⁰ Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 284-85.



In addition to the new buildings around Prexy's Pasture in the post World War II surge of growth, the university also provided additional parking space. Herb Pownall / UW Photo Service photo, Sanborn postcard from Michael Cassity collection.



Campus in 1954 showing expansion eastward, including Wyoming Hall, the new Law School Building, War Memorial Stadium and Fieldhouse, and Veterans' Village. Source: Emmet Chisum Special Collections, Coe Library, University of Wyoming.

The completion of Coe Library (Frederick Hutchinson Porter, architect) in 1958 may mark the end of one phase, the immediate postwar phase, of campus expansion and construction but more buildings were yet to come. In 1959-1960 a new bond issue provided for the construction of tall, modern dorms on Grand, east of Fifteenth. These new men's dormitories would become Crane and Hill Halls. Plus, a new women's dormitory, named for former governor Nellie Tayloe Ross, opened in 1960 between Knight Hall and Prexy's Pasture. Near Ross Hall was another new building, this one housing the Student Health Center and the School of Nursing. Both of these were also Frederick Hutchinson Porter buildings and the construction of these two buildings, as it turned out, also filled in the last remaining space around the perimeter of Prexy's Pasture. The selection of this location was not altogether natural or unanimous; in fact, the construction of Ross Hall had been moved to this location only after its original intended site, at the corner of Ninth and Ivinson, was denied it in a law prohibiting construction at that location by making that piece of land a state park.⁶¹ The same concerns would surface soon regarding other proposals for construction on the quadrangle.



Coe Library: "Modern buildings of colorful native stone in a setting of beautiful lawns, flower gardens and trees make the campus on U.S. 30 in northeast Laramie one of the most attractive in the United States." I. A. Jacobson / H. C. Easton postcard from Michael Cassity collection.

In 1962 when the University of Wyoming marked its seventy-fifth anniversary, it also dedicated the completion of several major construction projects: the remodeled old library, now the Aven Nelson Building; the Health Services Center and School of Nursing building; the Nellie Tayloe Ross Hall, the new Commerce

⁶¹ See the cogent discussion by Phil Roberts of this "park" in his pamphlet, "The Campus of the University of Wyoming," (Laramie: Albany County Tourism Board, 2012), 12.

and Industry Building on Iverson; Crane and Hill Halls (and cafeteria); a steam plant and utility distribution building, a garage / warehouse facility, and “a fifty-five acre physical education, recreation and athletic area.”⁶² The building achievement was substantial and it also reflected growth elsewhere in the university, but many on campus saw the physical growth as receiving attention at the expense of the core mission of the university. Historian Deborah Hardy writes that “Duke Humphrey was considered by many faculty to be a ‘bricks and mortar’ man, who demonstrated little understanding of academics and cared less.”⁶³



From left: Hill Hall, Cafeteria, Crane Hall, new dormitory and dining facilities, a part of the bricks and mortar expansion of the George Duke Humphrey administration. Dexter Press / Sanborn postcard from Michael Cassity collection.

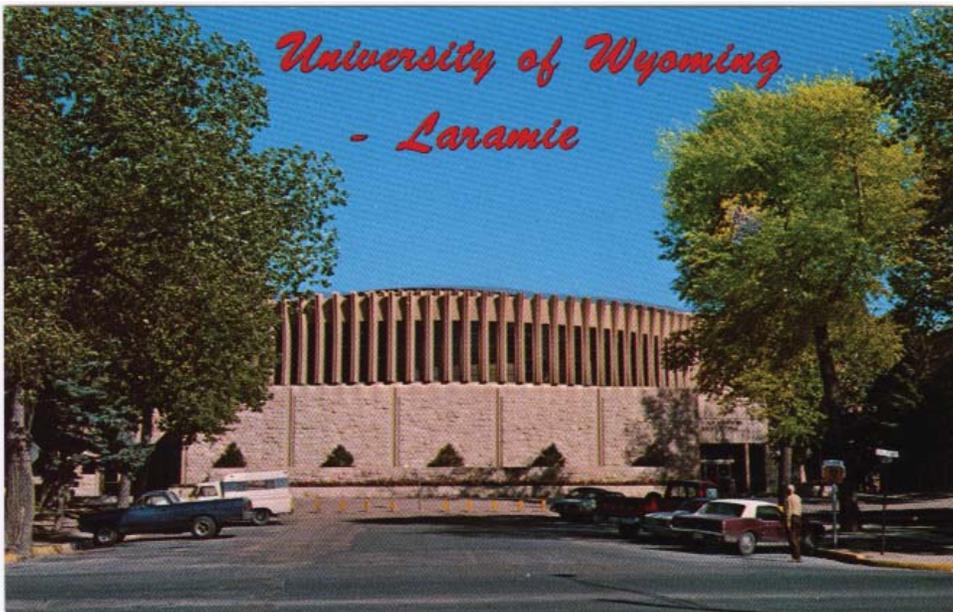
In one academic area Humphrey had a special interest but even that was contested. Humphrey had proposed a new science center, a single building that would house the various physical science departments on campus. This was included in a plan for more development, including remodeling existing dormitories and adding one more, and that substantial package quickly ran against major financial hurdles from previous building endeavors that were still not paid off. But the science center—the George Duke Humphrey Science Center—was what Humphrey called “the most important request I have presented to the Legislature in my years at the University.”⁶⁴ In 1963 the legislature approved the plan, including for the dormitories and additional married student apartments, and added approval for further bonded indebtedness two years later and now a classroom building was

⁶² Clough, *A History of the University of Wyoming, 1887-1964*, 298.

⁶³ Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 205.

⁶⁴ Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 174.

also in the mix. The building ran into a firestorm of resistance, and vocal protest, however, in 1965 when the Board of Trustees chose the site for its construction: on the northwest and southwest corners of Prexy's Pasture, near the Arts and Sciences Building. At that point, and after considering other locations, including the parking lot east of Wyoming Union, which proved equally unsatisfactory, the site chosen was on the west side of Arts and Sciences, between Old Main and Geology.⁶⁵ That space was not vacant, however, and the old Rural Demonstration School building and the postwar Art / Bookstore building were removed to make space for the new center. The modern architecture of the three new buildings (Biological Science, Physical Science, Classroom) contrasted dramatically with the surrounding buildings that reflected a different era and purpose; their main connection to the past was that their designs were prepared by Eliot and Clinton Hitchcock, sons of Wilbur Hitchcock who had designed earlier buildings on campus. The friction over building space and the special nature of Prexy's Pasture left its scars and tensions. In 1971 a state law prohibited further construction on Prexy's Pasture.⁶⁶



Located in the center of the new science complex on the west side of campus, the Classroom Building also represented an abrupt shift in architectural style for the old part of campus.

The remaining Humphrey administration construction included the building of four new dormitories for women in 1965 (White, Downey, McIntyre, and Orr), in the location of old Talbot Hall and Dray Cottage, for the first time removing women's housing from the center of campus—and all that that had signified. At the time this robust surge of construction was taking place, however, there emerged doubts about

⁶⁵ Ewig and Hert, *University of Wyoming*, 111; Roberts, "The Campus of the University of Wyoming," 2.

⁶⁶ Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 175.

the future liabilities of such efforts and whether they were needed and whether they could be sustained. As historian Hardy writes, “It may have been prophetic that in 1962 the University had to require out-of-town freshmen to live in recently-built dormitories that might otherwise have stood partially empty. Within twenty years, classroom, library, and office space was at a premium, in spite of remodeled facilities in the center of campus and additional buildings on its outskirts. Humphrey’s bricks and mortar provided no permanent solution to the University’s need for space.”⁶⁷ In 1966 Wyoming Hall (generally referred to by then as Wyo Hall) closed because of vacancies in the dormitory’s rooms. In 1970 the Knight and Ross cafeterias closed and in 1973 the cafeteria for Crane-Hill closed.⁶⁸



Downey and McIntyre Halls. Jack Decker photo, D&G Enterprises postcard from Michael Cassidy collection.

2.5 - THE MODERN UNIVERSITY

The first new major construction activity after the surge of building that concluded with the new dormitories reflected a new direction for the university. In one sense it was not exactly a literal new direction, for the campus had been moving eastward for a long time; but now it leaped past Fraternity Park to build a Fine Arts Center east of Fraternity Park in 1972. What it indicated rather, was the beginning of what would later be a cluster of buildings somewhat removed and separated from the main campus by a band of residential housing—fraternity, sorority, and dormitory—that stretched south from Greenhill Cemetery. Aside from the remodeling and expansion of existing buildings on campus (including the building of a new Geological Survey Building, attached to the existing Geology Building in 1976, and the large Engineering

⁶⁷ Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 175.

⁶⁸ Hardy, *Wyoming University*, 228.

additions in 1983), this area would become the focus of future efforts. In 1974 the Law School received a new building and it was located northeast of the Fine Arts Center; in 1975 the Corbett Physical Education Building was located southeast of Fine Arts. For that matter, there was no consensus on whether the university needed to rehabilitate the existing War Memorial Fieldhouse or to build a new facility.

Given the absence of an ongoing stream of construction, given the size of the new structure, and given its modern dome-shaped architecture, the Arena Auditorium made that much more of an impression when it was finally completed as an entirely new facility in 1982. Its location fulfilled two different needs: it was naturally located near other athletic venues, situated directly north of the existing fieldhouse and slightly northwest of the stadium; it also added weight to the emerging cluster of buildings in the complex sometimes being referred to already as an east campus. In 1992 the university added another distinctive, and large, building to that part of campus, this one situated across the street and northeast of the Arena Auditorium. The Centennial Complex (in recognition of the university's 1986 centennial) contained the Art Museum and the American Heritage Center. This was the tipi-shaped building designed by Antoine Predock. A few years later, the next major building to campus also was situated on its east side, but this time moved north so that the Animal Science / Molecular Biology Building was actually east of Greenhill Cemetery, indicating that campus expansion was beginning to surround that cemetery.

2.6 - BEYOND THE CENTURY

By the end of the decade of the 1990s there had been little more major construction, although remodeling was a frequent activity. After the turn of the century, however, a new surge of construction began to add more buildings to the campus. In this the athletic facilities began to move yet farther east and north, to the area north of Willett Drive and west of Thirtieth Street. When construction of academic and administrative buildings took place, from about 2007 on, it sometimes squeezed into existing spaces (the expansion of Coe Library in 2009; and the Business addition and remodel and the Berry Biodiversity Conservation Center, both in 2011; and the expansion of the Health Sciences Center in 2011), sometimes added to the growing complex in the east campus (Information Technology in 2008 and the Visual Arts Facility in 2012), and sometimes moved into new areas (the Anthropology Building crossing Lewis Street to the north in 2007). This construction, as a group not neatly defined as an architectural theme, did represent an important building surge.

At the same time, that building surge seems to be tapering off. At the end of 2012 one observer, looking at the new buildings on campus, came to the obvious conclusion: “In all its 125-year history, the university never looked more prosperous.”⁶⁹ But the energy boom that fueled this recent construction was weakening and university spokesperson Chad Baldwin confirmed that pattern: “The boom years are probably over.”⁷⁰

2.7 - CONCLUSION

Just as the University of Wyoming’s organization, mission, constituency, and academics have transformed over the decades since the 1880s, the university’s campus has also evolved and expanded in those years. That evolution, however, has not followed a direct and linear course, but has been sometimes halting and painfully



The buildings and structures—the built environment from the ground up—of the University of Wyoming campus in Laramie represent more than bricks (or stones) and mortar, more than classrooms and activity centers, and more than dormitories and laboratories. They represent the dreams of the future of those who created them and the aspirations for the state and nation by those who have depended upon them. They represent a bridge to the future by past generations of Wyomingites and now links to the past by our own and future generations. Photo: cornerstone of Liberal Arts (Arts & Sciences) Building, Michael Cassity, 2009.

⁶⁹ Gregory Nickerson, “Next UW President to Inherit Upgraded Campus, Downgraded Budget,” in *Wyofile*, December 4, 2012. This article can be found at: http://wyofile.com/gregory_nickerson/next-uw-president-to-inherit-upgraded-campus-downgraded-budget/#sthash.RxMT9uuw.dpuf.

⁷⁰ Baldwin is quoted by Nickerson in “Next UW President to Inherit Upgraded Campus, Downgraded Budget.”

slow and at other times has proceeded with a speed and intensity that has even caused some on campus to express concerns about direction and priority. The result of the development of the campus has been the formation of a mosaic of buildings and other physical features on the ground, and that mosaic also represents a pattern in time—pathways and milestones in history. That historical pattern reflects more than individual buildings, each with its own history and style; the pattern rather is a collection of buildings and structures in which the total is more than the sum of the parts.

To walk the campus of the University of Wyoming, and to walk it thoughtfully with the reflection and introspection appropriate to an institution of higher learning and fitting for a place where academic research and investigation are the precursors to decision and action, is to comprehend the layers and meanings of that mosaic. The pensive observer of the campus buildings and their layout can even walk the paths of the past and look at change over time much as an archaeologist might carefully peel away the layers of history to chart the course of earlier societies' evolution and challenges, in this case to mark the setbacks and surges, the prosperity and the want, the triumphs and the tragedies of the history of the university, and, for that matter, even to glimpse aspects of a history that is not always told in the university archives. And so the mosaic gives not just texture but meaning to some of the contours of the history of the university. To alter that mosaic, piece by piece, is also to alter the larger pattern, and any changes made—any additions, subtractions, modifications—need to be planned carefully and sensitively, with great forethought to the legacy of UW, past and future.
