

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Lulu McCormick Junior High School
other names/site number: Emerson Building/48LA857

2. Location

street & number: 2001 Capitol Avenue not for publication: N/A
city or town: Cheyenne vicinity: N/A
state: Wyoming code: 56 county: Laramie code: 021 zip code: 82001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Claudia Missly 5/1/05
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Linda McClelland 8/20/05
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: Public Schools in Cheyenne, Wyoming, from 1911 to 1954

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education Sub: school

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Government Sub: government office

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
Sub: Late Gothic Revival (Collegiate Gothic)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: concrete
roof : concrete and steel truss
walls: reinforced concrete with face brick
other: terra cotta detailing

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Education

Cat. Architecture

Period of Significance: 1929-1954

Significant Dates: 1929 (building date)

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above): N/A

Architect/Builder: William Dubois and Frederick Hutchinson Porter

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: City of Cheyenne Planning Office, Cheyenne, WY.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 2.4 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>13</u>	<u>515370</u>	<u>4553755</u>

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

All of Block 265, Original City of Cheyenne

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

The boundary is all of the lots which the property occupies in Block 265 to include landscaping and parking lots within the existing curb lines.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Robert G. Rosenberg, Historian
organization: Rosenberg Historical Consultants
street & number: 739 Crow Creek Road
city or town: Cheyenne state: WY

date: 8/31/2004, revised 12/31/2004
telephone: (307)-632-1144
zip code: 82009

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: State of Wyoming
street & number: 2001 Capitol Avenue
city or town: Cheyenne
state: WY zip code: 82002
telephone: (307)777-7701

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7. Description

The building that formerly housed Lulu McCormick Junior High School is located at 2001 Capitol Avenue in the northern portion of the original commercial district of the City of Cheyenne, Wyoming. The building occupies the entire block, and the facade or west side fronts on Capitol Avenue. The building also has formal but secondary entrances on the north side fronting West 21st Street and on the south side fronting West 20th Street. The rear or east side of the building with associated parking lots fronts on Central Avenue. The building was constructed in 1929, and it originally housed Cheyenne's junior high school. The building is currently known as the Emerson Building and is occupied by the offices of the Administrative Department of the Wyoming State Government.

The building rests on a raised basement (ground floor); the central portion consists of three above ground stories, and the north and south portions consist of two above-ground stories. The basic dimensions are 105 feet north-south, 58 feet east-west (on north and south) and 88 feet east-west (center of building, including gym and auditorium), resulting in a T-shaped plan.

This dark red brick building is an excellent representative of the Collegiate Gothic style. The main entrances (north, west and south sides) feature terra cotta portals with polychrome accents. Terra cotta detailing was also used on the water table, string courses, panels, and finials. Features of the Collegiate Gothic style included the use of arched doorways, vaulting, and the spire-like motif of the entrance portals and spandrel panels. The liberal use of terra cotta and tile work on the facade (west side) is a character-defining element. The detailing is unrivaled in any other Collegiate Gothic building in the state except for Natrona County High School in Casper, a building designed by the architectural firm of Garbutt, Weidner and Sweeney. The two buildings, built in the late 1920s, share similar terra cotta detailing, suggesting that those components could be ordered from catalogs of the day.

The facade is a full three stories above the raised basement and contains the primary entrance, which consists of three such portals. The terra cotta Tudor arched portals are open and lead to recessed steel twin-leaf doors. The front stoop consists of stone steps with a flagstone deck. The second and third-story portions of the entrance each contain three window bays. The central entrance is flanked on the north and south by three-story components, each containing nine window bays. The three-story central component, in turn, is flanked on the north and south by two-story components. Each contains groupings of window bays (3-2-3-1 on the north, reversed on the south); the window groupings are separated by brick pilasters capped with terra cotta ornamentation. The north and south ends of the facade consist of a windowless brick wall with a large rectangle outlined in brick. Decorative terra cotta detailing is used throughout the cornice area and resembles

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a balustrade. The water table on the facade consists of rectangular ashlar blocks and light-colored brick. Original windows have been replaced but are similar in appearance since the bays were not altered.

The north side of the building consists of two above-ground stories and contains a single entrance, asymmetrically placed west of center. It is not, however, an open arch portal but contains the doorway. The doorway has been altered and consists of a simple glass panel with two sidelights. The multi-light transom is probably original. The surrounds are similar in detail to the entrance on the facade. There are three window groupings west of the entrance separated by brick pilasters capped with terra cotta finials, and six window groupings east of the entrance, also separated by brick pilasters. The north side continues the terra cotta string course below the parapet.

The south side is similar to the north side. Due to slope, the entrance is accessed by a higher set of steps, which are flanked by a solid concrete railing. The window groupings are similar to those on the north side and are also separated by brick pilasters.

The rear (east) three-story component, which contained the gym, features a single tall brick chimney; some of the windows have been bricked over, and although there is less ornamental detailing, there are shallow pilasters capped with terra cotta as well as the terra cotta string course below the cornice. Parking lots fill in the corners of the T-shaped building at the northeast and southeast corners of the block.

The main entrance on the west side features flagstone steps and stoop and exterior twin-leaf one-light modern doors that open onto a small vestibule with terrazzo tiles on the floor. Three sets of interior wood and brass twin-leaf doors with arched multi-light transoms open into a foyer area whose floors are also covered with terrazzo tiles. A main hallway runs north-south with former classrooms (now offices) on both sides, and there are east and west wings with central hallways. The hallways retain marble wainscoting with plaster walls above and a dropped acoustic tile ceiling. An auditorium with a balcony occupies the center of the building on the first and second floors. Stairways between floors consist of concrete steps, steel bannisters and wood railings. The second floor hallways have wall-to-wall carpeting and dropped acoustic tile ceilings. The third floor lacks east and west wings and consists of small offices that appear to be partitioned from larger classrooms.

The physical integrity of this building is good to excellent; exterior modifications include a handicapped entrance on the north; windows and doors have been altered/replaced throughout, but the bays have not been altered. The interior has been modified to accommodate the change of function, that is, from a school building to an office building, but it retains several notable original features.

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8. Significance

National Register criteria

Lulu McCormick Junior High School (Emerson Building) is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places Under Criteria A and C. It is eligible under Criterion A for its direct association with the growth of education in Cheyenne. The building reflects the primary importance the Cheyenne community attached to the education of its youth from its inception as a railroad town in 1867. Schools represented the widespread belief in the value of universal education. Education was one of the first critical issues dealt with by Cheyenne's first citizens and by the first Wyoming territorial legislature. The formation of school districts and the building of schools reflected how Cheyenne's citizens felt about the permanency of their community and their faith in its future. In addition to involving the community in the activities of the school (musical performances, dramatic and athletic events), Lulu McCormick Junior High was used as a gathering place for public assemblies and civic celebrations, a place for the community to come together. Lulu McCormick Junior High School was the first building constructed in Wyoming specifically as a junior high school. Therefore, it reflects the innovation of junior high schools in our national education, a movement that began in 1910. During its Fortieth Year Celebration in 1969-1970, United States Senator Gale McGee presented the school with an American flag that had been flown over the nation's capitol.

The building is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an outstanding example of the Collegiate Gothic style in educational buildings and as the work of two master architects, William Dubois and Frederick Hutchinson Porter. It is the most elaborate of the three remaining educational structures in Cheyenne to represent this style (the others being Cheyenne High School and Johnson Junior High School, both of which were designed by Dubois).

Historic background

Public education was a primary concern of Cheyenne's citizens from its beginnings in 1867-68 as a "track town" along the first transcontinental railroad, the Union Pacific. The Territory of Wyoming was created in 1868, and Cheyenne was designated the temporary territorial capital. Cheyenne had the largest population of any city in the territory, and once designated as the seat of government, this position was vehemently defended by its residents. From about 1875 to 1887, Cheyenne enjoyed a boom period based largely on cattle ranching. Spectacular profits were made during the 1880s, and by 1884, the population of Cheyenne had soared to 7,000. It had evolved from a rough-hewn railroad town to a modern city. Cheyenne became the state capital when Wyoming won statehood in 1890.

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As early as October 1867, the local paper encouraged the development of a school for the 120 to 125 school-age children residing in Cheyenne. The City Council appointed a committee to arrange for a school building, and the first public school in Wyoming was constructed in late 1867. School District No. 1 was organized in November 1868, and covered an area of 270 square miles and included six rural schools. By 1874, the Cheyenne school had an enrollment of 131.

In 1886 Cheyenne adopted a two-track high school program that allowed pupils to choose between a college prep course or a "business" course of study. By 1905-06, the Cheyenne schools had a student population of 1,446 and employed 36 teachers. Cheyenne High School had an enrollment of 171 students and graduated 23 in 1906. In 1913-14 agriculture was added to the curriculum, and the city schools included Manual Training for boys and Domestic Science for girls. Cheyenne's oldest remaining school building was constructed during this general time period (Churchill School, 1911).

Lewis C. Tidball, the State Commissioner of Education, first suggested the establishment of junior high standards in a meeting with the State Board of Education on April 13-14, 1925. The purpose of the junior high school was to act as a transitional agent for adolescent youth who were "in-between" the elementary school and the high school and required administration, curriculum, and discipline measures more suited to their needs. In 1927, the Board published the first set of standards relating to junior high school accreditation in Wyoming. The junior high school was defined as a definite unit of the Wyoming Public School system, and might include grades seven, eight, and nine, or in cases where law or building situations interfered, it might include only grades seven and eight. After the junior high school standards were established, Cheyenne and Kemmerer, with three-year programs, had the first two schools to be accredited by the State Board of Education in 1928. However, the construction of separate school buildings to house the junior high school unit moved slowly in Wyoming. Cheyenne's Lulu McCormick Junior High School became the first such school to be constructed as a separate unit.

The post-World War I years saw the construction of some of Cheyenne's finest remaining schools. William Dubois designed the Cheyenne High School and the Gibson Clark School in 1921 and Johnson Junior High in 1923, and F.H. Porter designed the Park Addition School in 1921. By the end of the 1920s, the country and Wyoming were entering the Great Depression; however, in 1928, Dubois and Porter were commissioned to design Lulu McCormick Junior High School. It was constructed by the firm of Adams & McCann on the site of the original Central High School. A bond election was held in 1927, and the funding was approved for \$450,000 for a new school. In March 1928 the architects' plans were accepted, and construction began in June. The building was completed on October 15, 1929, at a final cost of \$450,000. The importance of the building to the community was indicated by a formal opening ceremony held on November 12, 1929. The public was invited and the festivities included a concert by the Cheyenne Municipal Band, and dancing in the

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gymnasium from nine to midnight. The faculty, Board of Education members, and other school officials were available to answer question from the public.

Pupil capacity of the new school was 1,200. When first built, the school contained thirty-eight classrooms, including gymnasium and library, and forty-four auxiliary rooms, including locker rooms, rest rooms, cafeteria, dining room, offices, store rooms, and an auditorium, which seated 1,222. The north side of the building was first occupied by grades one through six, but the dual usage was suspended after a short time. Vocational rooms were located on the "ground floor" (raised basement); principals' offices, classrooms, auditorium, and gym were on the first floor; the library and twelve classrooms were on the second floor; the cafeteria and three music classrooms were on the third floor. J.L. Goins was the first principal, overseeing a staff of twenty-four teachers. The building was named for Lulu M. McCormick, principal of the Central School from 1896 to 1928.

The Architects

Lulu McCormick Junior High was a collaboration of Cheyenne's two principal architects, William R. Dubois and Frederick Porter Hutchinson. Dubois was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1879. Little is known about William Dubois' early schooling, but he did study at the Chicago School of Architecture in the late 1800s. He received his architectural training at a firm in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In about 1900, his firm sent him to Cheyenne as the supervising architect for the construction of the Carnegie Library. Dubois soon established his own practice in Cheyenne and in 1904.

During a career in Cheyenne that spanned forty years, Dubois designed a wide range of residential, commercial, industrial, and public buildings in Cheyenne and across Wyoming. His buildings exhibited varied architectural styles and influences, such as Beaux Arts Classicism and Romanesque Revival. He proved his ability to master evolving styles through the decades; by the early 1940s, his buildings reflected the very latest in styles, such as Streamline (Art) Moderne. It is impossible to understate the impact of this architect on Cheyenne and Wyoming. His massive commercial buildings in the Cheyenne downtown historic district lent the young town its character of permanence and reliability, and as the decades passed, his ability to adapt to changes in architectural styles gave Cheyenne the appearance of modernity.

Almost every Cheyenne student in the early and middle years of the twentieth century passed through one of the many Dubois-designed public schools. His schools, as well as his other public and commercial buildings, reflect the evolving range of Dubois' architectural styles. The oldest remaining public school in Cheyenne is the Churchill School, designed by Dubois in 1911, a tall simplified building utilizing elements of the Foursquare style. Dubois also designed the Gibson Clark School in 1922, using a simple and clean

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version of Collegiate Gothic. He used a similar style in 1923 for Johnson Junior High School on the South Side. In 1940, Dubois designed his last public school, Corlett Elementary. By then, he was using elements of the Streamline Moderne architectural style, which he also applied in the early 1940s to the Eagles' Building and the Greyhound Bus Depot, both in Cheyenne.

During his prolific working life, Dubois was responsible for the design of many of the most important public buildings in Cheyenne, many of which are still standing. In addition to his many public schools, he designed extensions to the existing wings on the Wyoming State Capitol in 1915-1916. These additions reflected the original architectural style of the Capitol (French Renaissance), which was constructed in 1888. A fine example of Dubois' evolving style was represented by the nearby State Supreme Court Building, built in 1937. Considered one of Dubois' most interesting governmental buildings, it contained elements of the Neoclassical and Art Deco architectural styles.

Frederick H. Porter was born on July 9, 1890, in Salem, Massachusetts. Although his formal education did not continue past eighth grade, he did attend the Wentworth Institute, a technical institute in Boston. He also attended the Architectural Club Ateliers in Saint Louis and Boston. He practiced architecture from October 1906 to about 1965.

In 1906, "Bunk" Porter began an apprenticeship in the Denver Architect's Office. He came to Cheyenne in 1911 as an inspector for the construction of the Boyd Building (at that time the Citizen's National Bank). He returned to Massachusetts in 1914 to study at the Wentworth Institute in Boston. He won the American Traveling Scholarship in 1918 and traveled throughout Europe. He then returned to Cheyenne and established the architectural firm of Baerresen and Porter; within two years he had set up an independent practice. In 1944, he went into partnership with Walter Bradley, a collaboration that lasted until about 1954, when Bradley retired. In 1956, Porter went into partnership with his son, Fred Porter, Jr. and practiced as Porter and Porter. F.H. Porter retired in 1965. Porter was a strong believer in historic preservation and fought to preserve some of Cheyenne's best historic buildings.

For over forty years, Porter designed buildings that helped establish the tone of Cheyenne's architecture. His buildings included schools, churches, and public buildings. His first building in Cheyenne was the First Presbyterian Church (considered by him to be the "best job" he ever did), and the last was the O'Mahoney Federal Center. In between, he designed dozens of buildings throughout Wyoming and on the campus of the University of Wyoming in Laramie. He also designed several public schools around the state and in Cheyenne. Those included in this nomination (pre-dating 1954) were the Park Addition School, the Mabel Fincher School, and Deming Elementary School. In partnership with Bradley, he also designed Rossman and Hebard Elementary Schools, and the Storey Gymnasium.

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Porter's evolution of architectural styles is evident in his design of schools through the years. His first in Cheyenne was the Park Addition School, a simple one and one-half story side-gabled brick symmetrical building with a centered full-height advance pavilion. The style is unique among the remaining Cheyenne schools. Porter also designed the 1949 hipped-roofed addition to the building. His next school was a collaboration in 1929 with William Dubois in the design of McCormick Junior High School. In the 1940s, Porter's designs evolved to keep up with the "Modern" movement. In 1940 and 1945, Porter designed the Mable Fincher and Deming Elementary Schools, both of which featured Art Deco and International elements, with clean sweeping lines and simple detailing.

The Hebard School (1945) and Rossman School (1946), designed by the partnership of Porter and Bradley, also reflected the evolution of post-World War II architecture and featured Modern and International elements. Porter and Bradley's most recent building in the nomination is the Storey Gymnasium, built in 1950; although a much larger building than the above-mentioned schools, it also featured many similar Modern and International design elements.

Post-World War II

World War II and the resulting war buildup rescued the American economy and Cheyenne from the Great Depression. Fort D.A. Russell (renamed Fort Francis E. Warren) was chosen as the location of a Quartermaster Replacement Center, which had a tremendous positive impact on Cheyenne's economy. Although school construction was suspended during the war years, building resumed in the mid-1940s as Cheyenne's population continued to grow for a variety of reasons, including the proximity of F.E. Warren Air Force Base, the growth of the Cheyenne Airport, which was still on the transcontinental air route, and the establishment and expansion of the Frontier Oil Refinery on the South Side of Cheyenne. During the 1940s and 1950s, the student population of McCormick continued to rise, straining the ability of the existing facility to adequately house the increased numbers.

During the 1969-1970 school year at McCormick, a Fortieth Year Celebration was held, and former teachers, administrators, and board members were invited as special guests to an assembly and tea. At that time, United State Senator Gale McGee presented the school with an American flag that had flown over the nation's capitol.

At about this time, the fire marshal decided that the building was unsafe for the current student population, and plans were made for the construction of a new junior high school. While the new school was being built, over \$120,000 worth of repairs had to be made to the existing facility to allow students to continue

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to use it during the interim. As a result, students attended on a split shift. At the same time, the new senior high school was not yet finished on time due to cost overruns; so the following year, those students were divided between McCormick, the old Central High School, Gibson Clark School, and the Storey Gym. The 1974-75 school year was the last year of full operation of the school as a junior high. James A. Godfrey, the principal at McCormick, invited members of the Wyoming Legislature to visit the school during its session in Cheyenne emphasizing that it was a "very historic building." Jackie Lu Collins, the school librarian, also documented its historical importance in a separate letter addressed to the legislators and emphasized its significance as the first junior high school building in Wyoming. The building was then sold to the State of Wyoming for additional office space and is now known as the Emerson Building.

Although the building's function has changed, it remains as a landmark of beauty, community pride, and Cheyenne's early commitment to public education, most notably the junior high movement. It retains excellent integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling, association, setting, and location. Its strategic location in the heart of the city adjacent to other public buildings aids in maintaining community pride and spirit in both the building and the institution it once represented.

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Section 9. Major Bibliographical References

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