

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 04001548

Property Name: Commerce Block

County: Converse State: Wyoming

Multiple Name: N/A

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

 January 21, 2005
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 3: Certification

The SHPO's Certification is, hereby, amended to indicate that the documentation is a nomination and the property is eligible for National Register listing at the local level.

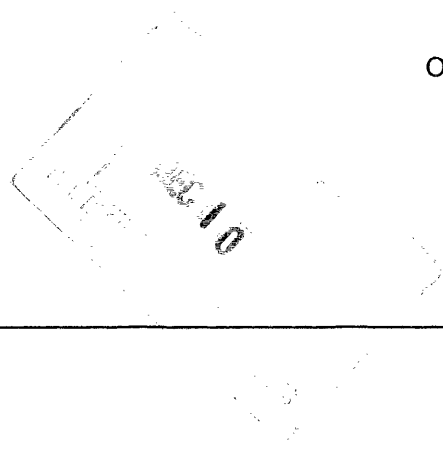
The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

**National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name: Commerce Block
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number: Fourth and Birch Street
city or town: Glenrock
state Wyoming code 56 county Converse code 009

not for publication ____
vicinity X
zip code 82701

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 Wisley _____ 11/23/04 _____
Signature of certifying official Date
State Historic Preservation Officer

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 McCullard 1/21/05

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>	_ buildings
-	_ sites
-	_ structures
-	_ objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> total

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

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE

Sub: Financial Institution

Specialty Store

Professional

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE

Sub: _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: OTHER

Sub: 20th Century Commercial

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: concrete

roof: wood: tar, roofing paper

walls: brick

other: N/A

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.: COMMERCE; ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION; COMMUNICATIONS

Period of Significance: 1917-1954

Significant Dates: 1917

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

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Edward A. Reavill

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: Town of Glenrock
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Rosenberg Historical Consultants _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>13</u>	<u>428814</u>	<u>4745557</u>

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

W. 50' Lots 21-24; all of Lots 19-20, Block 14, Original Town of Glenrock

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

The boundary is defined by the legal boundary of the lots that the building occupies and includes sidewalks and curbs.

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 zip code: 82009

Date: 7/21/04
telephone: (307) 632-1144

Property Owner(s)

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

Name: Town of Glenrock
street & number: P.O. Box 417
city or town: Glenrock
state: WY zip code: 82637
telephone: (307) 436-5729

Name: Glenrock Lodge No. 22 (Masonic Lodge)
street and number: P.O. Box 1557
city or town: Glenrock
state: WY zip code: 82637
telephone: unknown

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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**COMMERCE BLOCK
CONVERSE COUNTY, WYOMING**

7. Description

The Commerce Block is located at the southeast corner of Birch Street and Fourth Street in downtown Glenrock, Wyoming. It is a two-story, dark red brick commercial building with a flat roof, built in an L-shaped configuration. Its most distinctive feature is its regularly-spaced rows of brick pilasters capped with cream-colored terra cotta that divide the west and north finished sides of the building. The building occupies a corner lot and finished facades face both Birch Street and Fourth Street. The east and south sides of the building are unadorned plain tan-colored brick walls or brick covered with stucco. The building was constructed by Edward A. Reavill, who was an established building contractor in nearby Douglas; he was not an architect.

The overall dimensions of the building are 50' E-W (north facade) by 142' N-S (west facade) by 123' E-W (south side) by 42' N-S (east wall of theater portion). The theater component of the building extends to the east creating the current L-shaped configuration. A bar occupies the retail space adjacent to the property on the east along Birch Street, and an outdoor beer garden to the south fills the space created by the L-shaped historic building. Fourth Street slants downhill from south to north, and the building site has a similar slant. The building is currently vacant except for that portion owned by the Glenrock Masonic Temple on Lots 19 and 20 of Block 14, Original Town of Glenrock. There is a small novelty store currently occupying the southwest corner of the building, and the old Empress Theater portion is used by the Glenrock Masonic Lodge No. 22 for storage.

The north side of the building is divided into three major segments by four brick pilasters with cream-colored terra cotta capitals. The base of the pilasters consist of a gray granite-like stone. The original north facade featured display windows with clerestory occupying the east and west segments. The clerestory area is now covered with vertical wood siding, and the display windows have been replaced with two-light fixed units with wooden sash. The central segment contains a centered recessed entrance to the second story delineated by a brick pilaster on each side with a granite base and brick surround soldier courses with a cream-colored terra cotta square set at each end of the brick lintel. This entrance was originally flanked on the east and west by entrances to the two first floor businesses. The east entrance remains, but the west entrance was modified into a display window with clerestory. A recessed corner canted entrance was constructed in 1939 behind the most western pilaster, which then became free standing. The second story entrance and east entrance retain their original or early doors with transom. The second story windows are set in recessed surrounds with terra cotta sills. The east and west recessed surrounds contain a single one over one-light double-hung window with wooden sash; the central recessed surround contains two similar windows. The upper portion of the brick pilasters and the area above the recessed window surrounds contains intricate pendent designs using a combination of red and black brick. The cornice consists of cream-colored terra cotta tile. The stepped brick parapet is capped with white stone, and a segmental pediment is centered above the parapet wall bearing the name "The Commerce Block." The sign is outlined with white stone capping.

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**COMMERCE BLOCK
CONVERSE COUNTY, WYOMING**

The west side of the building or long elevation continues the pattern of brick pilasters with terra cotta caps and granite bases that divide this side into eleven segments. There were originally two entrances to the second story that were identical to the north second story entrance. These remain intact, but the entrances have been altered, the northernmost filled in with vertical wood siding. The door in the southern entrance has also been altered but still provides access to the second floor. Most of the former display windows have been altered, and clerestory areas have also been filled in with vertical wood siding. There are two remaining recessed entrances typical of single storefronts with flanking display windows. The first is located immediately south of the north second story entrance; the second is located near the south end of the building beneath a metal theater marquee. A third recessed entrance between the two has been somewhat modified and now has twin-leaf doors with a hasp lock. There are modified display windows on either side of the door, and vertical wood siding has been used to fill the intervening areas. It appears that some of the terra cotta capped brick pilasters have been modified in the area around the center of the west side. The theme of the second story entrances is reflected in the windows in the second story. A single second story window is placed above each entrance and set in a spandrel of recessed brick with a segmental arch and stone lintel. The remaining second story windows continue the theme of the north side with recessed surrounds. The pattern of decorative brick pendants is also continued on the west side below the cream-colored terra cotta cornice. Brick parapets capped with white stone with accents are centered above the street level second story entrances. Finally, there is an identical segmental pediment topping the parapet wall bearing the name of the building.

The interior of the building is in various stages of disrepair and renovation. The space formerly occupied by the Bank of Glenrock retains the original oak mezzanine with stairway and balustrade, which continues across the mezzanine level. The floor of the bank is finished in terrazzo tile. The walls and ceiling originally consisted of a plaster and lathe finish. Portions of both have been dry walled, but the finish has not been applied. Portions of the original wood trim and moldings as well as steam registers remain in place, especially in the south end of the bank. Restrooms are located under the stairs to the mezzanine.

The interior of the eastern front component (the former drug store) features an intact pressed metal ceiling and terrazzo tile floor. The interior retains most of the original dark wood trim and molding. The main entrance retains the original panel door and transom. There are three original globe light fixtures suspended from the ceiling. The walls are plaster lathe.

The business space directly south of the bank on the west side of the building consists of plaster lathe walls and a badly deteriorated wood floor. The east wall of this component consists of exposed brick. Ceiling materials have been removed, exposing the joists for the second floor. The original recessed entrance remains intact with display windows and door, and there is a steam radiator under one of them.

The interior of the old Empress Theater retains the original balcony and stage area, but all audience seats have been removed. The area is currently used for storage and is filled with a variety of items that make it difficult to see interior details.

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The interior of the second floor of the Commerce Block is currently unfinished and consists mainly of stud wall partitions. Evidence of the fire in the 1970s can still be seen on charred studs.

The basement of the Commerce Block has poured concrete walls and floor. The foundation is in fair condition, and the basement space is clean and free of debris. The space under the bank and drugstore portion of the building is separated from the remainder of the basement by a solid concrete wall. The basement retains a furnace unit for the steam heat.

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**COMMERCE BLOCK
CONVERSE COUNTY, WYOMING**

8. Significance

The Commerce Block is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. It is a key element of the commercial district of Glenrock, and it represents the economic growth of that community in the early twentieth century. The building was constructed in 1917 during the oil boom of the late 1910s and early 1920s, which was brought about by the discovery and development of the nearby Big Muddy Oil Field and the subsequent construction of two major refineries west of town. The oil industry created jobs for hundreds of employees and related service industries and provided a steady payroll, much of which was injected into the Glenrock economy. The building is not architect-designed, but rather represents an example of manufactured architecture; the building contractor, Edward Reavill, probably relied on a standard plan and mass-produced construction materials. As such, it is a fine example of early twentieth century commercial architecture with several notable architectural embellishments, including regularly-spaced brick pilasters with terra cotta capitals and gray granite-like bases, and a stepped brick parapet with two distinctive segmental pediments on the north and west sides bearing the name of the building. Due to its size and corner location, the Commerce Block is the pre-eminent component of the remaining commercial district of Glenrock.

Early Emigration and Transportation

The site of the town of Glenrock is strategically located near the confluence of Deer Creek and the North Platte River in east-central Wyoming. The main route of the Oregon Trail, used by hundreds of thousands of westbound emigrants from 1843-1869, stayed on the south side of the river and thus passed through the future site of Glenrock. Brigham Young and the first group of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) migrating to the Great Salt Lake Valley camped at Deer Creek on June 10, 1847. He was impressed with the area for its water, forage and groves of timber, and considered it an ideal camping site for future parties. The Mormons soon established way stations along the route to serve the needs of travelers. In 1853, a group of Mormon farmers settled along Deer Creek and raised vegetables for use of the travelers on their way to Utah. The Mormons also operated a ferry over the North Platte River near Deer Creek. Captain Howard Stansbury of the Corps of Topographical Engineers passed here on July 25, 1849, and described the crossing:

A distance of five miles up the Platte, over a sandy soil, brought us to Deer Creek, a bright, clear stream, running pleasantly through a large grove of timber, principally cottonwood. Judging from appearances, this spot has been a favorite camp-ground for the emigrants. Property of every description was strewn about in all directions, and in much greater quantities than we had yet seen. Just above the mouth of the stream, there was a ferry over the North Fork of the Platte, at which I determined to cross the train. The means employed for this purpose were of the rudest and simplest kind. The ferry-boat was constructed of seven canoes, dug out from cottonwood logs, fastened side by side with poles, a couple of hewn logs being secured across their tops, upon which the wheels of the wagons rested. This rude raft was

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drawn back and forth by means of a rope stretched across the river, and secured at the ends of either bank...The charge for ferriage was two dollars for each wagon.

Horn's Overland Guide written in 1852 noted the ferry at this location, but advised emigrants not to cross the North Platte there. In 1851, John Baptiste Richard's bridge was built of logs over the North Platte River near Deer Creek. He charged the emigrants a toll for crossing, but the bridge washed out in 1852 or 1853. He then moved upstream to the site of present-day Evansville and constructed a more substantial bridge there in 1853. In 1856, Hiram Kimball bid successfully for the United States mail contract between Salt Lake City and Independence, Missouri, for four years. Kimball transferred the contract to the newly organized Brigham Young Express and Carrying Company (known as the Y.X. Company). Young intended to also carry passengers and freight using the facilities of the mail system.

Deer Creek became one of the stations in this system. By July 1857, seven men were building a 320-square foot fort, a 150-square foot corral, and digging irrigation ditches and planting crops. At that time there were 76 horses and 123 head of cattle at the station. However, the fort was never finished because the Federal Government first canceled the mail contract, and then Col. Albert Sidney Johnson led a force of federal troops against the Mormons. The Mormon contingent at Deer Creek fled to Utah for safety.

Thomas Twiss, the Indian agent at Fort Laramie, moved his headquarters for the Upper Platte River Agency into the abandoned buildings at Deer Creek. He remained at the location until he was removed from the post by President Lincoln in 1861. Joseph Bissonette established a trading post at the crossing in 1857 that consisted of a store and blacksmith shop, and by 1859 he received a commission as postmaster. Bissonette remained at the site until his stock was raided by the Sioux in the fall of 1865. He was then forced to move to Fort Laramie for protection. From 1859 to 1864, the Iowa Synod of the German Lutheran Church of Saint Sebold conducted a mission at Deer Creek, attempting to establish Christianity among the Crow Indians. The group consisted of only four missionaries, one of whom was killed. The Indian uprisings of the 1860s finally closed the settlement.

In 1860, the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company established a Pony Express and stage station at Deer Creek. In 1861, the transcontinental telegraph was built along the route of the Oregon Trail and replaced the short-lived Pony Express. Deer Creek then became a garrisoned telegraph station. By 1862, a military post named Deer Creek Station was established at the site on the west side of Deer Creek. A plan drawn by Caspar Collins in 1863 depicts a rectangular corral with a stable on the east side and seven small rooms on the north side that housed a telegraph office, and various military quarters and offices. A detached mess room, kitchen, and blacksmith shop were located nearby to the east. On the north side of the Oregon Trail, there was an additional corral and barracks. Due to increasing Indian problems along the Oregon Trail, the route was moved south to the Overland Trail in 1862, and the telegraph followed by 1864.

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From 1863 to 1867, the Bozeman Trail to the Montana goldfields branched off from the Oregon Trail at Deer Creek. The departure point remained there until Fort Fetterman (northwest of today's Douglas) was built in 1867. John M. Bozeman stopped at Deer Creek in 1863 before blazing the trail. In 1864, 300 wagons gathered at Deer Creek before moving north on the new trail. Deer Creek Station was abandoned shortly after the Indian attack at Platte Bridge Station on July 26, 1865. With no one occupying any of the buildings, the Indians burned them to the ground on August 18, 1866.

In 1869, the government contracted for hay and wood for the newly built Fort Fetterman. Mr. Renshaw, who lived in the Deer Creek area, received the contract and used the site of the old Deer Creek Station as the center for these activities. Renshaw's Sioux Indian mother also ran a trading post at Deer Creek. Renshaw and a partner grazed a herd of cattle there in 1871. However, after killing a soldier at Fort Fetterman, Renshaw fled the area. The Indians frequently attacked the wood gatherers and hayers in the vicinity of Deer Creek, and the outpost fell into disuse. In the early 1880s, the area became part of the VR, Seymour, and Lockett ranches.

Early Coal Mining

In the 1880s, William Nuttall discovered coal in the area, and the village of Nuttall grew up around the mining activity. The Glenrock Coal Mine was established in about 1883 by the Deer Creek Coal Company, and was located on the east bank of Deer Creek, just outside present-day Glenrock. The vein of coal ranged from five to six and one-half feet in thickness and was described as "...an excellent lignite...free from any foreign matter." The coal was marketed along the line of the railroad "...for steaming and domestic purposes." By 1898, the mine was operated by the Glenrock Coal Company with John McNeil as manager. The company employed a crew of 65 men, and the mine had a capacity of 300 tons per day. Coal was mined using cutting machines powered by compressed air, which undercut the coal. The miners then broke the coal down with picks. Mules were used to haul the cars underground, then the loaded cars were brought to the surface by means of cable and winch. The Glenrock Mine reached more than 200 feet underground with 4200 feet of development. As it approached the North Platte River, the mine had to be pumped continuously, adding to expense.

By 1909 the Glenrock Mine was on the wane. As described by the State Coal Mine Inspector in 1909, "This is a very old mine and is about worked out." The 1910 report stated that the oldest mine in Converse County "...has closed down for good."

Early Railroading and the Birth of Glenrock

The Fremont, Elkhorn, and Missouri Valley Railway (FE&MV) gradually expanded its lines across central Nebraska in the 1870s. After gold was discovered in the Black Hills and the strikes proved of lasting significance, the FE&MV built into the region in 1886. That same year, the Wyoming Central Railway was

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organized in Wyoming Territory in order to "extend its railroad westward along the valley of the North Platte and Sweetwater through the counties of Albany, Carbon, Sweetwater, and Uinta and thence to the eastern boundary of Utah Territory..." Railroad officials stated that the new line would be built west to connect with the Central Pacific Railroad at Corinne, Utah, to create a transcontinental route to the Pacific.

The Chicago and North Western Railway Company led the railroad expansion into Wyoming. The FE&MV and its subsidiary, the Wyoming Central, were actually "leased lines" of the Chicago and North Western; in 1902, the lines were officially merged. The Chicago and North Western envisioned building a transcontinental route by connecting with existing western lines, such as the Oregon Pacific Railroad. As a result, the competing railroads built through long stretches of generally unsettled land, luring emigrants to the region and creating towns along the line to make the operation profitable. Some coal deposits were known to exist along the new Chicago and North Western line in Wyoming Territory, such as at Glenrock, and others were found during extensive surveys of the line, including the Lost Spring coal field.

The new line branched off from the existing line at Chadron, Nebraska, and ran seventy-seven miles west to the site of Douglas, Wyoming. Tracks reached Wyoming Territory in late June 1886. Railroad officials decided to make Douglas the "end of tracks" for that year and laid out the town in June 1886 ahead of the arrival of the tracks.

The Chicago and North Western continued to extend its lines westward along the North Platte River Valley, the most favorable route from an engineering standpoint as well as for future settlement and exploitation of the region. In 1887, the Wyoming Central expanded westward from Douglas up the North Platte River Valley for a distance of twenty-nine miles to Deer Creek, and the new town of Glenrock was established. A large sandstone rock, known as Rock in the Glen, was near the railroad station at Deer Creek. The depot across from the Rock in the Glen became known as Glen Rock, which soon became the name of the town. The following year, the Wyoming Central built an additional 24.7 miles of track up the North Platte to the site of Casper. Casper remained the terminal town until the tracks were pushed westward to Lander in 1906.

The arrival of the railroad brought an influx of settlers who soon pushed for the creation of a new county with a more conveniently located county seat. The area was then part of Laramie and Albany Counties, which extended the length of Wyoming from north to south and required locals to conduct legal business in distant Cheyenne or Laramie. On March 10, 1888, Converse County was carved out of the two counties and also included what is now Niobrara County. Glenrock was too small to seriously contend for the county seat, and the two chief contenders were Lusk and Douglas. The latter won out in the election by 1,000 votes.

Big Muddy Oil Field

The establishment of the Big Muddy Oil Field was the chief impetus to the growth of the town of Glenrock in the early twentieth century. It was located in the north half of Township 33 North-Range 76 West,

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along the south bank of the North Platte River about four miles west of Glenrock. In 1913, V.H. Barnett of the U.S. Geological Survey conducted a field investigation of an area between Casper and Glenrock on both sides of the North Platte River. Barnett concluded that "...the most favorable place for oil in this area, and in the judgement of the writer the most favorable place within fifty miles of Douglas, is in the flat south of the North Western Railway between Glenrock and Big Muddy Creek." He believed that the oil would be found in the Wall Creek sandstone, the chief oil sand in the Salt Creek Field, at a depth of about 2,500 feet. This is precisely where the Big Muddy Oil Field was subsequently located, and the Wall Creek sandstone did prove productive.

The Big Muddy Oil Field was discovered in 1916, when the Continental Oil Company completed a well on the Jones Lease in the NE/NE Section 9, T33N-R76W, which initially produced about 26 barrels of oil per day from the Shannon Sand. Other wells were completed in the same formation and produced an average of 35 barrels of "green" oil daily. In 1917, the Continental Oil Company completed a well located on the Whiteside 2 Lease in the NW/SE Section 7 into the deeper Wall Creek sands that initially produced 128 barrels of oil daily. In 1922, oil was discovered in a well drilled into the Dakota sand, and in 1931 a well located in the NE/NE Section 9 was drilled into the Lakota sand, which produced 405 barrels of oil per day.

The pioneer locators in the Big Muddy Field were Parker and Whiteside and A.E. Humphreys. In 1917, A.E. Humphreys assigned his interest to the Merritt Oil Corporation, which operated in conjunction with Midwest Refining Company until the end of 1922. The Mutual Oil Company subsequently acquired the interests of the Merritt Oil Corporation and in 1917, built a refinery on the west edge of Glenrock to process the Big Muddy oil. The Continental Oil Company acquired the Mutual Oil Company interests in the field and refinery in the mid-1920s. A short time after the first refinery was built, the Midwest Refining Company (Standard Oil of Indiana) built a second refinery at Glenrock to serve the Big Muddy Oil Field. An oil pipeline was constructed to connect the field to the refineries. By 1937, the Continental Refinery employed 93 men with a payroll of \$172,500. It processed 1,000,000 barrels of crude oil a year producing gasoline, kerosene, fuel oil, and also maintained a tank car department that reconditioned railroad tank cars. Crude oil was stored in the Clayton tank farm located on the north side of the North Platte River and operated by the Sinclair Pipe Line Company. The oil town of Parkerton was established about five miles west of Glenrock in the Big Muddy Oil Field to house and serve the large work force. Parkerton boasted a large brick school and gymnasium, but by World War II, Parkerton had been abandoned, the school torn down and moved to Glenrock. Muddy Camp and Lambs Camp also housed a large number of oil field workers in the Big Muddy Field. By the mid-1920s, the three principal companies operating in the Big Muddy Field were the Continental Oil Company, the Ohio Oil Company, and the Texas Company.

About 529 wells were drilled on and near the Big Muddy oil structure, of which 306 either were dry or had been abandoned by 1957. Wells drilled into the Wall Creek sands also produced some gas along with the oil. By December 15, 1957, the 142 wells in the field produced about 675 barrels daily from the Wall Creek sands and 48 produced 224 barrels of oil per day from the Dakota sand. Nearly all of the development in the Big Muddy Field since 1938 has been from the Dakota and Lakota sands. However, the Lakota sands

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produced more water than oil, so most of the wells were drilled in the Dakota sands. In 1935 a gas-injection program was started in the Second Wall Creek sand, but it proved too costly to maintain. In 1953 a water injection program was started, using three injection wells in the Second Wall Creek sand with water from two Lakota-sand oil wells. This program proved successful and was expanded. By 1958, there were 38 injection wells in the field. The total production from the Big Muddy field to 1957 was 37,574,833 barrels of oil and an estimated 549 million cubic feet of gas. Most of the natural gas from the field was used in the further development and production of oil in the field. Oil was piped five miles to the Continental and Standard Oil Refineries at Glenrock to the east or to the refineries at Casper to the west. By January 1, 1957, the Big Muddy Field ranked tenth among the nearly 170 fields in the State of Wyoming. The Standard Refinery was shut down in the late 1940s and the Continental Oil Refinery was closed in the mid-1950s.

The Growth of Glenrock and the Commerce Block

Although Glenrock was established in 1887 when the railroad arrived, the town was not incorporated until 1909. It maintained a steady but small population of slightly over 400 people when the coal mines were still productive, but the population fell to only 220 by 1915. The discovery of oil in the big Muddy Field, followed by the construction of two major refineries nearby, brought boom times to Glenrock in the late 1910s and early 1920s. By 1930, the population had swelled to 819. Most of the commercial district of Glenrock was constructed during this time, including the IOOF Building, the Commerce Block, the Lincoln Building, the Higgins Hotel, and the Baptist, Catholic, and Episcopal churches. Most of the fine residences were also built during this time. The Arnold's and Jones Additions to the Original Town were located north of the railroad tracks, and the Higgins Addition on the south side of the original town. The first electric plant and sewer system for the town were constructed in 1918. Glenrock was also located on the Yellowstone Highway that connected Denver, Colorado, and Rocky Mountain National Park to Yellowstone National Park.

During the initial oil boom, the Glenrock Investment Company was organized by several prominent businessmen. Their goal was to construct a large two-story brick commercial building at the southeast corner of Fourth and Birch Street (then Main Street) costing an estimated \$50,000. The officers of the company were President, J.E. Higgins; vice president, Irby Lam; secretary, O.A. Patzold; and treasurer, Charles H. Armour. The directors were composed of the same men but also included J.R. Slaughter, Stuart Anderson and B.A. Smyth. The *Glenrock Derrick* described the endeavor in its May 1917 issue:

The structure will be of brick, two stories high, fronting fifty feet on Main Street and 150 feet on Fourth Street. The Glenrock State Bank will have a beautiful new banking house in the corner room, and Floyd Jones will occupy the other Main Street room with his drug store. On the Fourth Street side there will be four more spacious and attractive store rooms; while the second floor will be devoted to offices and a large hall. The company already has tenants for the greater part of the building and doubtless all the space will be contracted for long before it is ready for occupancy.

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According to the Glenrock City Council Minutes for May 7, 1917, "Mr. Ed Reavill addressed the Council concerning the building of the new business block on the corner of Fourth and Main Streets and asked permission to move the old buildings in the street while the new one was being constructed. He also asked permission to use the dirt from the excavating to fill in the streets where needed." Construction of the building commenced in mid-May 1917, and it was finished for occupancy by January 1918. Edward R. Reavill, the builder, was a Douglas contractor. Reavill had also constructed the Higgins Hotel in 1916. He had moved from Cheyenne to Douglas in about 1906. He was not an architect, but advertised as a contractor, builder, painter and paperhanger. Little is known about Reavill's professional career as a builder. He remained in business in Douglas at least until 1920, and according to an article in the *Douglas Enterprise* dated July 29, 1941, he died on May 23, 1941, while visiting his daughter in Kansas City.

The Glenrock State Bank was the driving force behind the construction of the Commerce Block. The bank was incorporated on May 22, 1907, with a capital stock of \$15,000 divided into 150 shares of \$100 each. The principal shareholders were Thomas A. Cosgriff and George E. Abbott of Cheyenne, Wyoming; and John E. Higgins, J.A. Patzold, J.R. Slaughter, D.J. Smythe, Charles J. Smith, Irby Lam, Stuart Anderson, Joseph D. Sumner, and George D. McDonald, all residing in Glenrock. The Board of Directors consisted of Thomas A. Cosgriff, John E. Higgins, O.A. Patzold, J.R. Slaughter, and D.J. Smythe. On March 2, 1918, a special stockholders meeting was held and the capital stock of the Glenrock State Bank was increased to \$30,000. At that time, John E. Higgins was chairman and Charles H. Armour was secretary of the Board of Directors. By 1919 J.E. Higgins was the president, Joseph R. Slaughter, vice president; F.O. Carson, cashier; and R.R. Gardner, assistant cashier. The bank had assets of nearly \$500,000. Its only local competitor was the Bank of Glenrock, but it remained the larger of the two institutions.

John E. Higgins, was born in Wisconsin on October 21, 1857, to a family of Irish emigrants. After working in the forests of Minnesota and Wisconsin, he came west in 1880 and contracted to cut ties for the railroad in Livingston, Montana. In 1886, he moved to Nuttal, a coal camp across Deer Creek from the site of Glenrock, and entered the merchandising business. After Glenrock was founded in 1887, Higgins moved his mercantile store to the new townsite. Higgins also entered the sheep and cattle business in the 1880s and was a partner in the Glenrock Sheep Company with Stuart M. Anderson and Dr. and Mrs. Jay Smith. The sheep operation was headquartered two to three miles west of Glenrock on the North Platte River, and he also owned the Dry Creek Ranch located between Lower Boxelder and Deer Creek, and the GR Ranch on Willow and Duck Creeks. In 1897, Higgins was also the senior member of the firm of Higgins and McGrath, which operated out of Thermopolis, Wyoming. In 1885, he married Josephine Williams, a daughter of Lander businessman Eugene Amoretti.

In addition to serving as president of the Glenrock State Bank, Higgins also served as Converse County Commissioner for eight years and two terms as a state legislator from Converse County. Higgins built the Higgins Hotel in 1916 (currently enrolled on the National Register of Historic Places). He died of natural causes on June 24, 1926, at his quarters in the Higgins Hotel. He remained president of the Glenrock State Bank until his death, when he was succeeded by Stuart M. Anderson, one of his sheep ranching business partners.

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**COMMERCE BLOCK
CONVERSE COUNTY, WYOMING**

Joseph R. Slaughter, another founding member of the Glenrock State Bank, was born in Ohio in 1860, but grew up in Colorado. When he was eighteen he came to Wyoming and worked as a cowboy with some of the large cattle outfits. In 1891 or 1892 he homesteaded on the Lower VR Ranch. He was an acquaintance of John Higgins through their common sheep ranching enterprises. Slaughter organized the Slaughter Patzold Sheep Company located north of Glenrock on the 55 Ranch. He built a house on Main Street, the first residence to have hot water heat. He remained a life-long citizen of Glenrock except for a short two-year stay in California where he operated a grocery store. He was a member of the Glenrock Lodge of the Masons and served as master in 1907. Slaughter remained an officer of the Glenrock State Bank through the early 1920s. He died in Douglas in 1948.

The "bank on the corner," Glenrock's oldest institution, served Glenrock until July 5, 1934, when it merged with the Casper National Bank. According to the local newspaper, the merger was the result of a reduced volume of business brought about by the decline of the Big Muddy Oil Field and the onset of the Great Depression. The bank had not shown a profit for many years. Under the merger and liquidation, every depositor was guaranteed a one hundred percent refund, and all remaining business accounts were transferred to the Casper facility. As a result of the merger and liquidation, Glenrock was left without a banking facility. At the time of the merger, Stuart M. Anderson was president and director, F.O. Carson, vice president, cashier, and director. Other directors included J.C. Underwood, R.R. Berryman, Fred D Grant, Darrel J. Smith, David J. Smyth, George D. McDonald, and Kirby L. Payton.

In 1935, Bert's Bar, owned by Bert Martin, filled the empty bank quarters in the Commerce Block. Advertised as "Meet Your Friends at Bert's," the business offered fine liquors, wine, beer, tobacco, soft drinks, candy and gum, and a billiard parlor. Martin remodeled the interior and offered ice cold beer from a Zahm Dispenser and cooler.

Floyd Jones' drugstore originally occupied the remaining storefront on Main Street (east of the bank). Jones already had a drug store at that location and temporarily "moved out into Fourth Street" during construction. In addition to drugs, Jones also carried a wide range of goods including toys, cigars, pipes, cut glass, dolls, candy, and cameras. By 1922, Jones advertised the inclusion of a "sanitary soda fountain." Jones was involved in local politics. He served as mayor of Glenrock and was on the city council in the late 1910s and early 1920s. He also was involved in real estate, selling lots in the Jones Addition to Glenrock. In 1927, Jones contemplated moving his drug store to the D.J. Smyth Building to expand his operation in larger facilities. However, he ultimately decided to stay at his old location and leased the Smyth Building to Lindsey and Company's Golden Rule chain of department stores. The J.C. Penney's chain took over the Golden Rule store in 1929, but soon decided to close because of its bigger store already in operation nearby Casper. In July 1930, Jones finally decided to move from the Commerce Block to the Smyth corner at Fourth and Yellowstone, formerly occupied by J.C. Penney, which he still owned. At that time, Frank J. Morgan moved his confectionary store from the west side of the Commerce Block into the space left vacant by Jones. Morgan had been in business since about 1927, and sold a variety of goods including ice cream and candy, cigars,

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and school supplies; he also operated a small lending library. Morgan remained at this location in the business section of Glenrock until moving to the IOOF Building in September 1940.

In the late 1910s and early 1920s, the McDougall-Johnson Company operated The Men's Store in one of the storefronts on the west side of the Commerce Block. In December 1921, J.V. Johnson took over sole ownership of the business, selling men's clothing under the name of Vic J. Johnson. He remained at this location through 1924.

In February 1933, George Barber's Pool Hall, located for about one year in the Commerce Block, exchanged locations with Bowman's Drugs in the R.W. Mulvihill Building. R.H. Bowman came to Glenrock in 1919 from Stuart, Iowa. He established a drug and jewelry store in about 1922. After the exchange, Bowman's probably occupied the next business south of the bank on the west side of the Commerce Block. The business remained at that location until Bowman died on January 9, 1936. His business was sold by his widow to Dart Drugs, managed by Carlin Smith. Before managing Dart Drugs, Smith had been employed as a registered pharmacist at the Casper Pharmacy. The store featured a new fountain, jewelry repair, and film developing. By 1939, Dart Drugs was called the Carlin Pharmacy and occupied the old bank corner location. In July of that year, Chris Kennaugh, builder, constructed a corner entrance for the business, closing the existing doorway. The Commerce Block still retains that corner entrance. When Morgan's Drug Store moved to the IOOF Building in 1940, Carlin's Pharmacy expanded into the vacated space. Carlin's Pharmacy continued to operate under that name into the mid-1950s.

Joseph L. Cavanaugh's Bi-Rite Commissary Grocery occupied the next business south on the west side starting in ca. 1943-44 and remained there through the mid-1950s.

The *Glenrock Gazette* began publishing in Glenrock in 1918 with Guy J. Saxton as editor and publisher. Business directories list George F. Williams as the publisher by 1920. In 1925, George Nelson replaced Williams. By 1926, the directories list the *Glenrock Independent* with Guy J. Saxton as editor and publisher, although another source states that the *Independent* began publishing in Glenrock as early as 1922. By 1931, Saxton's wife, Mina was listed as the publisher, followed by W.B. Dobson in 1932, D.L. McDermott by 1937, and A.L. Davis in 1939-40. On June 27, 1936, the *Independent* plant burned. The paper then moved to the Clayton or Dr. Holmes Building, one block north of the Commerce Block. Nerwin O. Reed, Davis' nephew, and his wife came to Glenrock from Fort Lupton, Colorado, in September 1939, and soon took over operation of the *Glenrock Independent*. At that time the paper was located two doors east of the Commerce Block. In October 1943, it moved to the west side of the Commerce Block. It occupied the third business to the south until December 1955, when Reed rebuilt on the location of the building that had burned in 1936 at 207 South Fourth Street, across the street or west of the Commerce Block. Mr. Reed continued to operate the newspaper into the 1990s. Randy Stocker and partner Jana Reed Tyler, N.O. Reed's daughter, currently operate the weekly newspaper.

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**COMMERCE BLOCK
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Another constant occupant in the Commerce Block was the Empress Theater. It occupied a large two-story east wing that is depicted on the 1918 Sanborn Fire Insurance map. The facilities consisted of a large auditorium, balcony, and a raised stage. Large doors at the back of the stage were used for loading and unloading props and other equipment for traveling stage productions. In 1918, John O'Rourke was the proprietor and George N. Toby the manager. By 1920, E.A. Gross was the proprietor, a position he held until June 1925, when he sold out to local businessman Will Woods. Gross moved to Oregon and opened another theater there. Woods sold the theater to Fenton J. Lee and H.C. Morehouse of Hot Springs, South Dakota, in less than a month. The men were already experienced in the business, having run a movie theater there. The Empress Theater was also used for church and school functions as well as other organizations in town, and served as a polling place in the late 1930s, and therefore was a critical social component of the community.

In the late 1920s, the Empress Theater began to feel the effects of the Great Depression and the decline of the Big Muddy Oil Field. It closed for several weeks in March, but when William Leetch took over as manager, he showed films three days a week to audiences that at first rivaled the standing-room-only crowds of the oil boom days. Leetch installed Vitaphone equipment to enable him to show the early "talkies." Admission for regular films was forty cents for adults and ten cents for children. When talkies were shown, the prices were raised to fifty cents and twenty-five cents respectively. Nevertheless, the Empress closed again in October and was purchased a short time later by J.C. Palmer and Sons of Gering, Nebraska, also experienced in the movie business. Even the Palmers couldn't make a go of it, and the Empress closed for nearly a year until it was purchased by a Mr. Lind from Denver, Colorado, who redecorated the inside of the building, but he, too, was unsuccessful. The Empress stood vacant until late 1934, when it reopened under the ownership of Ross Lambert and Farris Jones of Bridgeport, Nebraska. The partners spent \$1500 renovating the interior and opened on February 7th with shows at 7:15 and 9:15 each night. Rates had fallen to thirty cents for adults and ten cents for children, twenty-five cents for balcony seats. After Labart and his partner got the business on an even footing, they returned to Nebraska, and Carl Jung managed the business. The Empress remained in operation under his management throughout the 1930s and 1940s. In August 1939, the Empress was renamed the Wyoma Theater and received a new neon sign. It was still managed by Carl Jung. By 1950, the Wyoma Theater was owned by Wesco Theatres, Inc. under the management of Nerwin O. Reed, the newspaper publisher. By 1955, Carlin Smith, the druggist, managed the theater.

The second floor of the Commerce Block was occupied by professional offices and a large community hall. The Commerce Hall held regular dances and social affairs throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Several doctors, dentists, and lawyers occupied suites in the late 1910s and 1920s, including Dr. A.L. Fouck, dentist, Dr. Herbert L. Harvey, M.D., Dr. A.B. Phillips, M.D., Dr. Leonard Tabor, Dr. B.V. McDermott, Roy M. Lockenour, lawyer, and C. Leonard Smith, Lawyer. The Higgins Realty Company with C.L. Olmstead as agent also maintained second floor offices. In the early 1920s, this company sold lots for ten to fifty dollars in the Higgins Addition to Glenrock.

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**COMMERCE BLOCK
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In later years, the commercial businesses gradually left the building, and it was used as an apartment rental facility. However, in early 1978, a fire broke out on the second floor due to a defective hot water heater. The resulting fire and water damage caused the residents to vacate the building. The Commerce Block has stood vacant since that time, although a small gift store currently occupies a space at the south end of the west side on the first floor, and the space in the old theater portion is leased out for storage by the Masons.

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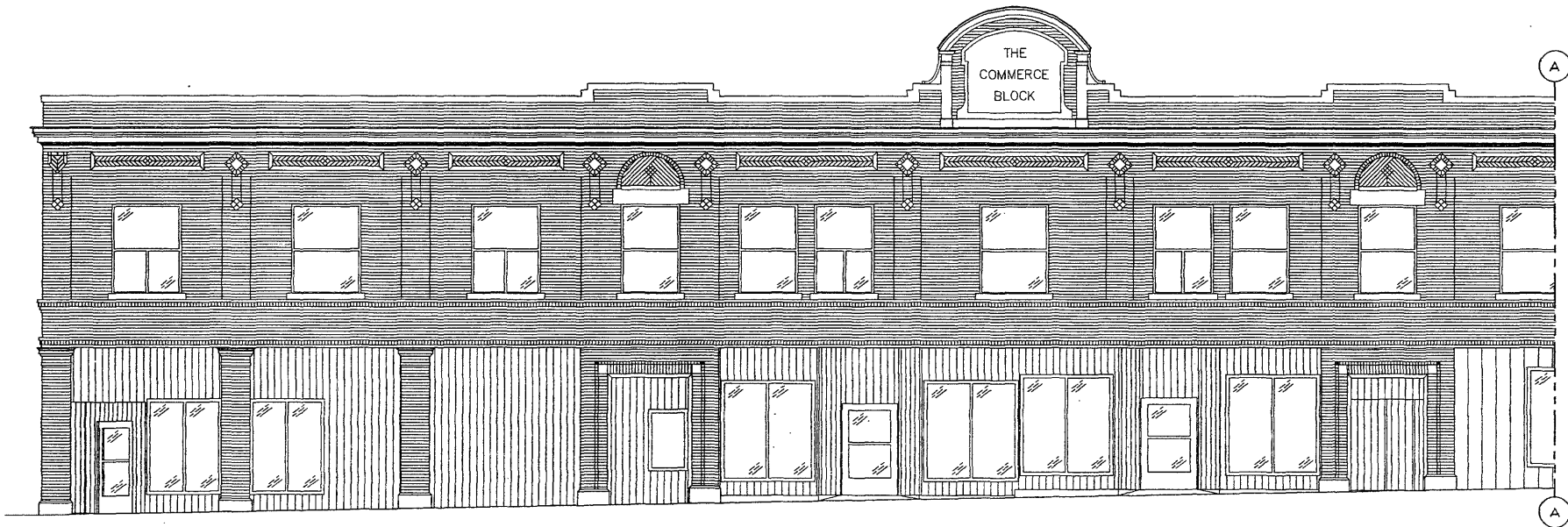
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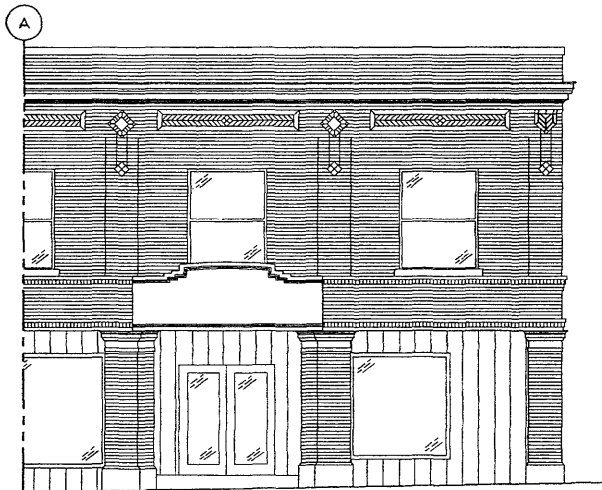
Glenrock Derrrick, Glenrock, Wyoming, May 1917.

Glenrock Gazette, Glenrock, Wyoming, March 1916 to 1924.

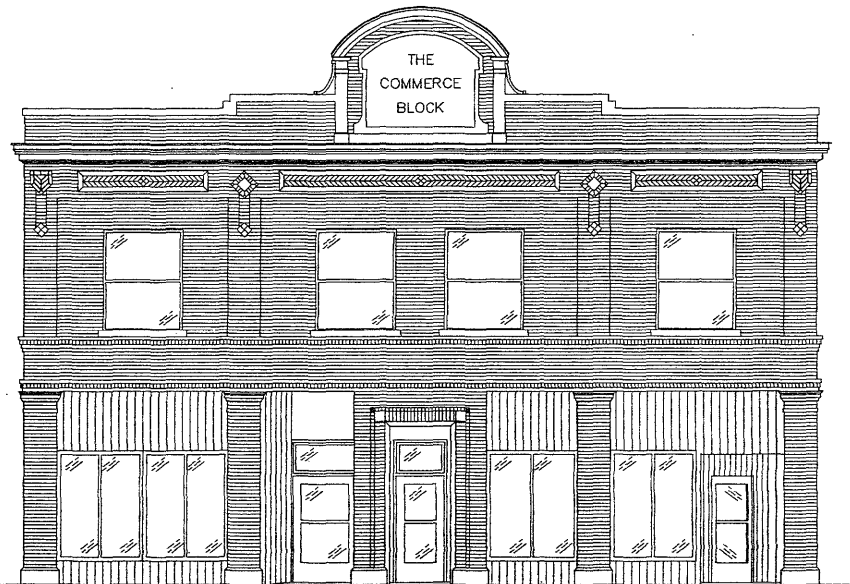
Glenrock Independent, Glenrock, Wyoming, March 1922 to December 1941.



1 WEST ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"

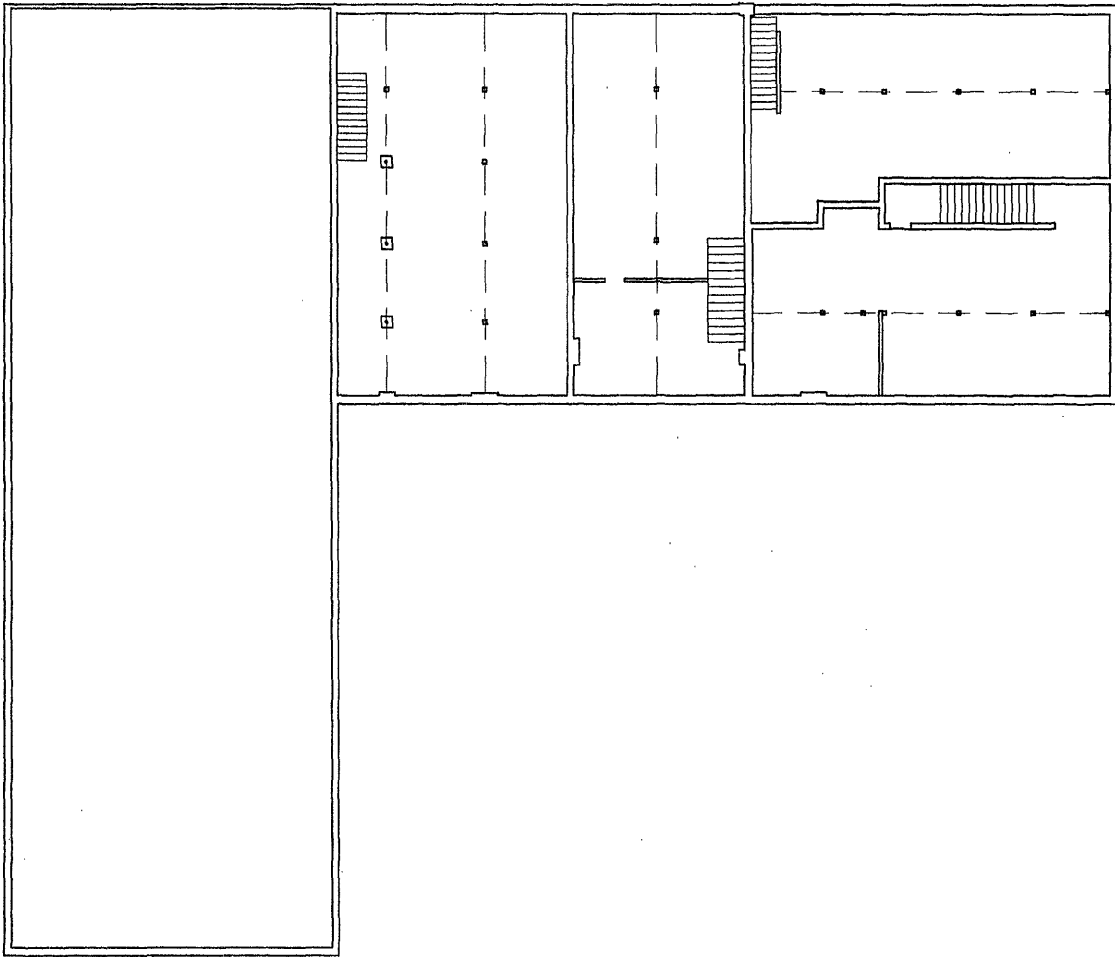


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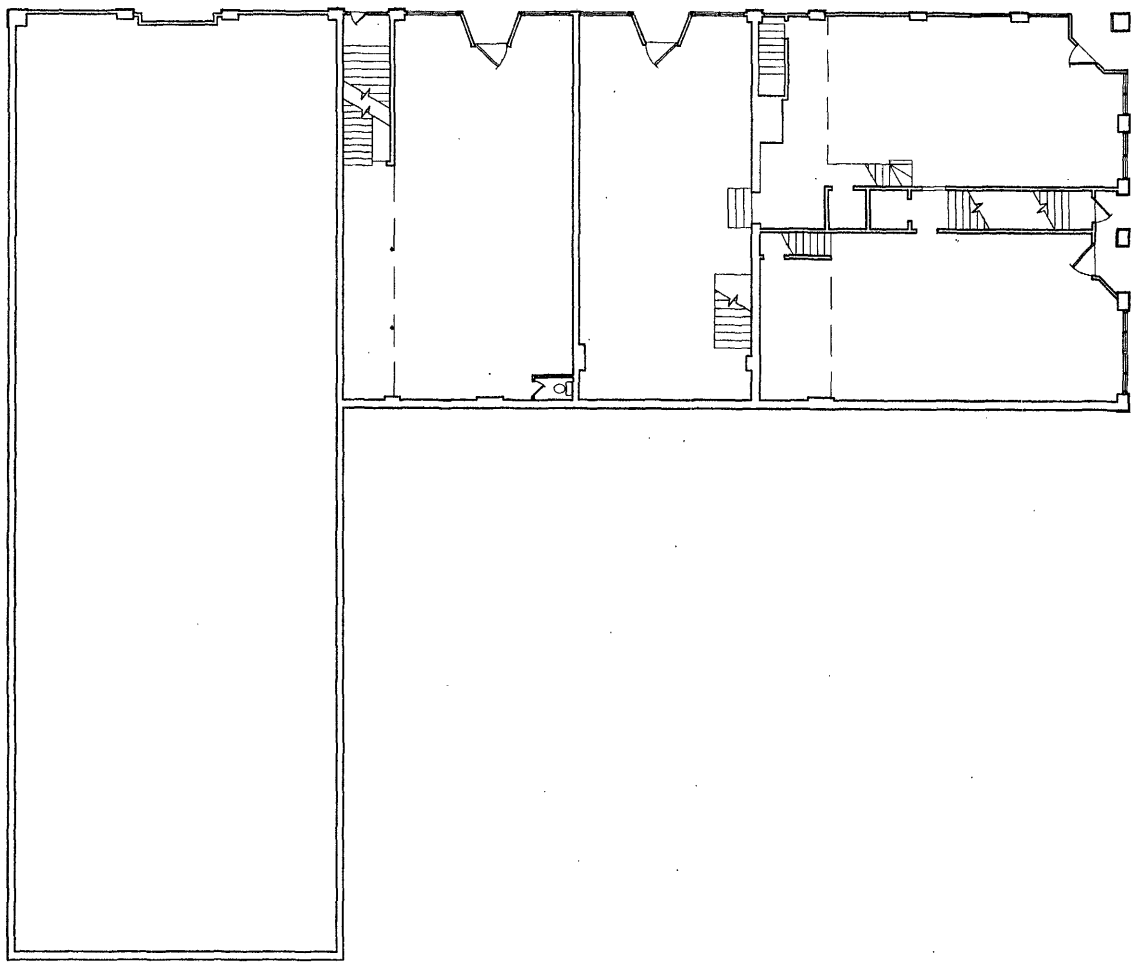
3 NORTH ELEVATION
1/4" = 1'-0"

1 BASEMENT PLAN PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



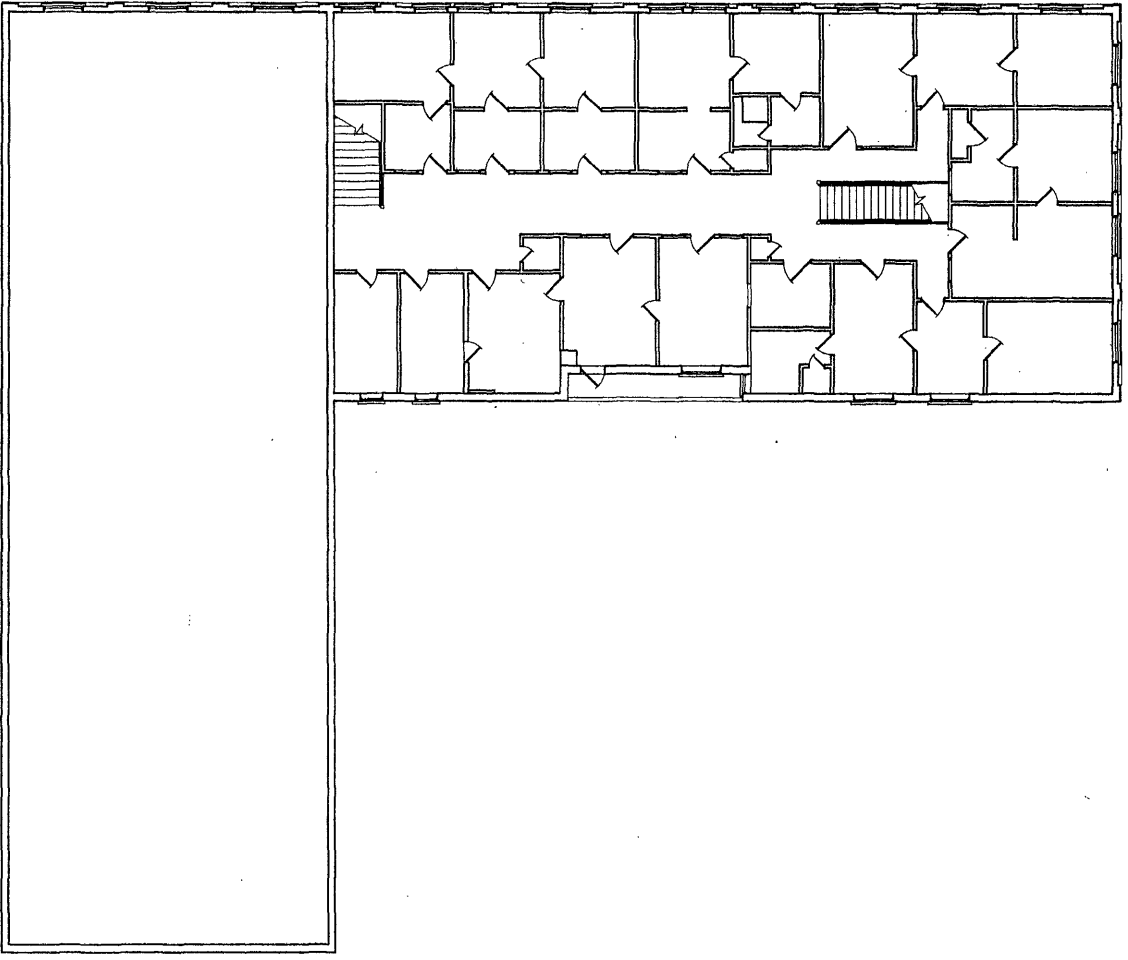
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					162 G. Center Casper, Wyoming 82501

1 MAIN FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



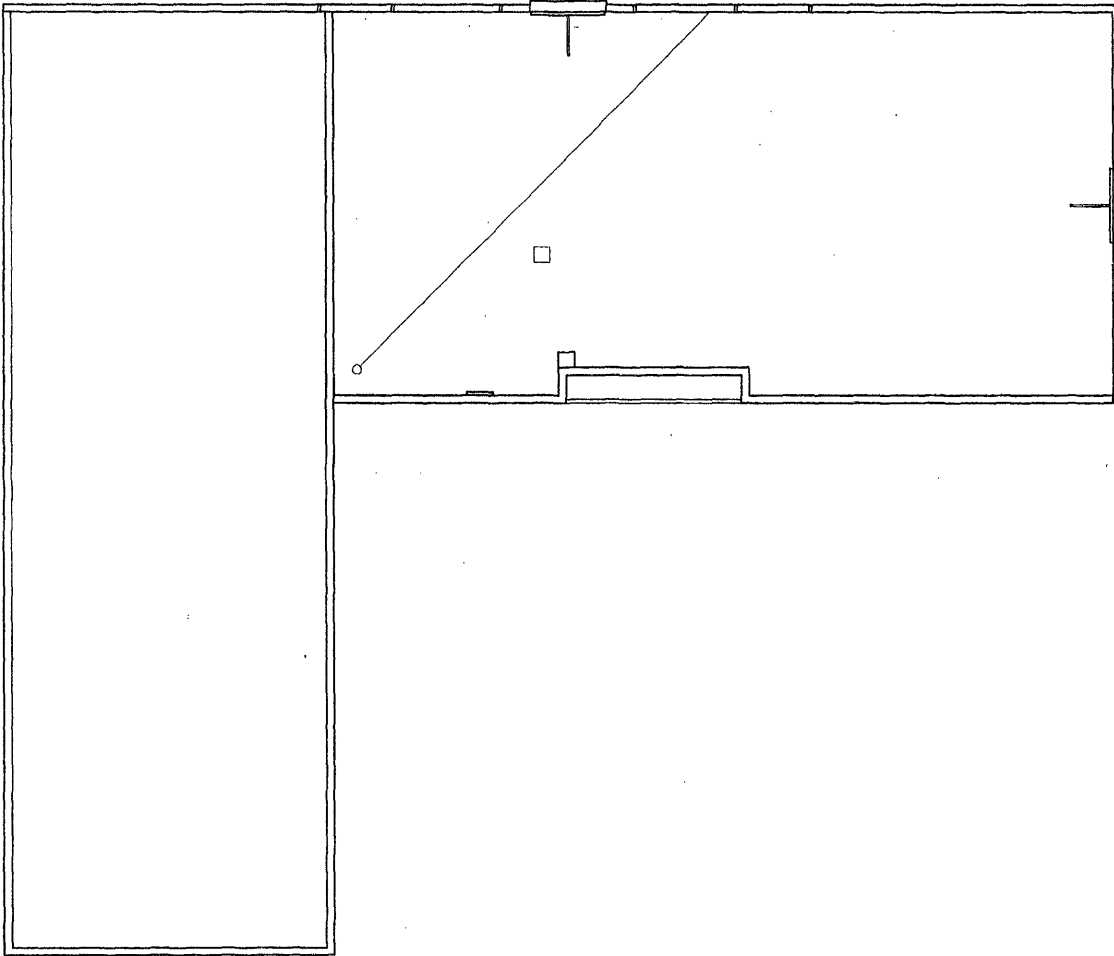
A1.2	MAIN FLOOR PLAN	PROJECT # 10280 DATE 7/19/2004 DRAWN BY SLD REVISIONS:		HISTORIC RESTORATION OF: COMMERCE BLOCK BUILDING GLENROCK, WYOMING	 Tel/Fax 307.234.3001 www.rvharchitects.com	162 S. Center Casper, Wyoming 82501
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1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



A1.3	SECOND FLOOR PLAN	PROJECT #: 0200 DATE: 7/17/2004 DRAWN BY: BLS REVISIONS:	HISTORIC RESTORATION OF: COMMERCE BLOCK BUILDING GLENROCK, WYOMING	 <small>Tel/Fax: 307.234.3001 www.zuharchitects.com</small>	<small>162 S. Center Casper, Wyoming 82601</small>
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1 ROOF PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



A1.4	ROOF PLAN	REVISIONS:	PROJECT # GCBB	HISTORIC RESTORATION OF: COMMERCE BLOCK BUILDING GLENROCK, WYOMING	DESIGN Architects Tel/Fax: 307.234.2801 www.rharchitects.com
		DATE: 7/19/2004	DRAWN BY: SLS		

Block 14, Original Town of Glenrock

