

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

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **JAN 28 1986**  
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic Gras House

and/or common Boucvalt-Gras House

**2. Location**

street & number 616 Elias \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Rock Springs \_\_\_ vicinity of

state Wyoming code 056 county Sweetwater code 037

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Doctor Roy P. Boucvalt

street & number 616 Elias

city, town Rock Springs \_\_\_ vicinity of state Wyoming 82901

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sweetwater County Courthouse

street & number Flaming Gorge Way

city, town Green River state Wyoming 82935

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title University of Wyoming has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Cheyenne state Wyoming

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Boucvalt-Gras house, 616 Elias Street, Rock Springs, Wyoming is a distinctive one story, detached, residential structure. As a building type, the house is a bungalow, built in the California Bungalow tradition. Constructed in 1914, the house is of frame construction, set on a poured concrete foundation, with clapboard cladding, and a low hipped roof. Its short ridgeline perpendicular to the street, covers the body of the house. The entrance is on the southeast corner and therefore at a right angle to the facade. The entrance porch extends off this corner and is covered by an intersecting gambrel roof carried on battered porch pedestals and square wooden piers. Two interior chimneys, one servicing the furnace and the other the parlor fireplace, project moderately above the roof and on either side of the ridgeline. One gable dormer faces the street.

The fenestration is asymmetrical with fixed and moveable sash as single, double, and triple windows, with the latter as canted bays. Glass division is one light over one. Two porches service the house, the large entrance porch partially enclosed by a cemented wall and decked with flooring, and a small concrete stoop at the rear. In area the entrance porch is approximately the size of an interior room. The porch roof supports are strongly battered pedestals with cemented faces and heavy wooden piers. Thickly cut brackets, curved as knee braces, mediate between the roof and the piers. The faces or gables of the gambrels are finished with stucco and stickwork imitating Tudor framing. Each is pierced for a wide louvered panel. The entrance door is a panel and glass model with beveled glass, molding work and dentils.

There are no divisions of the walls and only a modest modulation of the wall planes occurs for the two bay windows. One set of corner boards marks the rear porch enclosure, a later addition, and a wide watertable bands the entire house. As in most bungalow design, the proportion of window to wall mass is high to admit much light, air, and sun to the interior. Ornament on the exterior consists of exposed rafters on all the eaves, exposed purlins on the porch, extended barge boards on the porch roof and dormer, a corbelled cap on the fireplace chimney, and the brackets and gable finish on the porch roof.

As a house type, the Boucvalt-Gras house is a blend of two bungalow types--the hipped bungalow which most often received colonial treatments, and the original California gable-front, whose facade design focused on a broad porch, often with battered piers, and successive gables. In the Boucvalt-Gras house, the position of the entrance porch breaks with hipped roof form, indeed most bungalows in any style have entrances on the facade. This entrance placement gave rise to the opportunity for an alternative porch design, and that probably spawned the gambrel roof-battered pier composition. The traditional gable roof porch on the California bungalow established a series of receding planes. Such a design

(See Addendum)

# 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1913-1914      **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Boucvalt-Gras House embodies the distinctive characteristics of early twentieth century bungalow construction as adapted to Rock Springs at the time that it was an important coal mining center tied to the Union Pacific Railroad and its fortunes. The earliest type of middle class architecture was the expedient movable "shotgun" construction which was able to be moved from site to site. With the development of Rock Springs as a major coal source for the railroad, more substantial architecture began to evolve, including stone mansions and more importantly the architecture of the bungalow for a growing and solid middle class. The Boucvalt-Gras House is probably the oldest of the bungalow style houses in Rock Springs. The bungalow style continued its popularity with the middle class into the 1930's, most assuredly because of its attractiveness, affordability, and practicality. After the Boucvalt-Gras House was constructed, Rock Springs continued steady growth until the Depression, another steady economic climb just prior to World War II, and the tremendous decline in 1952 as the Union Pacific changed from coal to diesel-fired locomotives. The late 1960's until present has seen the character of Rock Springs change forever because of an unparalleled economic boom. Each of the prosperous economic cycles has led to alteration of most of the vernacular architecture. Suzanne Sherwood Unger in conducting the Sweetwater County Historical Survey became aware of these alterations and their cause, making a declaration that the Boucvalt-Gras House was exceptional in design and integrity. The majority of alterations in the vernacular architecture has occurred in the last twenty years and with the upturn of the economy just prior to World War II.

**Contributors:**

- Suzanne Sherwood Unger (The Historical Survey of Sweetwater County)
- David Kathka (Historian, Western Wyoming College)
- J. Dudley Gardner (Historian, Staff Archeologist, Western Wyoming College)
- Henry Chadey (Director, Sweetwater County Museum)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Unger, Susan. Interview, former western regional representative for National Trust.  
Rock Springs, Wyoming, July 15, 1983  
University of Wyoming Historic Sites Survey 1983-84. Sweetwater County.  
David Kathka. A history of Sweetwater County

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Rock Springs, Wyoming

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	2	6	4	8	4	0	0	4	6	0	1	5	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Addendum

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

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Herbert Gottfried and Doctor Roy P. Boucvalt

organization n/a

date August 30, 1985

street & number 616 Elias

telephone 307-362-7555

city or town Rock Springs

state Wyoming

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Kate G. D. Bush*

title Director and State Historic Preservation Officer

date January 21, 1986

### For NPS use only

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

*for William B. Bushong*  
Keeper of the National Register

date 3/13/86

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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would make no sense on the south elevation of the Boucvalt-Gras house. In composing an intersecting roof, the builder had the opportunity to stylize the corner and enlarge an otherwise understated entrance. Of historic interest is the fact that the technique of hiding the entrance from view was picked up in English cottage and Spanish style bungalows in the 1920's.

Stylistically, the Boucvalt-Gras house exterior is as eclectic as its form. The colonial motifs usually associated with the hipped type are referred to in the gambrel roof of the porch. Here the stucco and stickwork, while inappropriate for the style, make the porch more exotic. The gambrel roofs are scaled down enough and their lower angle is wide enough to fit comfortably into the hipped portion of the house. The fit is accomplished in part by extending the bargeboards beyond the main roof eaves, and by repeating that effect in the dormer. The extension calls visual attention to the lower portion of the roof and distracts the viewer from looking at the juncture of the gambrel with the edge of the hip. Other kinds of design articulations are borrowed too. Exposed rafters and purlins are associated with the edge of the hip. Other kinds of design articulations are borrowed too. Exposed rafters and purlins are associated with the Craftsman style as pioneered by Gustave Stickley. Brackets, usually thick and rectilinear in shape, are also associated with Craftsman styling. Stucco is sometimes found in bungalow gables, but the Tudor sticking is unusual and seems to allude to the desire to give this modest house more historical character. That motif is reinforced by the center window of the bays, which is a cottage type with a plain header. As the bungalow house evolves during the 1910-25 period, cottage windows will disappear in favor of new bungalow patterns. Lastly, corbelled chimney caps are common enough, but here the cap adds another dash of historicism in that corbelling is traditionally a cottage effect.

The interior of the Boucvalt-Gras house reflects the same combinations of motifs expressed on the exterior. On plan, the house is one of the several common arrangements of spaces, although there is less attention given to circulation than in most bungalows. The single hall is small and in the back half of the house. The configuration of rooms is typical for its plan with the exception of the foyer fronting the parlor. The alignment of the dining room-kitchen-porch on the south and parlor-bedroom-bathroom-bedroom on the north is typical. The walls and ceiling treatments are paint on a smoothly finished, perhaps floated, plaster. There are picture moldings in the parlor and bedrooms. The floors are tongue and groove boards with linoleum coverings. The lighting is a combination of single pendants and clusters of semi-indirect globes both hung with chain. The hardware is a bronze steel in a colonial pattern. The fireplace, which traditionally serves the bungalow parlor, has a broad rectangular stack that is stepped down to a thick pine mantle. The fireplace facing is painted common brick that joins a shallow hearth. A colonnade with battered columns and bookcases, their doors of beveled glass in a geometric pattern of diamonds and hexa-

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gons, divides the foyer from the parlor. Bath fixtures include period ceramic pieces, including a wall mounted sink, a toilet with a wall mounted tank and separate stool, and a pedestal-based tub. The sink and toilet hardware appears to be original, and the tub hardware, except for the stop, in nickel plated brass of a later period. The radiators are low, wide models painted white to match the woodwork. The only internal stair is at the rear of the house and leads to the basement.

The interior style is tied to that of the exterior with colonial motifs interacting with bungalow modern. The hardware, the door knobs, scutcheon plates, hinges, and odd hooks are colonial--plain faced, with a few molded edges. The light styles are mixed in that the single pendants have a floral globe. Each hangs from a chain, which after 1905 replaced the previous period's pipes and tubes, and the parlor-dining room lights are shower lights with striking fluted globes. The latter are semi-indirect types which reflect light off the ceiling and project light toward the floor through the glass. Each light is suspended by a chain, and a fluted glass column covers the lower half of each chain and wire. This style is Greek Revival or neo-Grecque as it was called. The use of historic lights--one Art Nouveau and the other revival--flavors the interior, a flavor reinforced by the classical colonnade. Its columns echo the battered piers of the porch and its general shape and plain entablature suggest revival design systems. The bookcase doors' pattern derives from Queen Anne style windows. In this case the window pattern has been slightly abstracted so that the pattern is more geometric and fills the entire glass. On the contemporary side of things, the use of a colonnade that doubled as storage was a modern concept or often sold as part of modern styling.

On the whole, the Boucvalt-Gras house can be considered a modern house, modern in the sense that it's style and appointments are progressive. Its modernity is subtle, as subtle as the extension of the house volume into the entrance porch, thereby breaking the box-like character of its street elevation. Given the fact that the bungalow house is evolving during the period when this house is being built, indeed this house is an early bungalow nationally, and bearing in mind that the bungalow had to be adapted to various climates, economic conditions and marketing opportunities, the Boucvalt-Gras house seems important. Its technology--heating, water, lights--is of the moment; its historicism is muted, accents that extend the form and the plan generating a work that is unique for the city and the state. As for overall composition, for what it is worth, of the thousands of bungalows reviewed in person or through literature, this is the only design of its kind known to this writer in the United States.

The real significance of this property, however, lies in its current condition. With only slight and, therefore, insignificant exceptions, this house is intact on the exterior and the interior. It functions, therefore, as a catalog of what was possible in bungalow housing in 1914, what could be ordered from a pre-cut

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manufacturer or built with a little imagination, with quality milled lumber and finish goods, with decently crafted appointments, all available through the railroad distribution system. In this way, Rock Springs, Wyoming played a role in the proliferation of material culture and the transfer of technology in its own terms. This condition is at the heart of the industrialization movement especially as facilitated by railroad expansion. While the same kind of claim could be made for other houses in Rock Springs, one could not discern those houses' roles in cultural development so easily, because their record is hidden under renovations and buried in changed perceptions as to what a house should look like and how it should function. To this end, the Boucvalt-Gras house makes a clear statement and reveals a thorough record of vernacular design in Wyoming.

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Roth, Leland. A Concise History of American Architecture. Harper & Row, New York.

Periodicals

Rock Springs Rocket, Saturday, August 22, 1936.

Other

Manuscript entitled "Ex-Mayor Bunning Honored." March, 1934.

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The County Clerk lists this property as all of lot 4 and part of lot 5, block 10, Pilot Butte Addition, City of Rock Springs. The Boucvalt-Gras house has historically been located on this site which retains original landscaping, sidewalks and setback. The only other structure on the site is a garage which, though it is not intrusive, does not demonstrate the architectural significance of the house and is therefore called non-contributing. Because the lot lines define adequately the historic setting of the house there is no need to include additional land area. Only that part of lot 5 which is currently owned by Dr. Roy P. Boucvalt is included within the boundary, which measures approximately 20 feet of the south portion of lot 5.