

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ritzville High School

other names/site number Old Ritzville High School

2. Location

street & number 7th Avenue between Columbia and Division Streets  not for publication

city or town Ritzville  vicinity

state Washington code WA county Adams code 001 zip code 99169

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

*W. M. Simpson* 3/21/94  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the 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): \_\_\_\_\_

*for*  
*Edson H. Beall* Signature of the Keeper  
Entered in the National Register 5-19-94 Date of Action

Old Ritzville High School  
Name of Property

Adams Co., WA  
County and State

**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**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

None

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Collegiate Gothic

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof TAR OVER WOOD

other

**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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1927-1944

Significant Dates

1927

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Rasque, George Melville

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, designated landmark, recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey, recorded by Historic American Engineering Record.

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

Eastern Washington University

Old Ritzville High School  
Name of Property

Adams County, WA  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than 1

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>1</u> <u>1</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>9</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

**Boundary Justification**

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

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Craig Holstine and Marsha Reilly

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date February 1992

street & number 259 Gregory Drive telephone 509-235-6749

city or town Cheney state WA zip code 99004

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

name Pacwest Group Inc.

street & number North 112 University Rd., Suite 306 telephone 509-922-3035

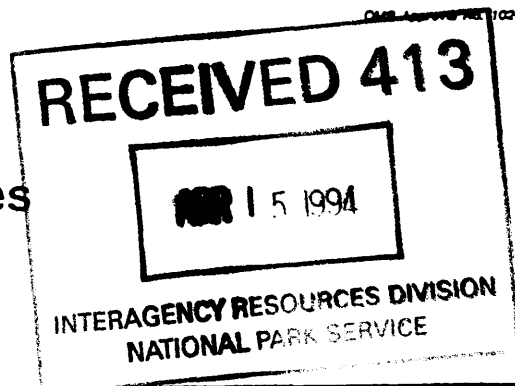
city or town Spokane state WA zip code 99206

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



Section number 7 Page 1

**Old Ritzville High School  
Ritzville, Washington**

## Description

Occupying the northern third of the large block bounded by 10th and 7th avenues and Columbia and Division streets, the Old Ritzville High School is a stately reminder of the important role education has played in the historic development of the city of Ritzville. The two-story brick building conveys its historic character through excellent exterior integrity; retention of basic floorplan and interior detailing constitutes structural evidence of the community's achieving its goal of providing local children with modern, spacious facilities for state-of-the-art education in the 1920s.

What is now a single structure is actually an older central mass (built in 1910) facing north onto 7th Avenue, with matching wings (added in 1927) along Columbia and Division streets. A veneer of salmon-colored brick and galvanized metal cornice mask the seams where the wings meet the older building. Galvanized metal coping and parapets add further continuity to the roof line, which bears shield-shaped reminders of the stone or tile ornamentation that has been removed. ("RHS" was inscribed within the shield over the east wing, "RJH" over the west wing, signifying the original division of the building into junior and senior high schools). Above the centrally-positioned main entryway, a tower-like mass rises slightly above the flat, streamlined parapet wall to a stepped crown. Fenestration patterns of double-hung wood sash windows are repeated on both halves of the front facade, creating a symmetry that implies orderliness and careful planning.

The school measures approximately 202 feet across its imposing front (7th Avenue) facade. Approximately 102 feet of that distance comprises the older block of the building, with 50-foot wide wings on either side. The wings measure 110 feet in length, both extending beyond the rear of the central mass, thus forming a small three-sided courtyard behind the school. From the first or main floor line to the top of the parapet wall above the roof, the building stands approximately 35 feet high.

Concrete steps flanked by brick piers with cast concrete caps lead to the main floor entryway. The portico consists of a brick arch capped by galvanized iron coping and shield ornamentation matching that along the roofline. The brick and coping motif is reflected in the four side entrances, two on each wing of the building. Brick stoops with concrete steps and brick piers extend outward from the east and west wall entryways. Cast concrete coping and shield

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Old Ritzville High School  
Ritzville, Washington**

### Description (continued)

ornamentation top the porticos, which consist of brick arches and arching, multipaned fan lights above double wooden multilight doors. A modern metal fire escape added subsequent to the school's construction obscures the top of the portico near the northeast corner of the school.

At the main entryway off 7th Avenue, original wooden, multipaned double doors with matching sidelights open into a landing from which stairs descend to the basement and rise to the main floor of the older portion of the building. The basement is divided roughly in half: locker and shower rooms occupy the front (north) portion, while a woodshop complete with benches and some remaining tools is housed in the south portion. A wide corridor with hardwood floors and metal lockers mounted into the south wall separates the two halves of the basement. Doorways exit rearward (to the south) from both ends of the corridor into the courtyard behind the building. There are no basement levels below the two side wings of the school.

The main or first floor of the building is on two levels, that in the older central mass being elevated slightly above those of the two wings. A wide hallway connects the older structure with the wings, which are accessed via inclined walkways from the central lobby area. The approximately seven-foot wide corridors running laterally the width of the structure on both the main and upper floors are the elements unifying the interiors of the older building and the wings. Stairwells connect the main floor with the basement below and the second floor above at either end of the older central building where the inclined walkways are positioned in the corridors. What appears to have been a trophy case of relatively recent construction is mounted into the rear wall of the main floor lobby. Otherwise no ornamentation is evident in what was the central crossroads of student traffic.

Classrooms with hardwood floors, lath and plaster walls and ceilings, blackboards, and fan-shaped fluorescent lighting that does not appear original occupy most of the space on the north side of the main floor. Small administrative offices, one with a wall-mounted safe containing student records, are located on the main floor of the older portion of the building. A faculty lounge and toilets are situated in the north half of the west wing. A gymnasium occupies the rear two-thirds of the east wing, rising the full two stories above its original hardwood floor, now buckled and deteriorated. Lath and plaster walls and a second-level observation balcony

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Old Ritzville High School  
Ritzville, Washington

### Description (continued)

with wooden balustrade characterize the gymnasium, which is the largest (ca. 77 by 48 feet and two stories high) and perhaps the most significant space in the building.

The southern portion of the west wing has experienced relatively more alteration than the remainder of the structure. Where a once-unobstructed corridor passed L-shaped between classrooms, a wall of lath and plaster now separates the hallway from the southwest entryway into the building. Removal of an original classroom wall and construction of the newer wall across the corridor resulted in the creation of a single large classroom, used as a band room since the modifications were completed ca. 1950. Foreign languages, usually German in this predominantly German community, were taught in a small classroom north of the band room. Across the hallway, home economics was taught in the rooms designed in 1927 for "domestic science" and "sewing." Not surprisingly, some alteration and modernization occurred in those rooms as well. At the northwest corner of the building adjacent to the second west-wall entryway, a stairwell rises to the building's upper floor.

Upstairs, the most significant space is the auditorium, measuring approximately 77 by 48 feet. As above the gymnasium, trusses of bolted 2 by 10, 8 by 8, and 8 by 6 inch planks support the roof over the auditorium. Original curved-back wooden seating remains in the auditorium, as do ornate light fixtures that hang from the slightly arched ceiling. The floor slopes downward toward the stage at the front of the room. Footlights and overhead floodlights still remain on the stage, as does an old, painted canvas backdrop. A lath and plaster spotlight/projection box large enough to accommodate both operator and equipment is attached to the rear wall, its floor being about six feet above the floor of the auditorium. Other than obvious signs of age, the auditorium retains excellent integrity.

The classroom across the hallway from the auditorium was used as a chemistry laboratory and lecture room. The lecture room is two steps up from the lab and the spaces are divided by an "accordion door." The wooden floors are badly buckled and the plaster ceiling has fallen in places due to water damage. The main central hallway on the second floor was used as locker space.

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Old Ritzville High School  
Ritzville, Washington

### Description (continued)

To the south of this central hallway is the library. Five study/reading rooms line the library on the west and north sides. Walls with large plate glass windows dividing these five rooms from the main library appear to have been added. The floors have been covered with linoleum and an acoustic tile ceiling has been installed. Opposite the library in the central building is a stairwell leading to a small space on the third floor. At one time, this space, with an adjoining restroom, was used as an office by the school counselor.

On the second floor east of the counselor office stairway, two additional classrooms remain. The first and smaller classroom has wooden floors and a modern acoustic tile ceiling that has been added. The room has suffered extensive water damage. The other larger classroom is in much better condition with no visible water damage. This last classroom originally was two smaller classrooms, the wall between them having been removed at some time.

At the east end of the second floor hallway, a modern metal door has been installed, leading to a metal fire escape, also added in recent times. Directly across the hallway (south) of the classroom is the upper level of the gymnasium. From here, the upper-story walkway circles the gymnasium below. Windows ring the walkway, providing light to the large, open room, which otherwise has no other source of outside light other than that entering through the windows in the double wooden doors exiting the east wall near the southeast corner of the building.

An alley and small asphalt courtyard separate the school from the metal shop, which is still owned and used by the Ritzville School District. (The shop is **not** included in this nomination). The one-story structure was originally a smaller building housing the boiler furnace that heated the school with steam heat until its closure. (The boiler room comprises the east end of the present building). Salmon-colored brick and coping matching that on the school distinguish the flat-roofed structure, which was enlarged in 1935 and again ca. 1950 to serve as an agricultural education shop. The shop's historic integrity has been compromised by closure of numerous window openings with concrete, installation of modern metal roll-away doors, and addition of a corrugated metal shed-roofed awning on the rear of the building.



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**Old Ritzville High School  
Ritzville, Washington**

### Description (continued)

Despite its abandonment and interior deterioration, the Old Ritzville High School is an evocative reminder of nearly seven decades of education in this small eastern Washington city. It also accurately reflects the building materials and technology of the day, and how they were used to represent the aspirations of the town's citizens to provide their children with state-of-the-art education in the early decades of the twentieth century.

### Statement of Significance

From its position in a residential neighborhood slightly elevated above the business quarter of the town, the Old Ritzville High School commands views of the central business district and seemingly unending grain fields beyond. While the width and breadth of the skyline reduces all things man-made to insignificant proportions, the school building is immense in comparison to other structures in town, with exceptions being the newer high school and the towering grain storage elevators near the railroad tracks crossing the center of the city. While the school seems disproportionately large for the town, the structure's impressive size reflects the wealth and bounty of the land and the population it supported in the early years of the twentieth century. The Old Ritzville High School clearly illustrates, through distinctive characteristics, the pattern of features common to schoolhouses dating to the 1920s. From its "Collegiate Gothic" style to the materials used on its exterior, the building represents a type, period, and method of construction found in countless other educational structures of its day. Designed by George M. Rasque, the school was one of the noted architect's first of many such facilities, numerous of which reflected this earlier precedent in appearance and structural functionalism. For those reasons, the Old Ritzville High School meets the eligibility requirements for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C.

Arrival of the Northern Pacific Railway in 1880 coincided with the first successful wheat harvests by the area's earliest settlers. Named for Philip Ritz, supposedly the first to put down roots here, Ritzville was made seat of the newly-established Adams County in 1884. Following its incorporation in 1888, the town grew slowly through the nation-wide depression of the early 1890s, only to experience phenomenal growth for the next two decades. Expansion of grain

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Old Ritzville High School  
Ritzville, Washington

### Significance (continued)

markets was credited for the boom: in 1901-1902, more wheat and flour was shipped from Ritzville than from any other primary shipping point in the world. A building boom in the central business district lasted through the first decade of the century, and concluded with construction of the Ritzville Hotel, the NP Passenger Depot, and other buildings now comprising the Ritzville Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Garfield and Reilly 1989).

By 1910 Ritzville's agricultural and population boom was being felt in the local schools. As the only accredited institution of its type in Adams County, Ritzville high school was attracting students from surrounding towns and rural areas. At the close of the year's term, 590 students (the total in all grades) were crowded into increasingly inadequate facilities (Cheney Free Press 27 May 1910, p. 2). "The high school is badly cramped for room," the Ritzville Times proclaimed. "Next year the high school situation will be still worse . . . . This will necessitate the employment of another high school teacher, for the freshman class will have to be divided" (13 January 1910, p. 1). The paper also editorialized on the subject and called for action:

Our schools are steadily increasing in efficiency and in the standard of work being done. Their reputation is not confined to the immediate vicinity of the town, but people from a distance are moving in to give their children the advantages of a first-class high school education. Other towns about us have better buildings than we have, and we must stir ourselves or we will be left behind in the race (13 January 1910, p. 1).

In January 1910, Mayor W.R. Peters began circulating a petition calling for school improvements (Spokesman-Review 29 January 1910, p. 5). His efforts, and those of the local commercial club and a group of women activists, helped convince an overwhelming majority of voters to approve a \$25,000 bond issue authorizing construction of a new high school. The total was impressive: 335 voters approved of the proposal, while a scant 57 opposed it. Women played a key role in the measure's passage, according to the Times: "Something like 150 [women] cast their ballots, with a very large percentage of them favoring better schools. By the way, give woman the ballot and she will show the same keen interest in all things pertaining to

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Old Ritzville High School  
Ritzville, Washington

### Significance (continued)

civic uplift, and a cleaner, better government" (24 February 1910, p. 1). Obviously women's suffrage had gained early proponents in Ritzville.

Following the bond election, the school board met and decided to purchase a block in town adjacent to the city waterworks. The owners of the property, T.W. and Sarah Hauschild, were apparently persuaded to donate the block to the school district, as indicated by a metal plaque now affixed to the shop building behind the school. The plaque reads: "This building is dedicated to learning and the perpetuation of democracy. This site graciously donated by T.W. and Sarah Hauschild and their heirs." The clerk of the board then advertised for bids, and "several architects" were expected to submit plans (Times 24 February 1910, pp. 1-2).

H.I. Ellis, a Spokane architect, won the contract with his design for a two-story brick building with full basement and all "modern conveniences" (Spokesman-Review 30 October 1910). The Pettifer Construction Company of Spokane built the structure for a reported \$30,000, more than authorized in the February bond issue. "Unavoidable delays" pushed construction of the new building beyond its scheduled 1 September 1910 completion date (Times 8 September 1910). Work continued into the fall at least until 29 October when 200 people attended the formal opening. Ritzville high school alumni hosted a public reception in early November at which "several hundred guests inspected the many attractions of the delightful building" (Times 3 November 1910). As late as December, an "improved ventilating system, the first in the country," was being installed, consisting of electric fans mounted in the roof (Spokesman-Review 31 December 1910, p. 3). Over 100 students were then enrolled in the high school. Charles A.R. Stone was serving as superintendent, Professor Stillwell was principal, and at least three teachers were on the faculty: Mr. Lewis, Miss Graham, and Miss Wilcox (Spokesman-Review 30 October 1910, p. 11).

Despite construction of the new high school, overcrowding again became a problem within a few short years. A report entitled "The Needs of Our Schools," prepared by the Parent-Teachers' Association in March 1917, identified numerous shortcomings in the Ritzville schools, including improper ventilation, inadequate fire protection, and unsanitary conditions, the latter apparently referring to the basement toilets in the high school. "The overcrowded condition of several of

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Old Ritzville High School  
Ritzville, Washington

### Significance (continued)

the grades was also reported, by no action taken to suggest a remedy" (Spokesman-Review 15 March 1917, p. 10).

In 1927 enrollment increased by approximately twenty-five percent over the previous year, creating a "very congested condition" in the school built seventeen years earlier. The school board had "followed the lead of a great many other communities" and established a junior high, which was also housed along with the senior high in the same structure. Classes were held for grades 10 through 12, numbering 133 pupils, in space designed for 100 students. The situation was even worse in the junior high, where 166 pupils were educated in rooms meant for only 80. Space was "so crowded that even with the use of the unsanitary basement, ample room cannot be found for the accommodation of classes" (Ritzville Journal-Times 27 January 1927, p. 1).

After "consulting with various architects, and studying buildings and conditions in various cities of the state," the Ritzville school board put the issue of expanding the high school to a vote of the community's citizens. The final selection of a design for the new building apparently came down to a choice between two architects: well-known Julius Zittel, who had served as State Architect and, in 1907, with partner Preusse, designed the Public Library in Ritzville; and George M. Rasque, younger and lesser known. Both men worked out of Spokane and both apparently proposed to add wings to the east and west sides of the high school. Rasque appears to have submitted the first design, but Zittel's proposal attracted considerable attention in that it included an auditorium and stage in the west wing. Those amenities were at first considered by the board to be excessively expensive, as was the gymnasium planned for the new east wing, but all the facilities were included in the final design chosen, that submitted by Rasque. In February 1927, voters approved a \$65,000 bond issued and work on the additions began later that year (Journal-Times 13 and 27 January and 10 February 1927).

As they first appeared in the local press, the new wings were designed to match the older central mass, especially in the roofline/parapet treatments. It is not known whether the publicized design was that of Zittel or Rasque, but when the board chose the latter to design the new school, changes were afoot for both the facade of the older portion of the building as well as for the new wings. Rasque's drawings dated March 1927 show the building as it was eventually

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**Old Ritzville High School**  
Ritzville, Washington

### Significance (continued)

built: gone was the curvilinear, Mission-style crown on the cornice at the building's center, as were the classical columns flanking the main entryway on the first floor directly below. A Gothic-like stepped parapet and crown with cast stone shields adorned the roof line of the old building, matched along the cornice of the new wings. An archway of brick construction with parapet wall and cast stone shields matching the roof line replaced the classical entryway on the older central mass (George M. Rasque drawings, sheets 1-13, 5 March 1927). The "Collegiate Gothic" style and decorative motifs were to be imitated in many subsequent schools Rasque designed throughout the region (Undated hand-colored photographs and drawings in the possession of Michael M. and Ruby Rasque McGarvey, Spokane).

Despite loud banging and occasional crashes, construction proceeded on the new wings as classes were held in the older building. The class of 1929 became the first class to graduate from the new facility. For many years, both junior and senior high (grades seven through twelve) students were educated in the building. While its location on the second floor proved awkward and not easily accessible for the elderly, the auditorium became a focal point in the life of the community. Meetings, debates, and spelling bees were held there, as were frequent plays written, produced and acted by students, faculty, Lions Club members, and other civic groups. In days before television and rapid transportation, rural communities relied upon local talent for entertainment, and Ritzville was no exception. Physical education and sporting events were held in the gymnasium for over three decades until a new facility was constructed in 1960. Modifications of the high school reflected changing educational needs, as exemplified by the conversion of two classrooms to create a bandroom in ca. 1949-50 (James and Mary Webb interview, January 1992).

The Old Ritzville High School was finally abandoned after the Hawthorn School was converted for use as the new high school in 1983. The class of 1982 was the last to graduate from the old school, the fifty-fourth class to do so since the addition of the wings in the late 1920s and the seventy-first class since construction of the original building. Nearly three-quarters of a century of education had finally ended at the Old Ritzville High School.

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**Old Ritzville High School  
Ritzville, Washington**

**Significance (continued)**

**George M. Rasque, Architect**

Spokane architect George Melville Rasque (pronounced "ras-kway") was born 13 August 1891 in Boscobel, Wisconsin. Prior to coming to Spokane ca. 1923, George Rasque worked as a manual training teacher at the Indian school in Jocko, Montana. After taking a correspondence course in architecture, he joined an architect by the name of Link to form the firm Link and Rasque. The two practiced in Montana before Rasque left for Spokane, where he worked the National Builders Bureau and later for the firm Whitehouse and Price. Rasque obtained a state architectural license, and was eventually licensed to practice in four northwestern states. Sometime in the mid to late 1920s, he formed his own firm, taking with him from Whitehouse and Price noted draftsman Arthur Sackville-West. Sackville-West had worked many years for other Spokane architects, including Kirtland Cutter (Michael M. and Ruby Rasque McGarvey and Jack Sackville-West, interviews, February 1992; Polk's Spokane City Directory, various volumes).

Rasque's son, George William "Dutch" Rasque, joined his father's business in ca. 1936 after the younger's graduation from Washington State University. The firm then became known as George M. Rasque and Son. The junior Rasque's name remained part of firm until ca. 1948, at least three years after his death in the Battle of Okinawa near the end of World War II. Despite the emotional devastation resulting from the loss of his only son, Rasque continued his practice in Spokane. After the war, Jack Sackville-West, the son of Rasque's draftsman and a young war veteran who had worked summers for Rasque, joined the firm, which became known as Rasque-Sackville-West. The latter bought the business when Rasque retired. Sackville-West continued the practice until retiring and selling out to his partner. Today Ray Cortner owns and operates the firm in Spokane (McGarvey and Sackville-West interviews).

During his long career, George M. Rasque became one of the best known architects in the state. He is perhaps most remembered for the many public buildings he designed in eastern Washington. His most notable projects included:

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Section number 8 Page 11

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**Old Ritzville High School  
Ritzville, Washington**

### Significance (continued)

Numerous buildings on the campuses of Eastern Washington University in Cheney, Eastern State Hospital and Lakeland Village School in Medical Lake, and the State Penitentiary in Walla Walla.

Benton, Ferry, and Stevens county courthouses in Prosser, Republic, and Colville, respectively.

Rural Electrification Administration buildings in Spokane and Davenport, Washington, and Lewiston and Sandpoint, Idaho.

Spokane Medical Center, Spokane.

Community Hall, Opportunity, Spokane Valley.

Approximately 60 school buildings throughout eastern Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana.

Rasque joined other notable Spokane architects, such as Whitehouse and Price, and structural engineers, including W.L. Malony, in designing some of the above buildings. While collaboration with other professionals was not uncommon for Rasque, neither was keen competitiveness. He was known to have deliberately underbid other firms in order to secure design contracts (Frederick Long, retired Spokane architect, interview January 1992). Rasque was fond of telling young students what he considered to be the three most important rules for practicing architecture: "1) Get the job; 2) Get the job; and 3) Get the job. You can't do good architecture unless you get the job," said Rasque. He often boasted that he would have been successful at anything because he was primarily a good businessman. His incredibly productive career spanning half a century is testimony to his ability to "get the job" (Sackville-West interview).

In specializing in public building design, Rasque followed in the footsteps of another noted Spokane architect, Julius Zittel. Zittel served as State Architect for many years designing

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 3 Page 12

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Old Ritzville High School  
Ritzville, Washington

### Significance (continued)

notable public buildings, such as Showalter Hall on the Eastern Washington University campus. With his many public building projects in the eastern portion of the state, Rasque held the apparently unofficial title of State Architect for Eastern Washington. Numerous buildings designed by Rasque on the EWU campus reflect his association with Clarence D. Martin, a Cheney native son who served as governor from 1933 to 1941 (McGarvey interview).

Rasque's work at Eastern State Hospital and EWU continued long after Martin left the governorship. His buildings on the two campuses probably represent Rasque's most stylish works. Near the end of his career, feeling indebted to the university in Cheney, Rasque established a scholarship fund for needy students. A dairy farm he purchased near Chattaroy in northeastern Spokane County was to provide the financing for the benevolent endeavor. Ironically the farm proved unprofitable; nevertheless, many students attended EWU and Washington State University on scholarships Rasque funded directly from his architectural practice (McGarvey and Sackville-West interviews).

George M. Rasque died in Spokane on 20 October 1977. To say that he was one of the most prolific architects of his day would be an understatement. His legacy is found in countless communities around eastern Washington, and many, if not most, of those buildings are still in use. Because of their sheer numbers and durability, the schools bearing Rasque's trademark designs are surely his greatest contribution to the architectural profession and to society in general. The Old Ritzville High School appears to have been one of his first public school projects, and its design is a precursor of many subsequent Rasque school buildings. According to his daughter, he prided himself most on having designed usable, practical buildings that benefitted people of all walks of life (McGarvey interview). Rasque is recognized as having been one of Spokane's and the Pacific Northwest's most productive and best known architects.



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Rasque, George M. Drawings of Ritzville High School. 5 March 1927. Provided to the author by 3E Design Group. Spokane.

\_\_\_\_\_. Undated hand-colored photographs and drawings of numerous schoolhouses designed by George M. Rasque, including the Old Ritzville High School. In the possession of Michael M. and Ruby Rasque McGarvey. Spokane.

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### **Bibliography (continued)**

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### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is bounded by Division Street on the west, 7th Avenue on the north, Columbia Street on the east, and an alleyway on the south in SE Sec. 23, T19N, R35E. Legal description of the property: NW 168.71 feet of Block 7, T.W. Hauschild's Addition to the town of Ritzville.

### **Verbal Boundary Justification**

The nominated property includes the building itself and grounds immediately adjacent to it.

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Old Ritzville High School  
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### Photographs

All photographs are of the Old Ritzville High School, Adams County, Ritzville, Washington. Photos were taken by Craig Holstine and Marsha Reilly in January 1992. Original negatives are in the possession of the authors.

1. Front facade facing 7th Avenue. View to the southwest.
2. 7th Avenue entryway. View to the south.
3. West facade facing Division Street. View to the east.
4. East facade facing Columbia Street. View to the northwest.
5. Rear alleyway and courtyard. View to the northwest.
6. Main (first) floor corridor and trophy case. View to the east.
7. Gymnasium and upper level observation balcony. View to the north.
8. Auditorium and stage (upper level). View to the south.
9. Library (upper level). View to the east.
10. Bandroom (first floor). View to the northwest.