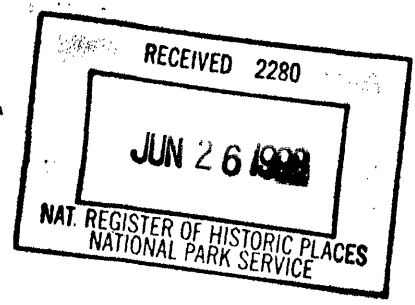


007



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Ralston Community Clubhouse
other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: 969 Carbon Street
city/town: Ralston
state: Wyoming
code: WY county: Park
not for publication: N/A
vicinity: N/A
zip code: 82440

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.

Signature of certifying official/Title John J. Keck Date 6/16/98

Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

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 Edson A. Beall 7-23-98
 see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register _____
- determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- removed from the National Register _____
- other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper Beall Date of Action _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property:

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property:

building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
<u>1</u>	Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Cat: Education	Sub: Schoolhouse
Social	Sub: Clubhouse

Current Functions:

Cat: Social	Sub: Clubhouse
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7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Hipped-roof one-room schoolhouse

Materials:

foundation:	concrete
walls:	frame
roof:	asphalt shingles
other:	

Narrative Description

The Ralston Clubhouse building has served as the clubhouse for the Ralston Community Club since 1930. It was originally constructed as a schoolhouse in 1914 by members of the community. It is a simple, one-story, hipped-roof building of wood frame construction with an enclosed entry vestibule and a gabled-roof addition. It is located on a small rise on the northwest edge of the town of Ralston, Wyoming. The building is surrounded by a residential area to the east and west and pasture to the north. The boundary is defined by wire fences on all sides with access from a paved street to the south. The interior of the building consists of a large open room and the later kitchen addition. An outhouse stands adjacent to the clubhouse to the north.

The Ralston Clubhouse has no basement and sits on a concrete foundation that adjusts to ground level. The building is sided with asbestos shingles and framed with wood corner boards. The roof of the building is hipped with a central flat and is covered with asphalt shingles. A brick chimney protrudes from the west roof slope near the eaves. Enclosed extended eaves are finished with beadboard. The south wall holds three paired 1/1 double-hung windows and a single 1/1 double-hung window towards the front facade
 (see continuation sheet)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria:

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of 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 (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance:

Entertainment/Recreation
Community improvement

Period(s) of Significance: 1930 to 1948

Significant Dates: 1930

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Ralston Community Clubhouse holds significance locally and regionally because it functions as the location for both the social and community service activities of the Ralston Community Club. Since 1930, it has continuously served as the Ralston Community Club Clubhouse. In a region of distances and isolation, the clubhouse has brought women and their families together to share in each other lives and that of the community.

The beginnings of the Ralston community on Powell Flats began with William "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Bill Cody envisioned using the Shoshone River to provide water for an irrigation system. In 1899, Cody and his partner Nate Salsbury took out a water right permit under the Carey Act to develop 120,000 acres of the Shoshone Valley for fifty miles east of Cody (including the Ralston area). Cody platted the townsite of Ralston on Powell Flats in connection with his proposed project. Financial difficulties postponed Cody's project and in February 1904, Cody and his partner relinquished all their rights to the recently created Reclamation Service (PCSC 1980:39).

The construction of the Burlington Railway through Park County to the town of Cody in 1901 also influenced the growth of Ralston. The railroad right-of-way passed through the townsite of Ralston as platted by Cody and established a rail station, a section house and boxcar living quarters at this location. The Lincoln Land Company replatted the townsite of Ralston in 1905 that consisted of nine blocks in the typical grid pattern on the north side of the railway right-of-way. The Ralston Post Office was established in March 1907 (PCSC 1980:10; 17).

The town of Ralston, situated on Powell Flats, was on the eastern edge of the Garland Unit of the Shoshone Irrigation Project that opened for homesteading in November 1907. The region was a "sagebrush and cactus covered desert" when 276 farms were homesteaded at the first opening of the project (Churchill 1984:9). The town of Ralston grew with the influx of settlers to the region and functioned as the service center for the homesteaders. By 1913, Ralston businesses included a pool hall, saloon, general store, lumber company, taxidermy shop and a hardware store. In 1914, the Ralston school house (now the clubhouse) was constructed by local citizens. By the 1920s, settlement slowed and in 1922, the Ralston school consolidated with the Powell district which led to the abandonment of the Ralston school building (PCSC 1980:17). In 1930, the Powell School District offered the Ralston school property to the Ralston Community Club, answering a dream of the club since its inception in 1919.

(see continuation sheet)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Anderson, Mrs. Joe

1948 Ralston Club History 1948. Unpublished manuscript, Ralston Community Club, Ralston, Wyoming.

Brown, Ursula E.

1926 Short History of Early Ralston Community Club. Unpublished manuscript, Ralston Community Club, Ralston, Wyoming.

Churchill, Beryl Gail

1984 *People Working Together A 75th Anniversary Salute to Powell*. Custom Printing, Powell, Wyoming.

Cox, Shirley Williams

1969 History of Ralston Club 1959-1969. Unpublished manuscript, Ralston Community Club, Ralston, Wyoming.

1976 Ralston Club History September 1969 - May 1976. Unpublished manuscript, Ralston Community Club, Ralston, Wyoming.

Park County Story Committee (PCSC)

1980 *The Park County Story*. Taylor Publishing Company, Dallas, Texas

Pease, Beatrice

1992 Wyoming Historic Architecture Inventory Form for Ralston Clubhouse. On file Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Myres, Sandra L. *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience, 1800-1915*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Nelson, Christene

1959 History Ralston Community Club 1930 Thru 1959. Unpublished manuscript, Ralston Community Club, Ralston, Wyoming.

Ralston Community Club (RCC)

1936 Letter to Rufus Wilson. On file Ralston Community Club, Ralston, Wyoming.

1938 Letter received from H.S. Graham. On file Ralston Community Club, Ralston, Wyoming.

1939 Letter to Frank O. Horton. On file Ralston Community Club, Ralston, Wyoming.

1946 Certificate of Incorporation. On file Ralston Community Club, Ralston, Wyoming.

Tubbs, Stephenie Ambrose

1986 "Montana Women's Clubs at the Turn of the Century" *Montana the Magazine of Western History*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Winter):26-35.

Williams, Mae

1945 Ralston Club History 1945. Unpublished manuscript, Ralston Community Club, Ralston, Wyoming.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

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

Specify Repository: Ralston Community Club, Ralston, Wyoming

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: .96 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	668870	4954840
B	12	668940	4954840
C	12	668940	4954780
D	12	668870	4954780

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): N/A

Verbal Boundary Description

The Ralston Community Clubhouse address is 969 Carbon Street in Ralston, Wyoming.

Boundary Justification

The boundary for the Ralston Community Clubhouse is defined by a wire fence in all directions. The area is approximately one acre.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Joan L. Brownell
 organization: Park County Historic Preservation Board date: September 1997
 street & number: 3203 Country Club Circle telephone: (406) 254-2601
 city or town: Billings state: MT zip code: 59102

Property Owner

name/title: Ralston Community Club
 street & number: 969 Carbon Street telephone:
 city or town: Ralston state: WY zip code: 32440

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7. Description

(east end wall). The north wall is solid except for a single 1/1 double-hung window in the same position as the single window on the south wall. The west end wall has one set of paired 1/1 double-hung windows with the remainder of the wall covered by the addition.

The front facade holds a centered enclosed vestibule. The vestibule contains the main entrance. The vestibule has a centered solid five panel door topped with a single light transom. The entryway is approached by wood steps and stoop with an open wood railing. The side walls of the vestibule each have a single 1/1 double-hung window. The vestibule is flanked to either side by a single 1/1 double-hung window. Originally topped by a simple belfry, the vestibule today has a clipped gable roof covered with asphalt shingles.

A wood frame addition extends off the west end wall that contains the kitchen area. This addition, built in 1951, sits on a concrete foundation and has a gabled roof. Exterior materials on the addition are the same as the main building, with asbestos shingles for siding and asphalt shingles for the roof. The south wall holds the entryway and paired 1/1 double-hung windows. The wood door has six upper lights and is approached by wood steps and stoop with an open wood railing. The west end wall contains a pair of small 2/2 double-hung windows. The north wall is solid.

Directly north of the building is an outhouse. This rectangular shed roofed building sits on large planks. It is covered with beveled shiplap siding framed by corner boards. The shed roof is covered with wood sheathing only. The outhouse is divided by a center wall into two sections, the women's and the men's. Each interior holds two seats and has a vertical tongue and groove door entry, although the men's door has collapsed inward. The original outhouses were individual buildings that stood west of the schoolhouse. These outhouses were combined to form the present outhouse that stands near the northeast corner of the building (RCC 1992).

The building stands in its original location. The setting is relatively undisturbed although the coal shed was removed with the installation of natural gas in 1968 and the outhouses have been moved within the site and joined into a single outbuilding. The building exhibits typical one-room school characteristics with its one-story, simple, rectangular shape, windows located on one wall and the entry vestibule. Windows and doors are original. Since the 1930s, modifications to the building, considered by club members as improvements, have been initiated by the Ralston Community Club to better serve the club's activities. Most of these modifications occurred in 1951 after Ursula Brown, one of the charter members of the club, left \$1,000 to the Ralston Community Club for improvements. In 1951, the club covered the original clapboard siding with asbestos shingles and replaced the original roofing material with asphalt shingles. They also reconstructed the chimney. In 1951, the belfry and bell were also removed and a clipped gabled roof constructed over the vestibule. The bell and belfry were given to the Presbyterian Church in Powell, Wyoming. For the club members, the most important improvement to the clubhouse was the kitchen addition constructed on the west end in 1951. The interior floor was replaced in the 1930s and the ceiling lowered with acoustical tiles in 1961 (Pease 1992; Nelson 1959).

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8. Significance

Women working together inspired the creation of the Ralston Community Club in Ralston, Wyoming.

During the harvesting of potatoes in the fall of 1919, three neighboring farmer's wives were assisting with the picking up. They seemed to enjoy it in spite of the hard work. Because of the good dinners and social time while eating and resting, an egg was laid. The incubating period lasted until potatoes were harvested and households were again returned to normalcy. Then one day seven neighborhood women each received an invitation to spend the afternoon with one of the women who helped lay the egg in the potato field (Brown 1926).

The early years on the reclamation project were difficult and household work occupied nearly every waking minute. Ursula Brown, one of the founding members of the Ralston Community Club, recalls that "few of us ever took time to visit our neighbors, unless on an errand" (Brown 1926). Therefore, after this first gathering, the women decided to have afternoon meetings every two weeks in private homes and serve light refreshments. The name chosen for these meetings was the Ralston Community Club with the motto "general welfare." Membership gradually grew by invitation to 39 members. Winter meetings became all day affairs with a potluck dinner at noon. Early social events included Thanksgiving dinners held for the Ralston community and family oyster suppers where one year they served 110 people. While the club really started as a social gathering, the members soon established a "Forget Me Not" committee to remember new births, sicknesses and deaths in the club and neighborhood. Early community service efforts included donations to the Wyoming Children's Home (Brown 1926).

In 1923, the club was officially organized and a constitution adopted. The abandoned Ralston Schoolhouse became the Ralston Community Clubhouse in 1930 although the title was not formally transferred until 1938. The women and their families concentrated their efforts towards making the clubhouse acceptable for their needs. In the 1930s, the club also developed as a social conscience for the community. In 1936, they sent a letter to the county commissioners declaring their disapproval of any "permit for a public dancehall, roadhouse, or retail liquor license in the townsite of Ralston or within the radius of two (2) miles thereof" (RCC 1936). In 1939, the club wrote their Congressman expressing their desire "that the strictest neutrality be maintained and our resolve to send our sons to war only in defense of their home land" (RCC 1939). The club also opened membership to all women within the community, thereby strengthening its tie to the whole community. The motto of the club became "Life at its best to most is a trial, Tis friendship that makes life worthwhile (Nelson 1959).

The Ralston Community Club incorporated in 1946. Its stated purpose was "to promote social activities for the general welfare of the community through education, social and civic programs . . ." (RCC 1946). The clubhouse has served as the center for the activities of the Ralston Community Club. It also has provided over the years a place for local events and activities to occur. The 4-H Club has held their meetings at the clubhouse and bible classes also have been held here. For many years, Park County (for a small fee) used the clubhouse as a voting place for local elections. Such activities and events draw the community together at a central location.

The clubhouse provided members a place to proceed with their community service activities, especially those that require collection and preparation of donated materials or goods. In the 1940s, club work concentrated around war efforts where members sewed Red Cross garments and prepared Christmas boxes for the enlisted men and women. The clubhouse served as a headquarters for their participation in various fund drives, as for the Red Cross and U.S.O. In 1946, they held a clothing and hospital drive and gave a benefit for a family who had lost everything to a fire. Annually, the club supported various charitable drives, as the Red Cross and Cancer Society and donated to heart, polio and other funds. Club members also donated their time to the local nursing home in Powell, where members "adopted" patients, made favors and served refreshments.

As a social center, the club held dances, potlucks, pie socials and bazaars and started a tradition of having a booth at the county fair. (Nelson 1959). Annual events included Halloween and Christmas parties, mother day celebrations, and a flower show. The club had

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8. Significance

potluck dinners and evening family suppers with game or dances afterwards. All these events brought family members together to share these occasions with their neighbors.

Women's club provided "an immeasurable comfort to women on the frontier to be able to communicate with each other. Through the development of personal relationships and social organizations, pioneer women could discuss such common problems as food, housing, and children" (Tubbs 1986:27). Community oriented activities brought relief from isolation and allowed women social interaction by conversation and an exchange of information. Such organizations also helped a women to "fulfill what they believed to be their civic and Christian duty to their family and community . . ." (Myres 1982:208). The Ralston Community Clubhouse has historically held the role of a touchstone for the Ralston community. In such a small town, most activities affect and involve the entire community one way or another and in the process brings the community closer.

Beginning in the third decade of the twentieth century and continuing to the present day, the Ralston Community Clubhouse has provided a place for Wyoming women of the Ralston community to socialize and make a contribution to their community outside of the home. While the building still exhibits aspects of a one-room schoolhouse, the significance of the building is as a community clubhouse. Most of the modifications to the Ralston Community Clubhouse are considered by club members as improvements to the Ralston Community Clubhouse, responding to the needs of the club or for necessary maintenance. The Ralston Community Clubhouse continues to serve as a center for both social events and community service activities. It illustrates how isolated communities in the sparsely populated regions of the West developed various means to achieve community solidarity and cohesion. The Ralston Community Clubhouse is a tangible example of how women helped bind their community together in the face of an unforgiving environment.