

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED MAR 31 1980  
DATE ENTERED JUN 30 1980

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Pearsons Hall of Science (preferred)

AND/OR COMMON  
Old Science Hall

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Beloit College Campus

CITY, TOWN  
Beloit

STATE Wisconsin CODE 55 COUNTY Rock CODE 105

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED (partially)	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input 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"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input 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  
The Trustees of Beloit College; Attn: David J. Mason, Secretary

STREET & NUMBER  
Beloit College

CITY, TOWN  
Beloit

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Rock County Court House

STREET & NUMBER  
51 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN  
Janesville, Wisconsin

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Rock County Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE  
1975

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Rock County Historical Society

CITY, TOWN  
Janesville Wisconsin

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED (slightly)	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Pearsons Hall of Science, constructed on the Beloit College campus in 1892, retains almost wholly its original appearance. It is an imposing building of Romanesque Revival design, faced with rusticated plum brown brick of strong character. Foundations are of rough-cut limestone.

Pearsons Hall of Science is composed of three attached elements: a middle section with apse, and two matching wings set back from the facade of the middle section. Each of these three architectural units is crowned with a hipped roof broken by centered gables. Small dormers on each wing echo the main roof and if not original are very old. There is a slight flare at the corners of the roof, which is enhanced by projecting cornices. These cornices are dentiled, and are virtually the only ornament on the structure. The middle section, in addition, is surmounted by a skylight integral with the roofline.

The eastern, or facade, elevation is two stories high. The middle section is flanked by twin towers nestled in the setback formed by each adjoining wing. The towers rise a full three stories and are surmounted with pyramidal roofs crowned with decorative metal finials. The east front is 136 feet in extent.

Built into a slight depression at the top of the bluff overlooking the Rock River, the north and south wings extend to the west, or rear, 115 feet. Thus on the north, south and west sides, the building rises a full three stories.

From the west Pearsons Hall of Science presents a facade as regular and symmetrical as from the east. The flanking wings project outwards from the mass of the middle section to form a small courtyard. Set between the flanking wings is the apse of the central section rising two stories. At the juncture of the flanking wings and the middle section, matching chimneys rise above the roofline, repeating the symmetry of the eastern facade.

The building was framed in skeletal form with iron posts bearing the weight of the beams; the brick employed on the exterior is screening only. The inside walls were also finished in brick. Slow burning construction was used throughout, greatly reducing the danger of fire.

The design of the building utilizes Romanesque Revival elements, with large massive blocks of wall interspersed with rows or series of round-arched windows. The walls are battered above the string courses and foundation. Pilaster strips appear on the faces of the towers, connected at the top by bands of semi-circular arches, which frame the recessed windows. On the flanking wings pilaster strips are repeated on the basement and first floor windows. These pilaster strips appear to be decorative only and not to relieve weight; they are created by recessing the brick between the levels of the windows. The sills of the windows are of terra-cotta, and the unglazed brownish orange of the sills contrasts nicely with the plum-brown color of the rough textured brick of the main fabric.

Centered in the middle section, the principal entrance, set into a large open arch, is decorated with a lunette screen of ornamental iron filigree. Above this entrance are three tall windows set in a tryptych arrangement, and rising into a gable. This

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arrangement forms the main decorative element of the facade.

The voussairs of the main entrance and of the arched windows are flush with the walls. The first story windows are enclosed within large arches which are semi-circular above the springing and are segmented by wooden mullions, now painted white but probably originally painted in a more harmonious color. Most of the upper story windows are grouped in pairs.

Only relatively minor alterations have been made on the facade, and those within the past twenty years: Modern windows have been installed on the basement level of the south side of the south wing of the building, which now houses the computer center, and entries were created at the base of the two corner towers of the east facade. To accomplish the latter, the south wall of the southeast tower and the north wall of the northeast tower were altered by the insertion of doors in the existing original window easements to create a better traffic pattern for entry and exit from the building. Threshold platforms were aligned with the lintels of the basement windows below. These alterations do not detract from the building's appearance.

The interior of Pearsons Hall of Science is almost wholly unchanged. The general lecture hall, located in the center of the main floor and including the apse, originally possessed a sloping floor. The floor was leveled when the room was made into the Chamberlin Science Library in the 1930's. The supporting iron columns of Doric and Ionic form are still serving their original function in what was the library until the construction of a new science library in adjacent Mayer Hall in the mid-1960's.

The building is in a remarkable state of preservation. At present only the basement floor is occupied, although the theatre uses the rooms on the first floor for costume storage. It is the intent of Beloit College to restore the building to full use, undertaking it stage by stage.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Association with persons of prominence.
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1891 - 1892  
1892 (cornerstone)

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Daniel H. Burnham

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Pearsons Hall of Science is of architectural significance as representing the work of a master firm of architects, led by Daniel H. Burnham, a nationally known Chicago architect of the late 19th century. It is of significance in the area of education in association with the development of the scientific curriculum of Beloit College, Wisconsin's oldest college of continuous academic existence, chartered by the Territorial Legislature on February 2, 1846. It is also significant in its association with persons who achieved prominence in their chosen fields of endeavor.

ARCHITECTURE: Pearsons Hall of Science is significant as the only building in Rock County designed by the Burnham firm, and possibly one of only three Burnham structures in the state, the other two being the Simmons Memorial Library of 1889 and the war memorial of 1886, both in Kenosha. Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846-1912), a nationally known Chicago architect, was known for his civic planning, for office buildings, and many other commissions.<sup>1</sup> He was an organizer of remarkable executive ability, according to Louis Sullivan and others who worked with him in the designs of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, for which Burnham was the Chief of Construction. His plans for the layout of the grounds (as carried out by his associate, Edward H. Bennett) resulted in the germ of Chicago's dramatic lakefront, which was further developed in Burnham's new City Plan for Chicago in 1906. In 1901 he had revived (with Charles F. McKim and William Law Olmstead, Jr.) the axial layout of L'Enfant's plan for Washington D.C., and he was responsible for city centers in San Francisco and in the Phillipines.

Earlier, with his partner John Wellborn Root (1850-1891), the firm of Burnham and Root (1873-1891) created such landmarks in Chicago office building as the Rookery (1885), the Monadnock Building (1889-1891), and the Reliance Building (1890-1895). After the death of Root, Burnham's design veered towards an academic eclecticism,<sup>2</sup> as in the Field Museum, Chicago (1911).

Pearsons Hall of Science, however, designed in 1891-1892, is a free adaptation of the Romanesque Revival style, as practiced by Henry Hobson Richardson and others.<sup>3</sup> The original plans, signed by Burnham, are in the possession of the Beloit College Buildings and Grounds department. The design presumably owed something to Root: "Plans were in the hand of Chief Architect Root at the time of his death", which occurred on January 15, 1891.<sup>4</sup> Echoes of Root's influence on the finished design of the building may be seen in the battered base of the structure, in the recessed Romanesque style arches into which the windows are set, and in the emphasis on the pattern of voids and solids, particularly as expressed in the sweep of the brick surfaces. Subsequently the plans were drawn up by Daniel Burnham,<sup>5</sup> and in July of 1891 bids were solicited. In October of that year the contract was awarded to Leni-check and Thwait of Milwaukee. The cost was estimated at \$68,000, not including

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Beloit College: 6.21.1891, page 377; 6.23.1891, pages 365-377; 1.26.1892, pages 380-381; 1.13.1893, pages 386, 391.  
 Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of Beloit College: 1.23.1891, page 436; 7.3.1891 pages 437-438; 10.13.1891, page 439.

**UTM NOT VERIFIED  
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 0.5  
 UTM REFERENCES (see Campus map appended) Beloit, Wis. Quad. 1:24000

A	1,6	3,330,840	4,710,748,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Only that area occupied by the building. *see continuation sheet rec'd 6/19/80*

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Professor Robert H. Irrmann

ORGANIZATION

Beloit College

STREET & NUMBER

CITY OR TOWN

Beloit

DATE

December 10, 1979

TELEPHONE

(608)365-3391 Ext. 317

STATE

Wisconsin 53511

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE X

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

*Richard Munnery*

TITLE

Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

2/1/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*W. Ray Price*

DATE

6/30/80

DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*Robert J. O'Connell*

DATE

6/19/80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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hardware and architect's fees, or the needed scientific apparatus. The cornerstone of Pearsons Hall of Science was laid on May 12, 1892, and the building was opened and dedicated on January 13, 1893.

EDUCATION: The years 1889-1892 were years of prosperity for Beloit College. Scoville Hall, the College Chapel, and old Chapin Hall (a dormitory for men) were built in these years. Of these, only the College Chapel - Edward Dwight Eaton Chapel - is still in existence, and it has been altered following a disastrous fire. Plans had been proposed for a new science hall in these years to strengthen that part of the curriculum.

The story of Pearsons Hall of Science begins early in the long tenure of the second president and alumnus of Beloit College, Dr. Edward Dwight Eaton. Instruction in the physical sciences was given in a temporary wooden structure, and indeed, the college was inadequately endowed to keep abreast of growing needs for the education of its students.<sup>6</sup> Dr. Eaton set out to remedy the situation and met with moderate success. In 1889 Dr. D.K. Pearsons of Chicago, Illinois, who had made a considerable fortune by dealing in land and bank stocks following the Great Chicago Fire, determined in his seventieth year to give away his accumulated wealth to educational institutions. He proposed to do this by offering a sum of money to institutions of his choosing and challenging the institution to raise a specified additional sum of money to secure the first: an early instance of the present day 'Challenge Grant' concept. Over the next twenty years he was to become a prime and valued benefactor of Beloit College.<sup>7</sup>

Having previously donated substantial sums to the college, Dr. Pearsons in 1891 offered \$60,000 for the building of a science hall, provided the college would raise \$120,000 for endowing instruction in the sciences.<sup>8</sup> The offer was promptly accepted, the money raised, and the architectural firm of Burnham and Root retained to draw up plans for the new building.

From the point of view of education, the erection of Pearsons Hall of Science was a major step in developing the scientific curriculum of the college. From the beginning of the 1850's, Beloit college had offered work in the natural sciences. With the construction of the new science hall, "... now the professors of the sciences rule over apartments thouroughly equipped with the latest apparatus...".<sup>9</sup> The building was designed to house the departments of Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Zoology, and Geology. Mathematics also found its home there. Forty years after the completion of the building, through the munificence of an alumnus/trustee (Dr. James Todd), gifts in the amount of \$73,000 permitted a complete rehabilitation and re-equipment of the laboratories in chemistry, physics, mathematics, biology, zoology, and geology. At the same time, through the generosity of the family of William E. Hale, a \$14,000 gift enabled the college to create the Chamberlin Science Library.

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As Dr. Eaton so aptly phrased, "The science work of the College, however, is not to be estimated solely by its Faculty and equipment; the real value of any institution lies in its product. How long is the list of graduates and students from Beloit, stimulated by its science work, who have gone out for noble service as teachers, writers, explorers, geologists, biologists, chemists, and engineers, as men and women in varied fields of research, whose earnest and strenuous endeavors have brought honor to themselves and thus to the College".<sup>10</sup>

OTHER: Pearsons' Hall of Science is significant also in its association with the professional instructional staff and student body, many of whom went out from the college to attain prominence in their chosen fields.

Dr. Erastus Gilbert Smith, professor of Chemistry and graduate of the University of Göttingen, not only influenced a long line of students during his forty year tenure, but also became widely known in the Beloit community. During his teaching career he authored several monographs on chemistry and published Determination of Rock-Forming Minerals, and Manual of Qualitative Analysis. He was Mayor of the City of Beloit for several terms, and following his retirement from teaching was elected to the Wisconsin state legislature. Among his interests were the promotion of a safe and pure water supply and adequate sanitary systems for the City of Beloit and other cities of the nation.<sup>12</sup> Dr. Smith was followed in the Chair of Chemistry by his student, Paul W. Boutwell.<sup>13</sup>

Among other students of Smith who were to achieve distinction were: O.E. Meinzer, (1901), researcher and author of technical materials concerning geology and water resources; Gilbert M. Smith, (1907), botanist and leading authority on algae, who taught at The University of Wisconsin and Stanford University; and Ellsworth Huntington, (1897), who became a climatologist and geographer at Yale University and authored several volumes, including Explorations in Turkestan, The Pulse of Asia, The Pulse of Progress, and Builders of America.

Dr. Hiram D. Densmore, a graduate of Beloit College in 1886, was appointed Professor of Botany and Zoology in 1888, which post he held for over forty years. During his tenure he worked with his colleagues to broaden the curriculum of the college and to co-ordinate it with teaching on the secondary school level. He authored a General Botany, a widely used textbook in the 1920's and '30s. Two of his students, George R. Lyman (1894) and Myrtle A. Shaw (1919), are especially noteworthy. Lyman taught for many years at Dartmouth College and was a plant pathologist there and in Washington D.C. Shaw was an agricultural bacteriologist for the University of Wisconsin.

George L. Collie, a graduate of Beloit (1881) and Harvard (1893), was Professor of Geology at Beloit from 1893 until his appointment in 1923 as Chairman of the newly formed Department of Anthropology.<sup>14</sup>

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Professor Collie from the time of his appointment to the college was the Curator of the just then received Rust Archaeological Collection which had been donated by Frank Logan, a newly appointed Trustee of the college. The Rust Archaeological Collection became the nucleus of The Logan Museum which was originally housed on the second floor of Pearsons Hall of Science, until 1906. Under the guidance of Professor Collie and the munificence of many donors the museum continued to grow and expand, adding courses in Archaeology (1899) and Anthropology (1923), and sending expeditions to Europe and North Africa, as well as archeological "digs" in North America.<sup>15</sup> This department remains among the strongest and best-known parts of the College's curriculum today.

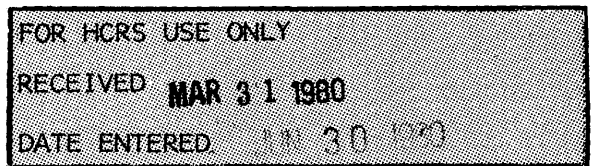
Roy Chapman Andrews, an alumnus of Beloit College class of 1906, studied under Dr. Collie and utilized the resources of the Logan Museum housed on the second floor of Pearsons Hall of Science. Andrews by the late 1920's had been honored by The National Geographic Society for his daring exploits, and had been appointed Director of the American Museum of Natural History, and is one of the best known graduates of the college.<sup>16</sup> Andrew's published works include: Across Mongolian Plains, 1921; Ends of the Earth, 1929; This Business of Exploring, 1935; This Amazing Planet, 1941; and Meet Your Ancestors, 1945 .

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### Footnotes

1. Withey, op. cit. p. 98.
2. G. Hatje: Encyclopedia of Modern Architecture, Abrams: New York , 1964, page 66.
3. Charles Moore: Daniel H. Burnham-Architect-Planner of Cities, Houghton Mifflin; Boston and New York, 1921, Vol. I, p. 29.
4. The Codex, Beloit College, 1892., page 40.
5. Moore, op. cit. Vol II, p. 210.
6. Edward Dwight Eaton: Historical Sketches of Beloit College, A.S. Barnes & Company: New York, 1935, p. 104.
7. Eaton, op. cit. p. 291, pp. 106ff, pp. 110-113.
8. Ibid. pp. 112-113.
9. The Round Table, XXXIX, 8, 1-13-93, p. 106.





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8. Footnotes (continued)

10. Eaton, op. cit. p. 220.
11. Way, Royal Bunson, Ed.: The Rock River Valley, S.J. Clarke: Chicago, 1926, Vol. III, page 600.
12. Eaton, op. cit. p. 81.
13. Ibid., p 215.
14. Ibid., pp. 214-217, 258-259, 265.
15. Ibid., p. 266.
16. Ibid., p. 276.

9. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Eaton, Edward Dwight. Historical Sketches of Beloit College. New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1935.
- Hatje, G.. Encyclopaedia of Modern Architecture. New York: Abrams, 1964.
- Moore, Charles. Daniel H. Burnham, Architect, Planner of Cities. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1921.
- Way, Royal Bunson, Ed.. The Rock River Valley. Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1926.
- Withey, H. and E.R. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects. Los Angeles: New Age, 1956.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Professor Robert H. Irrmann  
Beloit College  
Beloit, Wisconsin      53511

Nancy Belle Douglas  
National Register Officer  
Rock County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 896  
Janesville, WI      53545  
December 12, 1979  
(608)756-4509

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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Verbal Boundary Description

Located along the western edge of the south half of the Beloit College campus, between the Science Center (at the north) and the College Union building (at the south). Pearsons Hall occupies a plot approximately 136 feet wide (north-south) and 115 feet deep (west-east).

D. N. Anderson  
Historian & Registrar  
608/262-0746  
16 June 1980