

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 10 1976
DATE ENTERED JUL 19 1976

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

Basin Republican-Rustler Printing Building

AND/OR COMMON

Basin Republican-Rustler Printing Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

409 West C Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Basin

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Wyoming

CODE

56

COUNTY

Big Horn

CODE

003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Harvey S. and Muriel B. Balison

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Basin

VICINITY OF

STATE

Wyoming

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Big Horn County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Basin

STATE

Wyoming

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Wyoming Recreation Comm. Survey of Historic Sites, Markers & Monuments

DATE

1967 (1973 revised)

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Wyoming Recreation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Cheyenne,

STATE

Wyoming 82001

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In the northwest quadrant of Wyoming, rimmed by extensions of the Rocky Mountains, is a large, elliptical, region called the Big Horn Basin. On the eastern side of the basin are the Big Horn Mountains, a range which at its southern end turns abruptly west in central Wyoming; on the west side of the basin are the Absarokas, mountains extending in a northwest to southeast direction. The Big Horns and Absarokas are connected by the Owl Creek Mountains, a southern link in the wall around the basin. Forming the north wall are the Pryor Mountains and the Beartooth Mountains, the former an extension of the Big Horns and the latter an extension of the Absarokas. Between these two ranges is a broad, dry valley called Pryor Gap, the only natural opening to the basin.

Although surrounded by snow-capped peaks, the basin is generally arid in climate, and receives less than seven inches of precipitation annually. The central area of this intermontane, High Plains environment is one of contrasts--badlands and sage or grass prairies alternating with irrigated fields. Irrigation is made possible by many streams that issue from canyons worn into the slopes of the surrounding mountains. The most important river of the basin, and the most important tributary of the Yellowstone River, is the Big Horn. The latter cuts through the Owl Creek Mountains, bisecting the basin as it flows north toward a confluence with the Yellowstone near Custer, Montana. The Yellowstone, in turn, is a major tributary of the Missouri, and joins that river at the Montana-North Dakota state line. Upstream, or south, from the mouth of the Wind River Canyon, the Big Horn is known as the Wind River. Where it emerges from that deep canyon it is called the Big Horn, the English translation of an Indian name applied first to the river, then the nearby mountains, and later to other features of the region. Flowing through Big Horn Canyon at the north end of the basin the river leaves Wyoming to enter Montana.

One of the principal tributaries of the Big Horn is the Greybull River. Just south of the mouth of the Greybull, on the west bank of the Big Horn River, is the town of Basin. It is one of many, small agricultural centers of the region, but has the distinction of being the administrative seat of Big Horn County. Near the center of town, facing north, and opposite the town's courthouse square, is the Basin Republican-Rustler building. The Rustler, a newspaper establishment, is one of several business enterprises located along West C Street. Immediately east it shares a common wall with a shoe repair and leather shop, and to the west a small plot of grass separates the Rustler from a secondhand store. A garage was once located south, or behind, the Rustler building, but today the remaining portion of lot number 5 on block number 36 has been turned into a parking lot that is leased by a nearby grocery store. The Rustler is a plain, one-story, rectangular masonry and frame structure, its dimensions being 30.5 feet wide by 80 feet deep. Architecturally, the building is not unusually significant. The most obvious feature of the exterior is the north, or main, face in which are found two sets of plate glass windows, each divided into four square panes of glass. Above, but separated from those panes by plain trim, is a linear panel of ten rectangular windows. Above the windows, painted directly upon the building's beige face brick, are the words, "Basin Republican-Rustler Printing." The entire exterior, especially the brick and wood trim, displays weathering that has taken place for more than half a century.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Big Horn Basin of northwest Wyoming was first seen by the white man as early as 1807 when John Colter, a former member of the Lewis and Clark expedition, was sent into the area by fur trapper and trader, Manuel Lisa. Colter's job was to explore the twin possibilities of trapping beaver and trading with the Crow Indians. Four years later Wilson Price Hunt and his eastward-bound Astorians pierced the southeast fringe of the basin enroute to the Pacific Coast, but a thorough exploration of the basin's interior by fur trappers did not occur until about a decade later. The Big Horn River was used to transport furs from the lower canyon to the Yellowstone River, but it was not until the summer of 1825 that William H. Ashley first used the river to move furs the full length of the Big Horn Basin. The first official government expedition to explore the basin was that of 1859-60, commanded by Captain W. F. Reynolds and guided by renowned mountain man and scout, Jim Bridger. Later, in 1864, Bridger led a party of miners from present-day Casper, through the Owl Creek Mountains and the basin to the gold fields of Montana, using an improved trail that became known as the Bridger Road. Bridger's Road, however, was not as popular as the Bozeman Road located on the east side of the Big Horn Mountains, even though the latter was made a far more dangerous route by Indians who fought to retain control of the Powder River Basin, an area that was theirs by treaty.

Despite the 1867 rush to the Sweetwater gold mines of the southern Wind River Mountains, and the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad across southern Wyoming in 1868, the Big Horn Basin remained isolated to white settlement. North of the basin, Crow Indians were established on a reservation along the Yellowstone, and on the south edge of the basin was the Shoshone reservation. Of this isolation, historian Charles Lindsay wrote:

The Wyoming frontier had thus, by 1869, receded several hundred miles to the south and east. The northeastern quarter of the territory was a virtual reservation. The Platte, the Sweetwater, the upper Popo Agie, and the upper Wind River, represented, for all practical purposes, its exposed line on the north. Reaching the Big Horn Basin from the east, the north, or the south, without trespassing upon Indian treaty grounds, was next to an impossibility.

In 1870 a mining expedition penetrated the basin but met with little success, and in the 1870's and 1880's there were only spasmodic attempts to mine in the Big Horn Mountains.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Addendum

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1 Acre

UTM REFERENCES

A 12 735840 4918240
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mark Junge / Historian

ORGANIZATION

Wyoming Recreation Commission

DATE

1/9/75

STREET & NUMBER

604 East 25th Street

TELEPHONE

307-777-7695

CITY OR TOWN

Chevenne

STATE

Wyoming 82002

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

Paul H. Sherred

4-12-76

TITLE

Director and Wyoming SHPO

DATE

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

Attest:

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

7/19/76

ATTEST:

CLERK, OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

6-23-76

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The interior of the Rustler building consists of one large room. The floor is made of fir, walls are of plaster, and the ceiling is pressed tin. All surfaces manifest many years of use by workers of the printing trade. To a person entering the building for the first time, the foremost impression is visual, as tons of printing machinery and equipment meet the eye. The building houses an ensemble of antique printing machinery, and most of the peices are still capable of operation. The collection includes: two linotypes, an intertype, a Chandler-Price proof press, a Babcock Printing Press, two, open-face, treddle-operated presses, a punch, a perforator, a paper cutter, a stapling machine, a stereotype or tracing machine, a matte-casting box, a metal saw to cut type slugs to size, six double type case units, and ten work-bench cases covered with marble slabs. A few pieces of equipment are stored in the building's basement, and one walk-in steel safe located there contains some antique photographic equipment. The machinery on the main floor is supported by a pine sub-floor reinforced by wood, steel and concrete pillars. The latest pieces of machinery include a Compugraphic typesetter, an offset press, and a cylinder press. The building is heated by two space heaters, a floor furnace, and a pot-bellied stove that has been converted to supply gas heat.

Apart from its setting, the Basin Republican-Rustler Building is simply an old building. The exterior of the building is merely a shell of masonry, frame and glass, and is not especially significant even though it is more than fifty years old. Its architectural significance derives rather from its association with a larger setting which is downtown Basin, a setting imparting the flavor of a type of small-town American scene that is gradually slipping into the past. Within the buildings, the collection of antique printing machinery and equipment alone is significant enough for National Register consideration. That collection is more important than its individual pieces and it is more important than the shell housing it. The integrity of the collection, a physical representation of the printing trade as it existed many years ago, should receive primary consideration by those who will determine if the site qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places.

Tentative plans call for the sale of the building and its contents to the county, or to the Big Horn County Chapter of the Wyoming Historical Society. Following the removal of the modern printing equipment, the building and its contents will be preserved, possibly through the establishment of a museum district, as a museum of the printing trade. The preservation of the equipment, at least, is dependent upon the success of those plans, and the success of those plans is dependent upon enrollment of the building in the National Register.

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Before a serious mining effort was made during the 1890's in the mountain slopes surrounding the Big Horn Basin, the region was opened to another industry. Cattlemen found that it was profitable to drive herds of Texas cattle north to fatten on the grasses of the northern High Plains, and then ship them via railroad to processing plants in the Midwest. By 1871 large herds of Texas cattle were being driven to ranges in Colorado, Montana, the Dakotas, and Canada. It was therefore inevitable that the Big Horn Basin, containing ranges for feed as well as shelter from storms, became utilized by cattlemen. But the ring of mountains that formed a protective barrier around the basin also retarded that development. Before the first herd of cattle entered the basin, ranges to the east and south were stocked, and by 1878 there was still not a herd to be found in the basin. However, soon after that date cattle grazed through passes leading to the basin, and the stocking of its ranges took place from 1879 to 1884, the strongest years being 1880 to 1883. Among the earliest, large cattle outfits in the basin were those of Charles Carter, Captain Henry Belknap, Otto Franc, Henry Lovell, George Baxter, Colonel W. D. Pickett, Captain Robert Torrey, Victor Arland, and Joseph M. Carey. The nucleus of the Embar Ranch west of present-day Thermopolis was formed when John D. Woodruff settled there. In 1884 the range cattle industry gave birth to Arland, a town on the western fringe of the basin, on a tributary of the Upper Greybull River. Historian Lindsay wrote of the town:

Arland, as the place was called, could even in its most capacious days boast of nothing more than a saloon, store, post office, and what passed for a hotel. A dance hall flourished in one end of the establishment, for Arland, like many another frontier rendezvous, sheltered a type of the gentler sex that afforded days and nights together of relaxation for the cowboy, jaded from weeks of vigilance in the saddle. Here he gave vent to all the emotions that had accumulated during the restraining days of the drive.

Arland gave way to Meeteetse as the cowboy's place of diversion, and it is said that Meeteetse's whiskey was just as effective as any that passed the bar at Arland.

During the decline of the open range cattle industry, which was accelerated by the terrible winter of 1886-87, another period of settlement was begun in the Big Horn Basin. The small rancher-farmer and the sheepman were beginning to filter into the basin, choosing their homes along the valleys of small streams fringing the basin. As early as 1883 a few settlers with small herds of cattle took up land along the upper Greybull and Wood Rivers. Some who settled the basin's fringes were unsuccessful miners, such as W. Q. "Jack" Morris and his family and a family by the name of Hyatt, who came from the Black Hills in 1886 to settle on Sage Creek south of Pryor Gap. From 1886 to 1893 settlers, including Mormons from Utah and southwest Wyoming, were taking homes all along the Greybull River. By 1893 the large cattlemen were beginning to

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move or reduce their herds and as the open range cattle industry was constricted the sheepman prospered until, by 1897, there were more sheep than cattle in the basin.

Permanent settlement of the basin was based mainly upon agriculture, and not strictly the pastoral variety. Farmers, dependent upon reclamation of arid land through irrigation, provided the basic stock of settlers who sought out the basin from the mid-1880's through the first decade of the twentieth century and beyond. As early as 1885 the first large irrigation project in the basin was carried out along the Big Horn River south of Worland under the direction of W. A. Richards, a man who later became governor of the State of Wyoming.* This project was the first example of the tapping of a large river in the basin in an extensive project to reclaim arid land. According to Lindsay, settlement based upon reclamation came in three, general waves: one prior to the passage of the Carey Act of 1894, federal legislation that transferred arid lands in the West from federal to state, and eventually private, ownership for the purpose of settlement and reclamation; one following the Carey Act and lasting until the Reclamation Act of 1902, federal legislation that made available reclamation project money from a fund supplied by money gained from the sale of arid lands; and one following the Reclamation Act. Thus, farming and ranching provided the basis for the growth of towns and communities such as Basin, and with that growth came the growth of social institutions, such as the dissemination of information to the public through a medium called the newspaper.

According to Douglas C. McMurtrie, Wyoming has the distinction "of being the last state in the union to secure for itself the benefits afforded by the art typographic." Perhaps the reason for the late arrival of the printing press is because, until the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad across southern Wyoming in 1867-68, the area was one across which it was necessary to travel in order to reach another place, and was not considered seriously by most as a place for settlement. Upon the completion of the railroad, and as the High Plains Indians Wars drew to a close, people began to settle along the state's stream and river valleys. Prior to that time, small settlements existed along major, east-west transportation routes and in 1867 towns grew up at South Pass, where gold mining provided the incentive for settlement.

The first newspaper in what is today Wyoming was published in 1863 by H. Brundage at Fort Bridger. It was a small, one-page sheet called the Daily Telegraph, and appar-

*Richards was Surveyor General of Wyoming from 1889 to 1893. In 1894 he was nominated for governor by the Republican Party and on November 6, 1894 became the state's fourth governor. Two months after the conclusion of his term Richards was appointed assistant commissioner of the United States General Land Office.

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ently did not live long. As the Union Pacific Railroad branch of the nation's first transcontinental railroad advanced west toward a meeting in Utah with the Central Pacific, towns sprouted up along its tracks, providing the basis for the newspaper industry in a land which was until 1868 called Dakota Territory. On September 19, 1867 publication of the Cheyenne Leader was begun under the leadership of Nathan A. Baker and James E. Gates. Fifty miles west of Cheyenne, at Laramie, Baker started another paper in May, 1869 called the Laramie Daily Sentinel. In the fall of 1871 W. L. Vaughn began publication of the Evanston Age. William T. Shaffer began the Rocky Mountain Courier in Green River about 1876, and in 1881 the Rock Springs Miner was born. Rawlins, from 1878 to the achievement of statehood in 1890, had five different newspapers. Thus did many of Wyoming's earliest newspapers appear along the line of the railroad in the southern part of the state. In fact, one paper actually followed the tracks of the railroad, its presses located in a railroad car that was pulled west with the construction of the railroad. Editor Leigh Freeman took the paper, The Frontier Index, from Kearney City, Nebraska to Bear River City in southwest Wyoming, where the press was destroyed in a riot on November 20, 1868.

Further north in Wyoming the Sweetwater Mines was published as early as 1868, during the short-lived gold boom to the South Pass region. In 1869 Nathan Baker, who had published papers in both Cheyenne and Laramie, began the South Pass News at South Pass City. Eventually the paper came under the control of E. A. Slack, but when fire destroyed his print shop, equipment, and supplies, Slack moved to Laramie where he became editor of the Laramie Daily Independent. Not until 1883 was the first newspaper published in what is considered the northern part of the state. It was the Buffalo Echo, edited by T. V. McCandlish. On January 1 of the same year the Wind River Mountaineer was begun by I. C. Wynn at Lander.

The Big Horn Basin of Wyoming was comparatively late to receive the printing press because it was one of the last areas of the state where settlement occurred. When the Rustler ran off its first copy at Bonanza on June 1, 1889 there were thirty-one newspapers in the state. The paper's founder and editor was Joseph Newton DeBarthe, a New York City newsman, but also a dramatic critic, playwright, and composer. The perambulating DeBarthe was that type of editor described by one historian as "so constituted as to be unable to resist the smell of printer's ink." For a time he was in Lander, where he purchased printing machinery and supplies from the publisher of the Wind River Mountaineer. DeBarthe then transported those supplies over the Owl Creek Mountains to a twenty-foot-square log cabin in Bonanza, located west of Hyattville on the eastern fringe of the Big Horn Basin. The press arrived in town on a Wednesday afternoon, moved into its quarters Thursday noon, and that same day the first type was set in the Big Horn Basin. In the first issue of the Rustler, DeBarthe told how his journey was accomplished.

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The Rustler outfit was drawn from Lander to Bonanza by John B. Osborne; that is John superintended the drawing and the horses did the work. He attempted to drive through Poison Creek, got stuck in the mire and had to pack the entire load on his back across the creek through two feet of mud. This part of the program lasted exactly four hours. Everyone we met on the road who heard of our having been stuck said, "Why, you might have known you'd get stuck if you went through there," but we found it out for ourselves and won't cross there anymore. The first night out we stopped at the Popo Agie Ranch of John Rogers, and were hospitably entertained by that gentleman and his estimable wife. The second and third nights were passed under snow banks on Big Wind River, but we drew up the fourth night at the Birdseye Ranch of the Hank boys, over whose cabin door we found a two foot board bearing the word "welcome." Barring crossing the Big Horn River nothing of interest occurred. Jack has a sweet tooth in his head and had procured 10 pounds of loaf sugar to eat on the road. In attempting to ford the Big Horn below Stagner's old ranch, he went in deep suddenly, but not half as suddenly as he got out, and strange to relate, although he had \$50 worth of white printing paper aboard, his first ejaclation was, "Great Scott, I'll bet that sugar is ruined."

Greeting his public, editor DeBarthe announced in print:

The paper has not come to the Basin to wait, Macawbar like, for "something to turn up." Nay, Nay, pardners, it has come to turn something up. We have been told that failure will be our portion; that a lingering death of starvation awaits its publisher. But he snaps his fingers at fate and prophecies and has pulled off his coat and gone to work. Come what may, The Rustler has come to stay.

The Rustler did survive, and under the name Basin Republican-Rustler continues to be published today. However, it did not stay in Bonanza. Within a year following its establishment, DeBarthe was off for Buffalo where he began publishing the Buffalo Bulletin. Soon after DeBarthe left for Buffalo, William A. Richards acquired the Rustler. Richards hired Thomas Daggett, a New York City journalist described as "frail of body, but keen of mind", and a man who was reported to have been associated with William Cullen Bryant.

Daggett was involved in the journalistic battle waged to determine the location of the county seat of Big Horn County. When the first herds of cattle were entering the Basin, the region was divided into two counties: Johnson and Fremont counties. Johnson County was created in 1875, with its county seat at Buffalo, and has as its west

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boundary the Big Horn River; Fremont was established in 1884, with its county seat at Lander, and included all of the Big Horn Basin west of the Big Horn River. In 1888 Sheridan County was broken off the northern portion of those two counties, and its county seat was established at Sheridan. All three county seats were outside the Basin and accessible only by crossing a range of mountains. In 1890 the first state legislature provided for the establishment of Big Horn County, its boundaries conforming to the outline of the basin itself. The law provided that when the taxable property valuation of the county reached two million dollars and the population reached 1500, and when Fremont and Johnson counties could be left with sufficient tax bases, Big Horn County was to be organized. The organization of the county did not take place until 1896, and in that year a fight for location of the county seat was waged by two communities.

Otto, the second town established in the Basin, was one of the candidates for county seat and editor Lou Blakesley began the weekly Otto Courier to advance the cause of that town. Blakesley invited Daggett to help Otto, but Daggett refused to move from Bonanza unless he could bring the Rustler with him. When his terms were met, Otto for a time had two newspapers and began to wage a fight with a community that had grown up on the west bank of the Big Horn River, a few miles above the mouth of the Greybull. Basin City, as it was called, was surveyed and platted by Winfield S. Collins, a man who took an active part in the movement to make Basin the county seat. Collins bought the Paint Rock Record, a newspaper established in Hyattville in 1891 by O. T. Gebhart. Gebhart was one of William A. Richards' canal superintendents and the foreman of an 1884 southern Big Horn Basin surveying crew. Collins brought the paper to Basin City, renaming it the Basin City Herald. His editor was Joe Magill, a cosmopolitan cowboy from the Embar Ranch and later an editor and correspondent who spent some time with the Omaha World-Herald.

The Sheridan Enterprise, observing the fight between the neighboring towns, noted:

The intelligent and gentlemanly editor of the "Otto Courier" described his beloved brother, the "Basin City Herald" in the following courteous and endearing terms: "A low lived, brainless coward, biggest lying coward that ever breathed the breath of life, half-witted cur, brainless pup, skunk and poor fool"...Behold how good and joyful a thing it is to see brethern dwell together in amity.

In the end Basin won the contest because it drew support from another town named Cody, and thus pulled votes away from Otto. Two years after Otto lost its bid to become the county seat the Otto Courier was moved to Meeteetse where it continued as the Big Horn County News. The Rustler, meanwhile, had already moved to Hyattville

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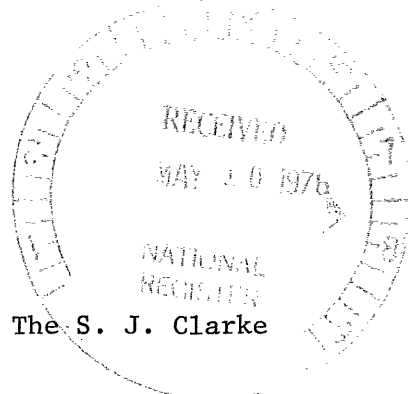
and remained there until 1900, when it was moved to Basin. In Basin it was printed in at least two different locations before merging with the Republican in June, 1928.

The Basin Republican was begun by Ed Phillips in 1905 when the Rustler became democratic in its political affiliation, and was located only a few doors away from the present office of the Basin Republican-Rustler. In November, 1905 Leslie Davidson bought an interest in the paper and when Phillips left, Davidson became editor. In 1907 P. O. Anderson and O. T. Gebhart purchased the Basin Republican. Anderson eventually became the sole proprietor of the weekly paper, which in 1928 became the Basin Republican-Rustler, and his ownership continued until 1962 when the paper was purchased by its present owners, Harvey S. and Muriel B. Balison. In 1924 the Republican moved to its present location in a building that, since its construction in 1917, had been used as a furniture store and mortuary. In 1974 the Basin Republican-Rustler was sent to Worland to be printed at the Northern Wyoming Daily News, and in the fall of that same year the job of printing the paper was taken over by Sage Publishing in Cody.

The Basin Republican-Rustler building is important for its contents, an ensemble of antique printing machinery and equipment. But it is also important for its association with the Rustler, a Wyoming newspaper that was, in 1889, the first to be published in a Rocky Mountain-High Plains region called the Big Horn Basin. Apart from its association with the historic Rustler, the Basin Republican-Rustler printing building has been for more than fifty years the home of the Republican. The Rustler, however, lends further historical interest to the structure.

The relationship of the building to the newspaper industry is particularly important in the consideration of its historic significance, because both the Republican and the Rustler individually, and combined as one paper, have played a role in the settlement and development of the Big Horn Basin. Like most newspapers the Republican-Rustler has been a source of information and entertainment to its readers. How far it has expressed, or shaped, the opinions of its readers is a moot point and deserves further study. But the immediate significance of the paper lies in its value as a historic, primary document, as a written record of the past. Historians are dependent upon it as a tool, enabling them to not only write a chronicle of the region, but also to provide insight into the relationship between the land and its residents. Contained in these papers is a record of local political battles, and a picture of local economic and social patterns. It allows the historian, with the gift of hindsight, to judge how people accomplished or failed in their personal, or collective, goals. In summary, the paper itself is historic, and its relation to a physical structure and the contents of that structure is historic.

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ADDENDUM (continued)

MISCELLANEOUS

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Vertical Files, Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, Cheyenne,
Wyoming.

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