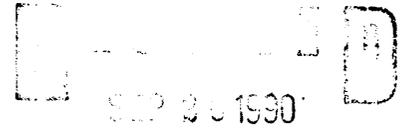


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See Instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the Instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cheney Odd Fellows Hall
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 321 First Street not for publication
city, town Cheney vicinity
state Washington code WA county Spokane code 063 zip code 99004

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	— buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	—	— sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	—	— structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	—	— objects
		<u>1</u>	— Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.
 See continuation sheet.

Jacob E. [Signature] Date 9/11/98
Signature of certifying official

Washington State Department of Community Development Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. 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:)

Arlene Byers Date 10/25/98
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social: meeting hall

Commerce: specialty store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce: business

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: commercial vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone (basalt)

walls brick

roof other: composition

other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Built in 1904, the Cheney Odd Fellows Hall is a late Victorian commercial block located at the southwest corner of First and F street in the downtown Cheney business district. The lot slopes gently toward the southeast, and the alley behind the building is about five feet lower than First Street. The hall is located at the southwest end of the four block business district, an area characterized by one and two story brick commercial structures and interspersed with a few vacant lots where historic buildings once stood. To the rear of the building are the concrete silos of the Cheney Grain Growers and the railroad tracks of the Burlington Northern line.

The Odd Fellows Hall is a two-story brick building that measures 50 feet along First and 80 feet along F Street. The building rests on a foundation of rough basalt fieldstone and mortar. The load-bearing brick walls are reddish brown on the rear and side elevations, and the front facade is faced in beige brick. The building has a sloping roof behind a parapet.

The front facade of the Odd Fellows is divided into glazed storefront bays on the lower level and a planar brick wall above punctuated by regularly spaced double hung windows and capped by a decorative parapet. Except for changes to the storefront bays, the exterior facade of the building remains unchanged. The building is framed by two engaged brick piers which rise from the sidewalk to the parapet and project slightly from the plane of the facade. At the cornice level, the piers are corbeled outward. Recessed between the piers, the facade is lighted by four original one-over-one double hung wood sash windows. The windows are set within segmental arched openings with decorative arched brick hoods. The hoods are united by a stringcourse that spans the upper facade, and the windows rest on a continuous projecting brick sill course. Above the windows, at the cornice level, ornamental brick panels suggest a frieze. The building is crowned by a corbeled parapet, with a decorative round arch which rises from the center of the facade. Within the face of the arch is the date of the building ("1904") and the symbol of the Odd Fellows.

The ground floor still retains the basic configuration of glazed storefronts. A cast iron lintel spans the front and serves as a cornice, and cast iron posts divide the facade into three display bays. Originally, the center bay was recessed and featured entrances into the store. Currently, all three bays are flush with the property line, and the side bays have direct entrances into them. It is apparent, however, that the original mullions dividing the large plate glass are still intact, as are the transoms behind plywood and a shingled awning. Above the cast iron storefront cornice is a dogtooth brick stringcourse.

The side elevation along F street retains good integrity and features a series of one-over-one double hung wood sash windows set within segmental arches, with smaller arched openings on the upper portion of the lower wall. Toward the rear of the building, a rounded arched fanlight indicates the original side entry to the upstairs hall. The hall is now accessed through an exterior stairway enclosed in a corrugated metal shed. A wood loading dock and storage shed at the rear of the building also are enclosed by corrugated metal. The rear elevation is otherwise a planar brick wall except for a single upper level opening with iron fire shutters. On the opposite (southwest) side elevation, the lower wall abuts a neighboring one-story building, and the upper wall is punctuated with a series of double hung windows in arched openings.

The interior of the storefront level has always been a single open space, and remains so today with modern retail and office spaces installed within the volume. The original maple hardwood floors are still intact, and covered with linoleum in only a small section. The exterior 15-inch thick brick walls have been plastered on the inside except for the northeast rear wall which is a tongue and groove frame extension from the brick wall. There is a toilet behind the extension which appears to have been part of the original building. Also in the rear is a set of double wooden doors exiting onto the wooden loading dock. The original transom (now boarded) and wood door within the arched doorway are still intact.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the ground floor is the pressed tin ceiling. Supported by 18 foot high, 12 by 12 inch square posts, the ceiling panels display a Gothic four-leaf pattern, with a slightly different pattern bordering a pressed tin cornice. All ceiling and cornice panels are painted white, lightening the interior considerably. What appear to be original incandescent light fixtures hang from the long chains suspended from the ceiling.

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

 nationally statewide locallyApplicable National Register Criteria A B C DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Period of Significance

1904-1940

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Odd Fellow Building Committee (see text)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Built in 1904, The Cheney Odd Fellows Hall is historically significant for its association with the community's leading fraternal organization in the early 20th century, and is the best preserved example of vernacular commercial architecture from the period. From its inception, the hall has been the venue of the community's most important social events and civic meetings. Today the building is a rare reminder of Cheney's public life during its formative years.

Historical Background. The first permanent white settlers arrived in the Cheney area in 1878. They were attracted by the survey stakes of the future Northern Pacific Railroad, and the availability of good farmlands, water, and timber. The City of Cheney was laid out by real estate speculators attracted to the growing community in 1880.

The speculators received a boost from the railroad, which donated eight acres of land, and one of the directors of the railroad, Benjamin P. Cheney, who donated \$10,000, for the establishment of a school in the new community. Previously called Depot Springs, and later Billings, the new town adopted its benefactor's name of Cheney.

In October, 1879, the present Spokane County was created by an act of the Territorial Legislature. The tiny settlement of Spokane Falls was designated as the temporary county seat. But in the election of November, 1880, the electorate voted to move the county seat to the far larger community of Cheney. The county records, however, were slow to move. In March, 1881, in the middle of the night, an armed delegation of Cheney townspeople "removed" the county records to their new home.

The first farmers raised horses, dairy and beef stock, and hay and feed in the wet bottomlands along the edge of the scablands. Cheney quickly became the leading producer of cheese and butter in the Territory. With the arrival of the railroad in June, 1881, dryland wheat farming in the surrounding Palouse hills assumed greater importance. Cheney became a leading farm supply and shipping community.

But the coming of the railroad and the opening of the mines in North Idaho resulted in even more rapid growth for the rival community of Spokane Falls. By initiative measure passed in November, 1886, Spokane Falls regained the county seat.

The Cheney School District was formed in 1881. At first, the public schools and the private Benjamin P. Cheney Academy worked to meet the educational needs of the community. But when the focus of economic growth moved to Spokane Falls, cooperation changed to competition. And the tax supported public schools held a natural advantage.

By 1888, the Cheney Academy was unable to support itself. In November, 1889, when the Territory of Washington became a State, the townspeople of Cheney saw a new opportunity. The building and grounds of the defunct Academy were proposed to be donated as the basis of the first teacher training institution, or normal school, in Washington State.

The Role of the Lodge In the Community. Cheney Lodge #21 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows was founded a year after the town, in October, 1881. It was the earliest, largest, and most influential of the three main fraternal organizations in Cheney (the other two were the Masons and the Knights of Pythias).

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Records of Cheney Lodge #21, 100F (Earl Moos, custodian).
Boots, Helen; personal notes and interviews; 1989.
Dryden, Cecil; Light for an Empire, the Store of Eastern Washington State College; 1965.
Durham, N.W.; History of Spokane and Spokane County, Washington; 1912.
Edwards, Reverend Jonathan; An Illustrated History, Spokane County; 1900.
Ogle, George A. & Co., publisher; Standard Atlas of Spokane County, Washington; 1912.
Oliphant, Orin J.; History of the State Normal School at Cheney, Washington; 1924.
White, Virginia; Dreamers and Schemers: A History of Pioneer Cheney, 1880-1885; 1982.
----- "Odd Fellows Dedicate Hall;" Cheney Free Press; December 9, 1904; page 1.
----- Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Washington I.O.O.F.; 1904.

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 #

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one
USGS Map: Cheney, Washington 7.5'

UTM References

A 11 456690 5259200
Zone Easting Northing
C
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing
D
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 5, Except NW 12 feet condemned for First Street, Block 5, Town Plat of Cheney.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel associated with the Cheney Odd Fellows Hall.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title David Barber
organization Cheney Architectural Preservation Association
street & number 8830 Wallingford Avenue North
city or town Seattle

date January 5, 1990; revised May 1990
telephone (206) 526-5342
state Washington zip code 98103

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Modern retail and office space has been created in the north half of the ground floor by construction of a free standing lumber and plywood enclosure. It is about 10 feet high, with its own walls and ceiling separate from the building. Similar office space has been installed in the front part of the south half of the ground floor and a storage loft has been installed in the rear of the south bay.

The full basement under the building reveals more of the structure's original character. When a new sidewalk was installed along the building's north side on F Street, a door and several windows were boarded over and partially buried under the new inclined sidewalk. These openings, however, are fully visible in the basement, which has basalt and mortar walls, concrete and dirt floors, covered in part with softwood on "sleepers," and a vertical flushboard wall separating the subterranean space into north and south halves. Posts of eight by eight inch dimension support the floor above and the basement's lath and plaster ceiling.

The upstairs is accessed by the rear stairway which leads to a narrow hallway against the rear wall of the building. A single leaf paneled door leads to a large anteroom. Sliding pocket doors separate the anteroom from the lodge hall, which spans the full width of the front portion of the building. The hall is nearly unaltered, and features a panelled box beam across the ceiling, raised platforms against both side walls, and maple floors under the floral carpeting. A variety of smaller rooms, accessed mostly through single leaf paneled doors, are located in the rear half of the upstairs, and include cloak rooms, rests rooms, and storage areas. Throughout the upstairs, the walls are lined with fir wainscoting and feature plaster and lath walls and 13 foot ceilings.

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The first role of the lodge was promotional. In the effort to attract settlers and investment, the lodge was an important symbol that Cheney was an established community, and not some promoter's pipe dream in the western wilderness. In responding to an inquiry from Missouri, Lucien Kellogg, the editor of the town's first newspaper and one of the founders of the Cheney Odd Fellows Lodge, would write, "All religious denominations are prosperous here and all benevolent orders are organized."

Initiation fees for the Odd Fellows Lodge were \$10, and annual dues were \$2. The justification for that kind of money was the member's self-interest, the benevolent role of the lodge. The lodge paid disability benefits and contributed to nursing care. The local lodge owned its own cemetery and paid funeral expenses. The State lodge operated a home for the aged. In the event of catastrophic illness, the lodge often took up a collection for a member in another town.

But the principal role of the lodge was social. When a petition for membership was received, a committee was formed to investigate "the character of the applicant." A report was made to the members and vote taken. Although they were always anxious to recruit new members, the lodge could, and frequently did, reject an applicant. Membership in the Odd Fellows meant acceptance by the community in the most literal sense.

Membership in the lodge required adherence to a code of conduct, the Principles of Odd Fellowship; these were based on Christian religious principles, with an emphasis on relationships between members. All members agreed to stand trial and accept judgement by the lodge in the event of a complaint by another member. The lodge could levy fines or even expel a member. Rarely invoked, expulsion would have been tantamount to ostracism by the community.

In the early days, the lodge met every Saturday evening. The members met in exclusive, male companionship. The activities of the lodge were secret and included the wearing of vestments and the performance of rituals. The effect of membership was to create a strong bond between the members, which carried over into all of the social, economic, and political activities of the community. The early fraternal lodges have accurately been described as "the glue that held the community together."

The Odd Fellow's bylaws clearly prohibited political activities at lodge meetings. But most of the early Mayors and City Councilmen of Cheney were members of the Odd Fellows. And the record indicates that membership in the Odd Fellows resulted in consensus and coordinated effort on many of the issues facing the community. This political role was most evident in the creation and support of the Cheney Normal School; more generally, the members promoted the interests of business and agriculture.

Membership saw a sharp increase, from 52 members to over 70, when the new hall was completed in 1904. The lodge would continue in the roles outlined above, and prosper, through the advent of the automobile, through Prohibition, through the First World War, and through the Great Depression.

But the Second World War would change the social fabric of small town America, and benevolent lodges would become part of the casualties. The causes of this decline are beyond the scope of this nomination, except to mention that urbanization, greater individual mobility, and television and other entertainment media, have all been mentioned as contributing factors. But other kinds of social organizations have grown as the benevolent lodges declined. Perhaps the causes were more profound, dealing with individual and community values of another era.

Historic Significance of Individuals Associated With the Lodge. The charter members of the Cheney Lodge in 1881 were Henry C. Long, Paul Bocion, Jacob Bettinger, W.W. Griswold, and Lucien M. Kellogg. Bettinger opened the first general store in Cheney. Griswold was a merchant and built the first brick building in town, a billiards hall. Bocion owned the liquor store and other commercial real estate. Kellogg was the editor of the town's first newspaper, the Northwest Tribune; he was the town's chief promoter and carried on a heated battle with the rival Spokane Times of Spokane Falls. Griswold and Kellogg were reportedly two of the citizens who "removed the County records to Cheney" in 1881.

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When the Cheney Odd Fellows Hall was built in 1904, the Lodge had grown to more than fifty members; they were the leading citizens of early Cheney, and would plant the seeds of today's community. First among them was Louis P. Walter, German immigrant and harness maker, with a deep respect for education and love for Cheney. Others have taken credit for the idea of a State Normal School in Cheney and for passage of the legislation. As the Noble Grand of the Cheney Odd Fellows, it was Walter who organized the support of the townspeople.

Walter had already helped to build Cheney's first water system and electrical plant. He was one of three members of the first Cheney School Board. When the Normal School was created, Walter served as president of the first Board of Trustees. And when the Normal School burned twice and appropriations were vetoed three times, Walter would help organize the rescue. He later served as City Councilman, Mayor, and State Representative.

Other prominent members included Ed Betz, president of the National Bank of Cheney and board member of the Cheney School District; today's Betz Elementary is named for him. Abel Brown owned a livery stable; he would become co-owner of the Brown and Holter chain of Chevrolet dealerships. Charles A. Ratcliffe owned a farm implement and lumber business; he would found Ratcliffe Ford. Frank Martin was co-owner of the Martin and Hubbard Creamery; later he would build the F.M. Martin Grain and Milling Company, predecessor to today's Centennial Mills flour plant. One of Martin's sons, Clarence, would become Governor in 1932.

Throughout its history, until it surrendered its charter in 1988, many of the leading men of Cheney belonged to the Odd Fellows Lodge. Space in this nomination does not permit the mention of more than the founders and the members at the time of construction of the Odd Fellows Hall. Of the members at the time of construction, twenty-one were profited or mentioned in Reverend Jonathan Edwards' An Illustrated History of Spokane County, published in 1900. Members, published in the proceedings of the Grand Lodge.

Construction of the Hall: Prior to 1904, the Cheney Odd Fellows had met in rented space. For several years, the Lodge had met in a second story meeting room at the First Street harness shop belonging to Louis Walter. By 1904, the Lodge had accumulated sufficient funds to consider the construction of their own hall.

A Building Committee was appointed, including Frank M. Martin, James L. Ankrom, Early E. Garberg, F. W. Rost, and F. W. Reuter. The committee obtained pledges of short-term loans from the members, purchased a building lot, and prepared plans for the new hall. The committee also purchased materials, and acted as general contractor for the new hall.

The members of the lodge were the principal suppliers of building materials for the new hall. Frank Martin, a member of the Building Committee, and J. F. Oppliger, secretary of the lodge, appear to have organized the Cheney Brick and Tile Company in May, 1904, to take advantage of the need for brick for the new building. Charles Ratcliffe supplied the lumber; other members provided materials and labor.

As work progressed, the Building Committee made loans from the members and paid the bills. When construction was completed, the committee rented the retail space to H. H. Schultz and Son, clothiers, and obtained long-term financing to reimburse the short-term loans from the members.

The Center of Community Social Life. As mentioned above, the early Odd Fellows conducted their weekly Lodge meetings on Saturday evenings. These meetings were the most important secular social activity for the members of the Lodge. But the new hall would soon assume an even larger and more important role in the social life of the community.

The Odd Fellows held a public dance on the evening that the building was dedicated. A dance committee was appointed; the committee's duties included publicity, hiring a band, providing refreshments, handling monies, and cleanup. This began a pattern of monthly dances, which were very popular with the townspeople.

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But organizing dances must have been burdensome, particularly for the few Odd Fellows who found themselves on the standing dance committee. Moreover, H. H. Schultz and Son moved out of the first floor commercial space in the winter of 1906. With more demand for dances than the members cared to organize, and concerned about the payments on construction loans, the Odd Fellows decided to rent out the second floor to all comers. It was the best and busiest meeting space in town.

The following is a list of some of the groups that used the second floor meeting area:

<u>First Date of Use</u>	<u>Name of Group</u>	<u>Use</u>
03-14-07	Eastern Star	Fraternal
04-19-07	Modern Woodmen of America	Fraternal
04-21-07	Congregational Church	Religious/Social
05-09-07	Cheney Fire Department	
07-02-07	Catholic Church	Religious/Social
06-11-07	Cheney Club	
07-13-07	Cheney Athletic Club	
07-29-07	Good Times Club	
07-29-07	Commercial Club	
10-10-07	Swastika Social Set	Dance
10-22-07	Pacific Inn Club	
04-01-08	Summitt Encampment #68	Fraternal
06-12-09	Royal Neighbors of America	Fraternal
04-02-10	Ladies Aid Cong(regation)	
10-30-10	Home Music Club	
12-23-10	Christian Church	Religious/Social
12-31-13	Pine Creek Dairy Boys	Dance
06-30-14	Rainbow Club	Dance
06-30-14	Cheney Band	Dance
07-01-15	Bonton Club	Dance
11-12-15	Cheney Dancing Club	Dance
01-10-20	Morning Star Lodge	
01-24-20	Cheney National Farm Loan Association	
09-16-26	Cheney Normal Boys	Dance
10-12-26	Moose Lodge	Mooseheart Dance
03-18-27	Green's Orchestra	Dance
10-13-27	Rawhouser Apache Dance	Dance
11-18-27	Jr. Order of American Mechanics	
03-17-27	Berry Orchestra	Dance
03-17-41	American Federation of Grain Millers, Local #98	Labor Union
04-17-50	Grange Supply	
06-20-50	American Legion	
07-20-50	Cheney Lodge #34, OOUW	

Some of the groups listed above, such as the Swastika Social Set, were enduring Cheney institutions and sponsored monthly dances for years. Others, such as the Pine Creek Dairy Boys, appear in the records only once.

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The Cheney Normal Boys must have been pulling the collective legs of the Normal School administration. By 1926, Washington State had been dry for ten years. But a little moonshine was often rumored to be cooking out in the pine woods. And although the Odd Fellows themselves were certainly law abiding, a hip flask or two may have attended the dances in the hall. In that era, the dances in the Odd Fellows Hall were strictly off limits to students of the Normal School. Maybe the Cheney Normal Boys were just the regular local boys claiming to be "normal."

And lastly, mention must also be made of the Rebekkas. Although primarily comprised of wives and daughters of the lodge members, male members of the Odd Fellows were allowed to join this auxiliary group. The Rebekkahs held weekly meetings and also sponsored social activities.

The Lodge and the Normal School. When Spokane Falls won back the county seat in 1886, the City of Cheney began an economic slide. The coming of statehood in 1889 presented a new opportunity. The townspeople of Cheney set their sights to secure one of the three new normal schools for their town. A State educational institution would be just the ticket to bring new business into town.

Washington Territory was admitted to statehood on November 11, 1889. The first State Normal School was located at Cheney by the Act of March 22, 1890. Cheney's first Mayor, D. F. Percival, claimed credit for the idea of securing the Normal School. Two politicians, Representative S. G. Grubb and Senator Alexander Watt, waged an unseemly public battle for credit for passage of the legislation.

As outlined above, Louis Walter, Grand Noble of the Cheney Odd Fellows, organized the community in support of the new school. But a difficult road lay ahead, and the Odd Fellows and the townspeople would need to rescue their school repeatedly before its roots were firmly established.

The first arose when the old Cheney Academy building burned on August 27, 1891. The Normal School began its fall term a week later in the public school building, generously provided by the townspeople, then transferred to space rented from W. W. Griswold on First Street. When State appropriations were not immediately available, the people of Cheney voted a local bond issue for a new public school. The State Normal School conducted classes in the new Cheney school until the legislature voted funds, and a new Normal School building was completed in 1896.

In the meantime, and partially due to the fire, the biennial appropriation for 1891-93 had proven inadequate. According to the biennial report for the school, "This lack of funds...would have closed the school but for the timely assistance rendered by the businessmen of Cheney and the members of the board. These gentlemen gave their joint notes in order to secure means for carrying on the work." These gentlemen, of course, were Louis Walter and the Odd Fellows.

Then, in 1893, Governor John McGraw vetoed the new biennial appropriation for the school. The faculty responded by agreeing to accept half salaries, and the students were charged tuition. According to J. Orin Oliphant, "...through the efforts of Louis Walter and other influential citizens of Cheney, the sum of \$3,000 was borrowed to pay the faculty..." The legislature of 1895 restored the maintenance appropriation and, as indicated above, provided \$60,000 for a new building.

Governor John Rogers would become famous for his sponsorship of the "Barefoot Schoolboy Law" in 1895, but he was no friend of the Cheney Normal School. The biennial appropriation was again vetoed in 1897. Again the faculty agreed to teach with subsistence salaries. Tuition was charged, and again the citizens of Cheney subscribed their own funds to pay expenses.

As reported in the Cheney Sentinel, Louis Walter was by far the largest contributor. Walter subscribed \$150 of his own funds, and another \$100 through the Cheney Water and Light Company. Other Odd Fellows contributing included W. W. Cossalnan, T. W. O'dell, F. M. Martin, Raymond Peterson, F. W. Reuter, and J. L. Ankrom. For extra measure, Walter threw in a free supply of winter firewood.

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The fourth and final crisis was a double blow. In April, 1912, the Normal School administration building burned to the ground. A biennial support bill, with appropriations for rebuilding, passed both houses of the legislature the following February, but was vetoed by Governor Ernest Lister.

Lieutenant Governor Louis F. Hart was an insurance broker from Tacoma, and the Grand Secretary of the Odd Fellows of Washington. He was described by Oliphant as “decidedly friendly toward the Normal School at Cheney.” As part of his duties as Lieutenant Governor, Hart appointed freshman Cheney Senator W. J. Sutton as Chairman of the powerful Senate Committee on Educational Institutions. From this position, Senator Sutton had no difficulty in organizing an override of the Governor’s veto.

As reported by Oliphant, “News that the Normal School bills had been passed...reached Cheney (on) March 11. The ringing of the fire bell announced the event to the community, and the town fairly went wild. Soon a large number of people had gathered on First Street,...A meeting was held in the auditorium of the Normal School, and afterwards a group of Normal students, contrary to regulations, went to the I.O.O.F. hall for a dance...”

Commercial History. The first floor space in the Odd Fellows Hall has always been prime commercial space in Cheney’s downtown business district. Tenants in the first floor space have been Cheney’s leading stores.

In the early years, turnover was fairly rapid. The first commercial tenants, clothiers H. H. Schultz and Son, lasted only two years. C. H. Arnold lasted less than two, a restaurant less than one. Beginning with Garberg Hardware in 1910, however, rentals stabilized.

Abe Batoroff and Roy Hansen would continue the hardware business in the Odd Fellows Hall until around 1941. The town Safeway store occupied the space until 1971. And the Sears catalog store has occupied the space since. The role of commercial tenants includes the following:

December, 1904	H. H. Schultz and Son	Clothiers
May, 1907	C. H. Arnold	?
December, 1908	Holly Inoda	Restaurant
November, 1909	Stewart and Ryan	?
August, 1910	E. E. Garberg	General Store
September, 1926	C. A. “Abe” Batoroff	Hardware
September, 1931	Roy S. Hansen	Hansen Hardware
July, 1941	Safeway Stores	Grocery Store
August, 1965	Mormon Church	Church
July, 1969 ?	Lee and Elsie Abelman	Sears Catalog Store
March, 1965	Garnett Boots	Boots Insurance
1966	Walter Goodwin	Barber Shop

Architectural Character. The Cheney Odd Fellows Hall appears to have been designed by a committee of lodge members and the craftsmen who constructed the building. Most materials were locally obtainable. Native basalt for the foundation was probably hauled only a few hundred yards.

The two story brick fraternal lodge on main street, with commercial space on the first floor and lodge meeting rooms on the second, is in the classic mode of vernacular commercial American architecture. These buildings marked the height of prosperity in small farming towns across the west. Most were built between the 1890s and the great depression. But in the 1990s, these landmarks are endangered. The experience of the Cheney Odd Fellows Hall is typical.

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In 1967, the new I-90 bypassed Cheney five miles to the north. Traffic on First Street decreased dramatically. Cheney still experienced a growing volume of commuter traffic between Spokane and the college, but new arterials channeled this traffic in and out of the northeast end of town.

In the early 1970s, the U. S. Post Office, Safeway, and the Owl Pharmacy relocated to the edges of the downtown area, where customer parking could be provided. Then beginning with Thrift Foods in 1975, the Cheney merchants began a rush to locate at the northeast end of town. Factors included location, where State Route 904 enters Cheney from Spokane; the availability of larger building sites to accommodate parking; and the desire to locate near other new businesses.

These trends resulted in long-term vacancies and low rents in the downtown business district. Low rents, in some cases, were not sufficient to support capital improvements or maintenance. When some deteriorated buildings were torn down, gaps remained as unimproved parking lots. This trend has not been entirely uniform; the City and several businesses have made new building investments in the downtown area. But some blight was beginning to be apparent.

In the Fall of 1988, the City of Cheney undertook a Dangerous Building Inspection Program, to inspect all of the buildings in the central business district. Serious structural defects were found in seven buildings, including the Odd Fellows Hall. The most serious defects in the Odd Fellows Hall were settling and cracks in the rear brick wall, and uncertain load capacity on the second floor.

At first, the Odd Fellows decided to appeal an order to repair the building. But concerned that the members might incur personal liabilities, and mindful of an aging membership, the Cheney Lodge decided to surrender its charter. After 107 years, the Cheney Lodge closed its books in October, 1988. Title to the Cheney Odd Fellows Hall was passed to the Grand Lodge of Washington in August, 1989. In the meantime, the City of Cheney had issued an order to vacate and demolish the building by October, 1989.

But a number of local townspeople were determined to save the historic old building. And the City of Cheney, concerned over the economic decline of the central business district, was sympathetic and supportive of these efforts. A private non-profit corporation, the Cheney Architectural Preservation Association (CAPA), was formed.

On September 1, 1989, CAPA and the Grand Lodge of the Odd Fellows submitted a preliminary plan for renovation of the Cheney Odd Fellows Hall. This plan was approved by the City of Cheney Board of Appeals on October 2, 1989; and the order to submit a final plan for repair, or to begin demolition of the building, was suspended until June 15, 1990 and has subsequently been permanently lifted.

Acknowledgements

The Cheney Architectural Preservation Association wishes to acknowledge the following persons for their assistance in preparing this nomination, and for their support of efforts to preserve and renovate the Cheney Odd Fellows Hall: Earl Moose, Helen and Garnett Boots, John boots, Ellen Proctor, Paul Delabarre, Everett Brundige, Floyd Payne, Margarite Barber, Mary George, Virginia White, Pat and Don Smith, and Richard Hobbs.