



A CLASS III CULTURAL RESOURCE INVESTIGATION:
AN HISTORIC SURVEY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE IN
CASPER, WYOMING

NATRONA COUNTY, WYOMING

DECEMBER 3, 2021



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PREPARED FOR:

CITY OF CASPER

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
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THIS INVESTIGATION WAS CARRIED OUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICIES AND REGULATIONS IMPLEMENTING SECTION 106 OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT OF 1966 (54 U.S.C. 307103). THE CULTURAL RESOURCE INVESTIGATION WAS UNDERTAKEN TO DOCUMENT CULTURAL RESOURCES THAT MAY BE AFFECTED WITHIN THE AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT OF THE PROPOSED UNDERTAKING. THE IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS OF SECTION 106 STATE THAT, "THE GOAL OF CONSULTATION IS TO IDENTIFY HISTORIC PROPERTIES POTENTIALLY AFFECTED BY THE UNDERTAKING, ASSESS ITS EFFECTS AND SEEK WAYS TO AVOID, MINIMIZE OR MITIGATE ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS ON HISTORIC PROPERTIES" (36 CFR 800.1b). THEREFORE, THE MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY CULTURAL RESOURCE SPECIALISTS, FOCUS ON THE POTENTIAL OF THE UNDERTAKING TO POSE AN ADVERSE EFFECT TO HISTORIC PROPERTIES, AS DEFINED IN 36 CFR 800.5.

THIS REPORT WAS PREPARED TO CONFORM TO THE WYOMING STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE FORMAT, GUIDELINES, AND STANDARDS FOR CLASS II AND III REPORTS.

Abstract

The City of Casper Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) contracted Grouse Mountain Environmental Consultants, LLC (Grouse Mountain) to conduct a Class III¹ cultural resource investigation and prepare a report for the African American Cultural Resource Survey on behalf of The City of Casper Historic HPC project. The intent of this survey is to assist with the identification and documentation of African American historical assets warranting preservation, recognition, and help facilitate future listings on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

A Class III urban pedestrian survey was conducted on August 26 and 27, 2021 by the Grouse Mountain Principal Investigator Rebecca Mashak. Overall, 28 physical locations were investigated for the project. Of these locations, three sites are previously documented as historic structures with two of the previously known sites (North Casper Clubhouse (Riverview Park Club House), Odd Fellow Building, Casper Lodge No. 22) listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Of the remaining 25 locations, six locations were newly documented as historic structures for a total of nine structures formally documented. The remaining 19 locations did not fit the criteria to be formally recorded.

Of the properties investigated during this project, two remain Listed on the NRHP, two are recommended as eligible (Melvin R. Davis Painting & Paperhanging and the Household of Ruth), and five are recommended as not eligible for listing on the NRHP.

While the properties identified in this report are not comprehensive, nor complete, this list is intended to provide guidance for additional surveys and cultural resource managers evaluating properties for listing on the NRHP. Preservation goals deal with a variety of historic and cultural resource needs, including identification, registration, and treatment. These priorities should be set based on several factors including the condition of individual resources, ownership, economic, political, and environmental conditions, and trends affecting the resources; as well as costs and technical considerations associated with resource identification, protection, and research. Further, goals and priorities should be established for identifying, evaluating, registering, and treating historic properties with shared characteristics.

Because the majority of the properties investigated during this project are under private ownership, certain information such as property owner names, address, or contact information is not made publicly available in this report.

¹ A Class III Intensive Field Survey provides cultural resource specialists and managers with a record of all cultural properties, which can be identified from surface indications, for a specific area (SHPO 2021).

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Project Background and Design

The City of Casper (the City) Historic Preservation Commission (HPC or CHPC) contracted Grouse Mountain Environmental Consultants, LLC (Grouse Mountain) to conduct a Class III Cultural Resource Survey to assist with the identification and documentation of historical assets warranting preservation and recognition that are associated to African American heritage. A Class III intensive field survey provides cultural resource specialists and managers with a record of all cultural properties, which can be identified from surface indications, for a specific area (SHPO² 2021). Identification efforts are designed to recognize properties associated with historic patterns; as well as gather information to determine the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility (NPS 2002).

This project is partially funded by a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant issued by the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Community Preservation Program. The intent of this project will help facilitate future listings on the NRHP with completed research including an urban field investigation, structural/architectural photography, determinations of architectural character and historical integrity of individual resources; and the submission of the survey results to the HPC and the SHPO. This survey will assist in the development of a synthetic context of African American settlement not only in Casper, as well as contribute to the overall history of Wyoming. This report contains management and NRHP recommendations for identified historic properties and provides best management practices for private and publicly owned properties.

According to 36 CFR 800.16(d), the area of potential effects (APE) is the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties if such properties exist. The APE is influenced by the geographic area, the scale and nature of a federal undertaking, and the physical, visual, auditory, and atmospheric effects of the proposed project. Direct effects to cultural resources include ground disturbance that takes place within the boundaries of cultural resources and impact physical characteristics of the resource such as its data content, construction, or materials. Indirect effects include impacts to other aspects of Integrity, including Setting, Feeling, and Association (NPS 1998). Although this project does not have a federal nexus and is not considered an undertaking; the project APE (survey boundary) is defined by the municipal city limits of Casper in Natrona County, Wyoming (Map 1).

A Class III urban pedestrian survey was conducted on August 26 and 27, 2021 by the Grouse Mountain Principal Investigator Rebecca Mashak. Overall, 28 physical locations were investigated for the proposed project (Table 1). All field notes, GPS data, and photographs are on file at the Grouse Mountain Buffalo, Wyoming office. All fieldwork authorizations and support documents for this investigation are submitted to the Casper HPC and SHPO.

Methods

The scope of this survey is to recognize the significance the African American community played in the development of Casper, Wyoming. This population contributed to the proliferation of agriculture as well as building the economy; however, the extent of their contribution is widely undocumented. African American settlement in Wyoming did not occur in a vacuum, and no single resource exists that presents a broad history or perspective of the topic.

The initial approach of this project began with the defined geographical extents as the municipal city limits of Casper, Wyoming which provided a clear guide for research. Secondly, this report identifies the broad patterns and themes regarding African American history of Casper through a records review and local ethnographic research. Working with the WY SHPO, Serve Wyoming, and the Western History Center, the temporal and thematic time-period recognized for this project ranges between 1900 and 1970. Finally, a focus on the identification of specific property types and locations were evaluated for potential eligibility criteria applied to those resources. The narrative of this report provides a thorough description of each identified resource while

² State Historic Preservation Office [Officer]

allowing the historic context section below to address the history and significance of the overarching history of African American heritage in Casper.

As identified through the field efforts, this report document's historical locations and structures specific to the history of African Americans. The information provided here, is an outline on how specific historic properties associated with African American heritage are evaluated, managed, protected, and preserved. The historic context of this report attempts to weave information regarding civil rights activism, commonality where African Americans lived and worked, and how economic, social, and political patterns evolved through the course of this study. As a best management practice, the final evaluation recommendations contain provisions for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nominations and eligibility. Additionally, this report will aid historians when evaluating the NRHP eligibility for places related to African American history not only in Casper, but throughout the State.

Prior to the pedestrian survey, a literature search and records review were conducted through the Wyoming Cultural Records office (WYCRO) and Geographic Information System (WYCROGIS) targeting known, or NRHP listed resources. Additional background research was conducted through the on-line WYCROGIS database, historic map searches; local literature review at the Western History Center at the Casper College; and a search of the online BLM land patent and General Land Office (GLO) plats. Grouse Mountain coordinated the initial resource identification efforts with the non-profit Serve Wyoming and the Natrona Regional Geospatial Cooperative (NRGC) (Serve Wyoming 2021a; NRGC 2021). When pertinent, supplementary research was conducted to identify as accurately as possible the former function and owner of each location or structure.

Grouse Mountain conducted the urban structural survey in accordance with the methods and standards described in the Wyoming SHPO guidelines for conducting and reporting cultural resource surveys. Identified resources are field verified and recorded in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, and the Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Documentation (48 FR 44734-37). Each resource is evaluated for the NRHP based upon Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations 60.4 (36 CFR 60.4) the Criteria for Evaluation, and 36 CFR 800 the Protection of Historic Properties.

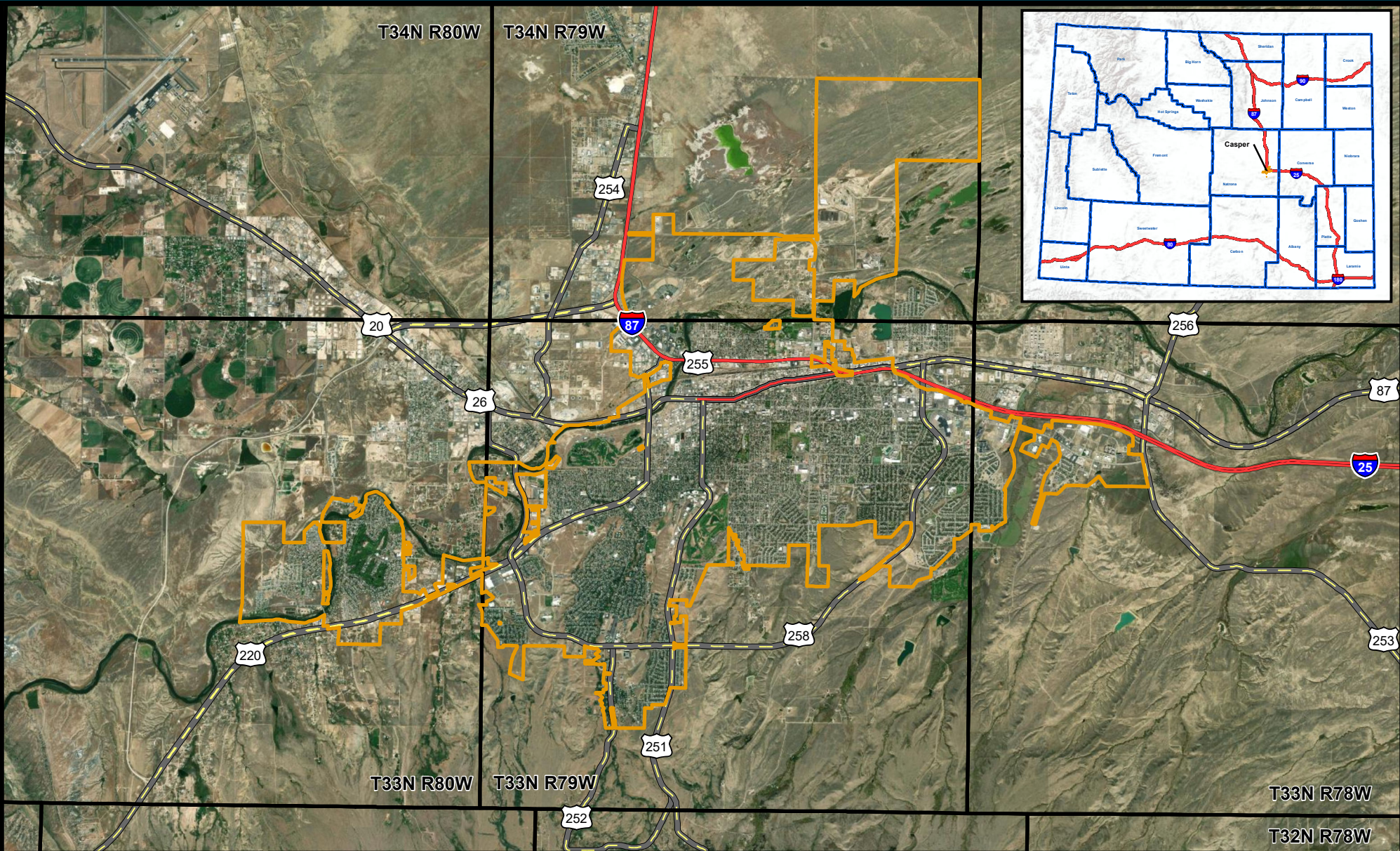
If a specific resource did not have available spatial data, the location was mapped using a handheld Trimble Nomad GPS device with sub-meter accuracy. However, location data was obtained using the NRGC parcel and addressing data (NRGC 2021a-b). Supplementary inventory techniques such as airplanes, drones, and other non-traditional methods were not employed during the August 26 and 27, 2021 inventory.

Table 1. Identified Properties

Former Name	Current Name	Owner Type	Presence/Absence of Structure	Year Built/Property Type (per Natrona Co. Assessor Office)	NRHP Status
North Casper Clubhouse	Riverview Park Club House	City	Present	1939 Pueblo Revival Rammed earth	Listed on NRHP
Melvin R. Davis Painting & Paperhanging	NA	Private	Present	1919 Ranch 1 Story	Not Eligible
Odd Fellow Building, Casper Lodge No. 22	Wolcott Galleria Vita Sana Olive Oil	Private	Present	1952 Fraternal Building	Listed on NRHP
Winter Memorial Presbyterian Church	Food for Thought Project James Reeb Memorial Park	City/Private	Present	Construction Date Unknown	Not Eligible
Casper Children's Theatre	Second Baptist Church	Private	Present	1928 1-story Ranch	Not Eligible
Tree of Life Church	Christ First Baptist Church	Private	Present	1940 Church	Not Eligible
Household of Ruth	NA	Private	Present	1918 2-Story	Not Eligible
Grace Chapel AME Church	Hebrew Roots Congregation	Private	Present	1980 Church	Not Eligible
First Presbyterian Church	Grace Reformed Church @ City Park	Private	Present	1925 Church	Not Eligible
Matthew H. Campfield Park	NA	City	Present	Park	NA
Imitate the Image Ministries	NA	Private	Present	2003	NA
Casper Colored Community Club	Shirts and More	Private	Present	1971	NA
Nellie's Rooming House	NA	Private	Absent	1922	NA
James Reeb Civil Rights Mural	Barlow & Haun Inc	Private	Present	1940 (building only, not related to the mural)	NA
Shirley's Café	Lee's Glass Inc	Private	Present	1917	NA
Sandbar District (<i>multiple properties</i>)	The Jazzland Theater Day and Night Café The Mexico Café The Mapp Family Hotel & Restaurant	NA	Present	NA ³	NA

³ NA = Not Applicable

Former Name	Current Name	Owner Type	Presence/Absence of Structure	Year Built/Property Type (per Natrona Co. Assessor Office)	NRHP Status
The Jazzland Theater	City Building	City	Absent	1980 (original structure demolished)	NA
Day and Night Café	City Building	City	Absent	1980 (original structure demolished)	NA
The Mexico Café	City Building	City	Absent	1980 (original structure demolished)	NA
The Mapp Family Hotel & Restaurant	Modern Electric	Private	Absent	1977 (original structure demolished)	NA
Southern Mansion Restaurant	NA	City	Absent	1980 (original structure demolished)	NA
Alabama Neely <i>[notable individual]</i>	Alabama Hart "Bamma Barnes"- <i>(Notable person)</i>	Private	Present	1919	NA
Ola Belle Smith <i>[notable individual]</i>	Residential home	Private	Present	1920	NA
Mrs. J. E. Edwards	1939 Green Book Entry for "Tourist Homes"	Private	Absent	Unknown, no structure present	NA
H. Keeling	1939 Green Book Entry for "Tourist Homes"	Private	Absent	1927 (year of detached garage, no residential structure present)	NA

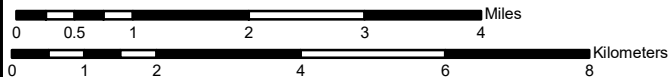


Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 13N
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983
 Units: Meter
 Map Scale = 1:104,796



Class III Cultural Resource Investigation: An Historic Survey of African American Heritage

Natrona County, WY
 T34N-R79W T33N-R80W
 T33N-R79W T33N-R78W



- Casper Municipal Boundary
- Interstate
- Highway



Map 1
Project Location

Terminology

It is important to note when writing about the American history of race, that the evolution of derogatory, or once-acceptable terminology used to describe race has significantly evolved over the past 50 years and continues to evolve. Specific use of terms such as *African American* or *Black* are used interchangeably when referring to individuals of African ancestry. This report does not use the generic term *people of color* with the exception of references to Black people in a general sense, and respectfully only in distinguishing those individuals from their white counterparts. In researching African American heritage in Wyoming, many historic documents written by and about Black Wyoming residents use outdated language. When these documents are quoted, the original language is preserved to prevent applying a modern standard of language to historic sources.

One additional note should be made regarding terminology for the historic “Sand Bar” district and the “North Casper” region. In the early years of settlement, the Sand Bar area was specifically named after a geographic section of the North Platte River that during the summer months when the seasonal flood waters receded, the river divided, and a small channel would remain away from the main body of water. This area was visible from the City and produced a beach of sand and washed pebbles giving way to the name- The Sand Bar. While remaining undeveloped, the area was used by children in the summer to forage wild berries and used as a sledding hill during the winter months (Jones 1982).

After the construction of the Pathfinder dam, flooding in the Sand Bar area ceased and small tarpaper shacks were constructed to house individuals with communicable diseases. These squalid structures were commonly referred to as “pest shacks” with the area used to dump Casper’s refuse (Jones 1982). By 1918, Casper and the Sand Bar had developed enough that undesirable people and crime were indicative of the transient and boom-style recruitment of workers.

Between 1918 and 1973, the Sand Bar was known for prostitution, gambling, and an entrenchment of other crimes. The Sand Bar was considered the segregated redlight district of Casper known to locals as “lower West Casper” whereas the northern stretches of the city became known as the “poor” or “black” community. In the course of this project, the Sand Bar and North Casper carry a derogatory connotation. These areas are still remembered by their former local names. In an effort to address the derogatory connotation the names *Sand Bar and North Casper* may still hold for African Americans in Wyoming; this report will also use the Sand Bar and North Casper when referring to these historic neighborhoods.

Project Goals and Limitations

The primary intent of this project is to facilitate future research on the subject of African American heritage in Casper and the evaluation or nomination of properties with significance to the NRHP. Of the 28 locations investigated for this project, seven are owned by the City of Casper and 22 properties are privately owned. For properties owned by the City, the HPC Ordinances established in 1987 outline and advise residents and property holders to promote historic preservation and awareness (Preservation Solutions 2019). The CHPC has the authority to designate, establish, and/or preserve areas or individual structures within any established zoning district having historical significance for the benefit of owners and the general public (Preservation Solutions 2019). A complete outline of the HPC procedures can be found in the 2019 Casper Historic Preservation Plan (HPP). For privately owned properties, the HPP and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 outline the procedures and processes of a rehabilitation tax credit program for private property owners (Preservation Solutions 2019; NHPA 1966). Additionally, private property owners retain the right to nominate (or to deny) their property for the NRHP. If a private property is nominated or listed on the NRHP, the private owner may maintain, manage, or dispose of their property as they choose, provided no federal monies are involved (HPC 2021).

Factors which may have affected the discovery of historic properties in the project area include a lack of documented resources (i.e., limited historic resources), limited time and funding for personal interviews and in-depth ethnographic research, and a lack of private property owner involvement. Several efforts and attempts were made to contact private property owners as well as a public outreach notification published by the City of

Casper yielded little public involvement. The search parameters of the two historic neighborhoods (The Sand Bar and North Casper) of the project have either been demolished through the Urban Renewal Program of the 1970's and built over with modern structures or were removed under unknown circumstances. Few, if any structures remain within City limits or under City jurisdiction that are indicative of the settlement era, while certain intact properties were privately owned with limited access to the property.

This survey is the first of its kind in Casper and there is a lack of written documentation of the African American population [in the city]. Therefore, what was discovered during the preliminary identification phase and subsequent investigation is neither complete nor comprehensive. The information gathered for this project should be supplemented through state-wide surveys, contexts, by new research, and field surveys that are not limited to only a geographical area, but also the chronological period considered as historic (NPS 2002).

Regional Context

The racial isolation of the historic African American presence in Wyoming is exemplified in overgrown or forgotten cemeteries and the erasure of communities such as Empire, Wyoming from contemporary maps. Despite little written documentation, it is however, known that many of the associated communities were scattered throughout eastern Wyoming along the border of Nebraska. These communities focused on subsistence farming; where decaying buildings and structures were eventually removed or destroyed and disappeared from the landscape along with the people who built them. Slowly forgotten from memory, the presence of African American settlement soon became a mistaken belief they were not here and misperceptions of their role in the development of the



Photo 1. Bronco Sam on a mule--worked for John Alsop on his ranch, Big Laramie River, eight miles from Laramie, African American cowboy on mule. Image courtesy of the Wyoming State Archives (2021).

state is not recognized as significant. Although few in number, the African American population was present during all phases of Wyoming settlement. Local census counts and derogatory topographic names reference inhabitants throughout the state; however, the population was never historically documented, and was never recorded as higher than one to two percent of the entire populace (Guenther 1988). The historic African American population in Casper, Wyoming is relatively unresearched to date and few references exist. The intent of this survey explores structural assets associated with African American heritage within the municipal limits of Casper. The *Cultural Context* section below is designed to increase the historic framework of Wyoming settlement, assist in establishing a background, and resolve misperceptions of the African American role in the settlement of Wyoming.

Census data compiled throughout the State of Wyoming from 1870 to 1880 describe a small percentage of African American inhabitants (Guenther 1988; Larson 1978). Prominent African American individuals have participated in Wyoming's politics, education, and everyday life beginning with James "Jim" Beckwourth, a notable mountain man associated with William Henry Ashley in the 1820's, Mathew Campfield, Wyoming's first African American coroner (1892-1894); to Taylor Haynes running for political office in 2014 and 2018 and James Reeb, a nationally known [white] Civil Rights supporter (Wyoming State Library 2021a). Based on the limited historic data and the County Assessors construction dates of the existing structures documented during this survey, the temporal focus of this project is the period between 1917 and 1971. These dates are contemporaneous with the Depression era (1920-1939) to Modern (1956 to present). Further, these dates were determined using the NRHP criteria of the property must be at least 50 years of age, and whether the property retained integrity and significance (NPS 2019).

African American history in Wyoming is not well known, however, those who have advocated for civil rights deserve recognition for their efforts. Beginning in the territorial days, individuals of African American decent were

minimally represented during settlement- however present, nonetheless. Often facing hostile and unsympathetic treatment from the public and elected officials added a disadvantage to anyone working alongside those who challenged racism and discrimination for centuries. Over the years, Wyoming has provided a space to challenge and persevere. In the words of late Wyoming Representative Elizabeth Byrd, "People here basically look at individuality, not color" (Rose 1984; 6). Through persistence and hard work, many victories were achieved such as voting rights and African Americans continue to serve as government officials, leaders of the faith community, and prominent business owners.

Known and Expected Property Types

Modern day Casper contains a plethora of buildings and residential homes. The city as a whole retains remnants of settlement history seen throughout, while intermixed with signs of a town striving for revitalization during the 1970's. North Casper was once known as the "poor" area and is currently a food desert where there are no grocery stores. Yet, north Casper contains an amalgamation of residential homes still displaying settlement era outbuildings on the same lot as turn of the century Craftsman style home.

In the spring of 1888, Casper's first resident built a temporary home on the upper terraces of the North Platte River. The Fall of 1888 brought the center of town to the junction of Center Street and Second Street, where the town remains to date. By the early 1900's, the economy of Casper relied on the cattle and wool industry with little influence from the railroad and the natural resource extraction industry. The town consisted mostly of the log building ruins of Fort Caspar and was a rough-and-tumble town (Hunt 2014). However, by 1909, with the passage of the Federal Reclamation act, Pathfinder dam was completed, and the town became profitable when the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad arrived (Hunt 2014). In 1914, following the opening and closing of the Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Company and Socie'té Belgo-Américan des Petroles du Wyoming refineries, two



Photo 2. Gladstone Hotel in April 1926. Courtesy of the Wyoming State Archives (WSA 2021).

larger refineries were established and achieved a combined capacity to refine 55,000 barrels of oil a day (Walters 1982). Based on this, and by the outbreak of World War II (WWI), assured Casper of tremendous growth and prosperity (Walters 1982).

New residential housing, hotels, and apartments were built as fast as materials could be obtained and land became a premium. Residential structures consisted of stick-built homes while by the 20th century brick and mortar buildings were common (Photo 2). Wealthy ranchers built elaborate houses still seen today in the Mansion District, south of the city center.

Government buildings and prosperous hotels were built at a grandeur level whereas residential homes varied in construction based on socioeconomic status. Common building materials noted on the 1903 Sanborn Map Company consisted of log, bricks of various colors, iron doors, and windows with shutters. Water systems were gravity fed and supplied by mountain streams. By 1912, common building styles consisted of brick buildings with wood cornices, shingled roofs with extensive improvements to the water systems including duplicate cast iron lines.

Grouse Mountain expected to find a mixture of residential housing styles, as well as some buildings characterized as historic and modern (i.e., craftsman, saltbox, folk style). Most of the original structures of the settlement era have been demolished through the Urban Renewal program throughout the city during the 1970's. At the time, the structures would have had false fronts on commercial properties (Photo 3) while residential structures were described as cribs (Photo 4) or were basic forms that supported large families.



Photo 3. Representative image of a false front store (center) as well as brick construction (left) and tarpaper/shingling (right). Image courtesy of the Western History Center.



Photo 4. Representative image of "cribs" within the Sandbar district later demolished during the Urban Renewal Project. Image courtesy of the Western History Center.

Resource Synthesis

Based on limited historic documentation of African American presence in Wyoming, it is suggestive this population was minimally present. Black settlers were met with exclusion and silencing through being ignored or were subject to violence. Very little information can be found doing a simple Google search on the internet, while more in-

depth research has been conducted by history scholar Todd Guenther and his 1988 Master of Arts (M.A.) thesis which discusses Black settlement in rural Wyoming (Guenther 1988). A secondary source of African American history in Wyoming can be found in the 2017 M.A. thesis written by Robert Galbreath which details the small community of Empire, Wyoming (Galbreath 2017). Both theses detail and emphasize the lack of written history and in most cases, describe research difficulties generally accomplished by word of mouth between local residents.

Although these research papers highlight African American heritage outside of Casper apart from Mathew Campfield, a notable historic person who significantly contributed to the development of Casper. Mr. Campfield was the first Black elected coroner in 1892 and 1894, as well as a military veteran, successful businessman and barber (Rea 2016). Today, the original homestead of Mathew Campfield is located on the grounds of the Fort Caspar Museum. Mathew Campfield later inspired Reverend William Pierce to lead an effort in the dedication of the Mathew Campfield Park located in the northern reaches of Casper (Personal communication Reverend William Pierce, August 27, 2021) (Photos 5 through 7).

A second, less well-known settlement is the Negro Creek Homestead located southwest of Casper. The archaeological site is within the Laramie Mountains and is estimated to have been occupied as early as 1892 and abandoned by 1906/1907 (Guenther 1988). Based on the geographic location relative to Casper, one can imply the Black settlers associated with the Negro Creek Valley frequented Casper.

The 1880 U.S. Census manuscripts of Carbon County reported 11 Black settlers who attempted permanent settlement (Table 2) (Guenther 1988). These settlers were young and coming from diverse backgrounds and were often associated with the military. Most played a minor role in the expansion of the Black population. Although few were revered such as Frank Geoard, a famous scout whose name appears in historic counts of the American west, and Matt Campfield- a local Casper resident who rose from slavery to become the first elected Black coroner.

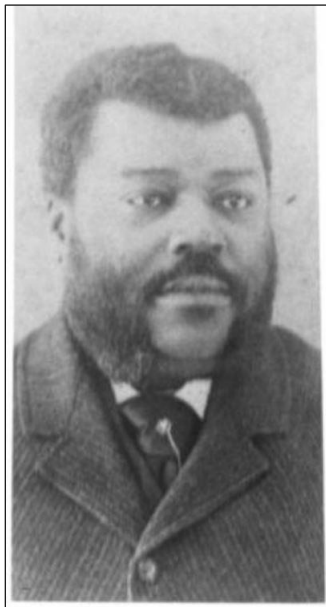


Photo 5. Image of Mathew Campfield at an unknown date. Image courtesy of the Wyoming State Archives (WSA 2021).



Photo 6. Overview of the northern portion of the Mathew Campfield Park, view east.



Photo 7. Overview of the northern portion of the Mathew Campfield Park, view southwest.

Table 2. Documented Black settlers from the 1880 Carbon County Census (Guenther 1988)

Name	Age	Marital Status	Occupation	Origin
<i>NORTH FORK CRAZY WOMAN CREEK</i>				
Palosen, Kazer	33	Married	Trapper	Mexico
<i>POWDER RIVER</i>				
Pickett, Andrew	21	Married	Farm Laborer	Texas
Leoman, Reuben	22	Single	Servant/Cook	Missouri
<i>FORT MCKINNEY</i>				
Campfield, Matt	33	Married	Barber, disabl[ed]	Georgia
Campfield, Fannie	28	Wife	Keeping House	Missouri
Geouard, Frank	29	Single	U.S. Scout	Unknown
Geouard, Sarah	22	Single	Servant	Wyoming
Smith, Rachel	30	Married	Cook	Maryland
<i>TONGUE RIVER</i>				
Lewis, John	26	Single	Farmer	Michigan
<i>PINEY CREEK</i>				
Jones, John	35	Single	Farm Laborer	No. Carolina
Knight, Joseph	22	Single	Herder	Wyoming

Significance and National Register of Historic Places Eligibility Criteria

All cultural resources identified within the survey area are evaluated for the NRHP using the criteria set forth in 36 CFR 60.4 (National Park Service (NPS) 1998) which states:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess [the seven aspects of] integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

Criterion A: *That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or*

Criterion B: *That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or*

Criterion C: *That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or*

Criterion D: *That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history*

Further, all resources are evaluated using the Seven Aspects of Integrity which include location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance (NPS 1998). In order for a resource to be listed on the NRHP, it must not only be significant under the Criterion, but the resource must also have integrity.

In general, archaeological sites that are deemed eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D includes an assessment of the potential or nature of subsurface cultural deposits, though surface features (i.e., structures, buildings, or objects that cannot be moved) and artifacts (i.e., objects such as cans, coins, glass bottles, household items, or items that can be collected) are also considered. Significant sites usually contain enough data to reflect a diverse array of activities that can be positively dated to specific cultural complexes.

Historic, or post-contact sites are generally assessed under Criteria A, B, and C, though historic trash scatters may be evaluated under Criterion D. Trash scatters and other ephemeral remains of historic activity are usually evaluated based upon the size, nature, and affiliation of their assemblage, including the diversity of the site assemblage, the presence or absence of subsurface cultural deposits, their age, and their association with historic

activities and national or regional significance. Historic sites with intact buildings or structures are assessed based upon the integrity of the features, their association with significant persons or events, or by the extent to which they represent a significant architectural or engineering style. In general, sites that are believed to be associated with significant persons or events should be unique or quintessential representations of that person or event.

Inventory Results

During the 2021 urban inventory, Grouse Mountain identified 28 locations that are associated with African American history throughout the City of Casper. Of these locations, three sites are previously documented as historic structures with two of the previously known sites listed on the NRHP (Table 3). Of the remaining 25 locations, six locations were newly documented as historic structures for a total of nine structures formally documented for this project (Table 3; Map 2). The remaining 19 locations are included in the site summary table, however, did not fit the criteria to be formally recorded based on several factors such as:

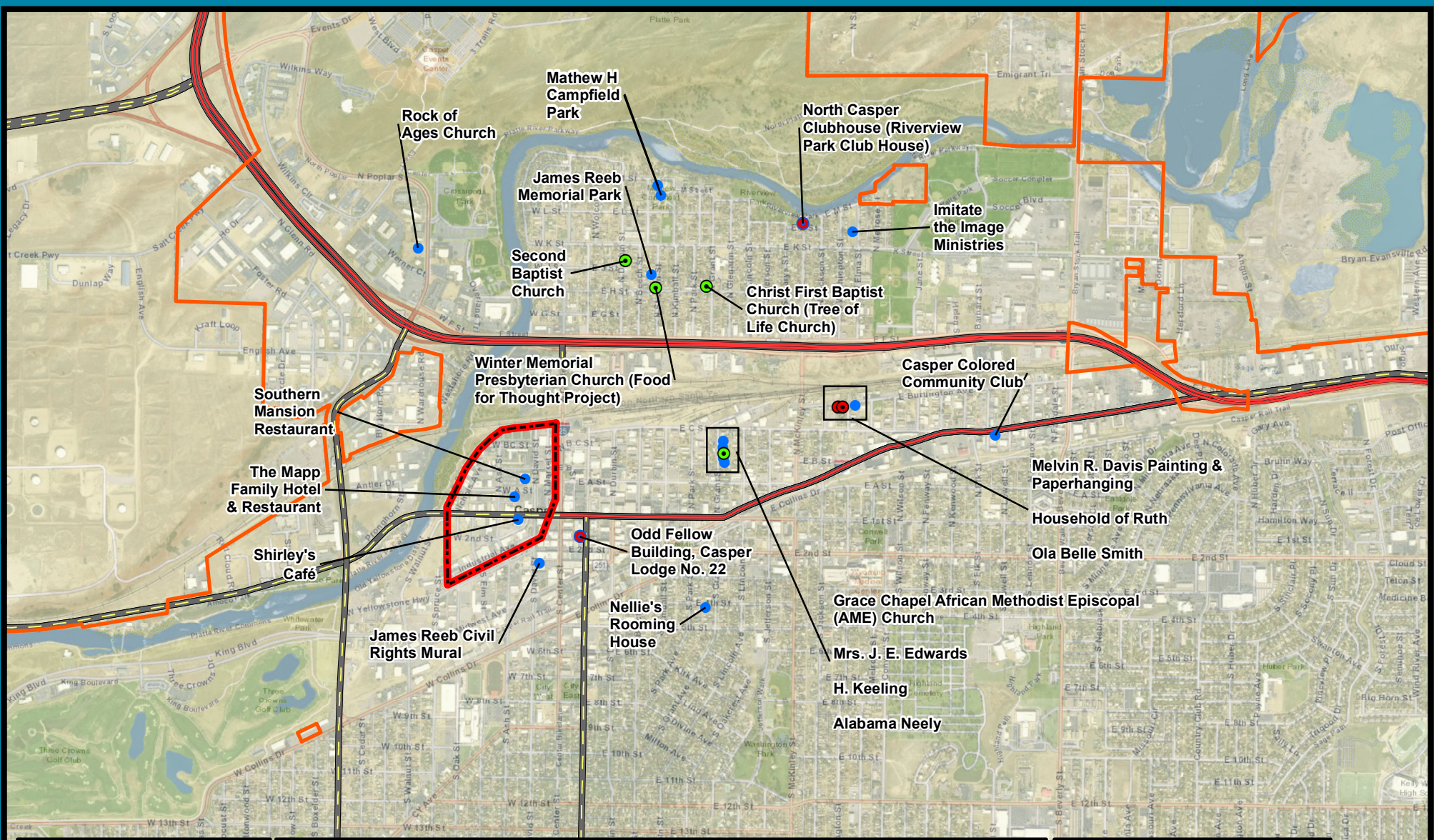
- The property is not 50 years old
- The property is not associated to a significant person or event
- The original structure is no longer present
- No structure was at/on the physical location
- The structure has been highly modified and no longer retains physical integrity of the thematic period

The eligibility of the NRHP listed sites did not change during the 2021 site visits, while two residential homes are recommended as eligible (48NA2751 and 48NA7139) with the remaining buildings are recommended as not eligible for listing (48NA7136, 48NA7137, 48NA7138, 48NA7140, and 48NA7141). A summary of findings regarding these cultural resources is provided below, with the confidential Wyoming Cultural Properties Forms submitted to the Wyoming SHPO and the City of Casper.

Table 3. Resource Summary Table

Name	Time Period	NRHP Eligibility	Criteria	In APE
North Casper Clubhouse (Riverview Park Club House)	Depression (1920-1939)	Listed on NRHP	A, C	Y
Melvin R. Davis Painting & Paperhanging	Expansion (1890-1919) Depression (1920-1939)	Eligible	A, B	Y
Odd Fellow Building, Casper Lodge No. 22	Modern (1951-present)	Listed on NRHP	A, C	Y
Winter Memorial Presbyterian Church (Food for Thought Project)	Depression (1920-1939)	Not Eligible		Y
Second Baptist Church	Depression (1920-1939)	Not Eligible		Y
Christ First Baptist Church (Tree of Life Church)	Depression (1920-1939)	Not Eligible		Y
Household of Ruth	Expansion (1890-1919) Depression (1920-1939)	Eligible	A, B	Y
Grace Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church	Depression (1920-1939)	Not Eligible		Y
First Presbyterian Church ⁴	Expansion (1890-1919) Depression (1920-1939)	Not Eligible		Y

⁴ The First Presbyterian Church is not discussed in this report.

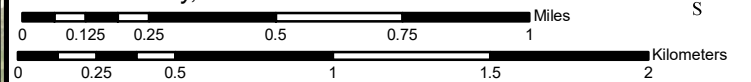


Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 13N
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983
 Units: Meter
 Map Scale = 1:24,000
 Quadrangle(s): 1986 Casper (42106-G3)



Class III Cultural Resource Investigation: An Historic Survey of African American Heritage

Natrona County, WY T33N-R79W



- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| NRHP Status | Listed | Sandbar District |
| Eligible | Casper Municipal Boundary | Interstate |
| Not Eligible | Highway | |
| Non-site | | |



Map 2 Resource Locations

Previously Recorded Sites

North Casper Clubhouse (Riverview Park Club House)

The North Casper Clubhouse was formally documented and listed on the NRHP on November 12, 1993, as recommended by Rosenberg Historical Consultants (Rosenberg 1993). At the time of the recording, the building was owned by the City of Casper, and currently remains under the same ownership as of 2021. A complete description of the structure and the NRHP nomination form is housed at the Wyoming SHPO cultural records office, with a brief discussion below taken from the existing site records.

As of the 2021 recording, the North Casper Clubhouse building is in great condition with some signs of settling, exposure, and normal signs of structural aging/decay (cracks, chipped paint, overgrown trees etc.) (Photos 8 through 10) (Map 2). Based on the 1993 NRHP site record completed by Rosenberg Historical Consultants, little has changed in the description of the building. Several windows on the north side appear to have been upgraded to vinyl windows and have wood shims exposed. All windows have a metal storm window with other modern modifications evident which includes, poured concrete front steps with iron/rebar handrails and grate system (to make this wheelchair accessible). Other upgrades that have occurred over time include sewer, water, and electric. The building is well maintained by the city of Casper.

Historically, the Clubhouse was a type of entity that was a private club for Whites. The literature research, and historic accounts obtained by Serve Wyoming indicates the club was open at times to the African American community (Photos 11 and 12). Because the Clubhouse was designed and built to be a social gathering place, and the original intention of the building was a White establishment; it is important to note the social implications this location had regarding the acceptance of African Americans in Casper. Although Casper was largely a non-segregated community, during the time the North Casper Clubhouse was in operation and allowing African Americans to attend social functions is a significant contribution to the overall history of Casper.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form (Rosenberg 1993):

The North Casper Clubhouse was constructed in 1938-1939 by the National Youth Administration. It is a one-story rammed earth building that represents the Pueblo Revival style. The massing of the building is more the result of construction technique than stylistic design. The building is located near the south bank of the North Platte River in Riverview Park. It faces south and is in a north-south alignment with North McKinley Street, which intersects with K Street in front of the building. The building is surrounded by an open grassy park area with hand-planted junipers, evergreens, hedges, and cottonwood and willow trees. There is a playground to the west of the building. There are no other buildings in the immediate vicinity of the clubhouse on the north side of K Street. The south side of the street consists of a residential area with modest, wood frame one-story homes and small yards.

Eligibility Recommendations:

Grouse Mountain recommends the North Casper Clubhouse remain Listed on the NRHP. As a social club, the building is known to be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Casper's local history (Criterion A) and is not known to be associated with the lives of significant persons in the past (Criterion B). The structure does embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and represents the work of a master, and possesses a significant and distinguishable entity whose components contain individual distinction (Criterion C). Because the structure does not require subsurface testing, the site is unlikely to provide information important to our knowledge of prehistory (Criterion D).

Overall, integrity at the North Casper Clubhouse is good to excellent. Integrity of location is retained. Integrity of setting and feeling have been somewhat compromised by some necessary upgrades and the modern built environment in the vicinity. Integrity of materials and workmanship are largely retained because the structure includes a unique design for the time period. Integrity of design and association is good to excellent with the

period of significance for the North Casper Clubhouse is from its construction between 1938-1939 to 1943 - a date chosen to coincide with the property's nomination to the NRHP (Rosenberg 1993).

The North Casper Clubhouse was constructed in 1938-1939 by the North Casper Improvement Association, a local organization composed of interested neighborhood citizens. The clubhouse was built by utilizing labor provided by the National Youth Administration, an agency of the Works Progress Administration, which was a major component of the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal program. The building was designed by the prominent Casper architectural firm of Goodrich and Krusmark. It was built using rammed earth construction, an old European building practice utilized by German-Russians on the high plains of North Dakota in the 1880s and advocated by many federal government agencies as a low cost and durable building technique during the Depression era. It is one of only a few examples of rammed earth construction currently identified in Wyoming. It has been used continuously as an important community center for over fifty years. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of the rammed earth method of construction, and it also represents the work of the prominent Casper architectural firm of Goodrich and Krusmark.

– National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form



Photo 8. Overview image of the North Casper Clubhouse view north-northeast.



Photo 9. Close-up image of the plaques on the north wall of the building.



Photo 10. Overview image of the North Casper Clubhouse view north-northeast.



Photo 11. Historic image of an event at the North Casper Club House at an unknown date. Image courtesy of the Western History Center (WHC 2021a).



Photo 12. Historic image of an event at the North Casper Club House at an unknown date. Image courtesy of the Western History Center (WHC 2021a).

Melvin R. Davis Painting & Paperhanging

The Melvin R. Davis Painting & Paperhanging house is a private residential home located in north Casper (Photos 13 and 14). This house has significant ties to the African American community through both Melvin R. Davis Sr. as well as Helen Knox. The house was constructed in 1919 and remains under the ownership of the Davis family. The house was informally documented by the Housing and Community Development Department and assigned a Smithsonian number through the SHPO in 1998.

Melvin Davis Sr. established his own successful painting business. His largest annual contract was the Wyoming National Bank Building. Melvin Davis Sr. challenged the painters' union that denied him membership. Later, he rejected the subsequent painter's union offer inviting him to join- requiring him to share his customers (Serve Wyoming 2021a-d). As another contribution to Casper, and based off community development and need, Melvin Davis developed the "Casper Negro Directory and Guide 1948-1949" (Serve Wyoming 2021d). The guide is not well known, or publicly available, however, is currently located at the Emmett D Chisum Special Collections room at the American Heritage Center in Laramie, Wyoming (Pers. Comm. Delia Hagan November 16, 2021). Although Melvin Sr. gained ground during times where African Americans were kickstarting the civil rights movement, the Davis children carried on the struggles that transpired in Casper. They describe how Casper was not a separate, or segregated school system for economic reasons. All the Davis children went to integrated schools. However, the impact of this was; there was never a partner in class and the Black students were made to walk the graduation line at the end of the precession (Serve Wyoming 2021d). The Black students were treated very poorly, and derogatory terms were used regularly against them. White children gave the sense of "other", and no inclusion efforts were made. Teachers imposed a sense of degrading of oneself because of skin color. Despite social disparities, the Davis family was pivotal in challenging segregation and civil rights in Casper (Serve Wyoming 2021a-d).

Another individual important to the African American civil rights movement in Casper is Helen Knox. Ms. Knox was elected in 1975 as the Regional Assistant Secretary of the Orchid Extension Club of Casper for the Wyoming State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs and National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACWC) (Casper Star Tribune August 25, 1975; P.7). The NACWC was formed in 1896 with Harriet Tubman as one of the earliest founders. Groups such as the NACWC women were set up to further challenge the notion that women are not to be suppressed and should be free (Serve Wyoming 2021d). These movements confronted civil rights and women's rights and were happening throughout the country.

In 1998 the Housing and Community Development Department proposed to rehabilitate the property to include repairs for the foundation, windows, exterior gutter system; as well as to replace the furnace in 2002 (WYCRO 1998, 2002). Based on the 2002 site record, SHPO determined the structure as not eligible for listing on the NRHP and the proposed rehabilitation efforts will have no effect to the structure.

Grouse Mountain revisited the property on August 27, 2021, and visually inspected the exterior of the home. Based on an image dated circa (ca.) 1950, the house has been minimally modified since construction with the exception of necessary modern upgrades such as vinyl siding, aluminum soffits, an updated exterior gutter system, and new windows. The house is in excellent condition and is indicative of a one-story Craftsman style home. The Natrona County Assessor website describes this house as a Ranch Style home; however, this style is contemporary to pre-1935 construction (Natrona County Assessor 2021). The Melvin R. Davis home was constructed in 1919 which suggests this style of home is a simple form of the Craftsman style. This eclectic style of home was commonly constructed between 1905 and 1930 (McAlester 2005). These homes have a low-pitched gabled roof with exposed roof rafters and decorative (false) beams or braces under the gables.

The Melvin R. Davis house has a low-pitched, front-gabled roof and a small addition on the south side of the house. The roof has modern asphalt shingles, and the roof rafters have been covered by aluminum soffits. The home does not have decorative trusses or false beams (or are covered), nor the classic columns on the porch. This home

may not have had the columns as the partially covered entrance appears to have been covered at a later date or was originally designed as-is.

Eligibility Recommendations:

Grouse Mountain recommends the Melvin R. Davis Painting & Paperhanging house as eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion A and B. The residence is known to be associated with civil rights events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Casper's local history (Criterion A). Based on the oral history of the property, it is known to be associated with the lives of two influential local individuals who contributed to the civil rights movement in Casper (Criterion B). Both Melvin R. Davis and Helen Knox lived at this home during their participation in local events and support of the civil rights movement.

The property type is a private residence, whereas the resource type is a building and should be evaluated further by an architectural historian to confirm or identify the contributing architectural style. Generally, the building does embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and does not represent the work of a master or possess a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (Criterion C). The construction of the property provides some association with a recognized architectural style in the regional chronological framework based on the period of significance from its construction date of 1919. However, this does not convey significance to the civil rights movement through design and association and renders this connection less useful. Because of this, integrity of association is poor.

Overall, physical integrity at the Melvin R. Davis Painting & Paperhanging house is good to excellent. Integrity of location within north Casper is retained, as this area is associated with having an historic African American population. Integrity of setting and feeling have been somewhat compromised by some necessary upgrades and the modern built environment in the vicinity. Integrity of materials and workmanship are largely retained, although compromised through the use of vinyl siding, aluminum soffits, and modern upgrades to the windows.

Because the activities and contributions of Melvin Davis and Helen Knox are demonstrably important to local civil rights history of Casper and, both parties resided at this residence at the time of those activities supports the eligible recommendation. Because the property does not require subsurface testing, it is unlikely to provide information important to our knowledge of prehistory of the region (Criterion D). However, personal interviews and ethnographic research with the remaining Davis family members may provide a more in-depth context of the civil rights events associated with this residence.



Photo 13. Overview image of the former residence of the Melvin R. Davis Painting & Paperhanging house showing the Household of Ruth to the right (rear) of the house.



Photo 14. Close up image of the stamped concrete "M R Davis". The unmodified photo was taken by Rebecca Mashak on August 27, 2021.

Odd Fellow Building, Casper Lodge No. 22

The Odd Fellows Building is in the current downtown area of Casper (Map 2; Photos 15 and 16). The steel frame, concrete floors, and masonry curtain walled building was completed in 1952. The property is eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A and C and is currently listed on the NRHP. This building is an important component of the post-World War II (WWII) building boom at the time the city was developing as a major commercial center (WYCRO 2009). After the end of WWII, Casper experienced a resurgence of fraternal lodge life with this building representing a modern style architecture designed by the locally prominent firm Goodrich & Wilking (WYCRO 2009). A complete history of the building can be found in the NRHP nomination form, with a brief description provided below (WYCRO 2009).

Grouse Mountain revisited the building on August 26, 2021, based on information that the Odd Fellow organization allowed African American men to join the fraternal order. Although the building no longer hosts the fraternal order, membership prior to the 1970's was open to adult white males 21 years of age (WYCRO 2009). Brief research into the membership of the does not clearly state when African American men were accepted into the organization, several oral histories of the Melvin R. Davis family recount family members joining the Fraternal order. Based on the history of the Odd Fellows membership prior to the 1970's only open to white males is suggestive this opened up to the African American community post 1970. The Casper Fraternal Order lodge presumably followed the same set of membership rules and accepted African American enrollment c.a. 1970 and through their disbandment in 2007. According to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) The Sovereign Grand Lodge website mission statement and command of the IOOF is to "visit the sick, relieve the distressed, bury the dead and educate the orphan." Specifically, IOOF today are dedicated to the following purposes (IOOF 2021):

- To improve and elevate the character of mankind by promoting the principles of friendship, love, truth, faith, hope, charity, and universal justice.
- To help make the world a better place to live by aiding each other, the community, the less fortunate, the youth, the elderly, the environment, and the community in every way possible.
- To promote good will and harmony amongst peoples and nations through the principle of universal fraternity, holding the belief that all men and women **regardless of race**, nationality, religion, social status, gender, rank, and station are brothers and sisters.

The 2009 NRHP nomination form describes the building having steel framed concrete floors, and masonry curtain walls that comprise the structure of the building. Finely honed limestone and shades of gold and tan Roman brick enclose the façade and returning bays on the south side. Red common brick fronts the hollow clay tile walls of both side and rear walls. An unarticulated parapet conceals the roof of the building (WYCRO 2009). In 2012, the City of Casper prepared an environmental review for a façade loan through the urban renewal program. The proposed upgrades included a new exterior awning and lighting. As of the 2021 revisit of the building, the awning was approved, and the store front is currently a privately owned specialty olive oil store. These additions do not drastically alter the building that deters from the historic function of the building, which has been consistently a store front on the first floor.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form (WYCRO 2009)

The Odd Fellows Building in Casper, Wyoming is historically significant...Completed in 1952, it is an important component of the post-World War II building boom in downtown Casper at the time the city was developing as a major commercial center...Lodge No. 22 members began planning for a new building during the early 1930s, but the building project was not initiated until 1949.

Eligibility Recommendations:

Based on the 2009 NRHP nomination form, Grouse Mountain recommends the Odd Fellow Building remain Listed on the NRHP under Criteria A and C. The property is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning

and Development and Social History. With the added knowledge that the Odd Fellows organization accepted African American members further supports the eligibility under Criterion A, as this is a significant contributing element to the history of the building, as well as Casper’s social history.

The building is eligible under Criterion C as it remains a representation of modern style architecture and was constructed by the locally prominent firm Goodrich & Wilking. The period of significance for the building extends from 1952 when the building was completed, to 1959- a significant year that marked the tapering of post WWII buildings in Casper. However, based off the oral family histories of the Davis family, the period of significance may extend to the 1970’s, when membership restrictions were changed, and the social organization allowed members of the African American community to join. As stated above, this is a contributing element to local and national history.



Photo 15. Overview image of the Odd Fellow’s building in downtown Casper, view northwest.



Photo 16. Overview image of the Odd Fellow's building in downtown Casper, view west.

New Sites

Winter Memorial Presbyterian Church (Food for Thought Project)

The Winter Memorial Presbyterian Church is in north Casper and is currently the Wyoming Food for Thought Project headquarters for Casper (2021) (Map 2; Photos 17 through 20). The location is also home to the James Reeb Memorial Park and community garden. The Church building is associated with James Reeb (James Joseph Reeb (Rape)) the Civil Rights activist/martyr killed during the Bloody Sunday riots in Selma, Alabama. At the time of James' birthday on New Year's Day in 1957, the family name was Rape, an Anglicized form of the original name Reeb (WSHS 2015). In 1949, James officially changed his name to Reeb, with his father following suit soon after (WSHS 2015). James found himself drawn to the ministry while filling in for local ministers on Sundays (Reeb 2015). James considered the church home and felt fully accepted and soon discovered he had the capability to lead under these circumstances. During his youth and formative years, he became a familiar face within the churches of Winter Memorial and the First Presbyterian Church in the 1940's (Reeb 2015).

Although this property is associated to James Reeb and his becoming a church leader and his philosophies with the civil rights movement, it is unknown whether James Reeb made significant contributions to the civil rights movement while at this church. According to the Natrona County Assessors website, the building was constructed at an unknown date, also potentially not meeting the minimum criteria of 50 years old to be considered an historic property. However, the building does exhibit certain construction styles that suggests the church was built between the 1950's and 1970's- which could also be due to upgrades and modifications over the years. Based on James Reeb's participation as a member and a substitute minister of this church in the 1940's, this would be indicative to a construction date prior to the 1950's. This is supported by a brief Google search of the Winter Memorial Presbyterian Church, which revealed the church may have been established in 1921 (Manta 2021). However, the source of Manta is not a reliable source, and more research should be conducted to confirm these dates. The 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps indicate a structure exists at the location of the current Winter Memorial Church (Food for Thought Project), however, no references to a church exist on the Sanborn map (Wyoming State Library 2021b).

Eligibility Recommendations:

Based on the 2021 field investigations, Grouse Mountain recommends the Winter Memorial Presbyterian Church as not eligible to the NRHP. The site is not known to be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history (Criterion A). Although it is known to be loosely associated with James Reeb, it is unknown whether James Reeb accomplished anything related to the civil rights movement or if it is a place where he discovered or worked on what led to his activism (Criterion B). The building does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (Criterion C). Finally, the location does not require subsurface testing and has already disturbed native landscapes in and adjacent to the building; therefore, it is unlikely to provide information important to our knowledge of prehistory or history (Criterion D). Overall, the physical integrity of the Winter Memorial Presbyterian Church is good to excellent, while integrity of location is retained as an historic church in north Casper. Integrity of setting and feeling have been somewhat compromised by the modern built environment in the vicinity. Integrity of materials and workmanship are largely unknown yet retained because it is unknown when the church was built and what modifications have occurred to the building. Integrity of design is good, although the building is not associated with an architect or prominent craftsman demonstrating a unique design. Although the structure is most likely 50 years old and provides some association with recognized cultural time periods in the regional and local historic chronological framework, the mixed style and construction of the building renders this connection less useful, and integrity of association is poor.



Photo 17. Overview image of the former Winter Memorial Presbyterian Church, view northwest.



Photo 18. Overview image of the former Winter Memorial Presbyterian Church view southwest showing the James Reeb Memorial Playground and public garden.



Photo 19. Overview image of the James Reeb Memorial Playground and public garden associated with the former Winter Memorial Presbyterian Church (background), view southwest.



Photo 20. Overview images of a James Reeb memorial poster located in the interior of the former Winter Memorial Presbyterian Church.

Second Baptist Church

The Second Baptist Church is in North Casper and was built in 1928 (Map 2; Photo 21). The building currently is home to the Casper's Children Theatre. The building is constructed of concrete cinderblocks with a moderately pitched roof. The street-front portion of the building has a false-front and a large covered "hangar" type of door that is permanently closed. The southern entrance has been upgraded to an outdoor patio with a poured concrete pad/floor and a vinyl fence. The interior of the building has been significantly modified and upgraded and no longer resembles typical church floorplans to include a pulpit and pew seating.

Based on the personal communications with Reverend William Pierce and Reverend Adrian White, the Second Baptist Church has ties to the Casper community stemming back to ca. 1917 to 1948. During WWII, Reverend M.E. Eilonth held services to honor the men and women leaving for war by giving them parting gifts such as American flags, spending money, a pocket bible, and other special items. However, during this time it is unknown if the Second Baptist Church was at this location (see also 48NA7138). Given that the Natrona County Assessor's construction date of 1928 suggests the church was elsewhere. At an unknown date, Reverend Haggerty changed the name from Second Baptist to Christ First Baptist Church. The reasoning is because the younger African American members felt they should be "first" instead of "second".

Eligibility Recommendations:

Based on the 2021 field investigations, Grouse Mountain recommends the Second Baptist Church as not eligible to the NRHP. Although the Second Baptist Church has historic ties to the African American community, the building is not known to be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Casper's history (Criterion A) and is not known to be associated with the lives of significant persons in the past (Criterion B). The building does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (Criterion C). Finally, the location does not require subsurface testing

and has already disturbed native landscapes in and adjacent to the building; therefore, it is unlikely to provide information important to our knowledge of prehistory (Criterion D). Overall, the physical integrity of the Second Baptist Church is good however has been significantly modified. The integrity of location is retained as an historic church in north Casper; however, Integrity of setting and feeling have been somewhat compromised by the modern built environment in the vicinity. Integrity of materials and workmanship are largely intact, while the Integrity of design is good, although the building is not associated with an architect or prominent craftsman demonstrating a unique design. Because the structure is 93 years old and provides some association with recognized cultural time periods in the regional and local historic chronological framework, the mixed style and construction of the building renders this connection less useful, and integrity of association is poor.



Photo 21. Overview image of the Second Baptist Church now the Casper Children's Theater, view northeast.

Christ First Baptist Church (Tree of Life Church)

The Christ First Baptist Church is in North Casper and is currently home to the Tree of Life Church (Map 2; Photo 22). The current building was constructed in 1940, however is historically associated with the African American faith community. The original structure - built in 1917 had an initial name of Second Baptist Church, then was petitioned to have a name change Christ First Missionary Baptist Church. At this location in 1918 was a time when many members of the community were being sent to war. Reverend Eilonth held services to honor the men and women going to war by giving them parting gifts such as money, an American flag, a pocket bible, and other special items.

Grouse Mountain was able to conduct a personal interview with Adrian White, the Reverend since 2017 who gave a brief oral history of the building (Pers. com. Reverend Adrian White, September 11, 2021). Reverend White explains there are minimal records of the building, and the history was not documented well, with the little information available being vague. Some of the earliest Reverends consist of Rev. Haggerty followed by Rev. Johnson, then Rev. Ray Jackson. During the times of Rev Haggerty, Johnson, and Jackson, the church had a great mixture of congregants for many years. The church has, and still is predominantly an African American church.

Since conception in Casper, the Church used to be just a basement church, everything was conducted downstairs up until 1960's.

During the 1990's into the 2000's the church fell into disrepair and only had roughly 30 to 40 congregants. The building started to go into decline based on "populated in a healthy manner" however, in 2008, Rev. Jackson did an interview and was able to muster up \$10,000, but the bank did not find the building worth the remaining \$40k needed for upgrades. During this time, the Church was used as a soup kitchen named "Mols and Fishes" and served food to the surrounding low-income community. By 2012 to 2014, the church closed due to lack of commitment to keep the soup kitchen running. After 2014, the building was in desperate need of repair and upgrades throughout, costs were skyrocketing to get the upgrades and securing funding was harder because of grandfather codes. The boiler burst and the church closed until 2017.

At this time, Reverend White came into the picture in 2017 and was asked to give a speech at this building. Adrian had no desire to be a preacher or be involved, however, he felt God inspired him to Paster at this church. Rev. White learned that when the church became the Christ First Ministries, the board of directors and congregants did not want a Moniker and tried to go after funding to restore the church. The original name created a stigma and [White] people did not want to worship there or be associated with "black people". The goal was to change the stigma, but the board left because they didn't want to change the church. At this point it became the Tree of Life Church.

Reverend White leads the ongoing renovations and has revitalized the building gaining up to 80 members pre-COVID. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, membership depends on who feels comfortable being there. Congregants are a community of African American young men and women who believe God will help restore their lives and gave them a place to worship.

Eligibility Recommendations:

Based on the 2021 field investigations, Grouse Mountain recommends the Christ First Baptist Church as not eligible to the NRHP. Although the Christ First Baptist Church has historic ties to the African American community, the building is not known to be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Casper's history (Criterion A) and is not known to be associated with the lives of significant persons in the past (Criterion B). The building does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (Criterion C). Finally, the location does not require subsurface testing and has already disturbed native landscapes in and adjacent to the building; therefore, it is unlikely to provide information important to our knowledge of prehistory (Criterion D). Overall, the physical integrity of the Christ First Baptist Church is good however has been significantly modified. The integrity of location is retained as an historic church in north Casper; however, integrity of setting and feeling have been somewhat compromised by the modern built environment in the vicinity. Integrity of materials and workmanship are largely intact, and the integrity of design is good, the building is not associated with an architect or prominent craftsman demonstrating a unique design. Because the structure is 81 years old and provides association with recognized cultural time periods in the regional and local historic chronological framework, the mixed style and construction of the building renders this connection less useful, and integrity of association is poor.



Photo 22. Overview image of the Christ First Baptist Church (Tree of Life Church) view northwest.

Household of Ruth

The Household of Ruth is located at the northern edge of Casper and situated on the south side of Interstate-25 (I-25) (Map 2; Photo 23). This area is a transition area to the North Casper neighborhood. The building has a construction date of 1918 and resembles a 2-story I-House, or National family of Folk Houses with the addition of a non-central main entrance, two dormers and a garage (or carriage house) on the first floor (Natrona County Assessor 2021; McAlester 2005). The National houses have a typical construction date of after ca. 1850-1890 and were common in pre-railroad America (McAlester 2005). Although, Casper has a large railroad history, this type of house may also be a modified standard salt-block style home common to the High Plains of Wyoming.

The private residence is situated on the west side (behind) the Melvin R. Davis Painting & Paperhanging home. The oral history presented by R.C. Johnson in the Serve Wyoming MLK/Wyoming Equality Day 2021 Freedom Trail presentation states this is the location for the women's Auxiliary group for the NACWC (Serve Wyoming 2021). Ms. Johnson explains that her grandmother and the group met every second, and fourth Tuesday of every month promptly at 8pm. The NACWC was formed in 1896 with Harriet Tubman as one of the earliest founding members. Groups such as the NACWC women were set up to challenge the notion that women are not to be suppressed and should be free (Serve Wyoming 2021d). These movements led by the women of Casper were paramount and contributed to the overall civil rights, and women's rights activism happening throughout the country. This residence has a shared history with the Melvin R. Davis Painting & Paperhanging home, the Davis family, and other influential individuals whose participation in local civil rights events help shape and support the civil rights movement at a local level.

Eligibility Recommendations:

Grouse Mountain recommends the Household of Ruth as eligible for listing on the NRHP under Criterion A and B. The residential building is known to be associated with civil rights events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of events in local history (Criterion A). Based on the oral history of the property, it is associated with Davis family members who played an active and influential role for civil rights in Casper. Several of the Davis family members contributed to the civil rights movement through persistent activism and social

networking to promote equal rights (Criterion B). Generally, the building does embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, although it does not represent the work of a master or possess a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (Criterion C). Because the building does not require subsurface testing, it is unlikely to provide information important to our knowledge of prehistory of the region (Criterion D). However, additional ethnographic research is needed to fully evaluate the property based on the significance of the Casper Chapter of the NACWC and the Davis family contributions to civil rights.

Overall, physical integrity of the Household of Ruth is good to excellent. Integrity of location within north Casper is moderately retained, as this area is associated with having an historic African American population. Integrity of setting and feeling have been compromised by some necessary upgrades and the modern built environment in the vicinity. Integrity of materials and workmanship are somewhat intact. While the integrity of design is good, the building is not associated with an architect or prominent craftsman demonstrating a unique design. Because the structure is 103 years old and provides association with recognized architectural style in the regional and local historic chronological framework, the mixed style and construction of the building renders this connection less useful, and integrity of association is poor.



Photo 23. Overview image of the House of Ruth, view south-southwest.

Grace Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church

The Grace Chapel AME Church is in North Casper and is currently the home to the Hebrew Roots Congregation (Map 2; Photos 24 and 25). There are conflicting records on the construction date of the building, as well as the original location of the Church (possibly on 2nd Street). The Natrona County Assessor's office states the structure was built in 1980, whereas oral histories and a placard on the building indicate as a construction data as early as 1917. The Grace AME Church at a national level is the first organized Black denomination in the United States (National Humanities 2009). The denomination was formally organized in 1816 in Philadelphia out of a congregation of African Americans who withdrew in 1787 from St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church because of restrictions in seating.

The Grace AME Church is historically associated with the African American community of faith. The Churches' leaders in Casper are known to preach the idea of equality prior to the Martin Luther King preaching's. The church brought in Paster James O'Miner in 1926 who spoke for fighting, demonstrating, and claiming your rights. Many people heard this and followed this advice. His greatest concern was that people would do things to be arrested during the Civil Rights movement- presumably being arrested in protest. This notion continued with Pastor Benjamin Watson who has been a long advocate for equality and working for one's rights and asserting one's claim to those rights (Serve Wyoming 2021d). The Grace AME Church was incorporated in 1970, however, it was dissolved in 2009.

Grouse Mountain conducted a field visit on August 26, 2021, and visually assessed the building's exterior. The building is a one-story structure with a partially above ground basement. The front entrance has wood siding and has architectural attributes common to church architecture. The main structure is a front-gabled saltbox building with a brick and concrete cinder block foundation and a mixture of wood and cement board siding. The rear of the building has a basement entrance and shows the remnants of a poured concrete foundation. This is suggestive that there was once an older structure here and the current building was built at a later date. Further research is needed, such as a search for the blueprints to confirm the 1980 construction.

Eligibility Recommendations:

Based on the 2021 field investigations, Grouse Mountain recommends the Grace AME Church as not eligible to the NRHP. Although the Grace AME Church has historic ties and deep roots to the African American community, both locally and nationally (Criterion A), it is unknown if this building is the original building for the Church, or if this is the location known to be associated with civil rights events that contributed to the broad patterns of Casper's [social] history (Criterion A). The building is not known to be associated with the lives of significant persons in the past (Criterion B). The building does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (Criterion C). Finally, the location does not require subsurface testing and has already disturbed native landscapes in and adjacent to the building; therefore, it is unlikely to provide information important to our knowledge of prehistory (Criterion D). Overall, the physical integrity of the Grace AME Church is good, however, it has been significantly modified and may not be the original structure for the Grace AME Church. Based on the 1980 construction date, this would disqualify the structure to be eligible because it is not 50 years or older.

The integrity of location is retained as an historic church in north Casper; however, the integrity of setting and feeling have been somewhat compromised by the modern built environment in the vicinity. Integrity of materials and workmanship are largely intact, and while the integrity of design is good, the building is not associated with an architect or prominent craftsman demonstrating a unique design. Because the structure is 41 years old and provides association with recognized cultural time periods in the regional and local historic chronological framework, the mixed style and construction of the building renders this connection less useful, and integrity of association is poor.



Photo 24. Overview image of the Grace Chapel AME Church, view east.



Photo 25. Close-up image of the south wall of the Grace Chapel AME Church showing the AME plaque.

Summary and Conclusion

During the course of this project, every effort was made to identify potential property types related to African American heritage in Casper, Wyoming from ca. 1900 to 1970. However, future research may identify additional NRHP eligible properties that relate to African American heritage that are outside the types of properties listed in this report. While the properties identified in this report are not comprehensive, nor complete, this list is intended to provide guidance for additional surveys and cultural resource managers evaluating properties for listing on the NRHP.

The primary goal of this project was to identify, document, and evaluate properties based on the NRHP qualifications; as well as identify key research domains specific to Casper. These include and are not limited to:

- Social history (fraternal orders/clubs)
- Women's movements
- Military
- Politics
- Public accommodation
- Housing

These key domains should be further investigated and ask questions such as: are there additional structures/locations that were not identified and what other methods can be incorporated for public involvement? Public involvement of local community and faith leaders, in particular from those of the Black community, is integral and may lead to additional discoveries due to a lack of written history. Local community and faith leaders have a wealth of institutional knowledge, word-of-mouth collection of stories, and possible tangible records. These histories should be further researched and documented.

Preservation goals deal with a variety of historic and cultural resource needs, including identification, registration, and treatment. Additional factors to consider include addressing information needs, research, and interpretation. Preservation priorities should be set based on several factors such as the condition of individual resources, ownership, as well as economic, political, and environmental conditions and trends affecting the resources; costs and technical considerations associated with resource identification, protection, and research. Further, goals and priorities should be established for identifying, evaluating, registering, and treating historic properties with shared characteristics.

Common Acronyms and Abbreviations

ca.	Circa [1918]
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
GIS	Geographic Information System
HPC	[Casper] Historic Preservation Commission
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office [Officer]
WSA	Wyoming State Archives
WYCPF	Wyoming Cultural Properties Form
WYIRF	Wyoming Isolated Resource Form
WYCRO	Wyoming Cultural Records Office
WYCROGIS	Wyoming Cultural Resource Geographic Information System
UWAR	University of Wyoming Archaeological Repository

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