

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received AUG 5 1986
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic American Woman's League Chapter House

and or common Peck Library

2. Location

street & number 217 North Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Peck N/A vicinity of

state Idaho code 016 county Nez Perce code 069

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
☐ district	☒ public	☒ occupied	☐ agriculture
☒ building(s)	☐ private	☐ unoccupied	☐ commercial
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment
☐ object	N/A in process	☐ yes: restricted	☐ government
	N/A being considered	☒ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial
		☐ no	☐ military
			☐ museum
			☐ park
			☐ private residence
			☐ religious
			☐ scientific
			☐ transportation
			☒ other: library

4. Owner of Property

name City of Peck

street & number P.O. Box 105

city, town Peck N/A vicinity of state Idaho 83545

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Nez Perce County Courthouse

street & number Main and Thirteenth Streets

city, town Lewiston state Idaho 83501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Idaho State Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1982 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Idaho State Historical Society

city, town Boise state Idaho

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered	☒ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☒ altered	N/A moved date N/A
☒ fair	☐ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The American Woman's League Chapter House is a one-story frame and stucco building facing southwest onto Main Street in the small town of Peck, Idaho. The building has a cruciform plan formed by two cross-gabled rectangular blocks. The outset entry and the two wings flanking it form a seven-bay front with a central door and three windows either side of it. The exterior wall finish of the frame building is comprised of a clapboarded section from the concrete slab foundation up to the window sills and stucco from the window sills to the eaves. The building's gable roof is covered with corrugated metal sheets.

Architects of the AWL chapter houses drew on the Prairie Style for the houses' low profile and horizontal lines, an effect created by shallow roofs, large squat chimneys, deep enclosed overhanging eaves, and horizontal bands of dark clapboards, light stucco, dark-framed windows, and dark eaves boards. The Peck chapter house retains all of these features, as well as original sash and glazing in the six-over-six double-hung sash windows, and decorative diagonal bricks and dark headers in the chimney on the northwest wall. The single-pane paneled front and side doors are probably original fixtures. Along the front and around the wings of the building, the clapboard siding is outset the depth of the chimney and of the built-in bookcase which is centered on the southeast wall. The outset, angled at the building corners, serves as a planter.

Two bas reliefs related to the AWL are extant in the building. On the exterior, a bas relief in the gable space above the front door displays the AWL emblem: the letters AWL superimposed on each other and over a cross, all within a wreath. Below the emblem is the legend "American Woman's League" in raised letters. On the interior, a bas relief plaque is set into the chimney above the fireplace. Entitled "Woman's Mission," the plaque by George Julian Zolnay depicts a seated woman embracing two children. On her lap is an open book.

The City of Peck has recently acquired the building and found a compatible reuse for it as the Peck Library. The chapter house is nearly unaltered. In the recent remodeling, a window in the rear wall has been stuccoed over, the metal roofing painted, and the original doors restored. The metal roofing dates from about 1945-1955 and covers the original compositio roofing. On the interior the original plan and design elements are intact, with the exception that a partition was added in the rear kitchen wing to create a bathroom for the Peck Library remodeling. The original kiln was removed from the building before 1940. A small sign reading "Peck Library" has been placed immediately above the front door. Also on the property is a woodshed built later than the chapter house and not contributing to the nomination.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400–1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500–1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600–1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☒ social/
☐ 1700–1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☐ 1800–1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☒ 1900–	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates	1909	Builder/Architect	Helpfensteller, Hirsch and Watson
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The American Woman's League Chapter House in Peck is architecturally significant as a nearly unaltered example of AWL architecture. The chapter house is one of two that were built in Idaho, and it is the only one of those to survive today. The chapter house is historically significant for its association with the AWL movement and for its role as a center for local social and educational activities. The building is significant at least within a state context; depending upon the survival of the thirty-nine other chapter houses built throughout the United States, the Peck building may be of national significance.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Peck

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

UTM References

A

1	1
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5	4	4	4	6	0
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5	1	4	6	8	0	0
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Zone **Easting** **Northing**

B

Diagram B shows three empty coordinate axes. The first axis is labeled 'Zone' and has two tick marks. The second axis is labeled 'Easting' and has four tick marks. The third axis is labeled 'Northing' and has four tick marks.

c

D 

E

F 

G

H | | | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nomination includes the American Woman's League Chapter House and the property on which it sits, lots 1, 2, and 3 in block 48, City of Peck, Idaho.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
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state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Jennifer Eastman Attebery, State Architectural Historian
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organization Idaho State Historical Society      date April 29, 1986
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street & number 610 North Julia Davis Drive **telephone** (208) 334-3861

city or town	Boise	state	Idaho	83702-7695
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12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national X state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Thomas A. Neely*

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer **date** 7/29/86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Registered

date 9-4-86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ **date** _____

Chief of Registration

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As noted in part 7 of this form, the Peck chapter house retains the distinctive features of the Prairie Style buildings designed for the American Woman's League by the St. Louis architectural firm of Helfensteller, Hirsch, and Watson. Chapter houses were available from the AWL to League chapters that qualified by acquiring a certain level of membership. Construction of the Peck building, which was a Class I chapter house, required that the local chapter acquire at least 30 paid members and a lot measuring 50 by 100 feet. According to AWL specifications, Class I buildings were erected at a cost of \$1,200 in communities of 500 to 1,500 people. The AWL believed that a woman's important role in society was homemaker, and therefore Helfensteller, Hirsch, and Watson were asked to create chapter houses that reflected domestic design and progressive ideals. The architects designed a series of standard Prairie Style plans that were clearly residential in massing, scale, materials, and decorative motifs. Each chapter house had a fireplace with George Julian Zolnay's bas relief "Woman's Mission." Each had the AWL emblem above the front door. The Peck chapter house is a well-preserved representative of those Prairie School designs, retaining its original location, design, materials (with the minor exceptions of roofing and one window on a non-primary exposure), and workmanship. The only other AWL building that was erected in Idaho, an apparently identical Class I chapter house in Payette, is no longer standing.

The American Woman's League was a scheme of St. Louis publisher and land developer Edward Gardner Lewis. Believing that woman suffrage would create a need for education and other programs that addressed women's issues, Lewis established the league in 1908. The league offered a constellation of services to its members: a correspondence school, chapter houses, an art academy, a lending library, an outlet for sales of member handicrafts, a widows' retreat, and a loan and relief fund. League members pledged to sell subscriptions of \$52 in two years' time. Membership was open to men, but they had no vote in League affairs. The League was based at Lewis's University City, a community he established in 1906 near the grounds of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Lewis's enterprise had a setback in 1911, when he declared bankruptcy, but the League was reorganized as the American Woman's Republic. The Republic established a cooperative colony at Atascadero, California, which supported itself through World War I by growing and processing dehydrated foods. By 1920, when woman suffrage was realized, the Republic was no longer active as an organization, but the Atascadero settlement remained.

An American Woman's League chapter was established at Peck, Idaho, by Mrs. C. A. Waite. The chapter house was built in 1909. As one of the small town's few public structures, the building served multiple purposes, many of them peripheral to the mission of the AWL. As a chapter house, the building served as a meeting place, library, and ceramic studio. In addition, the building was a community center for social activities and a resting place for farm families visiting town. It provided space for community church services and funeral services. In 1910 the Los Angeles Herald stated that, "The kiln built for the

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chapter at Peck,¹ Idaho was the beginning of a broad new life for members in that isolated town."

¹Meyer, Pauline. "Keep Your Face to the Sunshine--A Lost Chapter in the History of Woman Suffrage," p. 18.

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Deed for Block 48, lots 1-3, 31 March 1909, on file at Nez Perce County Recorder's Office, book 101, p. 127.

Historic Structures Worksheet prepared by Ann Hesson, Site 003764 in Idaho Historic Sites Inventory, Idaho State Historical Society, Boise, Idaho.

Meyer, Pauline. "Keep Your Face to the Sunshine--A Lost Chapter in the History of Woman Suffrage." Edwardsville, Illinois: 1980.

Quitclaim Deeds for Block 48, lots 1-3, 25 October 1984 and 18 February 1963, on file at Nez Perce County Courthouse, Lewiston, Idaho.

Smith, Margaret, telephone conversation with Jennifer Eastman Attebery, 27 June 1986, Peck, Idaho. Notes on file in Idaho Historic Sites Inventory, Idaho State Historical Society, Boise, Idaho.

"We, the Women of the United States." Lewiston Tribune. 17 June 1984.



American Woman's League Chapter House
217 North Main Street
Peck, Nez Perce County, Idaho

Photograph by Keith Peterson
February 2, 1986

Negative on file at the Idaho State Historical
Society, Boise, Idaho

View from southwest

Photograph 1 of 1