# 

**Wyoming**

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## Introduction

**Shotgun House**: a single-story house, one room wide and two or more rooms deep, usually capped by a gable-front roof; may also have a front porch. This house form is most often associated with workers’ housing in Louisiana and other Southern states, but is found in many railroad towns in Wyoming as well.

## Laramie, Wyoming



157 and 159 N. 6th Street

The architectural style of the houses on Bath Row is known as a Front Gable Shotgun. There are three homes left of the original seven on Bath Row on 6th Street, including 157 and 159, which were designated on the National Register of Historic Places.

Shotgun houses were built primarily in the rural southern regions of the United States from the early 1800s to the early 1900s, and are typically one- or one-and-a-half story, one room wide and several rooms deep, with the rooms placed in a straight line. According to folklore, one could fire a shotgun through the front door, hit the rear door, and leave the interior undamaged; hence the name. The roof ridge was usually perpendicular to the street; there was a narrow gable front with a porch and often a similar porch at the rear.

Theodore Bath built these Shotgun Houses in 1883. He was one of Laramie’s early pioneers, who brought with him excellent stone masonry skills that he used to construct these homes as well as others in Laramie. “Bath Row” – as the seven original houses were called – was constructed just after the tracks for the Union Pacific Railroad were completing in Laramie. Employees of the railroad inhabited the houses. Many of the renters were from Sweden and employed as “tie hacks” by the Union Pacific whose job it was to fashion railroad ties out of trees harvested in the nearby mountains.

The original dwellings were so alike that it was said that if someone looked in the side window of one house they could see all the way through to the windows of the house at the opposite end of the row. These homes were built with sandstone from a local quarry, which at the time cost one cent each and an additional 25 cents to transport the stones from the quarry. Each house cost approximately $600. Interestingly, the sandstone is the same material used in many of the historical buildings on the campus of the University of Wyoming, located just four blocks east of the houses. Even though the buildings on campus were built with a higher quality of stone than the houses on Bath Row, all of the stone was mined from the same quarry, which was located on 9th Street, just outside of Laramie.

The homes retained much of their original appearance – particularly with the sandstone siding and brick arches above the windows and doorways. Current owner, Jamie Egolf, purchased two of the houses (155 and 157) in 1978 and has since updated the floors, windowsills, and heating system. She also built an addition to join the two houses into one home. This ‘hyphen’ join is about 480 square feet and features a different type of sandstone, which distinguishes the siding materials used in the new addition from the original stone material used to build the houses. The National Register of Historic Places allows flexibility to make such changes, but stipulates that certain requirements must be met in order to make the adaptations. For example, it was necessary for the stone in the hyphen to be different than the original stone.

Today, the historic homes that make up Bath Row represent an important part of Laramie’s railroad history; they serve as a testament to the hard working employees of the Union Pacific Railroad.

Presentation by Jamie Egoff, owner:

<http://visitlaramie.org/find-adventure/historical-living-project/homes/home-3/>

- See more at: <http://visitlaramie.org/find-adventure/historical-living-project/homes/home-3/#sthash.XJtclQx6.dpuf>

## Rock Springs, Wyoming



Shotgun houses, Rock Springs (Mary Humstone, 1998, 2005)

Rock Springs has many examples of the shotgun house, which is one room wide and three or four rooms deep, with no hall. Its name derives from the fact that there is a straight shot through the house, from front door to back.



305 M Street (Mary Humstone 2005)

While many of Rock Springs’ historic buildings have been lost, recent preservation projects, such as the rehabilitation of this shotgun house for a Law Office, have preserved a sense of the city’s history while putting buildings back into productive use.

## Sheridan, Wyoming

Typical Shotgun House

Unique to the District is a row of single family shotgun houses along Gould between 3rd and 4th Streets. The simplicity and efficiency of these houses illustrate the character and livelihood of those who lived there and the community as a whole in the period in which they were built. Each house comprised just over 300 square feet with a very narrow footprint of about 12 feet wide and 30-35 feet long, with a front porch that wrapped around to the south side. Due to their narrow width, shotgun houses utilized adjoining rooms as circulation instead of hallways. The narrow shape also allowed for two houses to share a common lot while still maintaining separation for privacy. This common lot may have shared services such as a common outhouse in back. The narrow width also allowed for the span of roof structure to be efficiently accomplished with very narrow and short framing members.

Due to their size, most of the shotgun houses have been modified to accommodate a more modern lifestyle. These modifications have historic precedence depending upon when they were made. The most common modifications include small additions to the back or side, or the removal or enclosure of the original wood-framed porches. In general, the historic features of the houses should be retained, such as wood lap siding with vertical corner trim, high pitched gable roof with approximately 12” overhangs and shed-roofed, wood framed front porch.

Each house lends itself to the combined layout of the houses in evenly spaced rows along the street. They should not be considered solely on the integrity of the individual house, but in the context and scale that is created along the road, especially the houses along the east side of Gould. Although some appear to be in good shape, others have not been well maintained and one has been torn down. Rehabilitating the houses in disrepair should be a priority in order to maintain the historic fabric as a whole.

Generally, greater importance is given to a District’s prominent structures, while less prominent structures such as these houses are easy to overlook. Their small and awkward size may not have transitioned well to modern daily life, causing them to become undesirable places to live and therefore fall into disrepair. Creativity and special effort may be needed to preserve these houses as part of the District.

From: [**Sheridan Railroad Historic District Master Plan**](https://www.google.com/#q=shotgun+houses+historic+photos+Wyoming)**,** June 2012