

Humble Beginnings for A Solid Foundation



*A guide to
the history
of education
in the nation,
West and
Natrona
County*



Every organization Community ☘ Innovation

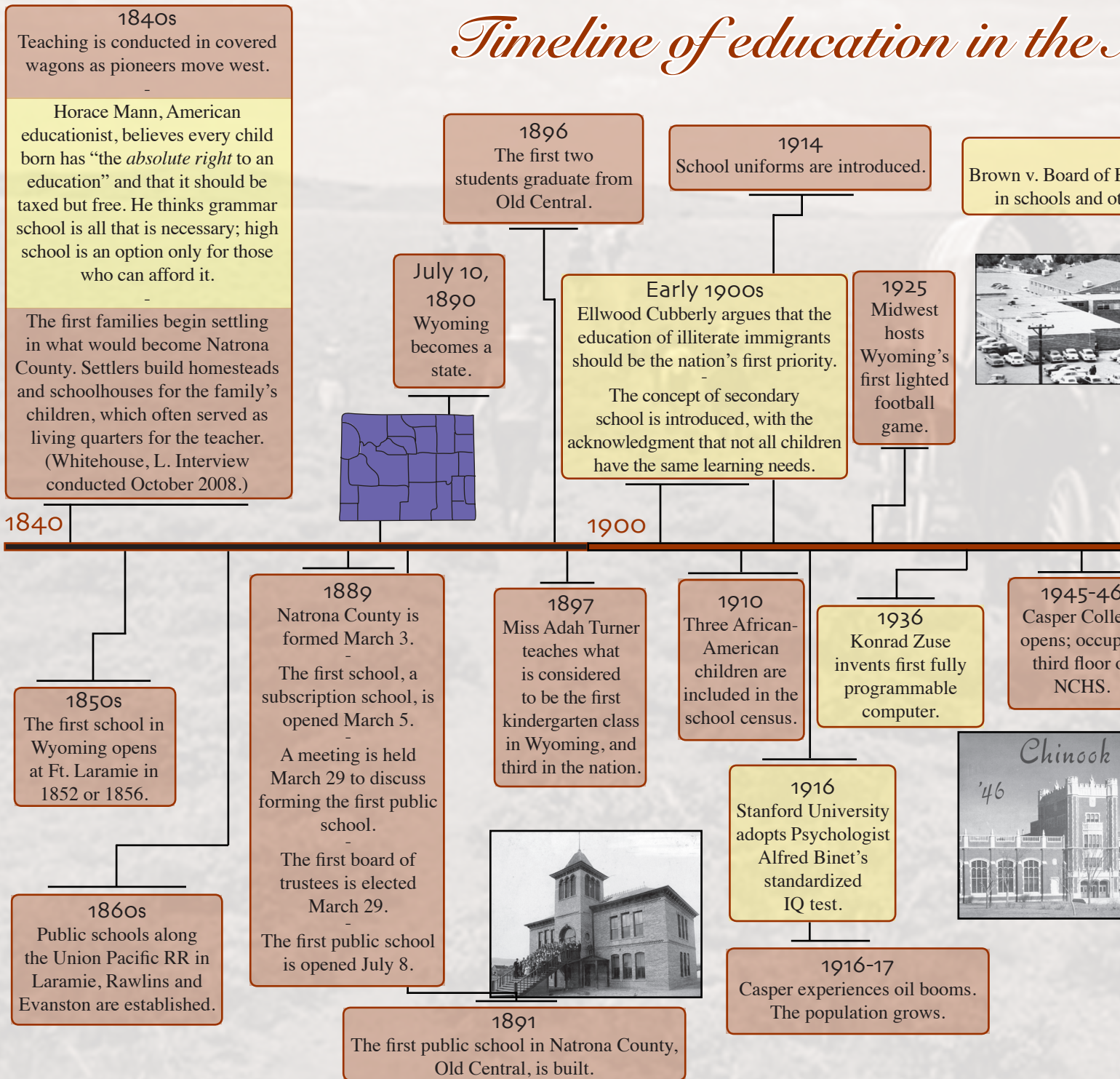
We must remember where we came from, so we have a clear vision of where we are going.

The Natrona County School District is built on the solid foundation of extraordinary people and the legendary history of the formation of our country.

Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States of America, outlined four principles in regard to his plan for education in the late 1700s:

“... That democracy cannot long exist without enlightenment; that it cannot function without wise and honest officials; that talent and virtue, needed in a free society, should be educated regardless of wealth, birth or other accidental condition; that the children of the poor

Timeline of education in the



is built on something.

Education

must be thus educated at common expense,” (Padover, S.).

Jefferson believed that education was the foundation of a democracy and that only enlightened people could successfully manage a society that practiced self-government.

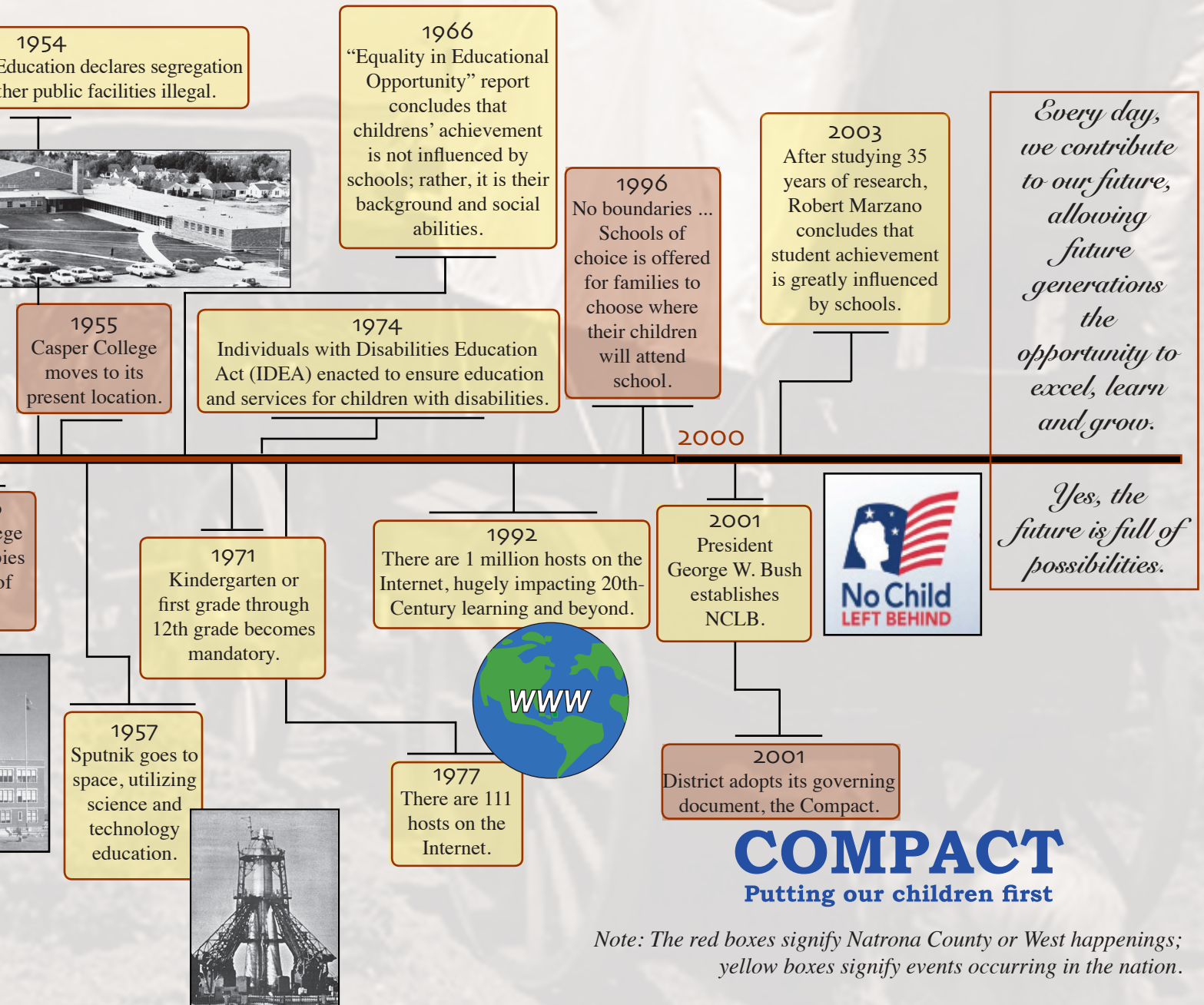
Just a few decades later, Jefferson’s vision of the importance of education moved west with the migration of settlers.

As pioneers traveled along the westward trails, some wagon parties taught the children lessons when they stopped for meals or during the ride in “school wagons.”

As settling occurred and homesteads were built, farmers and ranchers built one-room log schoolhouses on their land for their own families, which often consisted of a dozen or more children, since many miles typically separated neighbors. (Whitehouse, L.

Continued on back

Natrona County School District



Note: The red boxes signify Natrona County or West happenings; yellow boxes signify events occurring in the nation.

Interview conducted October 2008). Parents recruited and hired their own teachers, who usually lived in the schoolhouse or a “teacherage” on the property and took their meals with the family. Several of these one-room schoolhouses still exist in Natrona County and are available for viewing.

Teachers of this time mostly were females from the east and frequently were spinsters, or “women still unmarried beyond the usual age of marrying,” (www.dictionary.com). As soon as she got married, she had to quit her job and the family would begin another search. Most teachers were right out of high school, although some families preferred to hire older, possibly more permanent teachers (in their 50s or beyond).

Also during the time of

homesteaders, Native Americans were captured and “Americanized,” or made to become American in character, (www.dictionary.com). Many Indian boarding schools were established in the West (and throughout the country) in the mid- to late-19th Century, often taught by missionaries, to educate young Native Americans according to American standards. Typically, this was not a pleasant experience. (Throughout our history, there have been many learning opportunities for those trying to better the lives of all humans through education. As we continue to grow, we have learned much from such mistakes and injustices.) One Native American boarding school in Ethete, Wyo., St. Michael’s Mission School (Episcopal Church), allowed students to wear

their traditional clothing and speak their native tongue. (Means, T. Interview conducted January 2009.)

A few years later, in the early 1900s, oil was discovered in the area and Natrona County’s population grew substantially, which gave need for more schools and educators.

Throughout the 1900s, many more changes were made as technology advanced, knowledge expanded and the need for education became understood and appreciated.

Community. Innovation. Education. The Natrona County School District was formed with rich history, important lessons and great vision for the future. As we build new schools and implement new technologies, we must remember where we came from, so we have a clear vision of where we are going.

References

Photos - Cover

Background - Courtesy of Guy Sallade
Schoolhouse (opposite) - Courtesy of NCSD Community Relations
Slates (opposite) - Stock photo, www.dreamstime.com
Desks (opposite) - Stock photo, www.dreamstime.com

Photos - Inside

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Casper College - Courtesy of Jack Greenley,
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