

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form



JUL 01 1991

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Public School Buildings in Idaho

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Public Education in Idaho from Early Settlement to 1947

C. Geographical Data

The State of Idaho

See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Thomas J. Green

Signature of certifying official

6-25-91

Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Antoinette Albee

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

8/7/91

Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

Organization of Multiple Property Group

This multiple property documentation provides one historic context: the history of public education in Idaho from the early settlement of the 1860's to 1947, when the state school code was revised and Idaho education entered a modern era. The documentation identifies one property type: school houses. Although stables, teacherages, privies and later gymnasiums were almost always part of the school complex, most of these ancillary structures are either not extant, or are not recorded in sufficient numbers to assess the physical and associative characteristics to determine the registration requirements. It is anticipated that as more information is gathered in future surveys, additional property types will be included in this document.

The context statement outlines general historic developments of education. A description of the state's schools is included in Section F, as are the significance evaluation and registration requirements.

The architectural history of Idaho schools is discussed in the description under Section F. The state's schools followed a similar pattern of building, from pure utility to increased comfort and embellishment. This pattern was dependent, however, on the rate of settlement, which varied greatly in different parts of the state. Thus, schools that will be nominated within this multiple property documentation form under Criterion C will have an architectural context developed individually. Schools that will be nominated under Criterion A will rely on the context developed in this document.

Introduction

Permanent white settlement did not occur in Idaho until the 1860's. Before this, Idaho had been the domain of several Native American tribes and -- earlier in the nineteenth century -- fur trappers working for both British and American companies. The region was also traversed by thousands of emigrants who were planning on settling in the area west of the Cascades and in California.

In 1860 Mormons from Cache Valley founded the town of Franklin, just across the present state border from Utah, and prospectors established the mining camp of Pierce in the Clearwater region. Mormons would play the most significant role in the settlement of the southeastern corner of Idaho and the upper Snake River Valley; but mining would prove to be the attraction that brought people to Idaho and would lead to the development of its economy. The claims near Pierce started a gold rush near Oro Fino and Florence, and good placer deposits encouraged a rush to the Salmon River in 1862. During this time, gold mining also began in the southern half of the state and led to the establishment of such towns as Idaho City (at one time the largest town in the Northwest), Atlanta, Placerville and Silver City.

The large gold deposits on the Yankee Fork of the Salmon River and silver deposits in the Wood River region, both in central Idaho, attracted thousands of prospectors in the late 1870's and 1880's. By this time, the Union Pacific Railroad had begun building the Oregon Short Line through Idaho -- thus providing rail access to a large

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 1

part of the territory's population. Railways were also established from Utah through the upper Snake River Valley into Montana, and the Northern Pacific line soon ran across the Idaho panhandle and through Spokane, Washington.

This improved access had a tremendous effect on the state. It was worth investing large amounts of capital if ore could readily be transported to major markets. Railroad spurs to Hailey and Ketchum led to the maximum production of lead and silver in this region. Once silver was discovered and produced near Coeur d'Alene, transportation access allowed the silver industry to flourish. The influx of miners led to an increased demand for agricultural products, and many settlers went into business to supply mining towns.

Once Idaho had a transportation infrastructure, its agricultural sector could also participate in national markets. Just as the expansion of the mining industry depended on the availability of transportation, the expansion of the agricultural sector in the south depended on irrigation. The Mormons, who had had success with irrigation in Utah, brought their expertise northward into southeastern Idaho and irrigated their settlements in the upper Snake River Valley. Residents in the southwestern part of the state realized that agriculture was infeasible without similar irrigation projects, but until passage of federal legislation to assist reclamation projects, the capital to build large canal and dam projects was unavailable.

One of the most successful projects began with Milner Dam, built in 1904 through the financing of the federal Carey Act of 1894. The town of Twin Falls was established to serve the potential surrounding farming area. The Minidoka Dam, constructed in 1904 also under the auspices of the Reclamation Act of 1902, affected the Burley and Rupert area; the same act resulted in the completion of the New York Canal system and Arrowrock and Diversion dams near Boise.

Transcontinental railways not only allowed mining and agriculture to expand, but also opened up Idaho's forested areas for the lumber industry. With the depletion of timbered holdings in the upper Midwest, lumber barons eyed Idaho's forests. Although harvesting the trees was more difficult than anticipated, once Idaho had adequate rail service, lumber companies could compete with those of the Pacific Northwest and the South.

By the turn of the century, much of Idaho's development paralleled national trends. The progressive proposals that were occurring throughout the United States were also instigated in Idaho. Like many states dependent on agriculture, especially those in the Intermountain region, Idaho did not share in the economic prosperity of the 1920's. High prices during World War I encouraged farmers to expand, and when the decreased post-war supply lowered commodity prices, many farmers could not maintain their debt.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 2

The Depression hit Idaho hard, but federal programs provided an influx of funding. Idaho ranked eighth in receipt of New Deal money; more than two hundred public buildings, including schools, were constructed through federal assistance. Idaho did not suffer the physical devastation incurred by other agricultural states, such as those in the Dust Bowl, because so much of its farmland was irrigated.

Farming and other industries expanded during World War II, and many massive federal projects were constructed. The expansion was checked, however, by the exodus of people to the booming Pacific Coast industries.

Idaho has always been a state of disparate regions with distinct identities. This was caused not only by an uneven rate of settlement, but also by geography, as the mountain ranges, deserts and river drainages comprise natural boundaries. Schools were the social and cultural heart of many communities, but they also provided an important link with a territorial or statewide entity -- in this case an educational system. Thus, school buildings were both an integral part of settlements of any size, as well as providing cohesion on a statewide level.

Historic Context

The Earliest Schools

The first schools in Idaho were established by missionaries for Native Americans. Henry and Eliza Spaulding founded the earliest school in 1836 at the Lapwai Mission for the Nez Perce. Asa B. and Sarah Smith joined the Spauldings two years later and established a mission at Kamiah. Both the Spauldings and the Smiths sought to introduce Christianity and farming to the Nez Perce, but when the Whitmans were killed at Walla Walla in 1847, these missions were also closed.

Mormons also tried to establish a mission school; this occurred in 1855, and the school was located near the Lemhi pass. The missionaries had little luck, however, as the school closed three years later in response to Indian uprisings. Catholics, on the other hand, made inroads with the establishment of the Coeur d'Alene mission at Cataldo. The Cataldo school was part of a Catholic boarding school system in the Northwest; by 1890, over a thousand children were being educated in this system.

The Territorial Period

The establishment of a public school system during the territorial period in Idaho, 1863-1890, was a rocky, difficult and frustrating undertaking. The territory's small population, unsophisticated tax collection, and wide range of assessed property values made it difficult to generate adequate funding, even when the legislature supplied the necessary mechanisms to raise money for schools. The vastness of Idaho made supervision at the territorial level almost impossible. Even when the legislature attempted to provide the Territorial Superintendent or County Superintendent with more powers, there was no guarantee that such action would not

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 3

be rescinded in following sessions. Despite parents' concerns that their children attend school, their education was usually erratic, as they could not be spared from chores at home. Still, by 1889, 66 percent of school-age children were estimated to be in school, and schools were an important part of the social fabric of any community. Territorial citizens had laid the foundations for universal education.

The first schools for pioneer children were located in Franklin and Florence. Franklin is located near the Utah border and was settled by Mormons. With their comprehensive methods of community planning, Mormons made sure that a teacher was one of those settling a new area; textbooks were always included with provisions. Florence, in the Salmon River drainage of central Idaho, was one of Idaho's early gold mining sites, and its school was probably more haphazard than that of Franklin.

For the most part it was mining that brought people to the territory; although an early twentieth-century Idaho historian, Cornelius Brossan, wrote that the miners were "well-educated youth," schools in the Boise Basin and the rest of the territory during the 1860's started because there were children to teach and people to teach them. Five hundred children, for example, lived in the mining communities of the Boise Basin in 1864. Opening a school and charging tuition was another way to earn a living, and, as might be expected, the quality of education varied enormously. Private schools such as these, however, set a precedent, for many young people would be educated in subscription schools during the territorial period. Until the public school system was well under way, schools depended on entrepreneurial teachers and charitable donations from parents.

Territorial legislators addressed the issues of educating children in their first session, but it was not until the next year, 1864, that they addressed funding and supervision. They passed the Common School Act, which created a county school fund consisting of 5 percent of all money paid into the county treasury, and a permanent territorial school fund consisting of proceeds from public land sales. The positions of Territorial Superintendent of Public Instruction and County Superintendent were created. A separate act, also passed in 1864, levied a tax of 1 percent on all tollroads, bridges and ferries, which would be added to a general education pool. Unfortunately, these actions did little to initiate a good school system. No money was paid into the general fund from public land sales while Idaho was a territory, and receipts from toll roads and bridges were small. County commissioners were not required to levy a special school tax, and most taxes that were levied were too small.

Not only did the rural nature of education exacerbate the situation, but also the fact that so many districts were formed created an administrative burden. Parents did not want their children to have to travel far to school, as it was much more convenient to have a school (sometimes literally) in the backyard. As early as 1866 eight heads of families could petition for a school, thus creating a new district;

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 4

this power remained intact through at least the early 1900's. Parents and students gained in convenience and the school was often the heart of a rural area; but, the establishment of so many rural districts diluted all centralized attempts to monitor schooling.

The person responsible for supervising the nascent school system was the Territorial Superintendent of Public Instruction. One of that person's duties was to provide leadership by disseminating "intelligence among the people in relation to the method and value of education." (1) This position seemed at times to be in flux. In 1867, the legislature made the Territorial Controller the ex-officio Superintendent of Public Instruction, making the person in this position too busy to monitor the schools. The position was not restored to one solely concerned with education until 1887.

For this reason, and also because of the large area involved, real authority rested with the County Superintendents of Schools. Their responsibilities included creating public school districts, apportioning county school money, visiting schools, holding teacher examinations, and reporting on the status of education to the Territorial Superintendent. Although many County Superintendents were diligent in their duties, there were no requirements for the position; as one Territorial Superintendent wrote in 1869,

[the whole system operated on] "an utterly false and exploded theory that any one who can read, write and cipher is capable of superintending the educational interests of a whole county." (2)

In 1875, the legislature made the County Superintendent the ex-officio responsibility of either the County Auditor or the County Probate Judge, which effectively made education a low priority. The legislature tampered again with this office so that, from 1875 to the early 1880's, school supervision fell to the local Board of Trustees — many of whom were even less interested and qualified than the County Superintendent.

Standards for teachers were also difficult to enforce. The 1864 law required that instructors were only to report disorderly pupils to the Trustees, to keep a register of names and school data of pupils attending school, and file the register with the Trustees at the end of the school term. The Sixth Legislature in 1871 established the first real teaching requirements: that teachers be proficient in "reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, geography, grammar and history and have a capacity for importing instruction." (3)

In the territory's larger communities, the situation began to improve. The Eleventh and Thirteenth territorial legislatures created three independent school districts: Lewiston (1880), Boise (1881), and Emmett (1885). These school districts were given the power to issue bonds for school buildings and levy taxes to pay for the bonds,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 5

while also being entitled to county funds. The next year the legislature went a step further by allowing any school district with \$200,000 in taxable property to become independent. This did little to benefit rural districts, however, and most schools, both private and public, had to rely on parental funding until after statehood.

Although formal education continued to be casual in much of the state, Idaho's educational system had made great strides by 1890. School districts required standardized textbooks, and all children between 8 and 14 had to attend school for twelve weeks (eight of which had to be consecutive). Teaching requirements also became more stringent. There were 497 public schools and 13 private schools, up from 8 public and 4 private in 1865. During the next three decades, Idahoans would strive to establish more high schools (there were only three in 1890) and improve the physical quality of schools.

Education During Early Statehood

During the period from 1890 to 1930, educators had to contend with a world war, an influenza epidemic, and a depressed economy. Perhaps the most pressing problem was a rapidly growing population, which doubled every ten years from 1870 to 1910 and increased by 106,000 between 1911 and 1920. Idaho lost much of its frontier and pioneer patina, however, and educators were assisted by the attitudes shaped by the Progressive Era. As America's middle class expanded, people, especially women, had more time to address themselves to the country's problems. Women's suffrage, prohibition, child labor laws, conservation, and the democratization of government formed the zeitgeist, and education, even to a society as new as Idaho, was not immune to this impetus to correct society's ills.

Although the state legislatures between 1890 and 1900 did not undertake sweeping reforms, the centralization of the school system slowly improved and standards were tightened. In 1890, the State Board of Education had few concrete duties; by 1911 the Board was authorized to direct all educational affairs of state. Also in this year the legislature adopted the Idaho Plan, in which the Board and the Regents of the University of Idaho were authorized to supervise all state educational institutions, from the University of Idaho to all one-room schools.

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction still had the most visible authority, and by 1911 the Superintendent was required to hold a State Teaching Certificate, so that this position carried more credibility. Still, the County Superintendents had the most contact with public schools. Legislators in 1897 required that people in this capacity be at least 25 years old and hold first-grade teaching certificates, which enabled the holder to teach grades 5 through 8. This was a big contrast to the Board of Trustees, who were not required to have any educational experience. The lack of requirements at this level left a gaping hole in the entire system, since the trustees were empowered to hire and fire teachers, set salaries, build and repair schoolhouses, and furnish fuel, books, and other supplies.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 6

One of the most vociferous battles waged in this period was the issue of outhouses. Although County Superintendents insisted that such basic amenities be provided, many schools lacked outhouses until well into the twentieth century. Finally, in 1921, the legislature required trustees to provide separate privies at least twenty feet apart, stipulating that the teacher or the janitor had to clean them.

The duration of a school term lengthened, so that by 1929, state law required nine-month terms in all districts. This ended the practice of summer and winter terms. Jennifer Crabtree described that tradition when she wrote,

In regions, such as the Camas prairie, where weather was consistently severe, districts held school in the summer only. "Summer schools" usually lasted from four to seven months, around April to October. Agricultural areas were just the opposite and held "winter schools" because children helped with harvest during the summer.(4)

By the turn of the century the majority of grammar school-age children were receiving education on a regular basis, but the paucity of high schools remained a problem. The situation was not acute in urban areas, but building a high school was an expensive endeavor for rural districts. By 1909 there were only seventy-five high schools in the state. Early high schools generally were not in separate buildings, and few high schools offered all four years. Students were so ill-prepared for college that the University of Idaho had to incorporate a preparatory program, consisting of three years, because so many students were entering the college with little high-school education. In 1909, the legislature authorized the County Superintendent to create a rural high-school district if petitioned by five heads of families in two elementary districts and approved by the voters. This did not alleviate the problem, so by 1915, districts without high schools were required to pay the tuition of all eighth graders who wanted to attend high school in another district.

Eventually the situation was assuaged. Educators instigated the "Mother School Plan," which involved delineating between "accredited" and "approved" high schools. The latter were less strictly supervised and usually only offered one or two years. Their programs were matched with large four-year high schools to which students could transfer.

The Parent Teacher Association played an important role in improving Idaho's schools. Founded in 1905 as the "Mothers Congress," Idaho's was the ninth such organization in the United States. In the early years of its existence members focused on convincing parents to keep their children in school, and they continuously raised money for playground equipment, musical instruments, and books. They were instrumental in instigating school lunch programs; as early as 1913 they provided hot food to children in Ada and Minidoka counties, and later they raised money for kitchen equipment and lunch tables.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 7

Curriculums expanded. In an effort to lure students to school beyond the eighth grade, many schools included vocational education. Idaho benefitted from funding through the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, which provided money for cooperative work in agriculture, trades and industries, domestic science, and vocational teacher training. Whenever possible, schools were committed to preparing students for college. As early as 1906, for example, Nampa offered three "tracks" -- emphasizing English, classical, and scientific courses of study. As electives, it also offered commercial geography and commercial arithmetic. Such courses might have been more feasible in urban communities, but rural schools also strove to offer students more than the basics. Students planted school gardens and raised livestock, organized potato clubs, poultry clubs, and pig clubs, and entered statewide competitions to see which school could grow the best potato or the best beans. Curriculums reflected the demands of society: girls took domestic science classes, and boys signed up for manual training.

America's entry into World War I created a shortage of men and, thus, a shortage of teachers. In 1918, sixty schools had no teachers. The University of Idaho and the State Normal Schools in Albion and Lewiston offered nine-week crash courses, so that not only was there a shortage of teachers, but also many of those who did teach were poorly trained. The twenties were economically stagnant at best; the prosperity experienced in much of the United States did not reach the Intermountain West. This is because the economies of the states in this region were based on agriculture and mining, and commodity prices plummeted during this decade. School districts had to contend with delinquent taxes and post-war inflation, so that school construction came to a standstill.

Education in Idaho from 1930 to 1947

Throughout the nation, schools suffered greatly during the Depression. The depressed conditions of the twenties in Idaho only worsened, and it became increasingly difficult for the state's educational system to provide good schooling in adequate facilities. Although Idaho had the highest rate (next to Montana) of emigration during the 1920's, Idahoans leaving the state in the 1930's were replaced by people arriving from the decimated Dust Bowl. This created a mounting relief load which further strained the budgets of schools.

While Idaho ranked eighth in per capita federal expenditures from 1933 to 1939, much of its federal relief was provided for rural electrification and the Civilian Conservation Corps, rather than school construction. Nationally, most of the money for schools was funneled through the Public Works Administration. (PWA) Out of the forty-eight states Idaho was the fourth highest in receipt of PWA funding, yet out of eleven Western states, Idaho ranked ninth in the amount of PWA funds used for educational structures. (5) Instead, a large portion of Idaho's PWA money was spent on improved irrigation facilities and the construction and renovation of city water and sewage systems.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number E Page 8

In other ways, however, Idaho was progressive in the use of its allocation of funds regarding education. According to an article entitled "Charting U.S. Education" in a 1936 issue of Architectural Forum, although children in rural areas continued to comprise the bulk of the nation's student population, the majority of funds went to urban school districts. But in Idaho, 65 percent of the students attended school in rural districts, and they received 75 percent of capital outlay. In spite of the other priorities allotted PWA funds, seventy-eight schools were built through this program, assisting not only schools but also the construction industry. (6)

It was only after World War II that school officials could effectively solve problems concerning transportation, hot lunches, adequate facilities, and consolidation. An independent review team studied Idaho's school system in 1945 and '46, and while they found positive aspects, they concluded that it was outdated. Idaho was the only state still training teachers at normal colleges, and the fact that there were over one-thousand districts meant that money was spread thinly. Educators banded together in the 1940's to propose a new school funding formula and a plan for reorganizing districts and, while armed with the dismal results of the survey, convinced the legislature to revise the entire school code in 1947.

Under the new code, local school districts were responsible for busing their children to school, requiring the districts to meet equipment and safety regulations. The Department of Education was required to provide school lunches, and the two normal schools were renamed and authorized to grant four-year bachelor's degrees in education. Programs were devised to upgrade the curriculum and the state funding formula to get schools more money; teachers had a minimum salary schedule and received sick leave.

The most controversial issue was consolidation. As the heart of a rural community, residents were reluctant to give up their school, even if a consolidated school meant a more varied curriculum and a better building. Despite the opposition, however, the Department of Education succeeded in reducing the number of school districts from 1,000 in 1948 to 200 in 1954.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number E Page 9

Footnotes

(1) An Act to Establish a Common School System, 17 December 1864, Laws of the Territory of Idaho, Second Session, quoted in Jennifer Crabtree, School Days in Idaho, unpublished manuscript, Boise, Idaho, p. 17.

(2) Eighth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Idaho for the School Years 1881 and 1882, quoted in Crabtree, p. 19.

(3) An Act to Establish a Common School System, 13 January 1871, Laws and Resolutions Passed by the Sixth Legislative Assembly, quoted in Crabtree, p. 21.

(4) Crabtree, p. 101.

(5) Leonard J. Arrington, "Idaho and the Great Depression," Idaho Yesterdays 20 (Summer 1969): 7; "Charting U.S. Education, Architectural Forum 59 (January 1935): 9.

(6) "Charting U.S. Education," pp. 1-17.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type Schoolhouse

II. Description

The phases of school construction in Idaho closely parallel regional patterns of settlement and economic development. In other words, regardless of when areas were first settled or how their subsequent development transpired, the plans, materials and ornamentation followed a similar evolution. Nationally, American schools underwent tremendous changes from 1880 to 1910. Schools in Idaho generally followed these precepts; however, implementation seemed to occur later, and was dependent on the community's resources.

III. Significance

Schools are closely associated with all phases of primary and secondary education in Idaho, and often with the stages of a community's growth. Schoolhouses were built almost as soon as settlers arrived, and they served a practical as well as symbolic purpose, representing the hope of a new start. In rural communities the school was the only community building -- dances, meetings, voting polls and religious services were held in the structure. Schools in larger communities more accurately reflect national contemporary trends in school design and educational philosophies.

In rural areas, schools convey the development of Idaho's educational system. The transition from local to state control was a slow and gradual process; local districts and superintendents made the majority of the decisions. Few schools of the initial phase of building remain, but many one and two room structures, generally of

IV. Registration Requirements

In order to be eligible for the National Register, a property must exhibit its historic and architectural character in both physical and associative ways. It must be significant when evaluated within the context of the history of a community, and the background of Idaho's educational system.

Schools must retain integrity in order to be eligible. The roof configuration, scale, massing, wall cladding, and trim and fenestration should sufficiently convey the historic character of the building. Alterations in these five areas do not automatically exclude a property from nomination. Many schools have undergone window replacements or the application of aluminum and metal siding. Schools have also been adapted for other uses, such as houses, museums, churches, and granges. Alterations must be carefully evaluated to determine the impact to the significant character of the building. Original fenestration patterns should be maintained, and additions should not obscure the principal facades. Siding is acceptable if it closely

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet for additional property types

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

The multiple property listing for public schools in Idaho is based on buildings identified from extensive reconnaissance surveys in specific counties. These include Bonner County in the panhandle, and Ada, Canyon, Owyhee and Twin Falls counties in the southern half of the state. Individual site forms in the Idaho Historic Sites Inventory were also used as references.

This document was completed as part of the Idaho State Historic Preservation comprehensive planning effort. This effort includes identifying historic themes and associated property types. Education was identified as a theme, and schools as the property type. The typology of significant property types was based on the function of providing shelter for education and the association with the history of public school education in Idaho. The context statement was kept broad so that it would be applicable to public schools across the state, and so that it would pertain to a period of significance that spanned the historic phase of development in Idaho.

References used in preparing the historic context include site forms in the inventory, germane literature and oral history transcriptions.

Registration requirements were developed in accordance with National Park Service standards. It is the intent of the Idaho SHPO that this document allow for the evaluation of all public schools. See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

Arrington, Leonard J. "Idaho and the Great Depression." Idaho Yesterdays xx (Summer 1969): 2-8.

"Charting U.S. Education." Architectural Forum 59 (January 1935): 1-17.

Crabtree, Jennifer. School Days in Idaho. Unpublished manuscript in the Idaho State Historical Society Library, Boise, Idaho, 1989.

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency

- Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository: _____

I. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Egleston, State Architectural Historian
organization Idaho State Historical Society date June 20, 1991
street & number 210 Main Street telephone (208) 334-3861
city or town Boise state Idaho zip code 83702

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F Page 1

II. Description (continued):

Schools were among the first structures that settlers would erect, and they often served several community purposes, usually religious and social. Often the first school in a community was a one-room log building. A description of the Red Top School in Canyon County states:

A school with eighteen pupils was operating in 1865...the school house was built of logs, about 12 x 14 feet, with a low roof, constructed of logs, covered with grass and dirt. The floor was dirt, and there were openings for doors and windows, but nothing to protect them. School was not held in cold weather. (7)

The appurtenances of schools were similarly rough. Descriptions of blackboards include "three one-by-twelve boards nailed to the wall and painted black," or pieces of sheet iron nailed to the walls. If no desks or chairs were available then the students sat on low, backless benches. (8)

Within a few years, if the community prospered, a frame or brick building would be constructed, and then either expanded or replaced as the need arose. In areas that experienced the full range of a school building campaign, the first or second school is rarely extant. But in regions in which a community did not grow, a log building or the simplest frame structure is still visible. These phases occurred at different times, depending on the population. For example, a log building was used as a school in 1916 in Owyhee County, five years after the Longfellow School, a two-story, brick school with Mission Revival styling, was constructed in Boise. Just as they lived in a sequence of houses of improved comfort, children who were among the first generation of settlers had the experience of attending school in buildings ranging from the most rudimentary to comfortable structures with multiple rooms and an attempt at style. Settlers might have seen education as a necessity, but they first had to consider their survival, and it often took several years before a community built a school that provided anything more than basic shelter.

In 1881, the state provided a charter to the independent school districts that replaced one-room public schools with a graded system. The first schools that housed several grades were usually box-shaped with two stories and contained a central stairwell and corridors separating large classrooms. Some schools had tall windows on two walls, making the lighting harsh. Stylistic references were slight, but included small panes surrounding the upper light in the windows of the Queen Anne style, the wide eaves of the Prairie style and the scalloped parapets of the Spanish Colonial Revival.

This boxy design provided better sanitation, ventilation and heating than the log building or frame, one-room school, but it had drawbacks. The central stairway made

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F Page 2

the schools unsafe in case of fires, and the plan did not provide room for the changes that were occurring in school architecture at the turn of the century. Such schools usually did not contain a library, gymnasium or auditorium. The length of use of these buildings depended on the growth and finances of the community. For example, the first Bickel elementary school, located in Twin Falls, was built in 1906 and used until 1937. In Boise, however, several elementary schools incorporated the unit plan, a simple way to expand schools, as early as 1911. These schools often included a gymnasium and an auditorium situated near the main entrance so it could be used after-school hours by the community.

The biggest concerns of administrators concerned fire safety and lighting. Fire safety measures included the brick construction of interior partitions, fireproof material for stairs and exits, and the placement of stairwells at both ends. The proper lighting for students, it was determined, involved the use of windows along the wall to the pupils' left, and the wall area between windows was reduced to decrease shadows.

These plans and changes, however, were incorporated primarily for consolidated schools and those in larger communities. School officials had to address the needs of students where the one-two-or three-room school would suffice. In 1927 the Idaho Bulletin of Education devoted an issue to "School House Plans," for schools of up to three classrooms. It indicates that the reforms in school architecture regarding lighting were recognized by the state, as the publication specifies that "all school rooms shall be lighted from one side only," and that light should come from the east or west, thus the school should face either north or south. The minimum acreage for a rural school, the Bulletin stated, would ideally be one acre for a one-room building and two acres for two rooms. The plans were very simple, and included entry halls and two cloak rooms, one for each gender. One plan included space for a library, and another indicated a stage at one end, stipulating that the building could then be used for community events. Drawings of the buildings were almost completely devoid of ornamentation; a few had exposed rafters or brackets, giving them a Craftsman air, and others had a blind rectangle on the windowless walls. (9)

A study of schools in the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (ISHPO) sites inventory reveals that many schools follow the concepts outlined in the "School House Plans" issue, but that occasionally communities built purely for utility and were probably unaware of contemporary trends in educational design. As late as 1917 students attended school in a log structure in Owyhee County, and the four-or eight-room, central-stairwell box school was in use throughout many counties until World War II. On the other hand, some communities became somewhat flamboyant with rural schools: one two-room school in Canyon County incorporated a campanile into the entry porch. For the most part, administrators and parents did the best they could

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number F Page 3

for the children, using materials that were inexpensive and readily available but structurally sound, and erecting structures that were often plain but spacious and pleasant.

Usually only school boards in the most densely populated areas hired architects, but there are instances, such as in Paris (a small town in southeast Idaho), where the community built an architect-designed school. Generally school boards relied on plan books or contractors, and built with a preconceived idea of what a school should look like. The ISHPO's inventory also reveals that schools exhibited a variety of characteristics from many styles and periods. The use of a shallow-pitched hipped roof suggested several styles: Spanish Colonial Mission Revival, Georgian Revival, Craftsman, Prairie, and Italianate. Quoins were also used, although not with Georgian references but with something Tudor in mind. One eclectic school included quoins, the exaggerated eaves of the Prairie style, and Italianate brackets.

The availability of materials played a big role in the school's appearance. In the southern and eastern regions of the state, where timber was scarce, many schools were constructed of brick, but in the north, wooden clapboards were almost always used. Lava rock, a porous basaltic stone, was used for several schools in the Twin Falls area. In this region the stone was something of a "poor man's" building material, and yet in a few examples in counties hundreds of miles away, lava rock was used ornamentally, to face the walls of foundations.

Public Works Administration

Few schools in the inventory were built under the aegis of the PWA, but Idaho's schools did benefit from the federal largesse of the New Deal programs. WPA funds were used to raise schools and excavate basements, often for stages or community spaces, and the CCC built walls and playgrounds. More research on this topic is needed in order to draw conclusions about the stylistic or structural implications of the PWA on schools in Idaho.

Footnotes

(7) Corinne Moyers, Old Country Schools of Canyon County (Nampa, Idaho: By the Author, 1988), p. 15.

(8) Moyers, pp. 7, 58.

(9) "School House Plans," Idaho Bulletin of Education 13 (June, 1927), pp. 3-39.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 4

III. Significance (continued):

frame construction, are extant. These are usually used as a grange, for storage, or as a dwelling. Few schools of earlier building campaigns still exist in urban areas, but several schools dating from the teens and twenties are still in use and reveal information about developments in school architecture and curriculum changes.

As more districts adopted a graded program, school buildings were built more substantially, and usually resembled a two-story hipped-roof box. Many of these are still evident in sparsely populated areas, but are commonly used as houses, rather than schools. School officials, however, advocated changes in buildings. As early as 1911 schools began to be built of fireproof materials, contain stairwells and exits at opposite ends, and windows only on one wall to eliminate harsh lighting. Schools were also expanded in order to meet curriculum changes, which necessitated the incorporation of domestic science and manual training, business education and gymnasiums.

Stylistically, schools reflect a knowledge of contemporary national trends, as well as attitudes about "what a school should look like." Especially when they were first settled, communities had to rely on donated labor and materials, and could not build anything extravagant. As a community became more prosperous, however, and if the local school district received any state support, the school might hire an architect and specify ornamental details for the building. The use of stylistic details is broad, and includes Queen Anne, Prairie, Craftsman, Romanesque, and Spanish Colonial Revival and Italianate. Often elements of several styles were evident in one building.

No systematic study of buildings constructed under New Deal auspices has been undertaken, and although records state that seventy-eight educational buildings were constructed under the PWA, few of these have come to light. Current research shows that New Deal workers were often used not to build schools, but to improve them. They excavated basements, constructed playgrounds and built fences and walls.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 5

IV. Registration Requirements (continued):

resembles the original cladding of the structure. Alterations and additions that occurred during a building's period of significance might reflect changing patterns in education and school architecture, and should be evaluated within such a context.

Moved properties will be considered when the new location is compatible with the historic character of the structure, and the integrity of location and setting is still apparent.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number H Page 1

Gulliford, Andrew. America's Country Schools. Washington, D.C.:
The Preservation Press, 1984.

Lichtenstein, Suzanne Ralston. "American School Buildings:
1890-1920." MA thesis, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York,
1985.

 . "Boise Public Schools Thematic Group."
National Register Nomination, Idaho State Historic Preservation
Office, Boise Idaho, 1982.

Morton, Linda. "Owyhee County School Survey." Idaho State
Historic Preservation Office, Boise, Idaho, 1984.

Moyers, Corinne. Old Country Schools of Canyon County. Nampa,
Idaho: published by the author, 1988.

Renk, Nancy. "Bonner County School Survey." Idaho State
Historic Preservation Office, Boise, Idaho, 1986-87.

"School House Plans." Idaho Bulletin of Education 13 (June
1927): 3-39.