

INVENTORY SHEET FOR GROUP NOMINATIONS: IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BOISE, IDAHO

NOMINATION: Lava Rock Structures in South Central Idaho (TR)

SITE NAME: Bossuet, Birdie, Farm

SITE NUMBER: 75

LOCATION: ~~Approximately one and three-quarter miles west~~ ^w of Richfield, ~~Idaho~~ ^{vic.}

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Fred Hubsmith
Richfield ID 83349

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Richfield, 7.5 minutes

ACREAGE 1 1/4 acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Bossuet farm and the property on which it is located, in the NW 1/4, and the NE 1/4, all in the SE 1/4, NE 1/4, NW 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 34 T4S, R19E, Boise Meridian. Legal description on file at Lincoln County Court-house, Shoshone, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/728940/4767970

DATE OR PERIOD: ca. 1921

ARCHITECT OR BUILDER: Birdie Bossuet

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: architecture, agriculture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE:

CONDITION: House is in good condition, altered; the barn is deteriorated, unaltered. Both are on their original sites.

DESCRIPTION:

The low one-story Bossuet house is approximately 30 by 38 feet with a shallow gable roof with enclosed eaves. Shingles that have been painted white are in the gables above the low rubble walls. A full outset porch extends from the gable front. It has a gable roof slightly more shallow and lower than the roof on the main body of the house. The porch roof has a plain, narrow bargeboard. There are full stone columns on each corner and one-half columns with battered, square, wooden columns flanking the centered entrance. The porch has a ceiling and a wooden floor. It has been framed in on both sides with a window in each side wall. The mortar in the porch columns is pointed with beading painted white. Two sets of square paned windows are set horizontally in the left side wall of the house. One pair is set at the outside of the wall, making a deep reveal on the interior. The other pair is placed about midway in the wall. The rest of the windows are one-over-one-light double-hung sash. All of the windows in the house have wooden lintels set into the stone at each end about four inches. The sloping surface of the stones below the windows are covered with mortar. The house is set up against a rock outcropping in the banks of the Little Wood River. The rear wall is formed partially of planks fitted around the rocks. The nearly flush joints between the small stones in the walls of the house are unpainted.

Barn: The rectangular one-story barn is built along the side of an incline several hundred yards from the house. The random rubble walls vary from only two or three feet high on the left wall to approximately seven feet high at the front and approximately five feet high on the right wall and the rear. The barn has a gable roof covered with sheets of metal. Vertical boards cover the gables above the stone walls. A dry-laid corral wall about four feet high, three feet wide, and thirty feet long extends to the rear and left of the barn. It is supported by poles and is enclosed by an open pole corral fence. The barn was laid with mud, but most of the mud mortar has weathered away. There is some fallen stone in the masonry on the facade.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Bossuet buildings are significant as examples of rural vernacular architecture demonstrating the hard work and resourcefulness of a Lincoln county farmer-mason. The roughly constructed barn is typical of those built by farmer-masons. Because of their poor construction, most have proved to be temporary structures. This surviving example has a dramatic setting beside the Little Wood River. The ground at the front of the barn and at the rear of the house slopes steeply down to the Little Wood River. Obtaining household water and watering stock was an arduous and sometimes perilous task.

Rancher-farmer Birdie Bossuet owned the property from about 1921 to 1927. He built both buildings shortly after he moved there in about 1920. Building the low walls of the house and barn required neither great skill nor the use of scaffolding. The different treatment and placement of the double windows and the use of boards to finish the back wall of the house are ingenious solutions to building problems. The masonry in the porch columns is much more precise work. Either the stones for the columns were carefully chosen or they were dressed. These columns were added at later date. It is apparent that a skilled mason did them. The enclosure of the porch made it more useful by sheltering it from the prevailing winds. This minor functional alteration does not detract from the significant features of the building.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Records of the First Security Title Company, Gooding, Idaho.

Bushby, Glenn, interview with Marian Posey-Ploss, Richfield, Idaho, Summer 1980.