

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

NOMINATION: Historic Resources of Paris (Partial Inventory: Architecture)SITE NAME: Keller House and derrick (Paris, Idaho) SITE # 3LOCATION: East First North, Paris, IdahoOWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Wilford Michel, Paris, Idaho 83261QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Paris, 7.5 minute ACREAGE: two acresVERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Nomination includes the former Keller house and derrick and the property on which it stands: lots 6 and 7 of block 4, Paris Original Townsite.UTM(S): 12/4, 67, 500/46, 75, 30DATE OR PERIOD: ca. 1880s EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: StateAREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: architecture

DESCRIPTION: Deteriorated condition altered original site

The basic unit of the former Keller house is the square Southern mountain cabin,¹ with its tall gable roof and side wall facade of a centered door flanked by two windows. Hidden in a clump of mature poplar trees, the house's structure is difficult to ascertain. The front section of about fourteen feet square is adjoined at the rear by an offset ten foot square ell with a north-south gable roof. Two gabled dormer windows peak out from the corrugated metal roof on the north and east exposures. The ell also has two doors on the west and south, and a southern window. No chimneys are evident. The house may be log, as the walls are several inches thick, but shiplap siding covers the structure.

In the field east of the Keller house is a fine example of a Mormon derrick, a device of folk technology used until recently throughout the Great Basin to stack loose hay into tall round-topped stacks. The Keller derrick is the Mormon derrick type, distinguished by its quatrepodal base supporting an up-right mast, at the top of which pivots a boom. The base is built of three six-by-six timbers, cut on a circular saw, laid over two similar sills and notched with straight-sided saddle notches at the intersections of sill and crosspiece. These joints are fixed with heavy nuts and bolts. Smaller four-by-four timbers form a quatrepod upon this base, securing the heavy central log mast. Balanced at the top of the mast is a log boom, fastened with a pin that allows horizontal and vertical movement. Pulleys, used to control the hoisting and dumping of hay, are attached to the middle and upper end of the boom. A cable stretched along the top of the derrick and over metal and wooden braces probably acts as a brace for the entire boom.

1

Henry Glassie, "The Types of the Southern Mountain Cabin," in Jan Harold Brunvand, The Study of American Folklore (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1968), pp. 338-70.

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Keller house and derrick

SIGNIFICANCE:

Eighteen examples of small, square cabins--resembling closely Glassie's Southern mountain cabin--have been observed in Paris. Eight of these are attached to larger houses, and according to oral sources some of these were the original section of the house. This would seem to establish these square cabins as an early Paris house type, even though most of them are not datable. The appearance of small, square structures on the 1892 Sanborn maps helps support this idea. The square cabin house type has not been previously recorded in Idaho, and in this writer's experience is extremely rare in the state.

The Keller house provides us with a significant example of the square mountain cabin in a variation with an offset rear ell. (For other examples chosen for nomination, see sites #4 and #5.) The houses' dimensions, symmetrical facade, and steep gable roof bear a clear comparison with Glassie's cabins. Its gabled dormer windows are whimsical additions that appear oversized for this small building. The derrick near the Keller house provides the viewer a good closeup of these structures, which are usually seen only at a distance from a highway. Quickly disappearing, these devices are significant as visual relics of a dying farm technology based upon horse, ox, and human labor.