

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

NOMINATION: Historic Resources of Potlatch

SITE NAME: Joseph A. Terteling House

SITE NUMBER: 7

LOCATION: 1015 Fir Street, Potlatch, Idaho

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Dewey Dixon
Box 297
Potlatch, ID 83855

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Potlatch, 15 minute

ACREAGE: less than one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The nomination includes the Joseph A. Terteling House at 1015 Fir Street, a detached wood frame garage built the same time as the house, and the property on which they stand, tax no. 2813, Block 1 in Potlatch.

UTMS: 11/507600/5196750

DATE OR PERIOD: 1916

ARCHITECT OR BUILDER: attributed to A. M. Holmes

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Industry; architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: State

CONDITION: Good, altered, original site

DESCRIPTION:

This two-story rectangular brick house has a gable overhang roof with exposed rafters. It faces west with a centered door with glass on that side and on the east a wooden door off-centered to the south. The open post porch on the west runs the length of the facade and has a brick railing and brick posts. There is a recessed open post porch with one brick post on the southeast corner, and a similar one on the northeast corner has been enclosed. The windows are double-hung sash with three lights over one, and the first story windows have brick relieving arches. Alterations include a composition roof, and the porch on the northeast corner has been enclosed with brick and has two casement windows.

SIGNIFICANCE:

This 30' x 42' eight-room house was constructed in 1916 at a cost of \$3,164. It was the only brick house constructed by the lumber company, although the company built many other brick structures in the commercial district and at the mill site. It was one of five Potlatch houses constructed in 1916, and was probably designed by A M. Holmes. The house is significant as the only example of brick residential construction in the town and for its association with Joseph A. Terteling, founder of Terteling and Sons, a construction firm that built numerous major engineering projects throughout the west.

Joseph A. Terteling came to Idaho with his parents and siblings in the 1880s. With his father Ben and brother Pete he raised cattle and did masonry work in Lewiston, Idaho. After a series of hard winters, the family went bankrupt and left the state. Joseph and Pete returned in the 1890s and started a brick manufacturing plant. They had a difficult time weathering the depression of 1893 and the lean years that followed, but by the early 1900s Joseph had established a brick plant just south of Palouse, Washington, about ten miles west of the present location of Potlatch. In 1904 he became manager of the Palouse Brick and Tile Company, organized in that year as one of the largest brick companies in the Palouse country. The Palouse Brick and Tile Company provided some of the brick for mill construction at Potlatch. The Potlatch Lumber Company required thousands of bricks for its massive construction project and wanted to manufacture most of the brick at Potlatch. In early 1906 it hired Joseph Terteling to manage its brickyard, and in October that year, Terteling, along with two other men, incorporated the Potlatch Brick Company, capitalized at \$10,000. The brick company was completely independent from the lumber company. Within six months the brick company was marketing brick throughout the Palouse region, manufacturing 100,000 bricks daily, in addition to providing brick for the lumber company. Terteling bought out the Palouse Brick and Tile Company and moved its equipment to Potlatch.

From these brick manufacturing roots, Terteling and his sons expanded into other construction areas, acquiring over 200 horses and building roads in the Palouse region, eventually moving their business headquarters to Spokane and in 1930s to Boise, Idaho. There Terteling and his sons supervised the growth of one of the largest construction firms in the West, builders of highways, irrigation canals, dams, railroads, and tunnels. Some of their major Idaho construction projects included the Salmon River highway near Riggins; the Owyhee irrigation project; the Mountain Home Air Base; the Anderson Ranch Dam powerplant; and the Lucky Peak dam tunnel.

By the time Joseph Terteling died in 1940 his family business had sophisticated mechanized equipment and hundreds of employees. In future years the family businesses, operating under various individual names, would mine coal, build air bases and dams, and grow in to a major international construction firm, handling over \$65,000,000 in defense contracts during World War II alone.

The Terteling house was no doubt constructed by the Terteling family with brick from the Potlatch Brick Company, though, like all other houses in town, it was owned by the Potlatch Lumber Company. The Terteling family only lived here a short time before Joseph moved to Moscow, Idaho, so his children could attend the University of Idaho, and it is believed they were living in Moscow by 1918.