

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

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

✓ SITE NAME: Johnson, Quet, Farm

SITE NUMBER: 21

LOCATION: ~~Three miles north and seven-eighths mile west~~ ^{NW} of Richfield, ^{vic} ~~ID~~

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Mattco Investment Corporation
269 Loma Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90026

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Richfield, 7.5 minute

ACREAGE: about 2 acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

✓ The nomination includes the Quet Johnson house and the property on which it stands, the SW 1/4, SW 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 2 T4S, R19E and the barn and the property on which it stands in the E 1/2, SE 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 2, T4S, R19E. Legal description on file at Lincoln County Courthouse, Shoshone, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/730365/4775450

DATE OR PERIOD: 1910, 1911

ARCHITECT OR BUILDER: unknown

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: architecture, agriculture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: local

CONDITION: condition of the house is good, the condition of the barn is fair; both have been altered, and both are on their original sites.

DESCRIPTION:

House: This impressive, two-story house on a high basement is approximately 32 by 40 feet. The shingled gable roof has close enclosed eaves. There are decorative shingles in the gables above the two-story stone rubble walls. Light sand-colored mortar is in the medium-width nearly-flush joints. A pair of double-hung sash windows with entablature heads is centered in each gable. The house features elaborate yellow brick trim at its corners, on the sides of the windows and doors, and in arches above a variety of sizes and styles of windows. On the front gable, offset to the left, is an entrance door with a curved pane above a transom and curved side lights, all set in a round arch. A high concrete stoop with low walls leads to the door. On the first floor level to the right of the door is a window with one large pane and a narrower curved pane above it. Centered above the entrance at the second floor level is a double-hung window, and to its right is a wide four-pane window. All of the windows at the first and second story level have brick relieving arches above them with lava keystones. On the right wall at the first floor level are four double-hung asymmetrically-set windows. A door with a curved light and a transom is offset to the right. A high, wide concrete porch-patio with low walls wraps from this wall around to cover about one-half of the left side of the

rear wall. On the left wall are three basement windows, three double-hung sash windows at the first floor level, one between floors for a stairway and two offset to the left on the second floor. The rear wall is even more elaborate than the facade. At the first floor level is a door set into a half circle arch. Curved and rectangular sidelights are on each side of the upper half of the door. This is balanced at the right by a wide, short double-hung sash window with a curved single pane above two lower rectangular panes. At the second floor level offset to the left is a very large, shallow round arch with a fifteen-paned center window panel and with curved and rectangular sidelights on each side. A double-hung window is to its right.

Barn: To the left and behind the house is a large barn with a steep gable roof. Four windows are set symmetrically in the gable. The barn is approximately 30 by 60 feet and about 30 feet high. Below the pointed hay hood and above the one-story stone walls is a false front. The wooden parts of the barn are unpainted shiplap. A shed and small frame milk house has been attached on the right side of the centered double door. The stone wall to the left of the door on the facade and most of the left wall has been sprayed with gunite, covering the rubble stonework.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Quet Johnson House is significant as an excellent and beautiful example of the use of lava rock construction in a Colonial Revival style house. It is the most elaborate and imposing residence in this nomination. The original owner was Quet Johnson, one of the first entrymen on the Alberta tract. The house was built in 1910 and the barn in 1911. The designer of the house is unknown, but it is possible

that it was designed by W. O. Pearce, a draftsman for the Idaho Irrigation Company's Richfield Pump House and for the well-documented Richfield High School (now demolished). The style of the Johnson house is related to the many other Colonial Revival style houses in Jerome and Lincoln counties, but the house is unique in its large size and elaboration. The house is as close to a mansion as is found in the area of the nomination, rivaled only by some very large frame homes in the city of Shoshone. (See the Shoshone Historic District, already listed in the National Register of Historic Places.) Surprisingly, the newspaper reports on the house are matter of fact, praising Mr. Johnson's industry and success but referring to the house only as being made of stone. Because of its well-executed detail, its pleasing combination of color and texture through black rocks, light mortar, and light yellow bricks, its tall proportions, and its liberal use of windows, the house gives an impression of lightness. The source of the many custom shaped and sized window panes is not known. The beauty of the house is further enhanced by its placement on a ridge overlooking the Richfield tract to the south and the irrigated river valley to the northeast. The concrete porches are a later addition that do not detract significantly from the house. A 1914 photograph shows a simple concrete stoop on the facade, so the current porches, while bulkier, are compatible with the original appearance of the house.

The Johnson barn is architecturally significant as an example of the use of lava rock to build a vernacular barn type. The prototype for the false front appears to have been a commercial livery stable. The use of gunite to repair loosening mortar in the barn is unfortunate and misguided. However, enough of the original stonework is still visible to be instructive of the historical construction.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Richfield Recorder, October 20, 1910; June 15, 1911; and June 11, 1914.