

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

NOMINATION: (TOURTELLOTTE AND HUMMEL ARCHITECTURE IN IDAHO ~~IN IDAHO~~ TA)

SITE NAME: Pine Creek Baptist Church SITE NUMBER: 124

LOCATION: Main and ^{3rd} ~~South Third~~ streets, Pinehurst, Shoshone County ~~(079), Idaho~~

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:
Pine Creek Baptist Community Church
Pinehurst, ID 83850

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Kellogg, 15 minute ACREAGE: less than one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Pine Creek Baptist Church and the property on which it stands, tracts 39 and 40, City of Pinehurst. Legal description on file at the Shoshone County Courthouse, Wallace, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/5,57,500/52,65,150

DATE OR PERIOD: 1932

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture and Religion

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

CONDITION: good altered original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Pine Creek Baptist Church (now Pinehurst Baptist Church) is a rectangular structure with solid log walls, front-facing gables covered with rustic shingles, and a small square pyramidal-roofed belfry straddling the ridgebeam near the apex of the front gable. The twenty-five-by-forty-foot body of the church has full dovetail-notched corners. Front and rear additions are of matching materials but have plain mitred corners; they were probably made when the basement was excavated some time before 1956. A rectangular rear section is centered and outset at the rear. At center front is a shallow enclosed porch with a gabled roof projecting over a large concrete stoop with lateral flights of steps. A hip-roofed basement entry is offset at right front. The frame belfry on the roof has shingled lower walls and louvered upper panels.

The interior is still distinguished by exposed log walls and baptistry, although it has been remodeled with new ceilings, carpet, and pews. The nave windows are small and square with plain pebbled translucent panes; those in the rooms to the rear are multi-light casements.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Pine Creek Baptist Church is architecturally significant as the only genuine log structure in the group and as an excellent (and in several ways unusual) example of the nostalgic revival of the log cabin in the 1930s. Together with the log-veneer Bald Mountain Hot Springs complex (site 120), it is one of only two representatives in the Thematic Group of an interesting series of late commissions by Tourtellotte and Hummel which revived the appearance, and in this case something of the technology, of log building. It is also the only ecclesiastic example in the group, and one of the few in Idaho, of a mode more often used in commercial structures. Finally, the Pinehurst church represents the most northerly extension of identified works by these architects in Idaho. This geographically distant commission, well beyond their usual sphere of influence, was probably achieved through contact with the Baptist convention in the course of another rustic commission in the late 1920s.

This nostalgic log cabin revival style was used in several 1930s projects where particularly rusticity seemed apt for one reason or another: several unlocated summer cabins near Payette Lakes in 1938, and a design, at least, for a log house in Caldwell. There is strong evidence that a log church at Pierce in central Idaho, built to the same dimensions in the same year as the Pinehurst design, is also the work of Tourtellotte and Hummel (photograph 3). Unlike the majority of the buildings designed by the firm in this style, these little churches are not fictive but actual log buildings. This may have been an economic measure. For non-profit projects in these timbered areas a gift of logs, worked by donated labor, was a possible solution to the financial problems of building a church during the Depression

The plans for the Pine Creek call for a very simple corner-jointing system of saddle-notched logs. That indeed is what was done in the Pierce church. There, the very regular exposed butts of the logs, fitted according to the most primitive system yet clearly executed with modern tools, produce the curiously synthetic effect of most picturesque log buildings. At Pine Creek, however, the logs were very elegantly finished with full dove-tail joints, making this one of the finest examples of this particular kind of revival architecture yet inventoried in Idaho. The present pastor of the church attributes this work to Finnish miners among the congregation, and it does resemble non-architect-designed log buildings inventoried in areas of Finnish farm settlement in Idaho. Thus we have here an example unique in the group of the coming together of architectural design and folk technology. The only parallel, and that an inexact one, would be local builder Uriah Seaman's veneering of the Tourtellotte and Company Episcopal Church in Gooding (site 60) with lava rock masonry.

The plans for the structure are dated 1932. The Baptists had not been recurrent clients of the Tourtellotte and Hummel firm, as had the Catholics, Episcopalians, and Methodists; the only other Baptist building in the group is the 1908 church in Mountain Home (site 52). But in 1928 the firm had sold drawings to the Idaho Baptist Convention for an outdoor swimming pool at Easley Hot Springs, in the Hailey vicinity not far from Ketchum, where the tourist camp and natatorium project got under way the following year. Aside from the pool it is not clear what, if anything, designed by the firm was built at Easley, though the roll of drawings includes drawings of a proposed store and station in an appropriately rustic style.

In any case, this project for a Baptist retreat appears to have led to several others, including the rustic church at Pinehurst.

This building is nominated for its exceptional illustration, both in terms of the group and as an independent structure, of the early 1930s nostalgic log manner, here in interaction with a folk technology which substantially increases its quality.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

(Orofino) Clearwater Tribune. June 10, 1932, p. t, c. 6.

Boise, Idaho. Hummel Jones Miller Hunsucker P.A. File 114B. Collection book reference 1932; obsolete index reference to "log church at Piece." Drawings signed Tourtellotte and Hummel.