National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms Type all entries-complete applicable sections

1. Name

city, town

1. Nam	e					and c	3 Dist		
historic	Historic	Resource	s of Potl	atch (Pa	rtial Invent	ory: Ar	chitect	ure)	
and or common	N/A								
2. Loca	ntion								
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6. Repr	esenta	tion i	n Exis	iting	Surveys	5			
title Idaho Sta	ate Historic	Sites I	nventory	has this pro	perty been dete	rmined eli	gible?	yes	_X_ no
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city town		Boise				state	Idah	ιο	

For NPS use only

received

state

AUG 6 1986 date entered

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7. Description

Condition	deteriorated	Check one	Check one	site
<u> </u>	ruins	<u>X</u> altered	N/A_ moved	date N/A
_X fair	unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Potlatch, Idaho, lies north of the confluence of Rock Creek and the Palouse River in northwestern Latah County, approximately six miles east of the Washington-Idaho state line. Lying at an elevation of approximately 2,600 feet, it is bordered on the northeast by the smaller community of Onaway, and on the south and west by Palouse River flatlands. This country was quite heavily wooded prior to Potlatch's existence. The town consists of two hills--a small south hill and a larger north hill--bisected by U.S. Highway 95A, which in town is Sixth (or Main) Street, the community's major commercial area. Below and west of town is a large flat meadow directly adjacent to the Palouse River. This was the former site of the town's large sawmill, which has been dismantled. Potlatch in 1985 had a population of approximately 600, although in earlier times as many as 1,500 or 2,000 people lived there.

Potlatch was constructed as a company town by the Potlatch Lumber Company. It grew virtually overnight, as was common for Western company towns which were constructed to extract natural resources. The majority of the town's buildings were built in 1906-1907, with additional major construction coming as the company prospered and the town boomed, particularly in 1916-1917 and 1923. Virtually no buildings were constructed after 1923 until the mid-1950s, when the company sold its town and Potlatch became an incorporated city.

Working class houses were built on the north hill. Streets here are named after trees and run uphill to the east, progressing farther away from the millsite, as follows: Fir, Pine, Larch, Cedar, Spruce, Oak, Elm, Maple. Virtually all of the houses on this hill built prior to the time the company sold the town were constructed in 1906-1907. A few houses were added to the northern extremes of some of the streets in 1908, and a considerable number of houses were built on Elm and Maple streets in 1916 and 1923. There had been no housing on Maple before 1923.

Houses for management were situated on the smaller south hill, or Nob Hill. Ten homes were completed around a grassy park here in 1906. One house was added to Larch Street in 1916, and 11 houses were built on the hill in 1923.

Sixth Street is the town's main street. Most public and commercial buildings constructed here were built in 1906-1907, with some significant additions in 1916-1917.

Of the 45 major buildings included in this multiple resource area nomination, 16 were built in 1906; 11 in 1907; one each in 1908, 1911, and 1914; three in 1916; one in 1917; five in 1923; one in 1927; one in 1928; and one (site 6 in the Nob Hill Historic District, an intrusion) in the 1970s. We were unable to verify construction dates for three buildings. The 1927 and 1928 buildings are unusual, in that neither was built by the lumber company, two of only three buildings built prior to 1950 and not constructed at company expense. The 1927 structure is the Catholic Church Rectory (site 2 in the Workers' Neighborhood Historic District); the 1928 building is the American Legion Cabin (site 8).

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Historic Resources of Potlatch (Partial Inventory: Architecture Continuation sheet Item number 7 Page 1

Of the 291 major buildings surveyed in Potlatch during reconnaissance work, which included virtually every building in the historic part of town, 88 percent were residential; 10 percent were commercial or public; and two percent were religious. Of the 45 major buildings included in this multiple resource area nomination, 73 percent (33 buildings) are residential; 20 percent (9 buildings) are commercial or public; and seven percent (3 buildings) are religious.

With three exceptions (site 6 in the Nob Hill Historic District, site 7, and site 2 in the Commercial Historic District), all of the buildings in this nomination are wood frame structures. The exceptions are brick. Site 6 in the Nob Hill Historic District is an intrusion.

Virtually all of Potlatch's houses are bungalows. They are small in scale and modest in design with the exception of a few of the management houses on Nob Hill. But even here, houses are large only in comparison to others in Potlatch, the largest having nine rooms.

Most of the north hill working class houses follow a few basic designs, although variations in porch, door, and window placement relieved monotony. Workers houses ranged from three to six rooms, with a rare seven-room house. Construction costs for those built during the initial 1906-1907 period ranged from \$450 to over \$2,000. The houses usually had horizontal clapboard or shiplap siding, or a combination of horizontal and wood shingle siding. They normally had stone foundations and shingled gable roofs, although there are a good number of hip roofs. All houses here had east-west axes with front doors facing the streets. Most had porches with wooden sidewalks. The smaller houses were one story, while the larger ones were usually a story and a half, with a few two-story structures.

The Nob Hill management houses were considerably more individualized. Each plan was distinct, and managers often worked with the architect in customizing their homes. The ten original management houses constructed in 1906 had seven, eight, or nine rooms, and cost between \$2,347 and \$6,342 to construct. They all had horizontal wood siding or a combination of that and wood shingle siding. They had stone foundations and shingled gable roofs. These homes were well lighted, having many more windows than was common for workers' houses.

Styles for Potlatch's commercial, public, and religious buildings were somewhat more varied than the houses, although usually styles are merely suggested rather than fully expressed. This is not a community of intricate architectural design. The town was built primarily for function.

Potlatch was laid out in a very orderly plan. Streets run directly north-south (named for trees) and east-west (numbered), with precise 90 degree corners. Only Pine Street connected the working class north hill with Nob Hill. Sixth Street intersected the two hills, and, as the commercial and public center, was

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the only place where working class and management families normally mingled. Nob Hill had one large grassy park (currently the location of site 6 in the Nob Hill Historic District), and manager's houses were built on the streets directly bordering this open space.

Lot sizes on Nob Hill were quite large and varied. Lot sizes on the north hill, in contrast, were specifically designed to be very small to encourage upkeep by workers. There was one park open to workers until 1917, but this was filled in that year with the administrative office building (site 7 in the Commercial In more recent times--probably after World War II--a large Historic District). wooded city park was established in the southeast part of town. Though Potlatch had limited park space, the company viewed recreation as essential for a contented work force. The company maintained a baseball field, and in 1913 organized the Potlatch Amateur Athletic Club. The gymnasium (site no. 5 in the Commercial Historic District) constructed in 1916 was not only the town's largest building, but in many ways its most important. Here both sexes from all social classes met for social activities and athletic events, with the club being run by professional physical fitness directors.

In the 1940s or 1950s, two curving streets were constructed--Ponderosa Drive and Memorial Drive--which now serve to better connect the two hills. Native trees were cleared from the townsite during the time of original construction. Between 1906 and 1908, however, the company purchased hundreds of desiduous trees of various varieties, planting them at precise distances--usually 30 feet apart--along every street. Many of these trees still line Potlatch's roadways.

This multiple resource area nomination is based upon a 1984 reconnaissance survey done on contract with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office by historians Mary Reed and Keith Petersen, who are also the authors of this nomination. A "Reconnaissance Survey Report," dated September 1984 is on file at the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office. In that survey, virtually every building in the historic part of Potlatch was surveyed, photographed, and mapped. Buildings with potential for National Register eligibility were select-Once this process was completed, Petersen and Reed consulted with Jennifer ed. Eastman Attebery, State Architectural Historian. It became clear that the town as a whole did not have a density of historic structures great enough for a historic district. As an alternative, a multiple resource area seemed appropriate, to include three separate districts as well as individual buildings as Nob Hill Historic District, 19 buildings; Working Class Historic follows: District, 14 buildings; Commercial Historic District, 7 buildings; individual, 5 buildings.

Peterson and Reed returned to Potlatch in the spring and summer of 1985 to record the 45 buildings at National Register level with photography and more detailed description. Considerable library and archival work was also undertaken in the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography section (item 9) of this form.

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The criteria used in offering these structures for nomination were as follows:

(1) Building age. No buildings less than 50 years old were considered. This was an easy determination in Potlatch because, except for very recent, post-company construction, no town buildings were built later than the 1920s.

(2) Building alteration. Most--but not all--Potlatch structures have received minor alterations, particularly composition or metal roofs and siding. Many have been seriously altered with new additions, windows, doors, and so forth. All buildings with major alterations were discounted, although some with minor alterations were viewed favorably, particularly if the structure was the best representative of a repeating type of Potlatch architecture, made a contribution to a historic district streetscape, or had considerable historic significance.

(3) Building type. Working class houses were basically quite similar, with most variations coming in the number of rooms a house had. We felt it important to include at least one example of each sized house, in other words one three-room house, one of four rooms, one of five rooms, one of six, and one of seven. This factor only influenced our decision in the working class neighborhood, as Nob Hill and commercial/public buildings were more individualized. If residing and reroofing materials were compatible with original materials and left the vernacular plan andfenestration of a house intact, the house was still considered contributory to the workers Neighborhood Historic District.

(4) Historical association. Certain structures in town, such as the gymnasium, administration building, depot, and American Legion cabin, played an important role in the everyday lives of Potlatch residents. These buildings might have been slightly altered, yet were still considered eligible for nomination for their historic associations. For example, the gymnasium (site 5 in the Commercial Historic District) has a small addition on the front, although the remainder of the building is much intact. Because this structure served as the focal point for most town social and athletic activities, we felt its historical association was significant enough to list the building as individually eligible despite the alterations.

(5) Association with significant people. Three Potlatch residents had what might be considered major regional and state significance, and several others have been locally prominent. William Deary was the Potlatch Lumber Company's first general manager, serving from 1903, the time of incorporation, until his death in 1913. During that time he oversaw the building of Potlatch, and the development of the lumber company and the Washington, Idaho and Montana Railway, all of which had a major impact on the development of the Inland Empire. The town of Deary in Latah County, Idaho, is named for him; and his Potlatch house is site 2 in the Nob Hill District. Allison Laird was assistant general manager of the lumber company from 1905 until 1913 and general manager from then until his death in 1931. He likewise was a key character in Potlatch development.

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Laird Park, a U.S. Forest Service recreation area in Latah County is named for him; his house is site 4 in the Nob Hill district. Joseph A. Terteling is also of considerable regional significance. Founder of the Potlatch Brick Company in 1906, Terteling later became a contractor and the head of a multi-million dollar international family construction business with headquarters in Boise, Idaho.

<u>List of properties</u>

- 1. Commercal Historic District, 7 buildings
- 2. Workers' Neighborhood Historic District, 14 buildings and associated outbuildings
- 3. Nob Hill Historic District, 19 buildings and associated outbuildings
- 4. Three-room house, 940 Cedar Street
- 5. Boarding house
- 6. Four-room house, 1015 Pine Street
- 7. Joseph A. Terteling house
- 8. American Legion Cabin

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture architecture art commerce communications	X_ community planning conservation economics education engineering exploration/settlemen		science sculpture social/
Specific dates	1906-1928	Builder/Architect C.	Ferris White	·····

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Potlatch Multiple Resource Area includes a selection of five individually eligible properties, as well as 40 additional buildings in three historic dis-These buildings are representative of the town's architecture from its tricts. settlement as a lumber company town in 1906 through the 1928. These buildings are architecturally and historically significant as remnants of lumber company town architecture in Idaho and the Pacific Northwest. Lumbering was and is one of the most significant industries in the state and region, and lumber company towns, prior to modern highways, played a significant role in that industry. While the buildings are generally well crafted and constructed, wood being of no particular object in a sawmill town, Potlatch's significance lies not in its architectural innovation or craftsmanship, but in its representation of company town planning and building design and its history. Potlatch is the best example of a lumber company town in Idaho, and it was one of the largest and longestlived of the many Western lumber company towns. The selection of structures comprises the least altered, most representative, and best preserved examples of the building type and construction techniques observed in the overall town inventory.

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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The Potlatch Lumber Company was incorporated in 1903, one of several Western timber companies affiliated with Frederick Weyerhaeuser and associated Midwestern lumber barons. The Potlatch Lumber Company had a tremendous impact on the development of north central Idaho and the entire Palouse region. In addition to the town of Potlatch, the company was directly responsible for the formation of two other Idaho communities, Deary and Elk River. Because of its railroad, it also contributed to the development of several others, such as Princeton, Harvard, and Bovill. The company's inexpensive lumber greatly aided the settlement of the Palouse region. Furthermore, the company was for many years Idaho's largest taxpayer, hiring hundreds of employees as well as being one of the largest property owners in the state.

Potlatch purchased small existing saw mills in Colfax and Palouse, Washington but these were not large enough to manufacture all of the lumber generated from its tremendous north Idaho timberlands. Consequently in 1905 company officials announced they would construct a new, large mill.

While the company also planned to build a logging railroad to transport logs-what eventually became the Washington, Idaho and Montana Railway--ample water would be necessary to create a large log pond. The Palouse River supplied the only suitable Latah County waterway, and William Deary, the company's first general manager, purchased virtually all land along the river in Idaho suitable for a mill. After considerable debate among company directors, a construction site at the confluence of Rock Creek and the Palouse River was selected.

In the summer of 1905 the company hired one of the nation's foremost sawmill architects, William A. Wilkinson of Minneapolis, to design the mill. Construction began in September 1905, and one year later the mill began operation. It was the largest white pine sawmill in the world, steam-powered and belt driven.

In addition to the sawmill, the millsite had dozens of other buildings. The mill closed in 1981 and the entire millsite, with the exception of an office building added in the 1950s, was razed between 1983 and 1985.

Simultaneously with millsite construction, a town was laid out for housing workers and their families. In January 1906, the company hired C. Ferris White of Spokane, Washington, to design the town. White was 23 years old and had served six years as an architectural apprentice when he moved from Chicago to Spokane in 1890. He immediately became a partner with the established archi-Seaton and White designed not only in Spokane but also in tect C. B. Seaton. western Washington where White spent a good part of the early 1890s. He did cooperate with his partner, though, in designing some of the Inland Empire's most prominent landmarks, including the Spokane exposition center, the state normal school at Cheney, and most significantly, Spokane's Review Building headquarters of the city newspaper. White returned to Spokane from Western

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Washington in 1896, remaining there until 1915. Though he designed over a thousand buildings, he is relatively obscure today. He died in Everett, Washington, in 1922.

White contracted with the Potlatch Lumber Company to design and supervise the construction of over 200 buildings. In addition to houses, he designed the Potlatch Mercantile Company store, the W. I. & M. Depot, the hotel, school, and boarding houses.

White arrived in Potlatch in January 1906, finding mill construction well underway and a good number of small cottages already built. In fact, E. J. Davis, the company's master mechanic, moved into one of the cottages a few days after White's initial inspection of the site. Davis was the first person to occupy a permanent house in Potlatch. Even after contracting with White, the company hired a north Idaho builder to construct more small cottages, as the company was eager to settle people in the town.

White drew up the plans that would transform Potlatch into Latah County's second largest town. Within a month 40 houses were constructed, and by spring over 100 were completed. "The progress," reported the Palouse <u>Republic</u> in April, "is almost beyond belief. It is not unusual to see . . . mushroom towns that grow up in a night, built of tents and rough lumber; but to see a town . . . where every building is substantial grow up in practically but a few weeks . . . shows marked mental capacity and executive ability on the part of the men who planned a little earlier: "Potlatch . . . is making more rapid growth than any town in the history of the state."

The major portion of Potlatch was built under White's supervision in 1906 and 1907. In 1906, 143 houses were constructed and in 1907, 58 more were added. Other buildings were also put up at this time, including boarding houses, an ice house, Catholic church, hotel, school, and store. By August 1906 the town had a population of about 1,000, and a year later reached a population of around 1,500.

While most of Potlatch's houses were constructed during the initial 1906-1907 period, 14 more were built in 1908, one in 1909, 40 in 1910, one in 1915, five in 1916, one in 1921, and 26 in 1923. Most of the houses constructed in 1910 were temporary and were sold and removed from town in the 1940s.

While 1923 was the major construction date of additional houses, Potlatch experienced a significant building boom in 1916-1917 that dramatically altered the town's appearance. On December 25, 1915, a fire destroyed a building which had originally been constructed in 1911 as a livery barn, but had later been adapted to house a gymnasium and theater. In 1916 the company built a large gymnasium and a new theater to replace the burned facility. It also constructed a twostory brick garage that year, while a two-story frame administration building was added in 1917.

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Potlatch was largely patterned after Pullman, Illinois which, before the Pullman strike of 1893, had a reputation for producing a new type of dependable working-The strike tarnished that image, but the Potlatch Company directors man. believed their town could mimic the good while eliminating the bad. The company provided all of the basic necessities for its residents -- police and fire protection, recreational amenities, a school, churches, hospital care, and an inexpenwell-stocked company store. It prohibitied alcohol and prostitution, and sive, encouraged marriage--believing married workers more dependable--by allowing only married couples to rent company houses. Single men lived in boarding houses, or occasionally sublet rooms from families. There were no local elections; no mayor or town council.

The company made money on its town, even though its rents were low. In 1943 the Townsite Division--charged with maintaining the community and collecting rents-showed a profit of \$59,000. This profit margin shrank gradually to \$12,000 in 1950, largely due to post-war increases in labor costs, and the company began to consider ending its social and economic experiment by selling its town.

In late 1951 the company announced that it would sell the town to interested purchasers beginning in early spring 1952. By 1954 most building were owned by individuals, businesses, and organizations, and Potlatch became an incorporated community.

Once the buildings were finally transferred to other owners, the town took on a different image. Many owners altered residences by adding new siding, roofs, Additions were made to many houses, and some were removed doors, and windows. to create larger lots and/or new housing. Some owners let their houses deteriorate to a degree that would not have been allowed under company ownership. ship. The result is that Potlatch today is in some ways similar to other small towns with its various houses and buildings showing a diversity of care and Even with the changes that have come to the community, remodeling. though, Potlatch is still easily recognizable as being different. Very few of the houses have been altered to such a state to as to be unrecognizable as company-The streets are still laid out at precise 90-degree angles. built houses. It still has much of the flavor of a unique community.

During the course of our survey we met with the Potlatch City Council, held a public meeting discussing the survey in Potlatch, and met individually with many The Palouse, Washington, newspaper, which serves also as the town residents. Potlatch town paper, also ran stories concering the survey. Everyone we spoke to unanimously supported the nomination of Potlatch properties to the National The Latah County Historical Society also strongly supports such Register. All sites in this nomination have been included in the Idaho nominations. Historic Sites Inventory. To our knowledge, no comprehensive plan for Potlatch exists.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

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<u>10. Geog</u>	raphical Dat	a			
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	Prepared By				
name/title Keitl	n Petersen, Historian	AND Mary Ree	ed, Historian	n	
organization Idaho	o State Historical Soc	iety	date	November 26, 1	.985
street & number NW	313 Webb Street		telephone	(509) 332-3	457
city or town Pul	llman		state	Washington	99163
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Chief of Registration

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ARCHIVAL DEPOSITORIES:

- Laird Norton Company Archives, Seattle, Washington. [Originally headquartered in Minnesota, the Laird Norton Company was one of the affiliated companies that incorportated Potlatch Lumber Company. Finding aids and professional archivist available for researchers.]
- Latah County Historical Society, Moscow, Idaho. [The Society maintains hundreds of historic photographs of Potlatch, as well as oral histories and numerous small manuscript collections dealing with the town, including many written, unpublished reminiscences of town residents. Finding aids and librarian available for researchers.]
- University of Idaho Library Special Collections, Moscow, Idaho. [Special Collections maintains two very large collections relating specifically to Potlatch: The Potlatch Lumber Company papers include blueprints, townsite records, and house/building construction records; and the Washington, Idaho and Montana Railway papers. Finding aids and professional archivist available for researchers.]
- Weyerhaeuser Company Archives, Tacoma, Washington. [Potlatch Lumber Company was a Weyerhaeuser affiliated company and the Weyerhaeuser archives contain many Potlatch related materials. Finding aids and professional archivist available for reseachers.]

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OMB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87

Continuation sheet Page , a Item number Multiple Resource Area dnr-11 Thematic Group Name Potlatch Multiple Resource Area State IDAHO Latch County. ALL TOTION hin Nomination/Type of Review Date/Signature Entered in the ĭ1. American Legion Cabin Keeper National Bagister Attest ໍ້ 2. Keeper Boarding House Salasing Attest Commercial Historic District Keeper 3. Jubsbantive Attest ć**4**. Four-Room House Keeper Attest Intered in the [,]* 5. Nob Hill Historic District Keeper Rational Roginshap Attest **∂6.** Terteling, Joseph A., Keeper House Attest **ົ7.** Three-Room House Keeper Attest ۱^۵ **8.** Workers' Neighborhood Keeper Historic District Attest 9. Keeper Attest 10. Keeper

Attest