

NPS Form 10-9000  
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

4

1. Name of Property

historic name: Foster, Blacky, house

other name/site number: Smith Gulch Cabin, Johnny Briggs Cabin

site 10IH175, site BR-7

2. Location

street & number: Bitterroot National Forest, Idaho

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Shoup

vicinity: X

state: ID county: Idaho code: 049 zip code: 83469

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: public-federal

Category of Property: building(s)

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u>	structures
<u>2</u>	<u>      </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Evan D. DeBlasio \_\_\_\_\_ 2-13-92  
Signature of certifying official Date

Forest Service USDA  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Thomas J. Green \_\_\_\_\_ 5/31/91  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_ Autawicte Ave 4/10/92  
\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
determined not eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_
- National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
for Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: DOMESTIC Sub: single dwelling

Current : VACANT Sub: not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation stone/granite roof asphalt  
walls wood/log other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture  
Social history  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1930 1940

Significant Dates : ca. 1930 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person(s): N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: Salmon National Forest Supervisor's Office, site file

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>11</u>	<u>658280</u>	<u>5038720</u>	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Boundary follows a ten foot zone around the perimeter of the structure.

Boundary Justification: X See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Jennifer Eastman Attebery, Architectural Historian

Organization: Idaho State Historical Society Date: May 1, 1991

Street & Number: 210 Main Street Telephone: (208) 334-3861

City or Town: Boise State: ID Zip: 83702

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7

Blacky Foster House

Page 1

=====

The Blacky Foster house is a single-room log building with a gable roof. The building sits on a river bench north of the Salmon River and about 50 feet west of Smith Gulch, where a small stream enters the river. The site is located within the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness and is accessible only by pack trail or river.

The house is constructed of three tiers of large round logs, laid horizontally and joined with rough round corner-notching. Above these horizontal tiers are walls formed by vertical poles about 6 to 11 inches in diameter and secured at the eaves with 2-by-6 plates. Gables are constructed of vertical half-logs.

All of the logs and poles used in constructing the house were peeled. The ends of the logs and poles were squared off using a saw, and some of them were shaped with an ax. Ends of the horizontal logs project unevenly beyond the corner notch. The logs and poles were chinked on the interior and exterior of the house. Chinking consists of moss pressed into the gaps, then covered with tarpaper held in place by galvanized tacks. Large gaps were filled with strips of wood. The interior of the building also was finished with sheets of tarpaper secured by furring strips.

The building's foundation is composed of flat stones laid up with adobe mortar. Under the house, accessible through a cellar door in the floor, is a root cellar with a dirt floor.

The building's gable roof is constructed of tie beams and rafters made of 3 to 4 1/4 inch poles, set on 2-foot 7-inch centers. There are two collar beams made of 1-by-6s. The roof is sheathed with 1-by-8 lumber and rolled asphalt roofing. The roofing materials are not original, having been replaced many times since the building's construction in about 1930.

The building faces south, oriented toward the Salmon River. The south wall has a Z-pattern batten door and a horizontal sliding window with two sashes of four panes each. The side walls of the building also have horizontal multi-pane windows with two sashes, one of which slides. The windows are set into frames fashioned of scraps of dimensional lumber.

The interior of the building contains a bench, counter, two hanging shelves, and one standing shelf (see sketch map). The floor is made of 1-by-12 lumber. A trap door to the cellar is located towards the front of the house, with stairs made of lumber. The stone foundation of the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7

Blacky Foster House

Page 2

house forms the walls for the cellar. Air vents for the cellar are located at ground level on the north and south sides of the house. They are framed with boards and covered with metal screen. The cellar contains freestanding wooden storage shelves constructed of dimensional lumber and poles.

The building sits at its original location and retains its original character with the exception of reroofing and minor alterations on the south wall. Norm Guth, an outfitter operating from Smith Gulch, has replaced the roof four or five times. A small part of the south wall above the window appears to have been filled with replacement materials. Instead of the vertical logs used elsewhere in the building, this area is framed with two layers of lumber (vertical boards measuring 1-by-11 and horizontal boards measuring 1-by-7). Near the house is an outfitter's camp with five recently-constructed buildings. None of these alterations significantly effect the building's representation of architecture and social history of the Salmon River Breaks region. The building exhibits good structural integrity in spite of occupation by rodents and exposure to the elements. These effects have not caused an irreversible loss of structural integrity.

The property also includes a rock retaining wall enclosing the area immediately in front of the house and a small iris bed. This wall appears to date from the period of significance and is a contributory structure.

A site form, prepared in 1970, shows the remains of three or four more buildings, a trail, an orchard, areas that exhibit a concentration of historic artifacts, and pits that may be associated with placer mining. At this time, it is unclear if these remains still exist, and if they are associated with the Blacky Foster house. Their exclusion from this nomination does not preclude the eligibility of these additional sites, which could be evaluated at a future date.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8

Blacky Foster House

Page 1

=====

The Blacky Foster house is architecturally significant as an example of housing from the Depression period in the Salmon River Breaks region of Idaho. The house is also historically significant for its association with a distinctive subsistence lifestyle and community that was established in the Salmon River Breaks region during the late part of the nineteenth century and the first four decades of the twentieth century.

Beginning in the 1890s and throughout the early part of the twentieth century, the isolated Salmon River Breaks area of central Idaho was inhabited by a loosely-knit riverine community of small homesteads (or ranches) and placer-mining operations that were accessible only by trail or by river and that communicated and traded with each other through travel on flatboats. During the period between 1929 and the beginning of U.S. involvement in World War II, a resurgence in interest in placer-mining as a result of the Depression economy brought newcomers to the area to establish mining claims.

While the people of the Salmon River Breaks region sought a self-sufficient lifestyle, in fact they combined numerous activities to support themselves and their children, and those activities inevitably made them interdependent in a backwoods economy based on agriculture, mining, and recreation. This backwoods community and its economy has received little attention from historians because of its relative isolation from outside areas, their politics, economy, and society.

Typically the people of the Salmon River Breaks combined two or more of the following activities: placer mining, raising livestock and field crops, gardening, raising fruit trees, hunting (for food and for bounty animals), fire detection and control, moonshining, logging, and boating. A few men also hired out for construction of buildings, but typically--as with the Foster house--buildings were owner-constructed.

Since World War II the Salmon River Breaks community has declined under reinterpretations of private use of Federal land and reinterpretations of mining claim law. However, traces of this community still exist in historic archaeological sites and in a few extant buildings. Sites with evidence of Euroamerican settlement occur along the Salmon River on the bars and deltas where tributaries enter the river. Nearly every tributary has one or more such sites, about one site per one-mile stretch of river.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8

Blacky Foster House

Page 2

=====  
Today very little remains above ground to represent and document the activities of the Salmon River community. Of the 363 historic properties recorded in the 1982 inventory of the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, for example, 41 per cent were found to be in ruins, 28 per cent were found to lack integrity, and only 40 properties--11 per cent of the inventory--were found to possess sufficient integrity for National Register listing. (Twenty per cent of the surveyed properties were insufficiently documented.)

The Blacky Foster house is typical of the cabins constructed along the Salmon by placer-miners during the Depression Era. The house was constructed by Blacky Foster in about 1930 at his small-scale placer-mining operation. Foster was joined by his son Willard Foster in 1946-48, and Willard filed three mining claims in the area. Johnny E. Briggs later used the building when he located the Lucky B placer claim at Smith Gulch in 1952.

The Salmon River cabins typically were owner-constructed, and they often exhibit experimentation based on vernacular house types (such as the Rocky Mountain Cabin) and constructions (such as vertical log construction). Specific features often include horizontal log construction, one-room gable-front plans, gable overhangs (not present in this example), sash windows set horizontally (and therefore without sash weights) into simple dimensional lumber, batten doors, and stone foundations and cellars. It is typical, too, to find houses and other buildings oriented to the community's main means of travel and communication, the Salmon River. Other features associated with the subsistence lifestyle of the community often include outhouses, sheds, small barns, placer mining ditches and excavations, trails, orchards of apple and other fruit trees, and rock retaining walls and small flower gardens similar to the iris bed and retaining wall found at this property.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9

Blacky Foster House

Page 1

---

Carrey, Johnny, and Cort Conley. River of No Return. Cambridge, Idaho: Backeddy Books, 1978.

Guth, Norm. Personal communication, August 22, 1990.

Idaho Archaeological and Historic Sites Inventory, on file at Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, Boise, Idaho.

Jim Moore Place National Register Nomination form, on file at Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, Boise, Idaho.

Schumaker, O. Frank, and James E. Dewey. "A History of the Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area." On file at Salmon National Forest, Salmon, Idaho. 1970.

Throop, Gail. Historic Buildings in Wilderness: A Search for Compatibilities. United States Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, 1990.

Wilderness Planning Team. "An Inventory of the Ranch, Homestead, Trapper, and Other Cabins and Structures within the River of No Return Wilderness and Its Wild and Scenic Rivers." Report submitted to Congress in fulfillment of the Central Idaho Wilderness Act. On file at Salmon National Forest, Salmon, Idaho. 1982.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 10

Blacky Foster House

Page 1

=====

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary reflects the extent of the building and its immediate surroundings, including a rock wall listed as contributing in this nomination, that are historically associated with the property.