

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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**

historic Johnson Siding, House and Sawmill

and/or common John F. Johnson House and Sawmill

**2. Location**

*Rimrock Hwy.*

street & number Rimrock Highway, State Rd #44

N/A not for publication

city, town Rapid City *sd.*  vicinity of congressional district Second

state South Dakota code 46 county Pennington code 103

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Loren and Helen Langslet

street & number 500 East Commercial

city, town Gettysburg *N/A* vicinity of state South Dakota 57442

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pennington County Courthouse

street & number St. Joseph Street

city, town Rapid City state South Dakota

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title HAER Survey of the Black Hills has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1974-1976  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records NAER, Dept. of Interior, Historical Preservation Center

city, town Vermillion state South Dakota

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input type="checkbox"/> slightly	

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated on Rapid Creek, at Rimrock Highway, Johnson Siding is a site comprised of a house and ten outbuildings. All evidence of the sawmill has been removed.

The house is constructed in a method unique in South Dakota. Built of vertically placed logs, the house is the only known example of this technique of building. Rectangular in shape, the Johnson House is one-and-one-half stories in height, with a gable roof and two gabled dormers, one on each roof plane. A central passage plan house, the building has the characteristic symmetry of this house type, with five bays across the front, three across the rear, and three on each gable end. The dormers appear to have been a later addition as they are the only sections of the house which have round headed nails and one over one sash windows. All other windows are two over two sash. The entire house is sheathed in lapped horizontal boarding, except at the water table or sill line, where the boarding is flush vertical.

Perhaps the direct access to the mill resulted in the unusual construction of the Johnson House. The logs are actually power sawn timbers squared up into 6" x 8" dimensions. These logs extend from the bottom of the windows to the ceiling of the first floor. Resting on a rock foundation, the sill of the house is another peculiar feature, composed of three horizontal hewn logs or timbers. The plate, above the vertical logs, at the roof-line, is composed of two horizontal logs. This seemingly ungainly structure is stabilized by the vertical logs being morticed into the horizontal ones. The roof framing system is a conventional rafter type, which rests on the floor joists of the half or second story. The first and second story floor joists are mitered into the horizontal logs. The interior walls are conventional balloon frame studs and joists.

The other outbuildings are all rectangular shaped, frame gabled structures. One was used as a bunkhouse and later moved to serve as a cover for the cyclone or root cellar. The outbuildings are scattered along the edge of the hillside, while the sawmill stood closer to the creek at the bottom of the incline.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1883, 1885-1890 **Builder/Architect** John R. Johnson

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Significant in the areas of architecture, exploration/settlement and industry, Johnson Siding is one of the few remaining examples of the small Black Hills communities which grew up around a particular industry. Perhaps of greater significance, however, is the \* Johnson House, which utilized the power driven sawmill to create a hybrid house, which is both log and frame construction, and is the only example of vertical log construction in South Dakota.

John F. Johnson acquired the patent to this land in 1883. Two years later after clearing the wooded land he began work on the house, which took five years to complete. In 1886 the Rapid Canyon Line opened its track between Rapid City and Mystic, which allowed Johnson to open a sawmill and have a ready means to ship his lumber. The mill was built near the creek and soon lumber was shipped to other areas of the Black Hills. Johnson lumber was used for the flume which supplied Rapid City and Pactola with water. Both the mining operations and sash and door manufacturers drew upon large supplies of lumber.

While Johnson Siding was noted in a 1900 publication as a community, in truth, it consisted of little more than Johnson's buildings. Johnson provided a bunkhouse for his employees and no other early residence in the area are known.

The Black Hills area was intensively settled for industrial purposes and many communities like Johnson Siding grew up around an industry, whether it be stamp milling, mining or lumber. Few of the small hamlets or communities remain; Johnson Siding is one of the rare survivors of its period. It is also believed to be one of the earliest mills in the area.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the site is the construction technique employed in the house. The plan itself is rather unusual, for central passage plan houses were losing popularity by the time of the state's settlement. However a concentration of them survive in the Black Hills. This traditional form was combined with an extraordinary building method to create a highly unusual house.

The HAER inventory card reads "The Johnson Sawmill was in operation in 1974 when the survey was first begun. In that year it burned leaving only the burner. It appears mainly to have produced building supplies in the wooden structure pictured. The mill was rebuilt near Spearfish, but it was never solvent. Larry Johnson has since left the area."

\* construction of the

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Oral interview, John S. Johnson (grandson of homesteader), 29 Dec 79.  
 Oral interview, Henry Everson (uncle), 29 Dec 79.  
 Parker, Watson, and Hugh K. Lambert, Black Hills Ghost Towns. Chicago: The Swallow Press, Inc., 1974. p. 118.  
 HAER Inventory, Site #72 1974-1976

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 10.65  
 Quadrangle name Pactola Dam Quadrangle scale 1:24000

**UMT References**

A	<u>113</u>	<u>6247415</u>	<u>4881810</u>	B	<u>113</u>	<u>6249210</u>	<u>48819210</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>113</u>	<u>62491810</u>	<u>48817410</u>	D	<u>113</u>	<u>62471710</u>	<u>48816410</u>
E	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	F	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
G	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	H	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Rapid Creek forms the boundaries of the site on the west, south and east, while Rimrock Highway creates the northern boundary. The site is located in the NE 1/4 of Section 6, T1N and R6E.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Helen Langslet Technical editing: Carolyn Torma  
Historical Preservation Center  
USD, Vermillion, SD 57069  
 organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 28 May 81 (605-677-5313)  
 street & number 500 E. Commercial telephone 605-765-9637  
 city or town Gettysburg state South Dakota 57442

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature James R. Fishburn  
 title Director, Office of Cultural Preservation date May 3, 1982

For HCERS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>Shelona Byers</u>	Entered in the National Register date <u>6/17/82</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	