

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

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

✓ SITE NAME: Blessing, Carl, Outbuildings SITE NUMBER: 50

✓ LOCATION: ~~Two miles north and three and one-half miles west~~ ^{NW} of Jerome, ^{Vic.} ID

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Wiley Meyers
c/o Edward Meyers
Rural Route 2
Jerome, ID 83338

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Gooding, SE, 7.5 minutes ACREAGE: less than one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

✓ The nomination includes the Carl Blessing Outbuildings and the property on which they stand, the NE 1/4, NW 1/4, NW 1/4, NE 1/4, NW 1/4 of Section 9, T8S, R16E. Legal description on file at Jerome County Courthouse, Jerome, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/697180/4736005

DATE OR PERIOD: 1918 ARCHITECT OR BUILDER: Carl Blessing

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: architecture. agriculture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: local

CONDITION: good, unaltered, original site

DESCRIPTION:

A smoke house and a cellar are side by side a few hundred feet east of the farm residence on a lava outcropping. The cellar, on the left, is 20 feet wide and 26 feet long. A bulkhead door leads down several steps to the dirt floor. The perpendicular, unpointed rubble walls are about eight feet tall. The approximately nine-by-nine-foot smoke house to the right of the cellar is about eight feet-tall, with a centered wooden plank door. The dirt floor is several feet below the ground level outside. Both buildings have similar structural details. Boards were laid across the tops of the stone walls. A layer of straw was put on top, then sheets of tin or galvanized steel. About a foot of dirt was rounded over the entire roof. Between the two structures is a small dugout area about five feet wide and five feet high and deep. It has a stone back wall and shares side walls with the adjoining structures. Boards fitted into joints of both walls are covered similarly to the other two structures for a roof. The door is gone from this small section. The frames for the doors and part of the inside framing is railroad ties. The interior of the cellar has bins and shelves along the sides and a slotted rack hanging from the ceiling for apples. The smoke house has hooks in the ceiling, and still smells of curing smoke. An apple wood fire was built to the right of the smoke house and partially banked. Smoke was directed to the smoke house through a wooden pipe. A large, old grapevine covers both structures.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Blessing outbuildings are a good example of the resourceful use of lava rock to build farm food storage buildings, a good example of smoke house and cellar plans and a good example of owner-built lava rock construction. Carl Blessing built these buildings soon after he bought the farm in 1918. Storage for food had a high priority in establishing a farmstead. The location of the structures were determined partially by proximity to the house, but also the lava outcropping was a source of building material. Both buildings are built more above ground than many cellars because of the difficulty of excavation. Such farm buildings serve for year-round storage, and the cellar had to be pressed into service as an extra bedroom from time to time.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Blessing, Harold, and Ruth Jensen, interview with Marian Posey-Ploss, Jerome, Idaho, August 26, 1978.