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

NOMINATION: Kootenai County Rural Schools thematic group

SITE NAME: Cave Lake School

SITE NUMBER: 4

LOCATION: North side of State Highway 3, at intersection with Willow Creek Road

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Alfred D. Whalen
Route 2
St. Maries, ID 83861

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Medimont, 7.5' ACREAGE: about 1 acre

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The nomination includes the Cave Lake School and the property on which it stands, about one acre of land in the southeast corner of Lot 2, Section 4, T47N, R2W, B. M., beginning at the SE corner of government lot 2, Section 4, T47N, R2W, thence north 208 feet, thence west 208 feet, thence south 208 feet, thence east 108 feet to place of beginning, excluding Idaho Highway 3 right-of-way.

UTM(S): 11/529500/5251950

DATE OR PERIOD: 1913

ARCHITECT OR BUILDER: unknown

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: architecture, exploration/settlement

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: local

CONDITION: Deteriorated, altered, original site

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTORY BUILDINGS: 1

DESCRIPTION:

Cave Lake School is one of the thematic group's moderate-sized, functionally designed schools influenced by the Colonial Revival and bungalow styles. It is a rectangular wood-frame building, approximately 30 by 50 feet, with a partially enclosed gable-roofed front (south) porch. The building has a hipped roof covered with metal sheeting. The building is clad with painted shiplap siding and trimmed with vertical corner boards. The front porch gable end has three figure-four verge brackets and is wood-shingled.

Five panels of multi-light double-hung sash windows cover about half of the building's east and west facades; four panels of similar windows are offset toward the east end of the north facade. When in use as a schoolhouse, the building was partitioned to accommodate two classrooms. It is now used to store hay and is in a deteriorated condition; many of the windows are broken out and the interior is exposed to the elements. Aside from the metal roofing, the exterior of the building does not appear to have been altered.

SIGNIFICANCE:

Cave lake School is significant for its association with the early white settlement of the Cave Lake area and its representation of utilitarian rural schoolhouse design in Kootenai County.

Cave Lake School is situated in the Central Coeur d'Alene River study unit. Of nine schools that have been identified in the study unit, this and Lane School II are the only former schoolhouses that have retained sufficient architectural integrity to be eligible for the National Register.

Cave Lake School is located on the north side of Idaho Highway 3, approximately midway between the south ends of Cave and Medicine lakes and about one and one-half miles south of the Coeur d'Alene River. The Cave Lake area was within the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation until Congressional ratification of the Treaty of 1889. In late 1889 the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company inaugurated railroad service through the area and by the early 1890's homesteaders began to file on the adjacent land. Settlers were attracted to the area for a variety of reasons, including the rich farm and pasture land that lay adjacent to the lakes and the Coeur d'Alene River and the heavily timbered hillsides nearby. By the early 1900's a number of large sawmills had been established along the Coeur d'Alene River, including one at nearby Medicine Lake in 1902. Logging continued to play an important role in local life until the 1930's. Since then the community has remained primarily agricultural.

Cave Lake School is evidently the first and only school to have served the immediate area in which it is located, although several smaller schools were reportedly active on a temporary basis. Cave Lake School was built in 1913 and continued until about 1950, when it was consolidated into the Harrison (Kootenai) School District. The building is now privately owned and is used for hay storage.