

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

NOMINATION: (TOURTELLOTTE AND HUMMEL ARCHITECTURE IN IDAHO ~~7A~~)

SITE NAME: Lewiston Vineyards Gates

SITE NUMBER: 69

LOCATION: ~~Near Eighteenth Avenue and Tenth~~, Lewiston, Nez Perce County ~~(069)~~,
Idaho

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

City of Lewiston
P. O. Box 617
Lewiston, ID 83501

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Clarkston, 7.5 minute

ACREAGE: less than one acre

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Lewiston Vineyards Gates and the property on which they stand, the SE 1/4, NE 1/4, SW 1/4, SW 1/4, Section 6, T35N, R5W, Boise Meridian. Legal description on file at the Nez Perce County Court-house, Lewiston, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/4,98.670/51,38,410

DATE OR PERIOD: 1910

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

CONDITION: deteriorated altered (attrition) original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Lewiston Vineyard Gates site consists of the remains of a monumental entry to an early commercial vineyard, part of which is still visible on the hillside to the west. The project as described at the time was for "two massive stone entry towers of heavy stone" with stone walls adjacent, using "natural faced rock without the marks of tools, leaving the moss from the ledge" and laid up with black mortar and white stone."¹ The ruins on the site closely match these specifications.

The entire ensemble extended about 140 feet east to west. Its primary elements were two battered and buttressed stone towers, one of which survives, which formed the actual portal. On either side are low concrete bridges which must have formed part of the stone walls and which at one time linked the central towers to short side towers in the same rustic mode.

The large towers, to judge from the survivor on the west, were about twenty-five feet in height and eight feet square at the base; the standing tower is hollow,

steeply battered, and buttressed by outset corners up to a lower cornice five or six feet from the top, with a second cornice and a large concrete nipple at the summit. The eastern tower has collapsed or been demolished and most of the material removed, but the fallen concrete cap is in evidence some feet from the base, as shown in photograph 2. Also visible in that photograph are the eastern flanking bridge and short tower. These forms also survive on the west side. The small towers are battered but unbuttressed, with a single cornice under the concrete cap. The remains of the connecting stone wall are in evidence for some paces to the left of the short tower. All non-concrete remains are rough dark stone laid up with darkened mortar, except for the narrow stone frieze beneath the cornices.

1. Lewiston Tribune, May 21, 1910, p. 6, c. 3.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Lewiston Vineyard Gates are architecturally significant as an example unmatched in the Group of the fanciful classical-eclectic propensities of Ralph Loring of the Lewiston office; as an example of architecture; monumental in scale and as physical remains of an important early industry.

The other buildings in the Thematic Group which are attributable to Loring--the Idaho Grocery warehouses (site 480 and the Lewiston City Hall (site 61)--are handsome but conventional structures; the curious masonry forms of the Lewiston Vineyard Gates are closer to the personal style of the designer of such curious structures as the Kamiah State Bank (National Register, August 29, 1978) and the Clarkston, Washington, Public Library, which is a sort of tip-toes bungalow with an attic band of miniature columns. The Lewiston Vineyard Gates have a vaguely classicizing air, more because of their unspecific but imposing monumentality than anything else; but the specific forms--the battered profile and natural materials-- are arguable closer to the Craftsman aesthetic than to any other identifiable one. That Loring was attuned to the bungalow mode is evident not only in his design for the Clarkston Library but in a pure bungalow schoolhouse designed for the town of Winchester in the same year as the Vineyard Gates, the last year of his association with Tourtellotte and Company.

These surprising remains also have significance and interest as a work of monumental architecture--architecture in which the desire to make a statement of some kind is the primary purpose, overtaking more completely than is usual any actual physical function. There are very few examples of this in the Thematic Group; only the funerary monuments (sites 36, 55, and 132) are comparable. The gates also have historical significance in their local community as tangible evidence of the pride invested in local fruit-growing operations on the low hills above the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater rivers. These operations were once extensive within the boundaries of what is presently the City of Lewiston; the gates and the vineyards behind them have for that reason an additional iconic value.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

- Lewiston Tribune, May 21, 1910, p. 6, c. 3.