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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form



64501005

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

☒ New Submission ☐ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Agricultural Properties of Latah County, Idaho, 1855-1955

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Agriculture in Latah County, Idaho

C. Form Prepared By

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D. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. [] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Kenneth C. Reid
Title DEPUTY SHPO

Date 17 Feb 08

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall

Date of Action April 2, 2008

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E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Statement of Associated Historic Context

Introduction

Latah County, Idaho was established in 1888, the only county in the country to be created by an act of Congress. This unusual legislation carved out the new political unit from Nez Perce County to the south in response to demands by area residents, particularly farmers, for convenient access to government services. Latah County encompasses an area of widely varying terrain ranging from the rich Palouse soils in the west to the timbered mountains of the east. That terrain has had a profound impact on Latah County's agricultural history, and its built environment and landscape reflect the significance of that history.

Organization of Multiple Property Documentation Form

This multiple property documentation form identifies one historic context—agriculture in Latah County—and several property types associated with that context. The property types include farmsteads, barns, grain storage and transportation facilities, and cooperative/social organization buildings. The Statement of Associated Historic Context summarizes broad historic developments and events related to agriculture in Latah County. The Associated Property Types discusses the physical characteristics of each type and the standards to be met for potential National Register nomination.

Setting

Latah County is located in the panhandle of northern Idaho and borders the state of Washington. The county covers slightly over one thousand square miles and contains approximately 697,000 acres. The terrain ranges from wooded hill and mountainous areas in the east and north (a portion of which lies within the St. Joe National Forest) to the Palouse prairie and boundary farmlands of the south and west. As of 2007, Latah County's population is approximately 35,000; Moscow, the county seat and home to the University of Idaho, holds 22,000 of those residents. The remaining 13,000 live in the countryside or in the county's numerous small towns, which include Genesee, Juliaetta, Kendrick, Troy, Deary, Bovil, Potlatch, Onaway, Princeton, Harvard, Viola, Joel, Avon, Cedar Creek, Farmington, Howell, and Helmer.

The Palouse region is the dominant natural feature of Latah County and the origin of much of its agricultural prosperity. Part of the Columbia Plateau, the hilly, semiarid Palouse occupies southeastern Washington and a small portion of northern Idaho. The Palouse is the result of millions of years of climatic events including the deposit of large quantities of soil by prevailing winds. These loess soils can reach depths of up to fifty feet and have provided some of the nation's highest wheat yields since

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farmers began planting the grain. The eastern section of the Palouse, including the portion within Latah County, exhibits steep hillsides less evident in the drier western section in Washington State. The region's mild climate brings fall and spring precipitation and dry summers ideal for grain crops. The success of the Palouse as an agricultural area overshadows the county's northern and eastern sections, which contain more wooded areas and have shorter growing seasons.¹

Early History

Before white settlement began, the Palouse, Nez Perce and Coeur d'Alene Indians inhabited areas of the Columbia Plateau and often traveled through portions of present-day Latah County. The valley in which Moscow is located was particularly important to the tribes as a site for gathering the roots of the camas plant, which could be eaten raw, cooked, or made into flour. Between 1800 and 1850 the tribes began to make contact with white explorers and traders. Initially, the Palouse region was overlooked by these newcomers; the absence of flat land seemed to preclude agricultural activity, and the lack of fur-bearing mammals discouraged those interested in the fur trade. Missionaries who ministered to regional tribes, particularly the Nez Perce, began to farm and to encourage farming among the natives. As western-bound settlers showed an interest in the area, the pressures of the westward movement in general impacted the native groups. Beginning in 1855, the U.S. made treaties with the tribes that resulted in their ceding large areas of land to the government. Even before their lands were opened to settlement, white settlers began coming and clashes with Native Americans resulted in the entry of the U.S. Army. The tribal groups were defeated, and by 1900 most of these Indians were living on reservations.²

Agriculture and Settlement, 1855-1880

Settlement began to increase on the Columbia Plateau after 1855. In that year and in the years immediately following, gold strikes in present-day eastern Oregon, western Montana, and Idaho drew thousands of gold-seekers through the area and introduced them to its features. Gold was not the only source of potential wealth. Many people recognized the profits to be made in providing supplies to the gold camps and began to establish farms and ranches to raise products for those consumers. In addition, the development of steamboat transportation on the Snake River allowed prospective settlers a relatively convenient means of transportation into the area and some access to outside markets. The Mullan Road, which stretched from Walla Walla in Washington Territory to Fort Benton in Montana, was completed in 1859 and further encouraged travel into the region. Walla Walla became a thriving community and economic center.³

In the early 1860s, settlers began to set up ranching operations in the area of the Palouse west of present-day Latah County. They settled in the bottomlands and utilized the hillsides for grazing; cattle thrived on the rich native bunchgrass. Initially profitable, ranching became less so as more people entered the

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area and crowded the range with increased numbers of cattle and sheep. In addition, the bunchgrass did not rebound from overgrazing, diminishing the range's capacity to feed stock. Homesteaders interested in farming rather than ranching fenced their lands, breaking up the open range. A series of severe winters also adversely affected the ranching industry. The area began to shift from a ranching to a farming economy, and by the late 1880s most ranch operations were at the far western edge of the Palouse.⁴

By the late 1860s, settlers had occupied most of the choice bottomlands in the Palouse. During the 1870s, more people spread east into areas now in western Latah County. Most early settlers obtained land under the Homestead Act of 1862, which allowed them to claim 160 acres of public land after five years of residence, or under the Timber Culture Act of 1873, which granted public land to settlers who planted and cared for trees on a portion of their acreage. They could also obtain title to land through pre-emption entry by paying a cash-per-acre price. As the country settled, some farmers—either because of financial need or the desire to make a quick profit—sold, or “relinquished” their claims to others.⁵

The development of agriculture in the area was furthered by farmers' realization that their operations need not be restricted to the bottomlands, because the Palouse hillsides offered fertile soil ideal for dry-land farming of wheat. Soon, farmers were tilling any slope not too steep for their machinery. By the early 1880s, most of the best Palouse land was taken, and settlers who did not have the ability or the opportunity to buy existing farms began to move to the edges of the area, which were less desirable agriculturally. The expansion of settlement and growth of population led to the creation of Nez Perce County (which included present-day Latah County) in 1877; Paradise Valley (Moscow), Genesee, and Potlatch were burgeoning communities by that time.⁶

County Designation

Until 1888, present-day Latah County was a part of Nez Perce County, with its county seat in Lewiston, in the southern section of the county. As the northern area developed, its residents became increasingly dissatisfied with this governmental unit. Lewiston was less than thirty miles away from Moscow, the main commercial center in the northern part of the county, but the road was rough and required travel down a dramatically steep grade: Lewiston is nearly two thousand feet lower in elevation than Moscow. Lewiston and southern Nez Perce County residents, however, resisted division of the county. Moscow attorney and businessman Willis Sweet influenced Fred Dubois, who represented Idaho Territory in Congress, to introduce legislation that would create a new county separate from Nez Perce County. In May 1888, Congress passed the legislation and created Latah County. The name was probably based on two Nez Perce words: La-Kah, which refers to pine trees, and Tah-ol, which were the pestles the Nez Perce used to grind camas roots into flour. Latah County is the only county in the United States created by an act of Congress. On July 3, 1890, Idaho was admitted to the union of the United States of America.⁷

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Railroads and the Market Economy.

Although wheat was becoming an increasingly important crop before 1880, during this early period farmers practiced a diversified type of farming that produced a variety of products for market as well as meat and produce for subsistence. The growth of agricultural markets around the country and around the world, however, began to encourage American farmers to abandon traditional subsistence farming for production of cash crops. Latah County farmers were further influenced to expand by the ease with which they could grow wheat, a commodity which usually drew good prices on the market. Until the 1880s, however, the lack of an efficient transportation system constrained these ambitions. Farmers had to sell their products to local markets or ship them to the east or west by steamboat, requiring long trips to boat landings and heavy transportation costs. Until the advent of railroad transportation, two of the nearest shipping centers were in Lewiston, which required travel on a rough road culminating in a dramatically steep descent, and Walla Walla, more than one hundred miles away on the Mullan Road. The initiation of railroad transportation in the Palouse and in Latah County solved these problems, helped to transform area agriculture, and increased the desirability of area lands.⁸

The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, but the isolated regions of the Northwest waited until the 1880s for railway connections to the rest of the country. In the early part of that decade, both the Northern Pacific and the Union Pacific railroads built into the Northwest and provided branch lines to the Columbia Plateau. These lines began reaching the Palouse and Latah County as early as 1883, when the Northern Pacific built a line to Colfax, in present day Whitman County, Washington. Subsequently, the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company built its own lines from Colfax to Moscow and from Colfax to Farmington, located north of the Latah County line and just inside the Washington state border. Additional railroad construction, fueled by competition among rail companies, resulted in a web of lines in Latah County and encouraged economic growth. Farmers no longer had to depend upon miners or local communities to buy agricultural products; the railroads could carry their output to the nation and the world, thus opening markets that gave them opportunities to eventually move past subsistence farming and become commercial growers.⁹

Although wheat would eventually dominate much of Latah County crop lands, most farmers in this period continued to practice diversified agriculture. David Davis, for instance, who homesteaded near Genesee in 1878, developed a farm on which he raised hogs, grain, and fruit. He planted an orchard which included 500 peach, cherry, pear and apple trees and 850 Italian prune plum trees. He constructed a prune dryer and could process enough fruit in a month to fill a railroad car. Farmers in the Potlatch area also raised fruit, a viable crop because of the protection afforded by mountain ranges on the north and northeast. The ability to ship fruits to market via rail encouraged fruit growers, who were successful in raising a variety of products including apples, prunes, pears, and plums. In 1890, Latah County held more than twenty-two thousand apple trees. Flax and barley crops also were common in the county, and

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farmers continued to raise some stock for market as well as horses to pull farm machines. Families also raised meat for home use and dairy cows to provide milk and butter. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, however, growing crops for market—and especially one particular, valuable crop—became increasingly important for area farmers.¹⁰

Wheat and early mechanization

In the late 1880s, E. V. Smalley, who wrote promotional materials for the Northern Pacific Railroad, recorded that one farmer in the Genesee area claimed wheat yields of eighty bushels an acre; sixty bushels, Smalley acknowledged to his readers, was more common. Given Smalley's occupation, it is reasonable to expect that he reported the very highest crop yields. The ascendancy of wheat as a dominant crop in Latah County during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would prove Smalley was justified in trumpeting the local wheat production. Although other agricultural products, including sugar beets, flax, and fruit were grown in marketable quantities for a period of time, they succumbed to wheat and to a lesser extent, oats and barley as these grains became the most valuable crops exported from the county.¹¹

The first attempt to grow commercial grain in the Palouse probably occurred in 1869, south of present-day Colfax, Washington. The fertility of the Palouse soil, its moisture-retaining sub-soil, and the area's mild climate and favorable precipitation patterns proved to be ideal for grain production. Wheat began to dominate when the early settlers gave up their ideas about the superiority of the bottomlands and began tilling the rich soil of the hillsides. With the entrance of the railroads as reliable and efficient means to ship crops to market, wheat became increasingly important as a cash crop.¹²

Advances in farming methods also allowed farmers to expand their operations and their wheat production. The earliest settlers broke ground and harvested on a small scale, cutting hay with scythes, for instance, and seeding, binding and shocking grain by hand. As horse-drawn implements and machinery such as gang plows, mowing machines, balers, threshers and combines became available, farmers could work larger areas of land. The Palouse hills, some with grades as steep as forty degrees, required more horsepower than farmers with flat fields needed. Large teams of horses pulling machinery became common sights in the Palouse. Six-horse teams could plow about four acres of ground a day, even on steep slopes. Between twenty to forty-four horses might be required to pull heavy combine harvesters up the steep slopes and into the deep gullies. While the advent of this horse-powered machinery helped many farmers expand, it also required significant investment. Not only did they need to buy equipment, they also needed to purchase or raise draft horses and provide feed and barns for them. Because of the need for large numbers of horses to do field work on demanding terrain, many Palouse area barns were about twenty feet wider and longer than average-sized American barns. Farmers also needed to acquire more land to justify the high cost of equipment and horses. This cycle of expansion continued into the twentieth century and established the standard for large Palouse wheat operations.¹³

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The Wahl farm is an example of the expansion of wheat farming operations. Christian Wahl came to the area in 1880 and filed a timber claim on 160 acres east of Genesee. He raised livestock and fruit on his property while teaching school and working as a carpenter for extra cash. After his death in 1893, his descendents were successful in growing wheat, oats, barley, and timothy hay. The family began buying additional land, including entire farms, and eventually held property in two separate townships in Latah and Nez Perce Counties. The Wahls used up to forty horses to harvest and maintained houses and outbuildings at other sites they owned in order to have living accommodations and shelter for stock while planting or harvesting at one of the satellite locations. Although the Wahls also raised chicken and hogs for meat, kept a few dairy cattle, and raised and stored garden vegetables for home use, their farm was an expansive, commercial enterprise rather than a traditional subsistence farm with incidental cash crops or products.¹⁴

The success of wheat farming was threatened briefly in the early 1890s. A national financial depression, named the Panic of 1893, cooled the boom mentality of the Northwest and wheat prices dropped from eighty-five cents to twenty-three cents per bushel. In addition, the Palouse country suffered a dramatically wet and cold spring and summer season in 1893 which led to an almost total crop failure. Wheat quickly rebounded, however, and by the turn of the century farmers were again optimistic about the future. In 1909, wheat-rich Whitman County, Washington, recorded the highest per capita income of all the counties in the nation and Latah County, just to the east, shared in the prosperous times. That prosperity became visible in the built environment, as local farmers constructed imposing barns, houses with elaborate decoration, and specialized modern outbuildings. As wheat became the county's most important crop, other agricultural products were phased out. Market beef cattle became less important to growers because the land used for grazing yielded more profit when planted to wheat. Most of the county's commercial fruit orchards, already lowered in value by 1910 due to competition from other parts of the Northwest, were sacrificed to the greater cost-effectiveness of wheat production. In the ensuing decades, barley, oats, peas, lentils, and beans would become important to the agricultural economy, but much of Latah County farmlands would continue to be dominated by wheat fields.¹⁵

Even as wheat farming thrived, however, farmers limited by soil conditions, farm size or economic factors did not expand into significant commercial grain operations. The Cochrane farm in the northern part of the county, an area more rough and timbered than the Palouse, serves as an example. The Cochrane family bought their farm in 1895. In the early 1900s, Frederick Weyerhaeuser and associates established the Potlatch Lumber Company to take advantage of Latah County's rich supply of white pine. During the next several decades, Cochrane family members worked in the logging industry to supplement farm income while growing wheat, oats, barley and hay and raising horses, cattle, pigs, and chickens. The Cochranes kept a small dairy herd, shipped cream to area creameries, and traded butter for groceries at local stores. They butchered their own cattle and pigs and sold some of the meat to local markets. A large potato patch, a garden, and an orchard provided produce for home use. For those who were unable or unwilling to expand grain operations, the small and partially self-sufficient family farm remained a viable option.¹⁶

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World War I Impact on Agriculture

World War I dramatically affected American farming. Production of agricultural products fell sharply in the war-torn European countries and Russia as the war there accelerated. In the United States, prices for those products rose quickly. Palouse farmers had seen wheat prices as high as eighty cents a bushel in the prosperous period between 1910 to 1913, but the war pushed them to even higher levels. By 1915 some varieties of wheat were selling for \$1.40 a bushel, and in the period immediately following the war, prices rose to \$2.00 a bushel and higher. These rates encouraged farmers to expand operations and utilize any available ground to raise wheat; Latah County wheat farmers planted twice as much wheat during the war years as they had in 1909. Some of the larger farmers began to store their grain into the winter months in order to sell at the highest possible levels.¹⁷

Across the nation, many farmers overextended themselves during World War I in order to expand operations while prices for agricultural products were high. Some of them faced disaster when those prices fell in the post-war years and they were no longer able to generate enough income to pay their debts and support their operations. Although Latah County farmers felt the effects of the post-war drop, for the most part they could cope with the changes. Wheat prices remained higher than the pre-war levels for most of the 1920s and farmers continued to farm intensively in an effort to make up in production what they were losing in price. They also continued to modernize their operations as motorized equipment became available.¹⁸

Mechanization in the 1920s

The post-World War I drop in agricultural prices coincided with increasing mechanization during the 1920s, a trend that had been building since the 1910s. Large-scale farmers began to obtain tractors, combines and other equipment that made their jobs easier and increased productivity, but also raised the cost of investment in farming operations and the debt load. Latah County farmers faced a particular problem: equipment designed to serve the farming regions of the Midwest and the South was not as effective on the steep hills of the Palouse. Thus, area farmers were not as quick to replace horses as their counterparts in other areas. This unique environment may have delayed progress in some ways, but it also fostered technological change. At one point, the International Harvester Company sent machinists to the Earl and Lola Clyde farm in the Palouse to work on the design of a harvester that could be efficiently used on steep hillsides. This research aided the development of two innovations, the self-leveling combine and the self-propelled combine.¹⁹

As machines that could be effective on hillsides were devised and marketed, mechanization on farms in Latah County increased. To address the high costs of these changes, many farmers further expanded their holdings in order to create an efficiency of scale, and by 1930 one out of ten Palouse farms were

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one thousand acres or larger in size. Many smaller operators—particularly those who farmed on the fringes of the fertile Palouse—could not afford to expand and thus could not generate enough income to justify the cost of new machinery. Mechanization in the 1920s helped reinforce a cycle that had begun in the nineteenth century as farmers pursued the market economy: operators had to expand to make more cash; and they had to make more cash (or go further into debt) to fund their expansion. At the same time, farmers who could not expand because of location or individual economic conditions operated smaller, more diversified farms. Thus, the terrain in Latah County continued to affect the development of diverse agricultural landscapes and buildings.²⁰

Most Latah County farmers remained free of the kinds of problems many other American farmers faced during the 1920s: increasing droughts, local financial failures, and mounting indebtedness that threatened the stability of regional farming industries. With the onset of the Great Depression, however, farm owners in Latah County, along with their counterparts in other areas of the nation, would deal with issues and changes that marked one of the most dramatic periods in American agriculture.

The Great Depression

The economic and environmental ravages of the Great Depression exerted a profound effect on American farms. Agricultural prices fell after World War I while production rose due to the expansion that had taken place during the war and the recovery of European agriculture. As the 1930s approached, drought, soil loss, and insect infestations plagued farmers trying to raise crops. The national financial crisis affected banks and businesses that the farmers depended upon. Government programs instituted to address agricultural problems brought new regulations and operating procedures. Although Latah County farmers were affected by the drop in wheat prices, on the whole they did not suffer to the extent that farmers in other areas of the country did. The problems and the changes of the 1930s, however, left a lasting imprint on Latah County's agricultural landscape.²¹

Near the end of the 1920s wheat prices rose, and many farmers were optimistic enough about the future to continue enlarging operations. In 1929, however, the situation began to change. The stock market crash in October made farmers uneasy, but wheat prices at the end of the year, although falling, were higher than they had been twelve months earlier. As the economic depression wreaked havoc on the nation and the world, however, farm prices continued to drop. The price of wheat reached a low of thirty-eight cents a bushel by the end of 1932, down dramatically from the \$1.50 per bushel farmers had received before the stock market crash.²²

The year 1932 marked not only the low wheat price in Latah County, but also the low point of an agricultural crisis on a national level. After Franklin D. Roosevelt became President in 1933, his administration initiated legislation aimed at addressing the problems of American farmers. One of these

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bills, the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, was designed to decrease agricultural surplus. Farmers received financial incentives for reducing acreages under cultivation, and the program was successful in cutting production. In Latah County, fallowed acres—acres allowed to lie idle in order to restore moisture and nutrients—rose from approximately 36,000 in 1929 to more than 42,000 in 1934. Unfortunately, fallowing increased the area's soil erosion problem. The erosion was caused in part by intensive dry land wheat farming, which utilized deep plowing and frequent cultivation and made soils more susceptible to water and wind. In 1933, the national Soil Erosion Service (later the Soil Conservation Service) was established to deal with these issues on a national level.²³

The federal government also utilized the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to fight erosion problems. The Roosevelt administration established the CCC to put young unemployed men to work on conservation projects, and it proved to be one of era's most successful programs. CCC Company 1503, Moscow Camp SCS-1 was originally established near Bovill in 1934 before moving to Moscow in 1935. This was the first Soil Conservation Service CCC camp in the Northwest, and teams of young men worked in the area under SCS supervision altering water channels, riprapping waterway beds, building small dams, planting trees on ridge tops and slopes, and repairing eroded areas. On one Latah County farm, for example, the CCC worked on the site of the farm's original fruit orchard, which had died out. The slope on which the orchard had been located was seriously threatened by erosion, and the CCC planted a grove of locust trees to stabilize it.²⁴

Despite the hard times, farm mechanization continued throughout the 1930s. Between 1930 and 1940, the number of tractors on Idaho farms doubled, an increase greater than the national trend. In the Latah County area, diesel engine tractors began to replace gasoline powered machines. The caterpillar tractor became particularly popular in the Palouse because it was low and wide and able to efficiently work the steep slopes. Although farmers planted less wheat during the Great Depression, per acre wheat yields actually increased; Idaho Palouse farmers produced twenty-seven bushels of wheat per acre in 1939. Due to low wheat prices, however, farmers also grew other crops, including peas.²⁵ Electrification and the establishment of grain cooperatives were also important advances that transformed agriculture during the 1930s.

Electrification

The electrification of farms and ranches transformed rural life for millions of Americans, making farm and household chores easier and providing amenities that previously had been available only to town-dwellers. As in other areas of the country, initial electrification in Latah County occurred in its cities and towns. By the late 1920s, all of the towns in Latah County had electricity in some form but few farms enjoyed the innovation. The Potlatch Consolidated Electric Company, which provided electricity to the communities of Kendrick, Troy, Juliaetta, and Deary, offered the first commercial electrification to

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Latah County farmers. The company brought electricity to two farms beginning in 1915 and several more in 1925. The expense of constructing systems to serve isolated locations made rural service unprofitable, however. A few farmers were able to connect to existing systems, and a small number of others acquired their own generating plants. The development of electric cooperatives made small advances in rural electrification around the country. In Latah County, the Kennedy-Ford Power Line Company, which served a section in the northern part of the county, was established in 1934. In that year, only 8.4 percent of Latah County farms were served by electric systems.²⁶

Electrification for increased numbers of farms came with the establishment of the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). Franklin Roosevelt created the agency by executive order in May 1935 in an effort to save natural resources, make economical power more widely available, and improve the quality of life for farm families. The REA encouraged low-cost electrical system design and construction, provided loans for electrification purposes, and obtained energy at favorable rates. The REA program also encouraged development of local cooperatives. In Latah County, these groups included the Farmer's Power Corporation, which formed in 1936 and served twenty-five customers in the Genesee area. Rimrock Power and Light Company, established in 1937, provided power to twelve customers in the same area; and Thorncreek Power and Light Association, also serving rural customers who lived near Genesee, provided electricity to twenty-one customers beginning in 1937. Other areas of the county showed interest in establishing similar organizations. After the REA suggested that Latah County consolidate with surrounding counties in setting up a large cooperative, the Clearwater Valley Light and Power Association organized and subsequently received a loan from the REA. The cooperative built more than one thousand distribution lines throughout the area, eventually reaching every part of the county. By 1940, nearly 60 percent of Latah County farms were receiving electricity through cooperative-held lines.²⁷

Electrification dramatically changed farm life for hundreds of thousands of American families. Electric water pumps allowed the installation of plumbing systems, removing the need for outdoor privies. Modern kitchen appliances replaced wood stoves, and farm wives who had relied on "summer kitchens" attached to or separate from the farmhouse in order to cook in relative comfort during the hot months could conduct all their cooking and preserving in their home kitchens. The ability to pump water and to illuminate yards and outbuildings also eased the farmers' workload and increased efficiency on the farm.²⁸

Grain Storage and the Cooperative Movement

As farmers began to produce more grain than they could immediately sell, they required storage. Some farmers built granaries of their own, but the demand led to the development of commercial grain elevators. Early elevators were made of wood, usually with cribbed construction; in order to reduce fire

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danger and prolong the life of the buildings, many wood elevators were eventually covered with metal siding. Steel tanks came into use shortly after the turn of the century, and reinforced concrete elevators became common in the 1920s.²⁹

In an attempt to cut costs, farmers across the country formed non-profit cooperatives to store and market grain without using commercial operations, as well as to provide other services to members. Agricultural cooperative organizations existed in Latah County from the late 1800s. Many farmers joined the Farmers Alliance in 1889 and 1890, and the Farm Bureau, the Farmers Union, and the Grange attracted membership in the twentieth century, particularly during the years of the Great Depression. The farmers also took actions of their own, particularly in the area of marketing. In 1932, some wheat growers in the Genesee and Pullman, Washington, areas attempted to affect wheat prices by withholding their grain from the market, but their effort had no effect. Local farmers were more successful in cooperating to store and market grain, thus reducing middleman costs.³⁰

By 1920, farm organizations were involved in major efforts to organize farm cooperatives. The Copper-Volstead Act of 1922 aided in these efforts by encouraging development of cooperatives. The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929 gave impetus to the cooperative movement by loaning money to cooperative associations that in turn made loans to farmers and marketed their products. The North Pacific Grain Growers Cooperative Association was active in organizing local cooperatives, and its efforts gave rise to the Grain Growers Cooperative, organized in Latah County in 1930. Farmers joined the association by buying shares. The cooperative set up operations in competition with established grain storage companies including the Mark P. Miller Company and the Moscow Elevator Company. Initially, the Grain Growers Cooperative acquired warehouses at Moscow and Joel, then began building facilities in 1936. A warehouse in Troy was the cooperative's first construction project. They built another warehouse in Moscow in 1937 and an adjoining elevator in 1938. The next year, the cooperative constructed an elevator in Joel and in 1941 built an elevator in Troy next to the original warehouse. In 1942, the cooperative purchased the Mark P. Miller Co. facilities in Viola, Estes, Joel, Troy, Howell and Avon, doubling their capacity. During the ensuing two decades, the cooperative continued to buy and expand facilities, and their operations became a prominent part of the Latah County landscape.³¹

The Great Depression brought hardships to Latah County farmers and changes in its landscape due to erosion and the efforts to counteract it. At the same time, advances not only in mechanization but also in electrification and cooperative bargaining, both encouraged by New Deal government programs, helped bring modernization to the county's farms and resulted in new and changed buildings and structures.

World War II and the Post-War Period

World War II brought the Great Depression to a final end for the country and for its farmers. As the

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cycles of drought, wind, and insect infestation ended, the outbreak of war in Europe increased demand for agricultural products. By the end of 1941, wheat imports were up, and by 1944 the price per bushel had topped \$1.30. Latah County farmers also profited from the production of peas, a relatively new crop that had been planted during the Depression in part as a way to prevent erosion and replenish the soil. Between 1939 and 1944, Palouse area acreage planted to peas increased from about seventy thousand acres to nearly three hundred thousand acres. Lentils were first planted in the 1920s, but their production was hampered by the labor-intensive work needed to raise them. With the advent of machinery designed for harvesting lentils and the expansion of international markets, lentils became an increasingly important crop in the Palouse, and by the 1950s farmers there were producing up to two million pounds of lentils a year.³²

After World War II, American agriculture became increasingly specialized and the trends toward specialized, large-scale farming continued. Many small-scale farmers gave up stock-raising, chicken-raising and other efforts at diversification in order to concentrate their lands and assets on particular crops, especially wheat. Others who did not have the ability to invest in the machinery or land required to profit from such specialization found their economic conditions increasingly precarious. Thus, small farms were more likely to go up for sale and to be absorbed by larger operations.³³ This model had been evident in Latah County for decades, due to the opportunities for large-scale wheat farming, and scientific and technological developments supported the growth of such farming during the post-war period.

These innovations included chemical herbicides and insecticides that helped to control weeds and insects dangerous to grain crops. Fertilizers put nitrogen into the soil, reducing the need for fallowing, rotation planting and other efforts to replenish the land; fields could be planted in wheat for longer periods of time. Hybrid wheat varieties were more disease-resistant than earlier strains. The new methods dramatically affected yields in the area. Between the late 1940s and the mid- to late 1950s, wheat yields increased 85 percent, pea yields increased 72 percent, and barley yields increased 76 percent. Mechanization also accelerated during the 1950s. The number of tractors in Latah and Whitman (Washington) counties increased by 58 percent, indicating that very few farmers still used horses in farm work, and fences began to disappear after landowners no longer needed to pasture cattle and horses. Operators purchased new machinery, including larger tractors and combines well-suited to the Palouse terrain. The combination of high crop yields and good prices encouraged the long-standing trend toward farm expansion. Palouse farms, already larger than the national average, continued to grow in size.³⁴

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Summary

The history of Latah County agriculture repeats a constant theme. Farmers who were able to acquire and utilize the richest land and concentrate on a profitable crop—usually wheat—prospered and expanded. Those whose lands were less fertile and whose economic conditions were less stable continued to follow a more diversified model. They relied on a variety of means—including stock and chickens, dairy products, gardens and orchards—to help feed the family and also to provide some cash income. In addition, they were more likely to supplement that income by working outside the farm, particularly in the logging industry. Thus, the county provides an unusually vivid example of the shift from subsistence/diversified small farming to large-scale, specialized agriculture.

This shift can be seen in Latah County's built environment. As one travels from the western Palouse area to the rougher and more timbered areas of the east, the farmsteads become more compact, barns less imposing, and farmhouses less elaborate. The trajectory of Latah County agriculture—a trajectory very illustrative of American agriculture as a whole—is visible in its buildings and its landscape.

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F. Associated Property Types

Associated Property Types

Introduction

Latah County's agricultural buildings and landscapes reflect its history. Settled by farmers beginning in the mid-1800s, the county's agricultural areas have served as the basis for its continued growth. Unlike areas to the immediate west, Latah County includes a wide range of terrain and therefore has fostered a similarly wide range of agricultural practices, crops, and buildings. Most specifically, the county offers a comparison of the development of large-scale, limited crop agriculture and small-scale, subsistence/diversified farming. An examination and analysis of these properties helps to illuminate the agricultural history of Latah County and the history of American agriculture in general.

Property types associated with the historical context are identified and discussed in this section and requirements for eligibility for National Register nomination are outlined. In general, all properties must exhibit historic integrity, conveyed by the qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. In addition, properties must be documented as significant within the context of Latah County agricultural buildings. The period of significance is 1855 to 1955, which encompasses the beginning of non-Indian settlement and the development of agriculture for the following one hundred years.

In general, the property types include: Farmsteads; Barns; Grain Production; Storage and Transportation Buildings; and Social/Cooperative Organization Buildings. Other than barns and grain production buildings, individual elements of farmsteads usually do not carry the significance necessary to be nominated separately.

Property Types

Farmsteads: Pioneer subsistence homesteads

Description: Farmsteads dating from the earliest settlement era, 1855-1880, are rare. Most of these small early farms were either modernized or absorbed by larger farm operations and buildings taken down or modified. A few examples may remain in Latah County. Because of the proximity to timbered areas, these buildings may exhibit log construction, but plank construction will probably be more common. Roofs will be simple gable or shed type. Rock foundations and log sills may be evident. Farmsteads and their individual buildings will be compact. Buildings will typically include house, barn, and associated outbuildings.

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Significance: Pioneer subsistence homesteads reflect the earliest stage of agricultural history in Latah County and represent the Jeffersonian ideal of the yeoman farm.

Registration Requirements: Pioneer subsistence homesteads should contain buildings dating from the period 1855-1880, with only minor intrusions or changes from outside the period.

Farmsteads: Diversified/Subsistence Family Farms

Description: These properties will date from approximately 1880 through 1955. The farmstead buildings will usually be in close proximity to each other. Buildings, structures, and sites may include:

Farmhouse	Windmill	Blacksmith shed
Horse/mule barn	Tank House	Woodshed
Dairy barn	Pole Barn	Groves
Milk house	Garage	Orchards
Chicken house	Machine Shed	Corrals/Fences
Hog House	Privy	
Root cellar	Fruit dryer	

Significance: Diversified/subsistence family farms represent those farms that did not expand into a significant commercial operations but continued to provide for families through a combination of products raised for market and products raised for home use. They illustrate the persistence of the small family farm model in Latah County.

Registration Requirements: The farmstead must retain a sufficient number of buildings, structures and features to convey its significance as a diversified/subsistence farming unit; no major intrusions from the post-1955 period should be present. Individual buildings and structures should not display significant alterations from the post-1955 period. In general, houses and barns will be smaller and less elaborate than those found on the Expanded Commercial farmsteads.

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Description: These properties will date from 1880 through 1955. Buildings and structures may include:

Farmhouse			
Hired hand's house			
Bunkhouse	Windmill	Blacksmith shed	Corrals/Fences
Horse/mule barn	Tank House	Woodshed	
Dairy barn	Garage	Grain dryer	
Milk house	Pole Barn	Grain elevator	
Chicken house	Machine Shed	Granary	
Hog House	Privy	Groves	
Root cellar	Fruit dryer	Orchards	

Significance: These farmsteads illustrate the development of large, prosperous agricultural operations which expanded to hundreds of acres and focused on particular cash crops rather than diversified products or products for family use. In many cases, Expanded Commercial farms grew from the Diversified/Subsistence model and may retain elements from that stage; these farms are particularly significant in illuminating the evolution into larger agricultural enterprises.

Registration Requirements: The farmstead must retain a sufficient number of properties to convey its significance as an expanded/commercial farming unit; no major intrusions from the post-1955 period should be present. Individual buildings, structures, and sites should not display significant alterations from the post-1955 period. In general, houses and barns will be larger and more elaborate than those on the Diversified/Subsistence farms. Some farmsteads may display a range of buildings, sites and structures illustrating their evolution from the Diversified/Subsistence farms, but others may retain only buildings relating to expanded commercial farming.

Barns

Description: Barns in Latah County are generally based on a rectangular plan; no round or octagonal barns have been noted, although some may exist. The barns are roughly divided by function: stock/hay barns have expansive lofts and often feature hay hoods covering the mechanical system that lifted hay into the loft; dairy barns tend to be wide with a central entrance and multiple windows for light. Many barns, of course, combined these functions. Large barns with elaborate architectural details such as cupolas and hooded windows are typically associated with expanded commercial operations; gambrel

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F. Associated Property Types

and round roof barns in particular (see below) offered farmers more room for hay storage. Smaller gable-roof or broken gable barns with little or no adornment can most often be found as secondary barns or associated with the most modest of the diversified/subsistence farms. Barns are commonly identified by roof types, which include:

Gable roof: single ridgeline with even roof pitches on each side

Broken gable: single ridgeline with change in roof pitch on one or both sides, often indicating the extension of the roof over a wing or addition

Gambrel roof: relatively shallow pitch from the ridgepole to a point at which the pitch becomes steeper to the eaves; eaves are sometimes curved and this style is often referred to as Dutch gambrel.

Round roof: also referred to as gothic, arched, or rainbow roof. These roofs form a continuous arch, usually formed by curved, laminated rafters, and offer wind resistance as well as storage space.

Monitor roof: the center section of the barn is raised and carries a gable roof; the side sections of the roof extend out from the walls of the center section. This type of roof is more commonly seen on smaller outbuildings, and a half-monitor is a typical style for chicken houses.

Significance: Pre-1955 barns are the single most visible agricultural building type in Latah County. Although most of them have lost their original utilitarian function, a significant number are well-preserved and serve alternate purposes, particularly as storage spaces. Many families have invested significant resources into maintaining these buildings, which they see as symbols of their own histories as farmers. In some cases, the barn is the only remaining building of what was once a thriving farmstead. Other barns have been allowed to deteriorate with age, but they continue to represent the agricultural history of the county.

Registration requirements: Barns must retain most of their original features and elements with no major post-1955 alterations. Siding should be original or a replacement in like materials. Windows with original glazing are preferred, but replaced glass or boarded windows may reflect the normal maintenance conducted on a working farm. Doors or entrance openings cannot display modern treatments, such as vinyl garage doors. Modern additions may be acceptable if they are small in scale. Most functioning barns have roofs that have been replaced since the 1950s, often in metal; this is usually a necessity if the structure is going to survive. Therefore, metal roofs do not eliminate barns from eligibility, but they should be unobtrusive in color and style.

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F. Associated Property Types

Most barn interiors have been modified to some extent to serve modern needs, but many retain evidence of original construction, such as hewn beams, and/or features that reflect their original use, such as stanchions and feeding and hay-moving mechanisms. Lack of interior integrity should not negate exceptional exterior integrity.

Grain Storage and Shipping Facilities

Description: the importance of grain crops in Latah County are represented by those buildings that assisted farmers in storing and transporting their crops. Some farms may include pre-1955 granaries or elevators; these elevators may have served as community grain storage. Many county communities have grain elevator complexes which include pre-1955 components, and at least one retains one building tentatively identified as a flathouse.

Granaries were used mainly for farm storage of small grains as seed or livestock feed; on Palouse farms they may be significant for holding feed for draft animals. They are typically small gable or shed roof structures and often are of cribbed wall construction. The lack of windows is a clue to their identity; the buildings were designed to keep out rodents.

Cribbed elevators consist of several parts, including storage areas which are usually of cribbed construction consisting of 2 x 8 boards laid flat on top of each other in order to build walls that can contain bulk grain. Particularly in commercial or cooperative elevators, scale houses were attached to one side of the building and usually featured ramps on each side so that trucks could drive up, be weighed and dump their loads, and drive down the other side. The deposited grain was "elevated" to the headhouse on the top of the building and placed into bins by means of a "leg," a belt carrying metal cups. An operator directed the grain into the bins by means of a metal wheel. Operators began to cover all or parts of most elevators with sheet metal beginning in about the 1940s.

Grain elevator complexes in communities typically include a wide range of pre-1955 and post-1955 buildings. They may include cribbed or concrete elevators, office facilities, ladders and walkways, and modern scales outside the elevators.

Flathouses usually appear beside active or abandoned railroad grades and their floors are flush with the level of railroad cars to allow for convenient loading. They are utilitarian buildings constructed to withstand the weight of large amounts of grain. Rectangular in shape, they display heavy floor planks and concrete or timber foundations.

Significance: Grain storage and shipping facilities represent the importance of grain production to Latah County agriculture. In addition, commercial and cooperative grain elevator and elevator complexes illustrate the development of agriculture-related businesses as well as the organization of cooperative associations that helped farmers market their products and improve their profits.

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Registration Requirements: Granaries and elevators on farms must date from the 1855-1955 period with minimal alterations outside of that period. Elevators must retain evidence of the technology that moved grain. Most elevator complexes will include modern elements; in order to be eligible for registration, these elements must not dominate the historic structures or hide them from view. Metal siding on elevator complex buildings is acceptable if it was applied before the mid-1950s.

Cooperative/Social Organization Buildings and Sites

Description: Cooperative/Social Organization Buildings and Sites include meeting halls and parks where farmers gathered to organize cooperative movements, hold educational meetings, and socialize. Buildings are simple frame structures in rural settings; parks may include shelters.

Significance: Beginning in the late nineteenth century, farm families tried to influence market factors and fight rural isolation by forming and joining cooperative associations such as the Farm Bureau, the Grange, and the Farmers' Union. These properties represent their efforts, which included education programs, planning for processing, storing, marketing, and shipping products on a cooperative basis, and purely social functions.

Registration requirements: Buildings and sites must date from 1890-1955 with minimal alterations outside that period. Buildings should retain original siding or replaced siding of like material and original fenestration.

Summary

The associated property types were chosen for their ability to interpret Latah County agricultural history. These properties illustrate how agriculture developed in the county, how it varied from area to area, and how farming changed over time. Intact farmsteads can illustrate particular eras and types of farms or demonstrate the evolution from one type to another. Barns are the most visible examples of agricultural architecture in the county and also demonstrate the variety in Latah County agriculture and the changes farmers experienced in the 1855-1955 period. Grain storage and shipping facilities represent the domination of wheat and other grains in Latah County agriculture and demonstrate the means farmers used to store their crops and to get them to market. Cooperative/social organization buildings illuminate farmers' efforts to affect market forces and to form social groups.

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G. Geographic Data

Latah County is located in the panhandle of northern Idaho and borders the state of Washington. It is bounded on the west by Whitman County, Washington; on the north by Benewah County, Idaho; on the east by Clearwater County, Idaho; and on the south by Nez Perce County, Idaho.

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H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

In 2004, the Latah County Historic Preservation Commission conducted a reconnaissance survey of 10 identified agricultural properties in the Latah County. In 2005, windshield surveys were conducted in order to gain an understanding of the variety and number of potentially historic agricultural properties in the county, and 57 properties were identified. In 2006, a final windshield survey was conducted along the county's main traffic artery, U. S. Highway 95; this survey resulted in the identification of another 27 properties with potential for nomination under this Multiple Property Document.

The historic context was developed to address the agricultural history of Latah County. The context does not include the history of the lumber industry. The context was designed to address all agricultural properties, including farmsteads and the individual buildings that make up farmsteads, grain storage and transportation facilities, and buildings related to social/cooperative agricultural organizations. Examples of all of these properties have been found on survey in Latah County. The Period of Significance is 1855 to 1955. This hundred-year period marks the beginning of non-Indian settlement in Latah County and continues through the technological advances of the 1950s. Significant property types were based on function (agriculture/subsistence) and on time period (1855-1955).

The registration requirements for the listing of member properties were derived from the National Register of Historic Places standards for integrity, including qualities of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The presence of the many metal roofs installed in the last decades to protect agricultural buildings was taken into account as a preservation factor.

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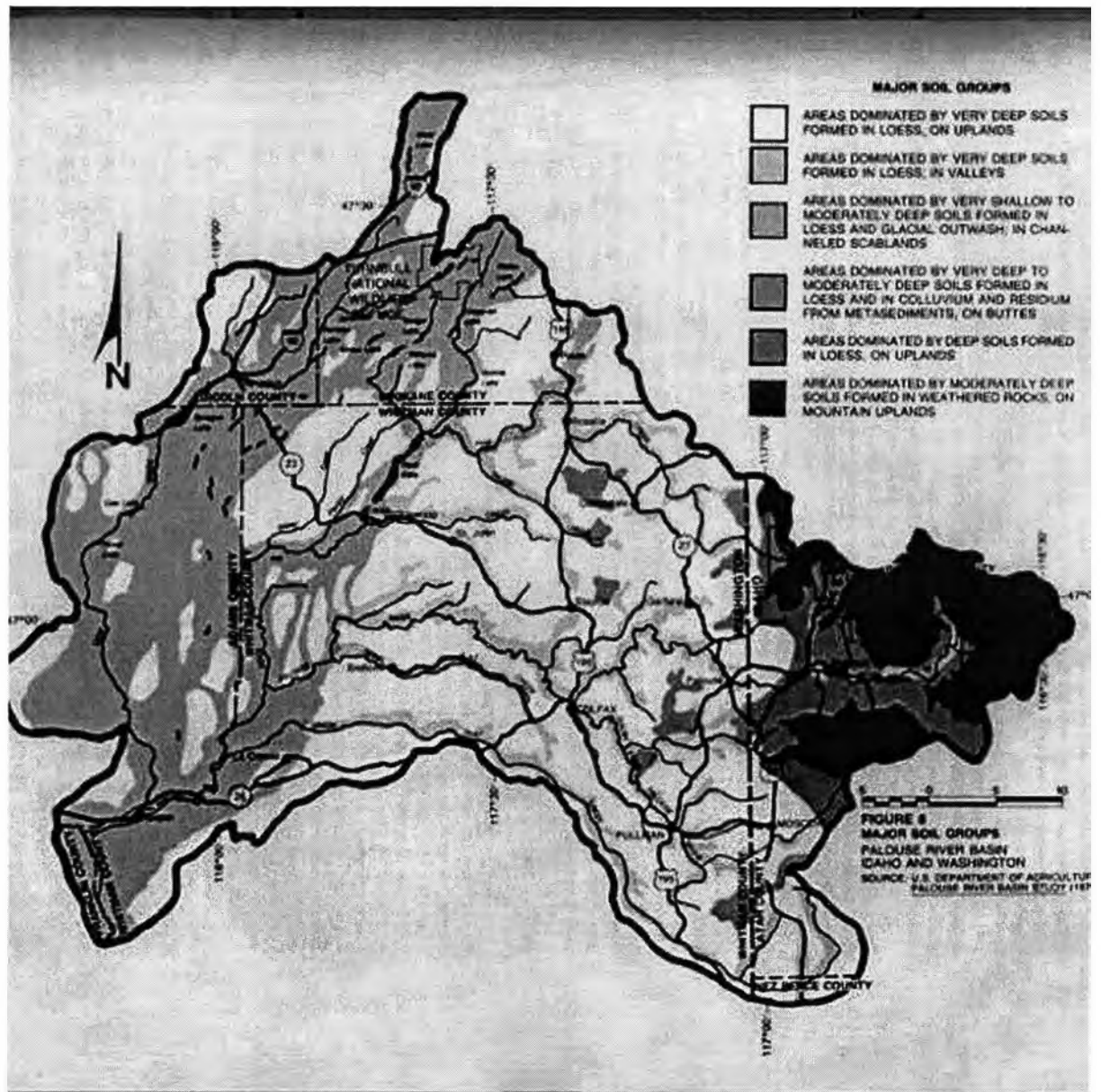
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Phillips, Richard E. *Farm Buildings From Planning to Completion*. St. Louis, Missouri: Doane Western, Inc., 1981.

Sloane, Eric. *An Age of Barns*. Funk & Wagnalls Publishing Company, Inc., 1967.

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Latah County, Idaho (seen above as solid)

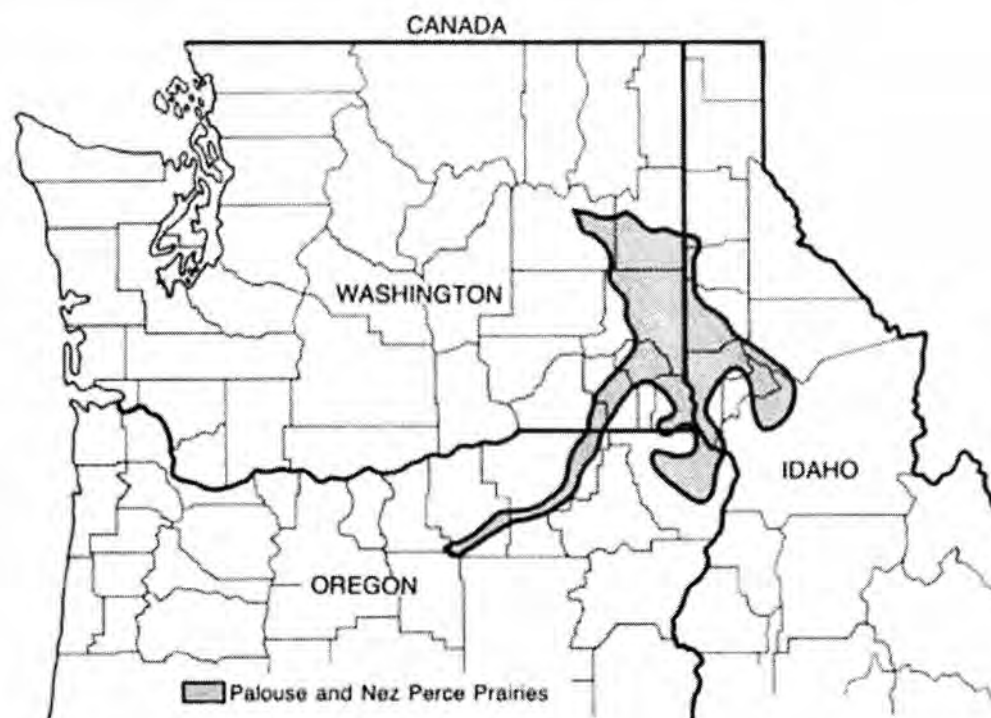


Figure 2: Location of the Palouse and Nez Perce Prairies (USDA Major Land Resource Area Number 9)

MEMORANDUM

TO: Janet Matthews - Keeper of the National Register
FROM: Tricia Canada ^{TJC} - Idaho SHPO
DATE: February 11, 2008
SUBJECT: Enclosed NRHP nomination

The enclosed materials are being submitted for the following document:

Historic Agricultural Properties of Latah County, Idaho, 1855-1955

_____	Original NRHP district nomination form on archival paper
<u> 1 </u>	Multiple Property Nomination form on archival paper
_____	4x6, black and white photographs
_____	Electronic Image File CD
_____	Original USGS map(s)
_____	8 ½ x 11 district map on archival paper
<u> 3 </u>	Other: <u>Maps on archival paper</u>

Comments:

If you have any questions about this nomination, please contact me at
208.334.3861 x102

*2 of enclosed nominations (Soncarly + Drester) fall
under this MPD.*