

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

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

SITE NAME: Ricketts, Julian T., House

SITE NUMBER: 91

LOCATION: ~~Four miles east, three miles south and one mile east~~ ^{SE} of Jerome, Idaho

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Julian T. Ricketts
Rural Route 4
Jeome, ID 83338

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Falls City, 7.5 minutes

ACREAGE: less than one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the Ricketts House and the property on which it stands, the SE 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4, SW 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 36, T8S, R17E, Boise Meridian. Legal description on file at Jerome County Courthouse, Jerome, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/711330/4728380

DATE OR PERIOD: 1928

ARCHITECT OR BUILDER: H. T. Pugh, Maurice V. Wulff,
Schulz

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: local

CONDITION: good, altered, original site

DESCRIPTION:

This one and one half story English cottage-style house is approximately 44 by 30 feet. It has a basement and a steep, shingled gable roof with an additional intersecting gable offset to the right of the front exposure. Light gray stucco with half timbering is in the gable walls above the one-story stone walls. The boxed eaves and the narrow, plain bargeboards are very close. A high, narrow gable-roofed dormer with its double-hung window is on the rear roof offset to the right of center. An exterior stone and concrete block chimney offset to the left of center on the left gable wall intersects the eaves. A pair of double-hung windows is centered midway in the peak of each of the three gables. The one-story stone walls have double-hung and casement windows of varying sizes placed singly and in pairs. They sit at the outside of the wall openings. The casement windows have from eight to sixteen panes. Light gray concrete lintels about ten inches wide are near the tops of the walls above the windows. They are slightly outset and extend into the masonry about four inches on each end. The narrower concrete lug sills are sloping. The centered front door has a round top with a round arch above it of dressed stone and concrete block voisseurs. A concrete block stoop extends from the front door. A large horizontal single-pane window is to the left of the door, and a pair of small double-hung windows are to the right. A pair of casement windows is at the right corner of the front wall, meeting another pair offset to

the left of the right wall. There is a concrete stoop with a half-round landing. Steps leading to the side door are offset to the left of center on the right wall. Darkened, brushed mortar is in the medium-width joints in the random rubble walls of small stones with naturally-rounded faces. The original interior features of the house are intact, and they include plaster applied directly on the stone walls.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Ricketts house is significant as an example of an English cottage-style house designed in lava rock. It is also significant because it exhibits the fine craftsmanship of master mason H. T. Pugh. It is one of the few structures in this nomination for which a source of plans is known. Julian Ricketts homesteaded this property in 1911, taking the place out of sagebrush. He had always wanted a stone house, and in 1927 he and his wife began to plan this house. They drew up preliminary plans and then engaged carpenter Maurice V. Wulff, who had the plans drawn by a professional at the Payette Lumber Company, Boise, Idaho. It is not known if the plan is a modification of stock plans, or if an architect designed the house. The plans do not bear a signature.

The basement for the house was dug in 1929. Mr. Schulz hauled rock with a team and rock sled from an outcropping in the desert about three miles to the east of the site. This was done because rocks pried from a ledge were more squared off and thus more suitable for masonry than rockpile rocks. The house was placed over a well made from a lava blow hole from which a continuous flow of cold air comes. It was planned that the flow of cold air from the well could be used to cool the house. The house proved to be very cool in the summer, so the natural air conditioning system has seldom been used. As soon as it was warm enough in the spring of 1928, Pugh started the rock work. By then Pugh had a Model T Ford and drove the eight miles from Jerome each day, rather than boarding with the family or camping at the site, as he had done in the 1910's when he drove a team and wagon. Pugh built his own forms to pour the concrete blocks used in the house. He was especially proud of the chimney. His concrete work in this structure is characteristically precise with cleanly angled edges and fine polished surfaces. This is one of the last residences constructed by Pugh. The arches in this house are indicative of the quality of craftsmanship in both stone and concrete of which Pugh was capable. His use of concrete blocks in this structure comes midway between his first use of them in his rural schools and the construction of the final section of the Jerome Cooperative Creamery, which he would build in 1934. The only alteration in this very fine home is the replacement of a large casement front window with a single pane picture window. This alteration is reversible and it detracts very little from the other significant features of the house.

The Ricketts property is across a county road from the site of Falls City, Idaho, in Jonathan Valley. Falls City was planned as a shipping point on the Southern Idaho Railroad for apples and other farm products and as a point from which tourists could embark to visit the Shoshone Falls about twelve miles to the south in the Snake River Canyon. Although the townsite was platted and lots were sold, it failed to materialize as a community. For decades, Julian Ricketts has found surveyor's stakes in his fields.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Ricketts, Julian and Josephene, interview with Marian Posey-Ploss, Jerome vicinity, Idaho, July 18, 1978.

North Side News (Jerome). July 1, 1976, p. 38.