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

NOMINATION: Historic Resources of Paris (Partial Inventory : Architecture)

SITE NAME: James Nye house (Paris, Idaho) SITE # 14

LOCATION: East ~~First~~ South ~~near Main, Paris~~

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Lawrence Austin, 4347 South 200 West, Ogden, UT 84401

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Paris, 7.5 minute ACREAGE: about 1½ acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Nomination includes the former Nye house and the property on which it stands: T 2021, block 11, Paris Townsite

UTM(S): 12/4, 67, 60/46, 74, 555

DATE OR PERIOD: 1870's EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: architecture, craft, agriculture

DESCRIPTION: Good condition unaltered original site

The Nye house, like the more ornate Judge Budge house (site # 22) has a very complex plan as an apparent result of additions. It also is, at least in its more prominent sections, a one-and-a-half story shiplap-sided frame structure, but with an angularity produced by gable roofs and dormers throughout. The one-and-a-half story sections are arranged in a tee-shape. On the narrow end facing the street is the most prominent feature, a one-story half-hexagonal bay with two-over-two sash windows and a modestly balustraded balcony above. An ornamental overdoor surmounts the entrance onto the balcony. Wall dormers with plain-framed windows break the eave on either side of this front wing. To the left of it is an enclosed shed-roofed entry porch, originially an open framework utilizing ornamental millwork similar to that on the balcony. A one-story gabled ell extends behind the porch to the left; a gabled overdoor on the east side is bracketed and decorated with discs and drop finials. To the rear of this ell is a low hip-and-ridge section extending to the rear of the house and connecting with a small, open porch at the southeast corner, which is slightly outset from the one-and-a-half-story gabled tee section which completes the plan at the southwest.

The James Nye outbuildings comprise a group of seven specialized structures in a scattered layout surrounded by a post and woven wire fence. The unpainted buildings include two balloon frame lean-tos sided with vertical lumber, a one-story gable-roofed balloon frame shed, a one-story gable-roofed balloon frame garage, an outhouse, a two-story chicken house, and a barn.

Largest of these structures is the tall, rectangular-plan hay and stock barn made of board and batten over a frame of round log timbers and heavy lumber. The gable roof is braced with diagonal timbers and covered with full-length board shingles. The fully floored loft, still used for hay storage, has hay doors in both east and west gables. These doors, hinged at the bottom, are not protected with hoods. On the north exposure a one-story lateral lean-to is attached. Windows filled with chicken wire line the north and south walls of the barn and lean-to. Typical of Paris barns, there is no cupola. All lumber in the barn bears circular saw marks.

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James Nye house

DESCRIPTION (continued):

The rectangular chicken house measures about fourteen by twenty-eight feet. Its structure is occasionally observed in southern Idaho: even tiers of timbers squared on a circular saw and joined with false corner timbering. On both levels windows are lined horizontally across the eastern exposure. In the north and south gable walls are two doors, the southern panel door being on the second story with an outside stairway. The gable roof is shingled.

The outhouse is a small square balloon frame structure with a shingled lean-to roof with simple bargeboards on all four roof edges. The panel door opens on the northern, house-ward exposure. Two small square openings on the east and south walls, which appear to be windows, instead form a boxed-in tunnel, possibly a vent.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Nye house is architecturally significant as a particularly elegant and well-dressed version of a composite house type of which there are several examples in Paris. Like the Smedley house (site #10), but at a larger scale, the Nye house is told to have been raised in successive stages. It began as a squarish cabin form which now appears as the left-side ell. In 1884, the I-portion was built, with its bay facing the street and the just-begun excavation for the Tabernacle; the house was then noted as "quite an ornament to our town".[1] Probably later, but certainly by 1892, when a Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows the house in its present shape, the rear I-block was added. The interior woodwork and connectors seem to support this order of composition.

What distinguishes the Nye house from others of its type in town is certainly the abundance and variety of its ornament. James Nye was called to Paris in 1877 probably because of his training as a carpenter. He worked at the local shingle and planing mill and produced cabinets and furniture. Nye was responsible for the carving in the ceiling of the Tabernacle choir and fashioned the pulpit banisters with a hand-lathe.[2] His skill with wood is quite evident on this house. The array of well-placed scallops, balusters, buttons, spears and brackets has contemporary rival only in the George Ashley, Sr. house (site #29).

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1 Bear Lake Democrat, 31 October 1884.

2 Bear Lake Pioneers, page 520.

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James Nye house

SIGNIFICANCE (continued):

The James Nye outbuildings are the first of several farmstead groups that have been chosen as significant examples of outbuilding layout in Paris. (For further examples see sites #4, 7, 9, 22, 36, 53, 55 and 71.) The Nye layout--a scatter of buildings, each with its own function--is one of the many organizational possibilities used by Paris farmers, a layout that can result when, as in this case, buildings are erected in different periods. Individual buildings on the site provide examples of a WPA-built outhouse; the Paris barn type built between 1892 and 1900 in a board and batten variation with two hay doors; and an elaborate two-story chicken house. This last structure is included, even though built by Nye in the 1930's while he was a member of the Egg Cooperative Association, because it is one of a handful of Paris outbuildings exhibiting plank construction, observed occasionally in other Idaho Mormon settlements.

Historic Resources of Paris (Partial Inventory: Architecture)
James Nye house, site #14
East First Street South near Main Street,
Paris, Bear Lake County, Idaho

Photographer: Patricia Wright
May, 1979

Negative on file at:
Idaho State Historical Society
Boise, Idaho

View from northwest

Photograph 1 of 3

Historic Resources of Paris (Partial Inventory: Architecture)
James Nye house, site #14
East First Street South near Main Street,
Paris, Bear Lake County, Idaho

Photographer: Lisa B. Reitzes
October, 1979

Negative on file at:
Idaho State Historical Society
Boise, Idaho

View from east

Photograph 2 of 3

Historic Resources of Paris (Partial Inventory:
Architecture)
James Nye outbuildings, site #14
East First Street South,
Paris, Bear Lake County, Idaho

Photographer: Patricia Wright
July, 1979

Negative on file at:
Idaho State Historical Society
Boise, Idaho

View from northeast

Photograph 3 of 3