

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

COORDINATED RESOURCE PLANNING AND PROTECTION 2. Comprehensive Architectural Survey

Number 764

1982

The earliest structures built by white men in Idaho date from the period 1808 through 1860 and include explorers' camps, trappers' cabins, Indian missions, trading posts, and military forts. The architecture of these settlements drew on a variety of construction types: adobe, vertical or horizontal timbers (either hewn or left in the round), posts in sills, and framed timbers with infill. The outstanding building from this period was the Sacred Heart Mission to the Coeur d'Alene Indians, built near present-day Cataldo in the early 1850's in the Italianate Baroque style.

Horizontal timbers, adobe bricks or blocks, and rough-sawn lumber were the primary building materials used during the 1860's. Saw mills operated in major early mining camps practically as soon as they started; whipsaws were also used to cut rough lumber. Brick buildings were highly regarded in Idaho's earliest communities, although bricks were not readily available for many years. Adobe, timbers, and rough lumber continued to be used in areas isolated from the primary transportation routes, areas like the Salmon River mountains, into the first few decades of the twentieth century.

Styles popular nationwide made their way to Idaho mining camps and Mormon villages of the 1860's and 1870's. Examples remain of the Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, and Italianate styles, although many of them have been altered. Much of Idaho's architecture from this period is vernacular in form and construction. The square cabin, hall and parlor, and central hall house types were commonly built in the Mormon settlement areas. In the mining camps gable-end houses were popular.

The Queen Anne style of domestic architecture and the Romanesque Revival and Renaissance Revival styles for commercial and institutional buildings were the predominant styles in late nineteenth century Idaho. By this time pattern book plans were widely available for residential designs and for outbuildings. Saw mills were turning out more finely finished lumber, brick was being manufactured at local brickyards, local lime sources had been located, stone quarries had begun business, and millwork, cast and pressed iron building fronts, and other architectural details were available from the Midwest by railroad shipment. Boise sandstone became an important local material for commercial

and institutional buildings and for house foundations.

During this period a number of architectural firms began working in the state. They included Tourtellotte and Hummel, James King, John C. Paulsen, W. S. Campbell, and Wayland and Fennell, all of Boise; James Nave of Lewiston; B. J. Nisbet of Twin Falls; and Frank H. Paradice of Pocatello. The work of these and other firms continued into the twentieth century, and many of their buildings had a broad influence on architectural styles statewide, however modest the local renditions of those styles were. Firms in Salt Lake City, Spokane, and Portland also began to capture architectural commissions in Idaho as the state's need for architect-designed buildings grew.

Twentieth-century architectural trends were influenced by the development of large irrigation tracts across southern Idaho under the Carey and Reclamation acts and the accompanying rapid increase in population and birth of new towns. These developments coincided with the national popularity of the American Colonial Revival style and the bungalow mode, and those two styles dominate Idaho residential architecture during the period 1900 through 1920. During the 1930's and later revival styles like the Mission, Tudoresque, and Colonial Revival styles continued their popularity. Idaho also felt the influence of the new architectural ideas represented in the Art Deco, Prairie School, and International styles. A number of new materials were available for experimentation, such as poured concrete, hollow concrete blocks, and stucco. Builders experimented as well with natural materials found in their regions, like cobblestone (primarily in northern Idaho) and lava rock (in south central Idaho). In many areas of the state the influence of vernacular house types and construction methods continued into the twentieth century, especially in rural architecture.

Several special types of architecture have been important in Idaho because the state's economy is based upon extractive and other land-based industries and because the state has a very high percentage of land under federal management. The mining, forestry, power-generating, and agricultural industries have developed their own architecture drawing upon the vocabulary of the styles popular for commercial and domestic buildings while establishing industry-specific usage of space, massing and proportions, and structural systems. Forest Service guard stations, ranger stations, and lookouts comprise just one such category of specialized architecture that needs further survey and evaluation.

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Publications--450 N. 4th Street, Boise, ID 83702--208-334-3428