

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

PIERCE COURTHOUSE

Number 946

July 1972

SIGNIFICANCE

Following gold discoveries at Pierce, September 30, 1860, thousands of miners rushed there the next spring. As a result, Shoshone County was established January 9, 1861, and cast the largest vote in Washington territory in the congressional election July 8. After Shoshone County was organized in Pierce, September 2, the Washington legislature moved the county boundaries northward to include the county seat and the voters in the county, December 19. Finally, on May 26, 1862, the county commissioners authorized construction of a courthouse and jail. Completed in August at a cost of \$3,700, the courthouse served Shoshone County until the county seat was moved to Murray. At that point, Idaho's oldest public building was sold to Ed Hammond for \$50. He used it for a residence.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The two-story courthouse was built of hewn logs and measured thirty-six feet in length and twenty feet in width, with sixteen foot posts employed for support. The roof was a square or one-half pitch and covered with three feet long and "two feet to the weather" shakes. Double thick one and one-half inch plank was used for the sides of the two cells, while the ceilings consisted of one inch shingle plank. The entire area was closely spiked. Each cell had a four inch by ten inch hole to allow the light in.

When the courthouse was sold in 1884 it was turned into living quarters and "in the ensuing years many people have lived in it, including Jack Maloney, a timber cruiser, whose daughter had the distinction of being born in the old jail." Subsequently an addition was built on and later the interior remodeled. The building still stands on its original location, and except for the addition, the outside retains much of its general original appearance.

(This information has not been edited.)

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