

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## REFERENCE SERIES

### JOHNNY SACK'S CABIN

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#### SIGNIFICANCE

The Johnny Sack cabin is architecturally and artistically significant for its distinctive craftsmanship. It is widely recognized locally as a landmark, and generally acknowledged to be the finest building in the Big Springs area of Island Park. It is considered to be the work of a master craftsman, and concern for its preservation has been expressed locally by the Madison County Historical Society. As an example of the bungalow mode applied to log construction the Sack cabin has more than local significance, however, and should be preserved.

The Johnny Sack cabin is a typical vacation house of the period 1920 to 1950. During this period the use of the log cabin motif became popular among rustivating Idahoans seeking peace and tranquillity in the sylvan confines of Idaho's mountain regions.

The Sack cabin, with its exquisite craftsmanship, is one of the more remarkable examples of its genre encountered in our state site survey to date.

The log cabin motif with its associations with rustic life became a prime symbol of the roughing holiday seeker as the actualities of pioneer life retreated into the realm of nostalgia. The Island Park area developed as a rather exclusive vacation area as the Railroad Ranch, owned by the Guggenheims and Harrimans, is a part of the region. The Big Springs region of the park, where the Johnny Sack cabin is located, was designated as part of the Federal Forest Reserve in 1906. In the early 1920's land was leased to the Kooch family and a resort inn was built. Later, in the 1930's more land was opened up to the public and it was at this time that the Sack cabin was erected on lease land. The cabin is the most pretentious of the cabins on Big Springs and is picturesquely located on a point overlooking the lake.

#### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Johnny Sack cabin is an exceptionally well made log bungalow, approximately 20 x 27 feet in size, with additions in the form of porches for sleeping and entry. Two bedrooms on the second story are made possible by a shed dormer extension to the east. Native stone, laid in random pattern, is used for piers

and foundations of the enclosed entry porch. The stone is chiefly of granite material in pink and several shades of grey.

The wooden window sashes employed are varied in size and construction. Most are fixed. Second story end windows are of the sliding variety.

The shapes and overall character of the cabin seem to derive from the prevailing bungalow mode of the period of construction (1932-1934) rather than from German models which may have been known to its immigrant builder, Johnny Sack. The roof pitch, extended eaves, exposed rafters, and chopped gables are all typical bungalow features which can be seen in most small towns in Idaho.

The craftsmanship in wood displayed in the house, especially in interior finish and hand-made furniture, is notable. A planed-bark technique is employed which creates rich and pleasing surface patterns.

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(This information has not been edited.)

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