

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY REFERENCE SERIES

## PARIS TABERNACLE

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### SIGNIFICANCE

A Mormon Stake includes a group of local church congregations (known as wards), and in many areas of the Mormon intermountain west, stake tabernacles are regional community centers. (The Salt Lake tabernacle in Temple Square is the best known of these.)

Paris, the earliest of the Bear Lake Mormon settlements, was established September 26, 1863, and a number of other Mormon towns followed in the summer of 1864. Increased population in the valley led to formation of the Bear Lake Stake of Zion, June 20, 1869. Brigham Young and a number of Mormon apostles came up for the occasion. A general reorganization of the stake, August 25-26, 1877, preceded the building of the tabernacle after 1884.

Aside from its regional community importance, this tabernacle is of unusual architectural interest.

### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mormon Tabernacle of Bear Lake Stake in Paris, Idaho, is in the Romanesque Revival style. It was designed by architect Joseph Don Carlos Young of Salt Lake City, a son of Brigham Young, and constructed under the supervision of Thomas G. Lowe of Logan, Utah.

Materials for the imposing Victorian structure, with its six-story bell tower, were gathered from the surrounding countryside. Red sandstone, the principal material, was quarried in Indian Creek Canyon, eighteen miles away, and hauled around the lake by horse and ox teams. In winter, much of the stone was sledged across the ice of Bear Lake. The stone cutting and carving were done by a family of Swiss masons, recently arrived in Utah. Jacob Tueller and his three sons moved to Paris to work on the tabernacle, and starting in 1884, devoted four years to the project.

All of the wood used in the structure, including the shingles, was cut in the canyons nearby. Most of the work was done by the Mormon settlers themselves, each contributing his own skill. A number of fine craftsmen in wood shaped the interior detail; especially noteworthy is the work of James Nye on the pulpit and choir ceiling. Overall dimensions are 127'6" x 73'4".

The building is in excellent condition and has not been altered since its dedication, September 15, 1889.

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**(This information has not been edited.)**

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