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CHESTERFIELD

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SIGNIFICANCE

From its beginning in 1846, the story of the migration of the Mormon population to establish a new society in the Mountain West is basic to an understanding of the area's history. Chesterfield, Idaho, remains as one of the best preserved colonies among the five hundred or so established by the Latter-Day Saints after their arrival in the Great Basin. Its principal structures, plan, and landscape all contribute to make it exemplary in the development of the Mormon settlement pattern. Because it exists surprisingly intact from its early days, it is even more significant as primitive village and rural landscape, little compromised by modern development. Finally, among its buildings one finds not only a variety of examples of early building forms, but also a distinguishing level of workmanship.

The state of Idaho was settled late in Western history. The first permanent settlement dates only to 1860. Although the Oregon Trail crossed southeastern Idaho between Fort Bridger and Fort Hall, few people stopped for long until more attractive locations became relatively crowded.

One of the areas that became "crowded" early was the Salt Lake City district. The decade of the 'sixties saw a deliberate movement northward from the Great Basin, resulting in such colonies as Franklin in Cache Valley and Paris in Bear Lake Valley. Further north in the Portneuf River Valley, permanent homes were first made in the 1870's and livestock was brought in to graze the natural grasses.

Two men from the Mormon settlement in Bountiful, a few miles north of Salt Lake, entered the Portneuf vicinity in 1879. Chester Call and Christian Nelson, his nephew by marriage, had located water at a point toward the north end of the valley and established a ranch there for the grazing of horses. Both men were second generation westerners, whose parents had come to Utah in early Mormon migrations. Chester had scouted the country and determined it a logical place for a settlement.

As Utah was short on vacant land, Chester was able to persuade a number of his relatives and friends to relocate to Idaho from Bountiful. By 1882, a number of families were living

in the vicinity. An informal congregation of the Mormon Church was established in 1883, and formalized as a "Ward" in 1884.

Desiring a more organized settlement, church leaders from Utah designated a townsite, and directed the laying out of a town grid on high ground. The town was to be called "Chesterfield" after an English location and in honor of Chester Call.

Once laid out, the townsite was occupied by a number of families, with thirty-one residential sites now documented. At least as many more were located near the townsite. As of this writing, twenty-three remain standing, as well as the church, school, three stores, the tithing office, and a number of outbuildings. A low level of intrusion--seven, or less than eighteen percent, of the inventoried sites--exists to mar the original townscape. Few homes have been conspicuously remodeled; only five sites are occupied.

Of the remaining buildings, all but two seem to have been built before 1910, and these two are of similar materials and compatible style. Examples of log, frame, and brick structures are present, and types and styles ranging from several distinctive cabin forms to I-house and Queen Anne. The workmanship of the buildings is fine, with unusual attention to interior trim, exterior style, and order in all facets of the construction.

Additional significance derives from the town's relationship with a number of issues of the time, such as the anti-Mormon, anti-polygamy furor of the period from 1872-1892 in southeast Idaho. A number of Chesterfield families were polygamous, and in fact were headed by men who spent some of their time with other families in other communities. The decline of intensive rural agriculture is well-documented in the area, with the landscape giving way to dry farming operations by huge landholders and an evacuation of the great majority of families. Economic trends are reflected in the town's struggles through the panics near the turn of the century. Although a simple agricultural village, Chesterfield has precocious buildings which are evidence of the ambitious design of the founders, as well as the over-wide streets and grand-scaled town plat typical of Mormon settlement patterns in the west. The Tithing Office, Chapel, Amusement Hall, and storage buildings for commonly held foodstuffs chronicle the church welfare system and the dominance of the religion; they show the pervasive role of the LDS religion in all facets of the settlement's life. In addition, the dominance of a settlement by a single family is unusual and noteworthy. Well over eighty percent of the residents of the town were lineal descendants or married to descendants of Cyril Call (1785-1873).

The others, almost without exception, were close friends of Call relatives prior to locating in the area.

The boundaries of the district were drawn to encompass not only the platted townsite but also those outlying sites associated with the nineteenth century colony. Boundaries were

squared by section or quarter-section lines to provide a clearly identifiable district within a reasonably regular figure. These boundaries also allow physical inclusion of much of the remarkable vista overseen from the sign point of the townsite-- the open landscape which contributes much to the site integrity of Chesterfield, providing its context and therefore much of its significance.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The rural village of Chesterfield, Idaho is located at the north end of a broad valley named for the Portneuf River which is its main water source. The townsite is located on the foothills of the Chesterfield Range of mountains, making the topography somewhat irregular, some parts being quite steep.

As was typical of the Mormon settlement pattern, a town grid street system was imposed on the landscape which does not readily accommodate such a rigid plan. Some proposed roads would be too steep to be practical and thus were never developed.

The most prominent buildings in town, the church and school, are located on the highest points in the topography. A magnificent vista of the valley is seen from the church site.

The historic area is scattered over a large portion of the valley's north end, with the original townsite platted a mile long (north and south) and three-quarters of a mile wide (east and west). The outlying sites included within the boundaries are farmsteads developed by families associated with the central settlement. These sites are up to three miles distant from the village center.

Approximately thirty-one residences remain in the district, plus the church, school, three stores, "tithing house" (used for ecclesiastical purposes) a number of outbuildings, and a local cemetery with graves dating back to the 1880's. A number of other sites in the district are verified locations of former farmsteads now removed.

The platted townsite includes thirty-five ten-acre blocks, seven tiers north and south, and five east and west. Each block is square, and divided into four square two and one-half acre lots. The streets were laid out to be ninety-nine feet (6 rods) wide, and sixteen foot sidewalks were also provided in the survey. Most of these streets are now obscured, but the pattern is evident to any but the most casual observer. Such a square grid arrangement is the rule in most Mormon settlements.

Buildings in the district are of several types: log, wood "slab," frame, and brick materials; most date from 1884 to 1925.

Log buildings are most common, including homes, barns, and outbuildings, as well as a log store. These structures are fairly primitive, but several boast unusually fine Victorian woodwork inside. Some are further distinguished "salt box" forms.

The "slab" homes are unique in that they are constructed of squared logs placed vertically around the perimeter of the house.

Varying in width, they are generally about four to six inches thick and run the full height of the building. Batten strips seal the spaces between logs as a weather proofing measure. The interiors of these structures tend to be simple, originally covered with muslin rather than plaster, for example.

Six homes are of frame construction, with sheathing or shiplap siding on the exterior and more elaborate millwork inside.

All of the log, slab, and frame houses are one or one-and-one-half story and of fairly small size. The most common form is the "hall-and-parlor" house--rectangular, two-roomed, with laterally-running gable roof and centered entry in the long wall--which is very typical in many Mormon settlements in the Intermountain West. (Samaria and Paris, Idaho, are regional examples.) Also present are several examples of a square cabin with off center entry; this form, usually associated by cultural geographers with a "southern mountain cabin," has also been observed in Paris. Rear additions, often producing a "saltbox" profile, are typical and true to type. Degrees of sophistication, not only in materials--from log to frame, e.g.--but in design and technique--from saddle to square-notched logs, from unelaborated to modestly elegant millwork, from fewer to more numerous windows, from uncorbelled to corbelled brick chimneys--can also be observed in these small dwellings, and probably relate in many cases to date of construction.

The brick buildings represent a departure from this simplicity. There are six remaining homes, a church, a school, two stores and the "tithing office," all made of locally fired orange brick with basalt and quartzite foundations. They represent a more refined architecture, with strong influence of house patterns common in the U.S. at the time. There is one example in brick (another in frame) of the I-type which is so popular in Mormon settlements, that geographer Peter Francoviglia has characterized it as "the Mormon house." The other large brick houses surviving in Chesterfield show, by their asymmetry of plan and eclecticism of detail, more influence from the Queen Anne style which was at a peak of popularity in Idaho in the '80's and '90's. The religious buildings are vernacular in style, but with elements of the Gothic and Greek Revivals. These buildings give evidence of unusual pride in the built environment among rural villages and an outstanding interest in quality workmanship.

The greatest clusters of buildings are on the southern two tiers of blocks of the townsite, which includes all of the public buildings. Two blocks are occupied by the religious buildings and schools, respectively. Residences tend to be on the corners of each block with outbuildings toward the center.

The entire landscape is dominated by open space, now mostly

cultivated as "dry farm" land. Originally more secondary structures were present, and at least six to ten primary residences were once located in the platted village. As farming trends drifted from labor-intensive cultivation of small plots, the larger dry farms have moved in to obscure some original streets and yard features. Cottonwood trees and other vegetation mark some original yard and street boundaries, especially adjacent to the original canal systems developed by the first settlers for irrigation. Many trees that were once planted have been removed or died due to lack of water.

At its height, some 400 or more individuals lived within a mile of the village, which was surrounded by substantially less farmland than it now is. A prominent landscape feature was sagebrush over large areas, with natural grasses at the beginning of the settlement history. The town area was a frequent campsite and grazing area for travelers on the Oregon Trail, which crossed the historic district.

After colonization, small farms were begun close to available water sources. As dry farming and mechanized land clearance developed, more land was placed under cultivation and the terrain became more homogeneous. The buildings of Chesterfield were mostly deserted before 1941 when the school closed. The population of the historic district is now about twenty.

Although unoccupied for a number of years, the buildings are in fairly good condition. The church is well maintained as a museum; the school, store, and most unoccupied brick homes are in sound structural condition, but with advancing roof failure causing severe water damage inside. Two brick homes and the tithing office are suffering from foundation failures and need prompt attention.

The wooden structures are all basically sound, with similar roof problems. A few have been damaged by livestock entry.

The Chesterfield Foundation, Inc., a local preservation organization with nonprofit status, is planning to replace roofs with cedar shingles like the original, fence out animals, do major brick repair, and secure the property from vandals.

Most buildings remain unchanged since 1925, other than by deterioration due to the elements or, particularly in the occupied homes, modern additions. Three new utility buildings have been erected in the district and eight homes have been resurfaced on the exterior, two with stucco and the remainder with more ephemeral materials, such as wide shingle or asbestos siding. Many structures are effectively unaltered, such as the main store, which retains its original windows, interior shelves, and some merchandise and equipment.

Archeologically, there may be some value in the district due to the presence of the Oregon Trail, though it likely skirted the townsite to avoid the elevated hills it occupies. Settlement artifacts and evidences would date no earlier than 1875.

INVENTORY

All buildings are ca. 1885-1900 unless otherwise indicated. Each is identified by its earliest known owner or resident.

1. The Christian Nelson house is at the site of the original Mormon homestead in the Chesterfield area. The structure dates ca. 1890. The original section is a one-and-one-half-story brick with segmentally arched windows and I-house proportions: one room deep, two wide, one-and-one-half-stories tall. The end-wall gable on this section is jerkin-headed over pairs of windows at both levels. A centered and gabled wall dormer breaks the eave on the long rear wall. On the opposite side, where the entrance would originally have occurred, a modern extension has been added. Several early outbuildings are associated with the site.

2. The Call cabin was built for a plural wife of Sydney B. Call. The original fabric has been obscured by modern siding and there is a small gabled ell of uncertain vintage at left. However the squarish proportions of the one-and-one-half story main cabin (there is a one-story shed-roofed extension at rear) provide a clear example of a cabin type which appears elsewhere in Chesterfield (i.e. in the Loveland house, #22) though less frequently than the rectangular hall-and-parlor type. The entry is right-of-center and transomed. A saddle-notched log outbuilding is associated with the house.

3. The Keplar Sessions farmhouse is a ruin, intended by the Chesterfield Foundation to be salvaged for brick to repair other buildings. A sod-roofed log outbuilding, pole corral, and several frame outbuildings including an "inside-out" granary survive on the site.

4. The Granville Barlow house, an apparently quite early cabin of saddle-notched logs, survives to the rear of a home of newer construction (see #39). The entry is centered in the long wall, and one square window is set to the left of it. A frame extension of uncertain age has been added at the east end of the cabin.

5. The Ed Thomas house is a one-and-one-half-story, lap-sided frame structure of I-house proportions. The door which is centered in the long wall and most of the windows retain peaked lintel trim. There is one interior chimney, built of brick and corbelled.

6. The Sylvanus Waddell house is a one-story frame dwelling with a front elevation conforming to the house-and-parlor type so common in Chesterfield--lateral ridgebeam, central door, flanking windows--but with a substantially deeper, in the fact almost

square, floor plan subsumed under the gable roof. There is an additional, shed-roofed extension to the rear. There are remains of two interior chimneys, one centered and one on the left side. Siding is shiplap.

7. The Emery Davids house is another small hall-and-parlor type with centered entry, flanking windows, and rear shed extension. The original fabric is obscured by asbestos sheet siding; the cabin was moved to the site in 1930 when the larger Cy Tolman house burned. Early outbuildings are associated with it.

8. The George Lester house is a square-planned cottage with truncated hip roof and left-of-center entry; the diagonal wood sheathing covered a frame structure infilled with brick.

9. The Ed Reese farmstead consists of several modest outbuildings dominated by a dwelling which was apparently built in several sections: one-and-one-half-story main block of square-notched log, with double-hung sash windows, shingled gables, and a centered and corbelled brick chimney; a lower-profiled, one-story, slab-and-batten ell with uncorbelled central brick chimney; and a shed-roofed, enclosed, frame porch at the intersection.

10. The Albert W. Jones house, the only structure remaining in its block, is a period house which has been asphalt resided. Several outbuildings are associated with it.

11. The James A. McClellan farmhouse is of log, square-notched with planked side-facing gables and a lower-profiled slab ell to the rear. A log barn is associated with the side site.

12. The Heber C. Loveland farmstead displays the familiar hall-and-parlor house type, although here the original fabric of the frame house has been obscured by modern shingle siding. There is a slab ell at the rear, and the ruin of a slab barn. The house was moved to this site around 1900, from another location just south of the townsite.

13. The Judson A. Tolman house was built in 1896 for the local bishop. It is a tall one-and-one-half-story brick ell-house with gabled roofs and stone foundation. There is an ell-shaped entry porch with hipped roofs at the intersection. The house is distinguished by segmentally-arched openings and by the remains of fine millwork in the turned posts, lattice-work and fan-like pierced brackets on the porch and on the balcony which surmounts a double window in the front-facing left wing.

14. The Anson Loveland farmstead is a frame house with an associated log barn ruin. The house is the one story hall-and-

parlor type with side-facing gables, centered door and flanking windows in the long side. There is one interior chimney. Peaked lintel trim over the sash windows and a transom over the door decorate this simple cabin.

15. The site of the Chesterfield Amusement Hall, ca. 1895, is marked by a foundation and brick debris from the ca. 1960 demolition. The site has possible potential for historic archaeology. The appearance of the original building, as apparent from historic photographs, was that of a simple, basically rectangular brick structure with front-facing gable, transomed door surmounted by gable lunette, segmentally-arched windows, and large outset quoins, probably of stone.

16. The Chesterfield Ward Meeting House (Latter Day Saints church) remains in very good repair south of the Amusement Hall site. Dating 1887-92, it consists of a rectangular brick body with front-facing gable and hipped outset porch. The three side bays contain narrow, flat-arched, linteled windows and are separated by brick pilaster-buttress forms. There is a corbelled brick chimney at rear. The building is dated in a half-round lunette set into the front gable. It overlooks the townsite and valley from a fine prominence, and is maintained as a museum by the local Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

17. The Chesterfield Elementary School, on another of the central blocks of the townsite, is a low, cross-lanned, three-room brick structure dating from 1921. The low profile and broad filled eaves of the complex hip-and-ridge roof suggest the influence of the prairie and bungalow styles. Ranges of multi-light windows fill the end walls, and a shallow-arched, transomed and sidelighted doubled-doored entry is centered in the cross wing. The brick is decoratively coursed and relieved with cast decoration around the openings, producing simple and handsome geometric patterns. The building is unoccupied but in fair condition.

The site of the original brick school, built in 1901 and destroyed by fire, is on the quarter block to the south. Only rubble remains of the earlier structure.

18. The Nathan Barlow store dates ca. 1900 and is the largest commercial structure in the district. It is a rectangular brick building with a small frame addition at rear. The main roof is parapeted and stepped toward the rear. The toothed courses at roofline suggest that a more elaborate cornice treatment may originally have been present. On the facade, a recessed, sidelighted entry is centered between six-pane display windows; "Queen Anne" strips line the shallow upper lights. The store is unoccupied but interior fixtures and some merchandise are intact. Storage sheds and barns are associated with the site.

19. The building earlier used by Nathan Barlow as a store is actually a hewn-log cabin, with square-notched corners, side-facing planked gables, and centered entry flanked by sash windows. There is a slightly lower gabled ell of frame construction at the rear.

20. Nathan Barlow's residence, south of the two store buildings associated with his name, is a single-story, three room brick house, ell-shaped with shed-roofed additions and an enclosed, hip-roofed entry porch at the intersection. The roof system is hip and ridge; windows are segmentally-arched. The grounds include an extant root cellar.

21. The Chesterfield Ward Tithing Office is a very fine, and fairly well-preserved, example of the Greek Revival style on the village scale. Dating ca. 1895, the diminutive two room brick structure is tall on its stone foundation; the front-facing gable has handsome returns and fine moldings, which also run under the eaves. The front and side windows and right of center front entrance are segmentally-arched with full, elaborated surrounds of lighter brick. The interior of the front office section is very fine, with wainscoting and milled woodwork. The building was used as a collection and disbursement office for the church welfare and donation programs, and the site also includes several outbuildings and a granary, all used for the storage of tithes "in kind."

22. The Heber Carlos Loveland house is a one-and-one-half-story log structure remarkable for its "saltbox" shape, particularly in that the shed-roofed rear section is clearly not an addition but continuous with the rest of the structure. Corners are square-notched, the chimney is handsomely corbelled; both downstairs and attic windows are double hung sash. The entry is left of center under a laterally-running ridgebeam. The ruins of an addition are to the east; a privy remains on the site.

23. The Rolland Johnson house is a two-room cabin of the familiar hall-and-parlor type, constructed of unhewn logs with square-notched corners. Single windows flank the centered entry, doubled ones are set in the end walls. There are remains of an interior brick chimney; interior millwork survives in good condition.

24. The Jack Bowman house, once the home of Sarah Call, plural wife of Chester, is a square-lanned cottage with a pyramidal hipped roof. Later siding has been almost entirely stripped off, revealing the original wood fabric.

25. The Ernest Thompson cabin is another example of the hall-and-parlor log dwelling, here of ruder construction: saddle-

notched logs, one window flanking the centered entrance. Eaves are close, gables are planked, and there is a crude frame addition at left rear.

26. The Martha Reese house is a hall-and-parlor cabin of log construction, now stuccoed. A more modern addition has been added to the right side, and a modern cinder block barn, which must be considered a non-period intrusion (#41) is associated with the site.

27. Several low, saddle-notched log outbuildings are what remains in the village of a farmstead which sheltered one of the first post offices and was the childhood home of Frank C. Robertson, later a prolific writer of western novels. The home itself, a log cabin, was dismantled and removed in 1978.

In close proximity to the Robertson outbuildings is the remains of the Adrian Ruger dugout. Documented as an early residence, this is the ruin of a primitive home which was essentially a roof over a hole in the hillside. The west wall was stone.

28. The Fanny Call house was built in 1897 for a plural wife of Ira Call. It is a hall-and-parlor type, now stuccoed and with a rear addition. A metal dairy barn on the site is a nonperiod intrusion (#42).

29. The Muir and Higginson store is a hip-and-ridge-roofed brick structure with a shed-roofed side section. There is a shed-roofed frame addition at the rear. The whole of the main structure has been resided with modern materials. There is severe foundation failure on the south side. The facade of the main, hip-roofed section is symmetrically-disposed, with central door and flanking windows.

30. The Charles Higginson house is one of the most elegant residences remaining in the village. The one-and-one-half-story brick structure is complex in plan, but basically it consists of a more-or-less square, front-facing gabled block with an ell-form wrapping around the side and rear. A one-story, square, hip-roofed front bay and a gabled side dormer elaborate the main block. A square second-story "tower" with truncated hipped roof rises above the entrance in the left front wing of the ell. A toothed course marks the division between the upper and lower stories. All openings have segmental relieving arches, decoratively emphasized by outset courses set over the arch and continued some inches down the sides of each opening. Queen Anne lights appear in the bay. A number of outbuildings are associated with the house.

31. The Moses Muir residence, sited south of that of his partner

Higginson, dates from 1887 and is the oldest documented brick home in Chesterfield. Nearly two full stories in height, it consists of a rectangular block with a polygonal east end and a hipped, laterally-ridged roof. The entrance is right of center, just east of a massive two-story tent-roofed tower bay. The house sits on a stone foundation; openings are segmentally-arched and there is a shed-roofed entry porch. There are two corbelled brick interior chimneys. Various outbuildings include the ruins of a brick granary.

32. The Chester/Vosco Call farmstead house was built by a son of Chester Call, on the Call homestead. The brick structure, now veneered with modern siding and showing several modern additions, still exhibits its Queen Anne derivation: asymmetrical plan, mullioned glass and shaped shingles in the gable, turned posts and elaborate millwork on the hip-roofed entry porch.

33. The Ira Call cabin, an early (ca. 1885) residence of a local merchant, housed two polygamous families in a single log structure. The final "saltbox" shape appears to have been achieved in several stages: through lateral extension of the gabled main block, as well as through addition and lateral extension of the shed-roofed sections to the rear. The southeast shed section has square-notched corners, while the probably earlier main block utilized the simpler saddle-notch system. The variety of doors entering this composite cabin is probably a functional reflection of its use by a polygamous household. There are two interior chimneys.

34. The Mary Call house is a dwelling of slab construction, formerly the home of a plural wife of Chester Call. The surviving structure conforms to an ell-plan, created by the conjunction of two hall-and-parlor shapes with intersecting ridgebeams. Before collapse of a lower-pitched gabled extension on the west end of the main cabin, the house would have been minimally tee-shaped. There are two interior chimneys.

35. The Cornielsen farmstead on the eastern margin of the district consists of a log and shingle home with various outbuildings.

36. The Josiah "Dode" Loveland house is another hall-and-parlor log cabin, here again of somewhat rough construction: saddle-notched logs, single window flanking the centered door. Here, unusually, even the rear addition is of log and therefore presumably quite early. A metal storage structure just north of the cabin is a recent but ephemeral addition.

37. The James and Ruth Call Davids house is a three room dwelling comprised of a hall-and-parlor type log cabin with a

low-roofed log ell to the rear. Corners are square-notched throughout; logs on the main cabin are hewn and cables are planked. Mrs. Davids was a Paiute Indian adopted by Anson Call, noted Mormon colonizer.

LIST OF NONCONFORMING INTRUSIONS

38. Several newer farm outbuildings adjacent to the Christian Nelson house (#1).
39. Residence, ca. 1950, near site of Granville Barlow house (#4), southwest corner block six.
40. Residence, ca. 1979, southwest corner block fourteen.
41. Cinder block barn associated with Martha Reese house (#26).
42. Metal dairy barn on site of Fanny Call house (#28).
43. Two metal quonset huts in southwest quarter of block thirty-one.
44. Residence, ca. 1915, with newer farm buildings directly across road from Mary Call house (#34); moved onto site several decades ago.

(This information has not been edited.)

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