



NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8-86)

**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property Freeze Community Church

historic name: Freeze Church

other name/site number: 013464

2. Location

street & number: 1 mile west of U.S. Highway 95

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Potlatch

vicinity: N/A

state: ID county: Latah code: 057

zip code: 83855

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building(s)

Number of Resources within Property:

| Contributing  | Noncontributing          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| <u>1</u>      | <u>      </u> buildings  |
| <u>      </u> | <u>      </u> sites      |
| <u>      </u> | <u>      </u> structures |
| <u>      </u> | <u>      </u> objects    |
| <u>1</u>      | <u>0</u> Total           |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90000679

Date Listed: 5/3/90

Freeze Community Church  
Property NameLatah  
CountyIdaho  
State

N/A

Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*for* Patrick Andrews  
Signature of the Keeper

5/3/90  
Date of Action

## =====

Amended Items in Nomination:  
Criteria consideration A is applicable to this property.

Confirmed by telephone with Don Watts of the Idaho SHPO, 5/3/90

## DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

## 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Thomas J. Green  
Signature of certifying official

3-19-90  
Date

Idaho State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Patrick Andrus  
Signature of Keeper

5/3/90  
Date  
of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic: Religion: Religious  
structure

Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

Current : vacant/not in use

Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Other: vernacular  
ecclesiastical

Other Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation stone roof Metal: steel  
walls wood: other concrete  
weatherboard

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A & C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: Architecture, Exploration/  
settlement

Period(s) of Significance: 1899-1910

Significant Dates : 1899

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.  
X See continuation sheet.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7

(Freeze Community Church) Page 1

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The smooth, rolling hills of the rich Palouse farmlands in northern Idaho are broken occasionally by clusters of trees and farm buildings. The Freeze Church sits on a low hilltop on the west side of the Deep Creek valley, its white steeple beside the coniferous trees in the cemetery a familiar landmark to area residents and travelers alike. The simple frame building is a vernacular version of the popular American Colonial revival style, its starkness relieved by the steeple whose decorative shingles provide the only adornment on the church. The building has been altered very little inside or out, with the principal changes being the covering of the original shingle roof with metal roofing and the replacement of the original entry steps with a concrete deck and handicapped ramp. The adjoining cemetery and open farmland surrounding the church have changed little over the years, but the tiny community of Freeze in the valley below no longer exists, its handful of houses, store and school now mostly gone.

The rectangular church sits on a foundation of native rocks and mortar. The balloon frame walls are clad on the exterior with cove shiplap siding, trimmed with vertical boards at the corners, and topped with a wide frieze board on north and south walls. The symmetrical facade, which faces east, is broken only by double entry doors while the side walls are marked by four evenly spaced windows; the rear wall contains no openings at all. A gable roof tops the church, its boxed eaves completing the trim but simple design. The roof ridge is broken at the rear by a brick chimney and at the front by the steeple.

Individual elements of the building continue the church's simple lines. The double wooden front doors have a five-panel design and are topped with a two-pane clear glass transom; wooden storm doors now protect the entry from adverse weather. The windows along the side walls are four-over-four double-hung sash, surrounded on the exterior by plain wooden trim and a simple molded lintel cap.

The steeple is the primary decorative element of the Freeze Church and is the one feature that distinguishes the building as a church instead of a rural school of the same time period. The four-sided belfry is perched atop the front gable ridge, its openings covered with louvers and its walls clad with boards set at a diagonal. Each side is topped with a small, steep gable enclosing the building date. An eight-sided steeple rises from this nest of gables and features alternating bands of fish scale and diamond shingles.

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The interior of the church is one room, with no separate entry or cloakroom. Simple wooden pews flank a center aisle which leads to a newer raised dais with pulpit. Stained wainscoting surrounds the walls below the windows, while painted horizontal boards clad the upper walls. The top edge of the walls curves into the ceiling which is covered with the same painted boards. Lights with large milk glass globes hang from the ceiling on chains. A large wood stove sits at the rear of the room near the entry doors, and the stovepipe runs the length of the room to connect with the brick chimney at the center front.

The Freeze Church has been altered very little in its ninety-year history. The original wooden shingles are now covered with green metal roofing, a common change in an area that receives a lot of snow and in a building heated with wood. The original wooden steps, which were just a little wider than the entry doors, were replaced about 1980 with a solid concrete deck across the facade, reached by both steps and a handicapped ramp on the right side. The deck has a simple metal railing around the edge. The primary change on the interior has been the addition of a raised dais to hold the pulpit.

The church is currently in need of repainting but is otherwise well maintained. The grounds surrounding the church have also seen little change through the years. A dirt driveway leads from the county road up to a parking area by the church. Low shrubbery conceals the church foundation, and low bushes and trees break the expanse of lawn on three sides. Two small outbuildings include a shed-roofed outhouse/wood storage building along the western boundary and a gabled maintenance building in the cemetery just north of the church. The cemetery has expanded from the grassy area to the north around to the west and south sides, and additional property has been purchased on the east for future expansion. Trees have grown and the gravestones have fallen over, but the general appearance is the same.

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Constructed in 1899, the Freeze Church is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. It is significantly associated with the settlement of the Deep Creek valley, with the short-lived town of Freeze, and for its larger connection with the rural community which remains viable today. Under Criteria C, the church is architecturally significant as a well-preserved example of a simple, vernacular religious building which is easily recognizable but is quickly disappearing in Idaho. It is also significant as an example of architecture from the early town of Freeze, since most other town buildings are either altered, deteriorated, or no longer extant.

The discovery of gold on the Clearwater River in northern Idaho late in 1860 indirectly encouraged the settlement of the rich farmlands of eastern Washington and northern Idaho. The thousands of miners who flocked to the new discoveries at Pierce, Orofino City, Elk City, and Florence formed a ready market for produce grown around Walla Walla, then the major supply point for the mines. New settlers saw the potential for business and soon moved to the northeast to farm around present-day Colfax where two hundred people lived by 1871.<sup>1</sup> The region grew rapidly during the 1870s and the new town of Palouse, Washington, was soon boasting of a flour mill and a sawmill. This settlement grew into a commercial center which supplied adjacent areas of Idaho as well as the Hoodoo mining region farther to the east. The population came close to two hundred people by 1882 and then multiplied sixfold in the next decade, reaching twelve hundred by 1891.<sup>2</sup> The arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in Palouse City in 1888 assured the merchants and nearby farmers of steady access to distant markets.

The Deep Creek valley is located less than ten miles northeast of Palouse, just over the border into Idaho. The first settlers, a small group led by David Notman, Jr., arrived in this area in 1874 and were joined over the next few years by members of the extended Freeze family. A wagon train of Freeze relatives and friends had moved from Arkansas to Washington Territory in the summer of 1873, joining David Notman's train just west of Denver. Once settled at Deep Creek, the families evidently made their living as farmers.

While it is difficult to set an exact date for the beginning of the town of Freeze, the man who appears to have been a prime mover in the town

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did not arrive until 1899. John A. Starner was a restless man who began his career teaching school in various towns in Illinois. He left these jobs to move west where he mined in both Colorado and Montana, then served as a probate judge in Washington Territory. By 1890 he had moved across the border to homestead along the Palouse River in northern Idaho where the short-lived town of Starner grew to include a general store, dance hall, and post office. He established other post offices at Princeton and Deep Creek before moving to Freeze in 1899. Upon his arrival there he established a general store and post office, named for an early settler, C. E. Freeze (or Freese).<sup>3</sup>

Freeze was a typical rural center, serving the needs of the families in the surrounding area. The town itself was never large but included the store and post office in one building, a blacksmith shop, grain chopper or chop mill, school, Woodmen of the World lodge hall, community church, and a few houses.<sup>4</sup> The town was about as shortlived as other Starner ventures: the post office was discontinued in 1907, the store burned about 1908, and the rest of the community soon gave in to the competition from the new town of Potlatch located about five miles southeast of Freeze. In the years since that time most of the buildings have succumbed to fire or have deteriorated considerably. Two homes, a barn, and some outbuildings remain in relatively good condition, but only the church remains virtually intact after ninety years.

Although the town did not have a long life, the surrounding farms remained a vital part of the Latah County economy. The commercial links shifted to Potlatch, but the community ties to Freeze remained strong. The Freeze Church served as a meeting place for a far-flung congregation and helped to tie them together when other bonds had been broken. Church services continued into the 1980s, and the building still is used for occasional weddings and funerals.

Architecturally, the church is an example of religious buildings that have been built throughout the United States, in varying degrees of elaboration, starting in the eighteenth century. Local builders used plans provided from pattern books, sometimes written by architects as illustrious as James Gibbs and Minard Lafever. The result was that a form emerged -- rectangular, with a steeple and belfry, sheathed with clapboards -- that is generally associated with religious buildings. Although details about the builders of the Freeze Church remain unknown, it can easily be assumed that the builder and congregation of the church

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(Freeze Community Church) Page 3

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were familiar with this form, as it is so ubiquitous throughout the American landscape. While many were built in Idaho, few remain, and the Freeze Church is an intact example of this well-known building type.

As the other buildings in Freeze have disappeared or been altered, the church remains changed very little, with only the original roofing and front steps replaced. The modest style mirrors the simple vernacular designs used in the other buildings left in the town. The massing, window and door placement, and the steeple show the builders' knowledge of church design, while the lack of ornamentation reflects the paucity of local resources, either financial or material.

1

Richard C. Waldbauer, Grubstaking the Palouse, Pullman:  
Washington State University Press, 1986, p. 17.

2

Ibid, p. 25.

3

Lalia P. Boone, "Post Offices of Latah County," Latah County  
Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 4 (October 1978),  
p. 28.

4

Telephone conversation with Velda Walker (early resident of Freeze),  
Potlatch, Idaho, 21 December 1989.

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Boone, Lalia P. "Post Offices of Latah County." Latah County  
Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin, 7 (October 1978)

Henderson, John M., William S. Shiach, and Harry B. Averill. An  
Illustrated History of North Idaho Embracing Nez Perces, Idaho,  
Latah, Kootenai and Shoshone Counties, State of Idaho. Western  
Publishing Company, 1903.

Otness, Lillian Woodworth. A Great Good Country. Moscow, Idaho:  
Latah County Historical Society, Local History Paper #8, 1983.

Ross, Opal Lambert. Landed Gentry. Farmington, Washington: 1979.

Waldbauer, Richard C. Grubstaking the Palouse. Pullman: Washington  
State University Press, 1986.

Walker, Velda, Potlatch, Idaho. Telephone conversation with Nancy  
F. Renk, 21 December 1989.

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Section number 10 (Freeze Community Church) Page 1

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Tract of land located in the State of Idaho, County of Latah, Twp 42 North Range 5 WBM, SW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of Sec 22.

The point of beginning from the Northeast corner of Sec 22, is S. 34° 07' 38" W 5054.85 feet; thence S. 82° 04' 18" E. 197.46 feet to the Real Point of Beginning; thence S. 89° 17' 15" E. 150.00 feet; thence S. 00° 42' 00" W. 363.00 feet; thence S. 52° 15' 48" W. 414.41 feet; thence N. 00° 00' 00" E. 85.88 feet; thence N. 90° E. 17.88 feet; thence N. 31° 38' 00" E. 306.9 feet; thence N. 00° 42' 00" E. 271.30 to point of beginning.

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BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary is based on the legally-recorded boundary lines of the property. The boundary includes the church and the cemetery, and it contains the area which has historically been associated with the Freeze Church.

9. Major Bibliographical References

☒ See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

☒ State historic preservation office

☐ Other state agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other -- Specify Repository: Idaho State Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 6.85 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A 11 503090 5200090 B \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ☒ See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: ☒ See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Nancy Renk, Field Staff

Organization: Idaho State Historical Society Date: January 3, 1990

Street & Number: 210 Main St. Telephone: (208) 334-3861

City or Town: Boise State: ID Zip: 83702



FREEZE CHURCH

POTLATCH, IDAHO

NANCY RENK

OCTOBER 17, 1989

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VIEW NW



FREEZE CHURCH

POTLATCH, IDAHO

NANCY RENK

OCTOBER 17, 1989

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VIEW NW



FREEZE CHURCH

POTLATCH, IDAHO

NANCY RENK

OCTOBER 17, 1989

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL  
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