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**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form**

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information for additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Rural Properties of Ada County, Idaho

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Settlement and Agricultural Development of Ada County, 1860s-1950s

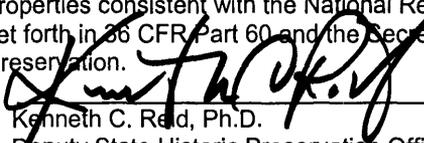
Community Development in Rural Ada County, 1860s-1950s

C. Form Prepared By

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organization The Arrowrock Group, Inc. date October 15, 2001
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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

 Date 31/01/03
Kenneth C. Reid, Ph.D. Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Idaho State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register  Date 3/20/2003

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

See continuation sheet

F. Associated Property Types

See continuation sheet

G. Geographical Data

See continuation sheet

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

See continuation sheet

I. Major Bibliographical References

Primary location of additional documentation:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State historic preservation office	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local government
<input type="checkbox"/> Other State agency	<input type="checkbox"/> University
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Specify repository: Ada County Development Services, Boise

See continuation sheet

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E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Physical Description

Ada County's geography and climate shaped the history of its agricultural development. Located in southwestern Idaho, Ada County is transected by the Boise River, a tributary of the Snake River and part of the great Columbia River drainage system. The Columbia River drainage system connects the Rocky Mountains to the Cascade Range and Pacific Coast. Four major streams feed the Boise River in Ada County: Indian Creek, Willow Creek, Fifteen Mile Creek, and Dry Creek. The county's northern section consists of broad river bottom lands and terraces, rolling hills, and the beginnings of mountains. Its southern section is a semi-arid desert plain, now fed by an intricate system of irrigation canals leading from the Boise River and its dams. From river bottom to sage-covered hills, Ada County averages 2,500 feet to 3-4,000 feet in elevation. This semi-arid region receives only 8.5 inches of precipitation annually. Dry, hot summers and freezing winters shape its seasons. These climate extremes are tempered by the river valley's location between the Owyhee Mountains and Boise's foothills, called the Boise Front.

Initial Settlement

Ada County's topography—a broad and rich river valley bounded by foothills, plains, and mountains--created a natural corridor through southwestern Idaho to the Pacific Northwest. Over thousands of years, Native Americans, explorers, fur traders, missionaries, and Oregon Trail emigrants traveled through the valley and rested along the Boise River's tree-lined banks. Gold and silver deposits brought miners and their suppliers into the region, marking the beginning of semi-permanent settlement. In 1862, George Grimes and Moses Splawn explored parts of the Boise Basin and found gold at what was later named Grimes Creek. Major strikes also occurred in the Rocky Bar area, east of Boise Basin, and the Owyhee Mountains to the southwest. Miners from played-out Oregon, California, and northern Idaho gold camps came along the Snake and Boise rivers to these new strikes. Mining camps grew into small towns, leading to the founding of Idaho City, Placerville, and Silver City, all located in the mountains surrounding the Boise River. In less than two years, over 6,000 people lived in the Boise Basin, making it the largest population center in the Pacific Northwest.¹

Mining and related industries also brought the first non-native ethnic and minority groups to the area. Chinese and Basque immigrants followed the gold trail from California to Idaho (the Basques finding a niche in the sheep industry that supplied the mines), and a few

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African-Americans settled in the mining camps of Silver City, Quartzburg, and Idaho City. Some of these prospectors, especially the Chinese and African-Americans, were harassed and driven from their claims. They found other occupations such as tending cattle and sheep, or providing services in local communities. Many Basques and Hispanics drove freight wagons and ran pack trains out of Boise. Most Chinese and African-Americans eventually moved to burgeoning towns, working in laundries, barbershops, restaurants, and other businesses.²

Many who originally came to mine made a more profitable living by raising livestock and vegetables to sell to their counterparts, rather than mining for elusive gold. Small ranches sprang up along the Boise River and its tributaries as settlers claimed land with readily available sources of water. There they could easily raise stock and crops and had easy access to local markets. The Boise River Valley's earliest settlers exemplified this pattern of settlement. William Richey and brothers Tom and Frank Davis were former Boise Basin miners who scouted Boise Valley for ranch sites. In 1863 they settled on Cottonwood Creek near the Boise foothills, and built cabins out of native trees. The Davis brothers eventually had the first fruit ranch in the Boise River valley. "Captain" McKay, an old Hudson's Bay Company trapper, also had a ranch four miles down river from the Davis ranch. Others farming along the river included Bill Little, located near Warm Springs, and John McLean, who settled near the Ritchey-Davis ranch.³

As mining and farming grew in 1863, conflict arose between Native Americans and non-native emigrants over southwestern Idaho's natural resources. Miners and settlers requested federal protection from Indians, and the U. S. Army scouted several sites for construction of a fort. In 1863, Major Pinckney Lugenbeel chose a location at the crossroads of the Oregon Trail and the road to the Boise Basin gold mines, situated near the Boise River, and near Boise City which was also platted that year. By then, approximately 100 people were already living in the valley. By 1864, Idaho Territory was created and Lewiston, in the Northern territory, was chosen to serve as its capital. The capital was subsequently moved to Boise City in late December of 1864. The same year Ada County, named after the daughter of H. C. Riggs, one of Boise City's founders, was formed.

Public Land Acquisition

Ada County settlers followed patterns of public land acquisition common to other western territories. The U. S. General Land Office (predecessor of the Bureau of Land Management)

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surveyed Idaho Territory in the early 1860s. The surveys began at Initial Point near present-day Kuna. The surveyors established a township system in advance of transferring public lands into private ownership. One way that settlers appropriated land prior to survey was through “squatter’s rights,” allowed under the federal Preemption Act of 1841. Under the act, people could choose a piece of land, build a dwelling on it, and make other improvements without legal ownership of the property. They “squatted” there until their land was surveyed and offered for sale by the government. The settlers could then lay legal claim through the Preemption Act and purchase up to 160 acres at \$1.25 an acre. Several of the earliest farm and ranch lands along the Boise River were claimed in this manner. Former Illinois native and Boise Basin miner T. C. Catlin filed a preemption claim to acquire 160 acres on Eagle Island, then known as Illinois Island. At his location along the Boise River he constructed a sawmill and was then able to contract to provide 100,000 shingles for buildings being constructed at Fort Boise.⁴

In 1862 Congress passed the Homestead Act, the embodiment of Thomas Jefferson’s ideal of an agricultural society founded upon small land holdings. Land was made available to any family or person who was a U. S. citizen or had filed a declaration to become one. Quarter sections (160 acres) of land were distributed free, provided the property was lived and worked on for five years. Such land could also be purchased after six months for \$1.25 an acre. Numerous homestead claims were filed in Ada County, but its semi-arid regions proved unsuitable for most small-scale homesteaders. Many were relinquished, or sold at sheriff’s auctions for back taxes. The outlying desert plain remained generally unsettled until massive irrigation projects dramatically changed the landscape.⁵

In the 1870s, Congress passed two acts that had implications in southwestern Idaho. The Timber Culture Act of 1873 attempted to increase humidity on semi-arid lands by encouraging tree plantings. The act provided that any settler (who had previously been limited to a claim of 320 acres) might claim an additional 160 acres of public land if 40 acres of the land was planted in trees. Later, the number was dropped to 10 acres. Settlers usually planted hardwood trees such as locusts, maples, and elms. Though this act failed to create the anticipated precipitation, remnants of these groves can still be found in Ada County. The original David Gekeler farm (later Triangle-Young Dairy) in southeast Boise, and acreages along Locust Grove and Maple Grove streets are examples of Timber Culture claims.⁶

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The federal Desert Land Act, instituted in 1877, allowed more generous land allocations in semi-arid regions. This act allowed claimants a maximum of 640 acres of desert land at \$1.25 an acre, provided they engage in some ditch construction before proof of land ownership. The Desert Land Act, however, did not address the need for major irrigation projects needed to reach lands beyond the river bottoms. Private reclamation developers attempted to solve this problem over the next 25 years.⁷

Agricultural Development and Private Irrigation Projects

By 1864, farmers occupied all the land near the river that could be irrigated by direct diversion. A few ranches were located along tributary creeks, such as Dry, Ten Mile, and Fifteen Mile creeks, where stock raising and dry farming took place. Diversified farming practices began in order to supply the needs of the mines and Fort Boise. Local farmers and ranchers received exceptionally high prices for their produce and livestock, which helped finance agricultural efforts that were larger.⁸

Stage and freight lines serving the mining communities also provided transport of farm products from the Boise River valley to these markets. An 1864 letter from Idaho City, published in the *Washington Statesman*, described the increased agricultural activity:

The quantity of vegetables and other products of the soil...is very large, averaging for the past month not less than a dozen wagonloads per day, brought to this place alone. Owyhee and South Boise mining regions furnish equally good markets for the Boise River valley, which is the main dependent so far of all the mining camps in this region of the country.⁹

The first crops grown in Ada County included garden produce, potatoes, onions, grain, hay, and small fruits. The riverbanks and creek sides provided rich soil for truck gardens and root crops. The terraces, foothills, and plains were planted with dryland alfalfa and grain. Irrigation water for lowland crops was diverted directly from the Boise River by 1863. Water wheels transported river water to gravity-flow ditches throughout the valley. Thomas Davis dug such a channel soon after he settled near the Boise River, and in 1864 filed the first water right in Boise. Polett Mace and T. C. Catlin of Eagle Island also built a ditch that year; each farmer irrigated about 350 acres

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from the water it carried. The Pioneer Canal, located on Boise River's north side, eventually led to the establishment of the Star community. William Morris constructed a ditch (later known as the Ridenbaugh Canal) upstream from Boise City that eventually irrigated most of Boise's south "bench," or terrace lands. In 1865, the Boise Valley Irrigation Company began a canal near the present-day Veterans Parkway. The ditch extended northwest through the Collister area.¹⁰

These early irrigation ventures were privately funded or cooperatively established by local farmers. The ditch systems allowed agriculture to gradually spread out from the riverbanks to other parts of Ada County. By 1880, Ada County's population reached 4,674 people, and included 117 farms and several small supply centers. Once the Boise Basin and Owyhee mines were played out, these agricultural enclaves created the basis for many Ada County towns and cities.¹¹

Dreams and schemes of privately financed irrigation projects prompted the development of major canal systems extending from the Boise River. Through the Desert Land Act, William Morris claimed over 17,000 acres of bench lands south of the river. In 1880, he began to sell large acreages by promising buyers an extensive irrigation system. Morris died two years later; his nephew, William Ridenbaugh, took over development of the canal system, completed it, and eventually sold it. In the 1880s farmers began constructing Settlers Canal, which started near the present-day Fairview Bridge. The canal stretched westward on top of the bench lands surrounding Boise. It finally reached the Meridian area after former Boise mayor John Lemp infused capital into the canal's development. Lemp then sold the irrigation district to local farmers.¹²

The New York Canal began as the area's most ambitious irrigation project in 1882. Successful gold placers along the Snake River, as well as reclamation prospects, prompted some New York investors to plan a massive reclamation project leading from the Boise River. These investors hoped to cover the cost of the canal through placer gold production. Not only would the canal's water feed new farm lands, but also could be used during summer months to work the Snake River placers. Bank failures delayed the canal project, and an alternative source of irrigation for the project was sought. The Phyllis Canal, begun in 1886, served a portion of the New York canal system. Further bank failures and litigation over water rights prevented the original canal's completion until the 1900s.¹³

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All who farmed in southwestern Idaho and surrounding semi-arid Western lands shared a common bond in learning to adapt the realities of harsh, sometimes unyielding environment. They also shared the national belief that humankind could harness nature's energy and resources for the common benefit, rather than completely adapting to the environment as it already existed. The vision of "making the desert bloom" became the driving force behind developing irrigated agriculture on a major scale in the arid West.

Early Transportation Networks

By the 1880s, Ada County communities were linked in two important ways: by a network of irrigation canals and ditches, and by a more delicate link of early transportation systems, from pack trails to railroads. Larger transportation networks spread through the region rapidly. A stage line was established between Idaho City and the Owyhee mines in 1864. Pack trains were used between Idaho City and Boise City, then stages drove the rest of the way to Silver City. The stage road started near the Oregon Trail near Boise's western bench area, then stretched southwest across the valley to present-day Kuna Butte. The stage then crossed the Snake River at Walter's Ferry in Owyhee County. At least two stage stations developed along the route. One was located ten miles from Boise (Ten Mile Station, later the site of Kuna), and another one five miles further southwest (later called Fifteen Mile Station). Former Territorial Supreme Court judge and *Idaho Statesman* editor Milton Kelly described Ten Mile Station in a news article: "Coming to Boise, it is the last place of changing horses, and the last opportunity for a meal in the desert before...the green paradise on the Boise."

All stage roads leading to Boise were extremely rough. Travelers not only suffered discomfort, but also were threatened by Native American attacks and highway robbers. Natural disaster made travel at times undependable. One 1867 traveler described his trip from Oregon:

After a wearisome journey of fourteen days I arrived at last at [Boise City]. The roads, especially through the Blue Mountains, I found in horrible condition.... Numbers of emigrants and travelers concentrate here, as the Indians on the route thither are reported to be very dangerous. The bridge across Boise River has been carried off by high water, but different ferries are ready for service.¹⁵

Toll and wagon roads spread through Ada County as its population grew. In 1869, Alexander Rossi and A. H. Robie built a toll road from their lumber mill on Schaefer Creek through the Dry Creek community (now the location of the Hidden Springs Development). In the early 1890s, the Eagle community, led by former land surveyor and farmer Thomas Aiken, competed strongly

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with Star for a bridge across the Boise River. Eagle won the vote, and Aiken donated the bridge's right-of-way from his land holdings. The bridge helped small businesses to develop in Eagle.¹⁶

Railroad tracks began supplanting stage lines in the 1880s. The Oregon Short Line (OSL) Railroad reached the old Fifteen-Mile Stage Station in 1883. Railroad officials chose not to lay tracks through Boise City because of its terrain. It was too expensive and difficult to build the line down the bluffs into the city's center. The OSL's tracks were extended to Nampa and the first train began operating on September 25, 1883. From 1883 to 1887, freight wagons from Ten Mile Station transported all supplies to Silver City, Boise City, Idaho City, and Placerville. In 1900, OSL officials renamed the Ten Mile Station Kuna, which they claimed came from Shoshoni tribal language. *Idaho Statesman* editor Milt Kelly called the choice of Kuna for the name of the station as "...the ugliest, nonsensical name that could be picked out for a railway station."¹⁷

In 1887, Boise City was finally connected by rail to Nampa. The Idaho Central Railway Company, incorporated in 1886, laid tracks from Boise to the OSL's line in Nampa. Its first train operated on September 5, 1887. The Idaho Central constructed its first depot on the bench near the present-day Boise Depot location. Known as the "stub line," the Idaho Central merged with the Oregon Short Line in 1889.¹⁸

Railroad construction brought more people of different nationalities to southwestern Idaho. Chinese, Japanese, Greek, and Italian immigrants, as well as African-American emigrants, worked on building the railroad lines in the area. Some stayed here, finding work in local communities or on farms. A few ethnic families rented or bought small parcels of land and began agricultural operations. Because of the nature of land claim settlement, property owned by individuals of the same ethnic group was not often adjacent to each another, thus limiting their ability to form communities based on nationality or race. Exceptions to this rule were the Chinese truck gardens adjacent to Boise, in an area first called Government Island (present-day Garden City). Pioneer farmer Tom Davis hired Chinese to work in his orchards there, and allowed them to live there and sell produce. Chinese families lived there until the 1940s, when the land was sold and subdivided into smaller lots.¹⁹

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The railroads helped Ada County farmers and business owners gain access to larger regional and national markets and suppliers. All types of technological advancements reached new Idaho farms and communities by rail soon after they were being used in other, more established areas of the United States. Consequently, nineteenth-century Idaho towns and rural areas developed in an uneven fashion. The railroad and local businesses provided lumber, bricks, and stone to small-town entrepreneurs. They in turn built substantial edifices on the four corners of Main Street to create the image of an established town, similar to those in the Midwest or East. At the same time, the railroad brought pre-cut lumber for homestead shacks and later for barns, which were erected on lands recently cleared of native sagebrush. The latest style of barn might be constructed on a farm or ranch, but the house often did not have running water.²⁰

Many Ada County farmers continued to wait for water to irrigate their crops, as the fortunes of private canal builders waxed and waned. On the more arid lands in Ada County, homesteaders would have to haul large buckets of water from creeks and reservoirs several miles away. The vagaries of national and international markets and economies slowed development of Ada County agriculture in the late nineteenth century. It would eventually take millions of federal dollars to provide a stable system of water delivery to Ada County farmlands.

Federal Reclamation Projects

In the 1890s, a few small-scale, private irrigation projects expanded their operations. By 1891, the Ridenbaugh Canal stretched across Ada County to the Caldwell area. The Boise Valley Irrigation Ditch Company, which served the Collister area, combined with the Farmers Union Ditch Company in 1894. In 1895, the Idaho Legislature passed a law similar to California's Wright Act, which laid the legal groundwork for the formation of irrigation districts. Local farmers served by the Settlers Canal organized a district in 1896, and eventually bought the water system from John Lemp. The Farmers Union Ditch Company also created a district and extended its canal system westward to Big Gulch, north of Star.²¹

Other major irrigation projects, such as the New York Canal, stagnated during the 1890s. Further private reclamation efforts were attempted, such as construction of a reservoir and canal near the railroad stop of Orchard, located southeast of Boise City. There eastern investors had 2,000 acres cleared for planting a fruit orchard. Nationwide bank panics, as well as litigation over water

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rights, discouraged further mass infusions of private capital into Idaho irrigation schemes.²²

The 1902 establishment of the U. S. Reclamation Service (predecessor of the Bureau of Reclamation) finally delivered the massive capital needed for further irrigated development of the West's semi-arid lands. When the U.S. Reclamation Service began searching for appropriate project sites, the Boise Valley was chosen as one of two possible locations in Idaho. A large association of Boise River Valley water users formed in 1902, and Idaho's state engineer began searching the Upper Boise River for water storage sites. The Boise Valley Irrigation Association was eager and willing to co-operate with any state or federal project that would solve the storage problem. In 1905, the Secretary of the Interior approved funding for the first phases of the Boise Project.²³

Major reservoir development began in the Boise Project area in 1906. Projects included construction of Diversion Dam on the Boise River, southwestward expansion of the New York Canal system, and construction of Deer Flat Reservoir near Caldwell. Anticipating the arrival of irrigation water, Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Teed filed a 200-acre claim in 1904 under the Desert Land Act. Teed's brother-in-law, David R. Hubbard, filed on acreage adjacent to the Teed property. A portion of his claim included lands surrounding the Mora train stop. Hubbard also served on the board of directors of the Boise Valley Irrigation Association. Prior to approval of the Boise Project, Hubbard also signed a contract to create several reservoirs in southern Ada County. The contracting organization was the Idaho Lateral and Canal Company, organized mainly by subscription pledges of prospective water users. The agreement called for Hubbard's company to excavate Painter Lake (later known as Lake Hazel), Hubbard Lake (later Hubbard Reservoir), Kuna Lake, Watkins Lake, Catherine Lake, and Rawson Lake. These would be tied together with connecting laterals. After completion of all but Rawson Lake, the project was dropped for fear of interfering with the larger Boise Project plans. Since they were not being used for water storage, all the "lakes" disappeared in later years, except for Hubbard Reservoir.²⁴

The Kuna townsite had opened in 1907, and the railroad stops of Mora, Pleasant Valley, and Owyhee developed into small communities soon after. When the New York Canal was completed in 1909, it extended westward to Canyon County's Deer Flat Reservoir (present-day Lake Lowell),²⁵ and the sagebrush desert surrounding these communities and other irrigated tracts was slowly turned into green pastures, hay fields, orchards, and row crops. Irrigation completely transformed most of Ada County's landscape in matter of a few decades.

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Valley-wide Public Transportation

Though county-wide irrigation projects lagged in the 1890s, Boise City's population boomed. Hundreds of families emigrated to Boise from Southern California, Oregon, and midwestern states during this decade. In 1890, Boise's population nearly doubled from 2,311 to 4,026 in nine months, and construction of homes and businesses proceeded rapidly. The rest of Ada County did not fare as well as Boise--the capital city accounted for nearly half of Ada County's 8,368 population.²⁶

Following trends in other burgeoning Western cities, a streetcar system to serve Boise's city center and adjacent suburbs was established by 1891. By 1904, Boise developer Walter Pierce developed another streetcar line that extended along present-day State Street and Highway 44, through the towns of Eagle, Star, and Middleton. Several streetcar lines merged in 1907, under the name Boise Valley Traction Company. The company finished a "Loop" connection of several small communities to Boise, including Eagle, Star, Middleton, Caldwell, Nampa, Meridian, and Ustick. Several local entrepreneurs and wealthy professional people who helped start the interurban lines also bought property along its tracks. They platted small towns (such as Ustick, Collister, and McDermott), subdivided three, five, and ten-acre lots to be developed as "country homes" or small agricultural acreages. More people began homesteading bench lands, or bought relinquished homesteads in anticipation of irrigated farming. Eventually these farmers made use of the streetcar lines to transport dairy, poultry, and other farm products to town markets.²⁷

This pattern of development had already occurred in other late 19th- and early 20th-century suburban areas of the United States. The streetcar suburb offered families a taste of "country life," with relatively easy access to urban work centers provided by inexpensive public transportation. This suburban form of "country life" reflected American ideals concerning the virtues of open space, fresh air, and pastoral settings. Cheap land served by the streetcar, railroad, and irrigation systems allowed small family farms and orchards to thrive within reach of urban amenities. The development pattern in the greater Boise River Valley mirrored the early streetcar suburbs of the greater Los Angeles area.²⁸

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Development of Meridian, Eagle, and Star

Railroad and streetcar communities also sprung up along the tracks west of Boise. In 1890, a post office called Hunter (named after the Idaho Central Railroad's superintendent) was established along its tracks nine miles west of Boise City. Two years later, the Hunter post office moved one mile west from original site. By 1896, the little village was renamed Meridian. There were already a few farms and ranches in the area, especially along Five Mile, Ten Mile, and Fifteen Mile creeks. Once the Settlers Canal reached the surrounding farmlands, Meridian's population expanded to 200 people in 1897. That year the town's first creamery, the Consolidated Creamery, was built. As the local orchard industry grew, two large evaporators (fruit dryers) were constructed in and near Meridian by W. K. and O. V. Allen. Dried Italian prunes were mainly produced, because of their popularity as a health food. The Meridian evaporator was constructed in 1902 for \$10,000; a similar plant was located near the Beatty railroad crossing west of town. Spurred by these new industries and the continued expansion of farmlands, Meridian's population reached 500 in 1904.²⁹

By 1891, the Thomas Aikens family had moved from their farm to Eagle, where they owned most of the townsite. Once the bridge was built over the Boise River near Eagle, a small business center formed. At their new town dwelling (which is still extant), the Aikens boarded workers who were constructing the Interurban Railway. Mr. Aikens also constructed a one-room, frame building that served as Eagle's first high school. By 1910 he had commissioned the erection of the Eagle Hotel. The hotel's front room housed what was probably the first real estate office in Eagle. The town's population was composed mainly of working class families and skilled craftsmen, who built modest homes along the Interurban line.³⁰

The Star community began in a manner similar to Eagle. In the late 1860s, several ranches and farms started on the river bottom lands west of Eagle. The 1864 construction of the Pioneer ditch encouraged further development away from the river's edge. One ranch, owned by A. V. Linder, was established 2 and 1/2 miles west of Eagle in 1869. Ben Swalley owned 300 acres of land east of the present site of Star in the 1870s. Area settlers built a country school nearby, and the builder cut out a wooden star and nailed it into its front door. The school became a local landmark, and the small community that developed nearby was named Star. The community had a post office, general store, and hotel by the late 1880s. The townsite was platted in 1903 and incorporated in 1906. With the arrival of the Interurban streetcar line in 1907, the town began to

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establish a business center. The Farmers Bank was started by J. E. and Laura Roberts 1907, with Interurban developer W. E. Pierce as one of its major stockholders. Other stockholders included Boise attorney Frank Martin, A. V. Linder, Ira L. Aiken, and real estate developer Ernest Jullion.³¹

Agricultural Practices and Products

The arrival of the railroad helped Ada County farmers commercialize their operations. Once the rail lines were established, local farmers had access to larger regional and national markets. More small-scale ranchers and farmers began to raise cattle and sheep, as rail service allowed them to easily ship their stock to Portland and Chicago markets. The refrigerated rail car, first introduced in the 1870s, also allowed perishable foods to travel great distances. Modern farm machinery became more easily available to Idaho farmers through rail and freight lines.

Newcomers to the semi-arid West soon found that many traditional farming methods did not adapt well to irrigated agriculture. Many had to change from dryland methods of farming to row crop agriculture, as well as learn what crops grew well in volcanic soils. New Idaho farmers also needed to learn to survey and level their land to get the maximum amount of irrigation water from canals, and found that the construction and care of irrigation ditches required experience and knowledge. The Western system of water rights differed greatly from riparian, or streamside, rights in Midwestern and Eastern States, so farmers had to learn new laws regarding the formation and powers of irrigation districts. Some homesteaders could not adjust to these changes and returned to their native states. Others relinquished their farms and worked as hired hands, or sought other types of occupations. The pioneer farmers who remained eventually learned from hard-earned experience, from other long-time agriculturists in their locale, and from governmental sources of agricultural information.³²

By the 1900s, Idaho farmers and stock raisers had increased access to scientific data and technical assistance regarding agriculture. The University of Idaho, Idaho's only land-grant college, was established in 1892. Through the land-grant colleges, the U. S. Department of Agriculture set up agricultural experiment stations, extension services, and technical information programs. These services became available in every Idaho county. Ada County farmers also had access to a proliferation of agricultural magazines, including the *Idaho Farmer* (later known as the *Idaho Farmer-Stockman*). Local feed, lumber, and implement stores also carried detailed descriptions and blueprints of the latest farm building plans and agricultural equipment for their rural customers.³³

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In the 1890s, the price of land in Ada County varied from \$5 to \$20 an acre. The higher prices were paid if improvements (such as removal of sagebrush and rocks, and construction of ditches) had already been made. It cost two to three dollars per acre to clear the native sagebrush, accomplished by using hand-held “grubbing” hoes or by railroad ties pulled by a team of horses. Because the irrigation systems were not complete, crops that needed minimal cultivation and water were most commonly grown. Timothy grass grew easily, and made a farmer \$8-12 per ton. Clover was harvested twice a season at \$7-10 per ton. Alfalfa could be cut three times at \$6-10 per ton. Other common Ada County crops included wheat, oats, barley, and rye, often grown on dryland farms located in the foothills. Potatoes, onions, beets, turnips, and cabbage were grown with the help of irrigation water.³⁴

Ada County’s orchard industry grew rapidly in the 1890s, due to high fruit prices and rail access to nationwide markets. Following Thomas Davis’ lead, many Idaho farmers planted commercial orchards. One was Lawrence Smitchger, a native of Germany, who started an orchard and poultry ranch seven miles west of Boise in 1898. He put ten acres into Italian prunes, and made more money from the prunes than from his chickens and cows. Several others put their land into plum/prune trees, making it the largest fruit crop in the area. Apples were the second most common fruit crops in southwestern Idaho, and both cider and vinegar factories sprang up near Ustick and Manville’s property.³⁵

In 1907, the Boise and Payette river valleys became the richest fruit-producing areas in Idaho. High prices for fruit from 1907 to 1911 led to heavy speculation in orchard lands throughout Ada County. In 1909, the Avalon Orchard Tracts Company organized southwest of Kuna; their property consisted of 713 acres. Two years later the Nampa Apple Orchard Company incorporated, and its shareholders acquired 240 acres southeast of Kuna. Land directly south of Kuna along present-day School Road was platted as Kuna Orchard Tracts, where three commercial varieties of apples were grown. Large orchards were planted in other areas of southeastern Ada County, including Mora, Pleasant Valley, and Orchard. In 1894, the Idaho Fruit Company had located near Orchard and set out 50,000 prune and other fruit trees. Unfortunately, these areas did not receive enough irrigation water, and their soils were not well suited for fruit growing. Most of these orchards were abandoned or the trees sold for firewood by the early 1920s.³⁶

Idaho’s dairy industry also began to thrive at the turn of the 20th Century. Commercial markets for butter and cheese increased as the population, and better transportation networks, grew. Ada

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County farmers could use both the railroad and the interurban lines to ship their milk to creameries and cheese factories. In addition to the Meridian and Boise operations, other creameries were located in Star, Ustick, Kuna, and eventually McDermott. The Kuna creamery was part of the Avalon Orchards operations, which diversified its agricultural production. The dairy and fruit industries were the mainstays of Ada County's agricultural economy during this time.³⁷

By 1910, Ada County had 1,503 irrigated farms.³⁸ Though dryland wheat production boomed in other areas of the arid West, local farmers could not compete against those who had access to irrigation. Most dryland farmers turned to raising stock and a little alfalfa, and grazed their cattle through a lease arrangement on adjacent public lands. Settlement continued on abandoned homestead lands or on desert lands where irrigation water remained a promise rather than a reality, as Federal reclamation projects continued to dominate Ada County's history in the next decades.

Construction of Arrowrock Dam and the Expansion of Agriculture in Ada County

The Reclamation Service received increased Congressional funding for the Boise Valley Project by 1912. Construction of Arrowrock Dam, the valley's major storage site located on the south fork of the Boise River, was completed by 1916. The \$4,725,000 dam held the record as the highest dam in the world for the next 20 years. Several dignitaries spoke at its dedication, including Mora-area developer David R. Hubbard. Arrowrock Dam's construction laid the keystone for further agricultural development in southwestern Idaho³⁹ and it increased optimism concerning the Ada County's agricultural future. Land developers, farmers, and trade services poured into the county. Several towns grew rapidly in the 1910s. For example, Kuna's population increased from 75 in 1911 to 300 in 1912. Mora, Ten Mile, Pleasant Valley, Owyhee, and Orchard had attracted enough settlers to build schools in each community. Substantial high schools were also constructed at Eagle and Meridian, so that older students no longer had to travel to Boise for secondary education. Smaller agricultural hamlets, such as Dry Creek, continued to send their high-school age children to Boise.⁴⁰

Speculation on and development of agricultural lands increased during the 1910s, sometimes overestimating the delivery capabilities of reclamation projects. Some southern Ada County settlers had to haul water great distances from reservoirs for both agricultural and domestic use.

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Owyhee residents quickly realized that they would not receive water through the Boise Valley project and left. The Owyhee School closed down as early as 1914. Other settlements lasted a little longer, such as Pleasant Valley and Orchard, but they never quite reached the potential that their early promoters claimed they would.⁴¹

Despite these setbacks, southern Idaho's fruit and dairy industries continued to grow rapidly. The state's fruit acreage more than doubled between 1910 and 1912, due to good crop prices. More evaporating factories and packing sheds were constructed, including Meridian's Earl-McBirney Fruit Company in 1918. Ada County dairy farmers formed cooperative businesses to benefit directly from increased markets and prices. In 1913, the Boise Valley Cooperative Creamery started a cheese factory in Meridian with a branch at Eagle. An associated creamery was built in 1917 at the McDermott townsite southwest of Meridian. Poultry producers also formed cooperatives in order get better market prices and railroad shipping rates.⁴²

Several new federal and state laws were passed to support the agricultural industry. Beginning in the late 1890s, farmers pressed for improved road conditions throughout the United States. In 1910, Congress passed the Rural Post Roads Act, providing regular federal subsidies to road building. Low-interest loans became available to farmers from the State Land Board around 1915, and in 1916 the Federal Farm Loan Act was passed to sustain agricultural production. A few farmers could then afford to purchase modern machinery, such as gas-powered light tractors. Most Idaho farmers, however, stuck to horse-drawn equipment until after World War II.⁴³

In 1916, Congressman Addison T. Smith helped pass a bill that included Idaho under the 1909 Enlarged Homestead Law. This law allowed farmers owning less than 320 acres to make additional entry claims on lands non-contiguous to their current holdings. Farmers could then increase their production, which became necessary with the onset of World War One.⁴⁴

One of southwestern Idaho's important agricultural industries started a downturn after 1916. High market prices in previous years led to increased speculation in orchard lands, and an overabundance of fruit trees was planted. The market became saturated, and fruit prices began to fall. Some orchardists were inexperienced in dealing with insect infestations and fruit tree diseases, and did not care for their trees properly. Insects and disease took a heavy toll on southwestern Idaho orchards from 1916 to 1918, along with heavy spring frosts. The *Idaho Farmer* magazine encouraged farmers to start diversifying their production, rather than just raising fruit. Many orchard owners began pulling their trees and planting other crops.⁴⁵

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With the onset of World War I, markets for other agricultural products began to soar. Farmers adjusted their production to meet high wartime demands for meat, leather, wool, and grain. Increased production also affected associated processing industries. In 1918, Herbert Lemp announced plans for organizing a \$1 million meatpacking plant in Boise. Three principal Boise meat packers merged to handle all cattle, hogs, and sheep in Idaho and Eastern Oregon. The war effort and increased agricultural production also caused labor shortages. A few Mexican and Japanese nationals came to work in southern Idaho fields, but the majority of work was done by family members of farm owners. A 1917 survey by the *Idaho Farmer* found that women and high school-age boys and girls were harvesting crops and doing other farm jobs.⁴⁶

Farm women's heavy workload caused many to give up farm life and move to urban areas. In 1920, Florence Ward conducted an USDA farm home survey of 10,000 farms in northern and western states. The survey found that too many hours of hard work and too few hours of leisure were the chief reasons why women were not attracted to farm life. The average workday for farm women equaled 11.3 hours. Only 40% had water in their kitchens (running hot water was even more rare), 50% owned wringer washing machines, and 79% still had kerosene rather than electrical lighting. Over half of farm women did all the gardening, and 81% took care of all poultry flocks.⁴⁷

When the war ended, the artificial market it created disappeared. Prices fell dramatically for grain, cattle, and sheep. Idaho and other agricultural states suffered from an agricultural depression before 1929. Farm prices dropped dramatically in 1922, and Ada County growth slowed. The only stable markets were for dairy and poultry products. Ada County co-operative dairies and creameries began to serve Los Angeles and other urban markets. Poultry raising became a major Idaho industry, and farm women also formed co-operatives to receive better market prices. Many families remembered that cream and egg checks were often the only sources of income during the depression.⁴⁸

Transportation networks changed during the late 1920s. In 1925, the Union Pacific Railroad finally constructed a main line to Boise. Boise citizens paid for its right-of-way, which brought trains directly from Orchard into the capital city. Ridership on the interurban streetcars gradually decreased, as mass-produced automobiles became affordable for more people. By 1928, the Boise Valley Traction Company ceased its operations. A year later, the Boise and Western Railroad Company took over the Traction Company's track lines. Meridian and Star-area

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farmers still needed transportation to nearby markets, so the Boise and Western hauled freight and farm products until the late 1930s.⁴⁹

The Great Depression and World War II

For farmers, the Depression was one long continuum from the 1920s until the 1940s. Drought and grasshopper plagues in the 1930s compounded problems for Midwestern and Far Western agriculturists. Some families simply could not outlast the long-term effects of the depression. Many farms were sold at sheriff's auctions for back taxes or unpaid mortgages. A few who lost or sold their farms bought small acreages near towns and found other work to supplement their income. Some followed guidelines in the 1935 publication *Five Acres and Independence*, and were able to subsist on small plots of land. A few enterprising agriculturists managed to buy or rent repossessed farmlands. Several Basque herders and ranch hands gained their own farmlands in this manner. They took their wages for awhile in breeding stock, then bought relinquished ranches for a bargain price at sheriff's auctions.⁵⁰

Several Depression-era New Deal programs partially revived farming operations and population growth in Ada County. The Farm Credit and Agricultural Adjustment Acts of 1933 helped farmers secure new loans and get better price supports for their crops. The Farm Credit Act also increased funding for rural road improvement and created more jobs for those out of work. Dust Bowl refugees and unemployed Idaho residents sought work through federal relief programs. The Resettlement Administration, established in 1935, also organized new homestead communities and helped poor families buy farms, including in Idaho. The program was replaced by the Farm Security Administration in 1937. Other work relief projects, such as the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA), also proved helpful to agriculture. Both the PWA and WPA programs provided farmers with cheap labor and physical improvements. Workers lined irrigation ditches with concrete, built headgates, laid culverts, and constructed "WPA outhouses" on farmsteads. Little research has been done on how these programs affected Ada County agriculture, but some physical evidence remains on some farmsteads and in original title abstracts of many rural properties.⁵¹

Reclamation projects also provided more water storage and created construction jobs. The 1939 Federal Reclamation Act offered better financial and tenurial conditions to western irrigators, and provided funding for the construction of Idaho's Anderson Ranch Dam and Powerplant. Located

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on the south fork of the Boise River, the dam was intended to increase irrigation, power production, and flood control for southwestern Idaho. Construction began in 1941, but ceased for several years during World War II. The dam and power plant were completed in 1951, at a cost of 26 million dollars.⁵²

World War II brought another boom to agricultural communities throughout the United States. Farmers were called upon to produce more grain, meat, milk, and poultry products. Idaho's fruit industry also rebounded, due to wartime import restrictions on apples from Japan. Trees were planted in new ground, rather than on old orchard sites. Fruit growers found they could not replant in the same area due to high levels of lead arsenate (an early pesticide) in the ground. Despite these problems, fruit prices remained high well into the 1950s.⁵³

As in World War I, farmers and ranchers experienced a labor shortage during the Second World War. Many women and young men were also involved in the war effort, so laborers were brought from other countries. Jamaican and Mexican nationals worked in some Ada County fields, and Japanese American prisoners from the Minidoka Relocation Center, near Hunt, in Jerome County, worked in beet fields throughout southern Idaho and eastern Oregon. In 1946, a few German prisoners of war from Camp Rupert were also used as farm workers in the Boise Valley. Periodic arrival of Mexican migrant workers through the "bracero" program (Public Law 78) continued until 1964. Many Hispanic families subsequently chose to settle permanently throughout southern Idaho.⁵⁴

Post-World War II—Farm Consolidation and Specialization

After World War II, some returning veterans bought farms through various loan programs, such as the 1946 Farm Home Administration and the GI Bill. Agriculture, especially the dairy industry, continued to flourish in Ada County. Milk production soared to meet the needs of the baby booms that followed World War II and the Korean War. With the population explosion came increased demand for all kinds of agricultural products, including fruit, corn, beans, and sugar from beets. The size of individual Ada County farms increased, but the actual numbers of these farms dropped after 1945, due to urban growth and consolidation of agricultural lands.⁵⁵

The trend of farm consolidation expanded during the 1950s, as individual farmers required more acres to make a profit. More cultivated ground required more expensive planting and harvesting equipment, more irrigation water, intensive application of fertilizers to increase crop yields and

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marketability, and increased electrical costs. Electric power became an important part of agricultural expansion, as irrigation pumps pulled water out of the river and from deep wells. Irrigation by electric sprinkler systems started to replace gravity-fed ditches. Farmers followed new market trends and specialized farming increased. Ada County farmers planted large crops of sugar beets, mint, barley, and more recently, lawn sod. Specialized farming required expensive specialized equipment, and agricultural production became highly mechanized. Increased mechanization also meant fewer jobs for family members and hired laborers on the farm. Many grown children left small family operations to pursue more lucrative and less labor-intensive work in towns and cities. Some of Ada County's smaller towns began to shrink as the agricultural population declined. Consolidation of country schools and post offices also changed rural Ada County, for these institutions had often served as cultural and social centers for farmers and small-town residents.⁵⁶

By the 1960s, Boise's city limits expanded as Ada County's population began shifting to urban centers. Small family farms had increasing difficulty competing with larger corporate farms and agribusiness. As the demand for suburban housing in Ada County grew, the amount of agricultural land and properties began to shrink. As early as 1960, former agricultural areas immediately adjacent to Boise were annexed into city limits. The ideal of "country life," however, never completely disappeared. As part of the "Back to the Land Movement" of the 1970s, some people tried once more to live on five acres and raise enough to feed themselves.

The United States Department of Agriculture published technical bulletins similar to Kains' 1935 publication; one was titled *Living on a Few Acres*. Other people followed the anti-urban movement of the time, buying small acreages in the country and raising a few animals. Ada County allowed minimum lots of five acres in rural areas until 1989, when the minimum lot sizes were changed to 10 and 40 acres.⁵⁷

The number of Ada County farms continues to decrease rapidly in the twenty-first century. Over the last several decades, agricultural market prices have decreased for American farmers. Historic farm buildings are being dismantled or abandoned as farming technology changes and farm income decreases. As Ada County's urban communities continue to expand, more agricultural lands adjacent to these cities are quickly turning into residential suburbs and small businesses. Small pockets of historic farmsteads remain, but many are immediately threatened by the destruction of their rural character. The century-old dominance of Ada County's agricultural economy has weakened, but it still plays a vital role in its citizens' cultural heritage.

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F. Associated Property Types

Introduction

Rural areas and small towns of the Far West historically developed in an uneven fashion. Late nineteenth-century frontier settlement occurred as the rest of United States was undergoing industrialization, allowing urban development and rural settlement to occur concurrently. People and resources moved into the region intermittently, often arriving from various points in both the East and the West. New settlers brought their own preconceived notions of how rural communities, farmlands, and ranches should be developed. Settlers were influenced by their former environment and setting, by their own ethnic, religious, and occupational backgrounds, by new technologies, and by the latest trends in building styles and landscape design.

Once emigrant peoples arrived in the West, they had to adapt to the realities of a new environment that did not match their previous experiences. Because of late nineteenth-century laws regarding public land claims, most settlers did not develop traditional ethnic or religious agricultural enclaves, especially in southwestern Idaho. Homesteaders also had to adapt their agricultural methods to fit a semi-arid climate and native soils that would only grow certain types of crops. They initially had to use indigenous materials for buildings and structures, or wait for precut lumber and other building materials to be shipped to them. Building construction and styles were also shaped by the particular expertise of available builders and designers, whose construction traditions and experience varied greatly.

This complex settlement history sparked a diverse architectural heritage in the Far West. Relationships between the kinds of crops and livestock raised, technology, ethnic heritage, and the types of architectural forms and styles used were not always as clear-cut as they often were in Eastern states. Architectural designs, planbook designs, and traditional folk building types can all appear in the same town or on a farmstead, and are often intertwined in the construction of a single building or structure.

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Registration Requirements

The majority of rural Ada County buildings and structures are located on historic farmsteads. Generally, farm and ranch buildings were altered or adapted for other uses as farming practices changed over time. When the use of an agricultural structure or its interior machinery became obsolete, the structure was either dismantled or reworked to fit new technologies. Often the original farmhouse was torn down or altered, while the surrounding outbuildings remained unchanged and intact. Even alterations and additions to farm buildings and houses on a rural site can provide important historical information on changing agricultural practices over time. These changes can evoke different historical periods on the site, and changing technologies within each period.

Rural properties will usually meet registration requirements because of their traditional or vernacular forms, building plans, and materials. Highly stylized buildings are few and far between and are therefore not a registration requirement. In general, buildings and structures on farmsteads should retain a rural setting and the forms, plans, or materials that evoke their period of construction and the rural life of the time. The integrity of their association and feeling is not necessarily significantly diminished by the presence of later or contemporary outbuildings, so long as they display forms, materials and functions similar to their predecessors.

Domestic, financial, and commercial buildings in rural towns should meet the same basic requirements as rural properties. They also should retain a significant amount of stylistic integrity, where style is present. In general, to qualify for registration the buildings must display some of the stylistic features of the time period in which they were constructed. Common styles in Ada County include Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Spanish Revival, Tudor Revival, and Ranch, and early 20th century Commercial architecture. Buildings based on folk and vernacular forms such as log cabins, homestead shacks, I-house and four-square plans, and Minimal Traditional house plans should retain enough of their original form, building plan, or materials to meet registration requirements.

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PROPERTY TYPES

Farms and Ranches

In certain areas of the West, the distinctions between farms and ranches are often blurred. In Ada County agriculturists raised both crops and livestock, and the building types of both ranching and farming were constructed on many individual sites. Usually farms are distinguished by row crop cultivation and limited livestock production, covering an area of 40 to 360 acres. The word "ranch" generally is applied to stock raising operations of horses, cattle, and sheep that can cover hundreds to thousands of acres.

In both first-person and second-hand accounts of Ada County's early agricultural settlement, the word "ranch" was often applied to a multipurpose agricultural site that did not necessarily include extensive range lands. Large orchards were also sometimes called "fruit ranches." A few traditional ranches were located in the county's foothills and southwestern region, but the rest of the agricultural sites were generally blended operations. "Farmer-stockmen" more accurately describes agriculturists in Ada County and other areas of the Far West.

Farmstead/Ranch Site Arrangement

The site arrangement of buildings, structures, and landscape features on a farmstead fall under two subgroups: Domestic and Agricultural. The two subgroups are joined together by a service route leading from a main road to the house and its secondary structures, and to the barn and other outbuildings. The arrangement of these buildings and structures along the service route can be describe in various ways, such as U-shaped, L-shaped, T-shaped, and others. The location and placement of buildings, as well as landscaping features such as trees and ornamental plantings, can also reflect agricultural practices and landscape designs of various historical periods.

Many agricultural sites in Ada County reflect a scattered plan, rather than a specific farmstead arrangement. A few farmsteads, such as those along Ustick Road and Stroebel Lane, reflect influences of "Country Beautiful" landscape designs of the early twentieth century. Curved driveways lined with trees, and ornamental plantings around the house that created a park-like atmosphere marked the "Country Beautiful" movement.

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THE AGRICULTURAL SUBGROUP—ANIMAL FACILITIES

Barns

There have been several attempts to create specific architectural terminology for agricultural buildings and structures in the United States. Most of the terms already developed describe more traditional building types in the East and Midwest, but do not accurately describe rural vernacular architecture of the Far West. This is especially the case for barns, which in Ada County are a mixture of types, functions, and (rarely) ethnic influence. For the purposes of this documentation, barns are categorized in two ways: according to function or use, and according to construction types or forms.

Barns categorized according to function or use are described in the following terms: General (Multipurpose) Barns; Dairy Barns; Stock (Horse, Cattle, and Sheep) Barns; Hay and Feeder Barns; Stables and Stall Barns.

Barns categorized according to construction types or forms include the following: banked construction; basement construction; full monitor or broken gable (sometimes referred to as “crib”) construction; log construction; stone masonry construction; post and beam construction; transverse frame construction; balloon frame construction; light truss or braced rafter construction; pole frame construction; quonset/arch rafter construction; concrete or cinder block construction; and prefabricated, metal frame construction.

Often barns are categorized by ethnic influences, such as English barns, Dutch barns, Swiss-German barns, or Finnish barns. In most cases, the ethnic influence on Ada County barns cannot be definitively documented. The following is a sampler of barn types in Ada County.

General (Multipurpose) Farm Barn

General farm barns were used for a variety of purposes. A few cattle, horses, sheep, and hogs were housed in a single barn, along with hay, grain, and produce. These barns typically appeared on more modest farmsteads, where specialized stock raising and crop production had not yet taken place. Often these barns were retrofitted to house a dairy operation. General farm barns were most common during the time period of 1880 to 1915, but a few were constructed as late as 1945.

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General farm barns were usually rectangular in plan with a gable, broken gable, full monitor, or a shed roof. These one and one-half story buildings had a loft area for hay storage. Construction types and materials used for general farm barns included log, full monitor (sometimes called crib), heavy timber "basilica" (heavy beams mortised and tenoned to form an "H" shape in the central area of the barn), post-and-lintel (lighter-weight sawn lumber framing), balloon frame, and occasionally stone masonry.

Stock Barns

Stock barns were used to house cattle, sheep, or horses. They are rectangular in plan and older stock barns usually have gable or monitor roofs. Stock barns differ from specialized dairy barns in form, with fewer windows, interior pens rather than stanchions, and smaller entryways into the barns, rather than driveways. Cattle and horse barns were commonly one or one and one-half stories, with hay storage in the half-story loft area. Sheep barns are usually small one-story, rectangular buildings topped with either gable or shed roofs.

Dairy Barns

Dairy barns served one particular function: as facilities for milking and feeding dairy cows. Barns built exclusively for dairy cattle became popular after 1910. These specialized barns were historically associated with the rise of the American dairy industry and laws requiring the separation of cattle from other animals for sanitation purposes. A dairy barn can usually be distinguished by a large number of windows on its lateral facades (long sides), poured concrete floors, a cupola or ventilator, and a wide central driveway through the barn lined with individual stanchions (specialized stalls for milking) and mangers (feed troughs). More advanced dairy facilities included side alleys and an air circulation system composed of airshafts and multiple ventilators. Dairy barns built from 1910 to 1940 usually included a large loft area for hay storage, with an external hay door. Some used hay tracks and a rope pulley system running the length of the loft area, with a projecting hood covering the track and hay fork (or sling) outside of the hay door.

Dairy barns were constructed in many different ways with a variety of building materials. Ada County dairy barns often featured several different construction types: banked, basement, post and beam, balloon frame, light truss or braced rafter; pole frame, and quonset/arch rafter with concrete or cinder block side walls. Between 1912 to 1920, the three most common types of construction were post and beam, balloon frame, and light truss construction. Framed roofs varied from gable, to monitor to varieties of light truss construction types such as gambrel or gothic-arched roofs

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The most standardized and popular form of dairy barn was the “Wisconsin” (sometimes referred to as the “Illinois”) plan, used in Idaho between 1910 and 1940. This barn plan was developed by the University of Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station in the early 1900s, and soon spread throughout the United States. The Wisconsin plan featured a gambrel roof and rectangular floor plan with a large central driveway flanked by rows of stanchions. It was the first plan to emphasize the use of a concrete slab floor. The Wisconsin plan also provided increased light and air circulation through the use of multiple windows, airshafts, and ventilators. Manure could be more easily removed by the use of side alleyways and shallow troughs in the floor behind the cows. A few barns had buckets hung on a track system above the side alleyways, into which manure was shoveled and taken outside. The overall design emphasized increased sanitation of the dairy operation.

Other specialized barns developed in relation to the dairy industry. Examples include cow/calf barns (for nursing calves and their mothers), calf barns (for weaning calves), and bull pens (for breeding purposes). These barns were usually constructed on larger, well-financed dairy operations.

By the late 1930s and 1940s, different styles of dairy barns appeared, marking technological changes in the dairy industry. With the advent of milking machines, barns were designed to house a production-line milking operation. One-story, shallow gable-roofed barns called “dairy parlors” and “California flat barns” came into vogue. These buildings were first constructed of wood frame and later poured concrete, concrete block, and cinderblock. The interior plan included an inclined side alleyway where cattle were driven to a few stanchions with no mangers. This change reflected new practices of feeding cows outside with baled hay that need no interior storage. A few cows were milked at one time, and then the next group was brought in for milking. In order to meet the sanitation standards of Grade A milk, some dairy parlors were designed with concrete floors and one-story concrete walls.

Hay and Feeder Barns

Hay barns and feeder barns were used for storage of hay, grain, and corn and as feeding sites for stock animals. Hay barns are usually rectangular, with wood or metal framing and a variety of roof types. The sides of the barn may not be fully enclosed. Most have a wide central driveway for machinery and sometimes have a corn crib built inside of the structure. The crib may have partially slatted exterior walls. The framing is simple, usually consisting of either wood balloon framing or pole framing.

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Feeder barns are designed to provide shelter for stock and fodder during feeding time. They usually are of rectangular or square massing, with extended gable rooflines that provide shelter over the mangers and feeding animals. Sometimes these structures have a simple gable roof on the middle section with false pent roofs extending over the side walls. The barns are usually of post and beam or pole construction, with open side walls leading to the interior feeding troughs.

Stables and Stall Barns

Stables and stall barns (sometimes referred to as “cow sheds”) were modest buildings usually found on small-scale agricultural operations. They are one-story rectangular structures with small side or central alleyways, and a shallow gable or shed roof. The interior section is divided into smaller pens (in the case of stables) or individual stalls (in the case of stall barns, which are primarily used for milking a few cows).

Stables and stall barns are usually balloon framed and covered with horizontal wood boards or board-and-batten siding. Post-1940s stables and stall barns are constructed of poles or prefabricated metal framing. At least one stall barn of stacked basalt (lava rock) rubble walls was located in an Ada County survey.

Ethnic-Influenced Barns

One Ada County barn that appears to be based on a form used by a particular ethnic group is an “English,” or three-bay barn type. The “English” barn is usually timber-framed with mortise-and-tenon joints. Three units of sixteen feet each placed side by side lengthways (also called “bays”) make up its interior plan. The driveway is located through the long side, or lateral façade. Most barns based on the “English” plan have a steep-pitched gable roof and vertical board or board-and-batten siding. This traditional barn plan was used mostly before 1900.

Quonset Huts or Barns

Quonset structures were constructed on or moved to farmsteads after they came into common usage during World War II. These long rectangular buildings feature semi-cylindrical roofs covered metal sheeting, and side walls of wood or metal framing. Large sliding doors are centrally located in each end wall, along with a smaller entryway flanking it on one side. These inexpensive barns had a variety of uses as animal facilities, machine sheds, and feed storage.

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Other Animal Facilities

Poultry Houses

A variety of poultry housing was documented in the Ada County survey: individual shelters, pens, coops, and brooder or laying houses. Individual shelters were simple A-frame buildings used to hold a single bird, such as a turkey. Chicken coops, or “colony houses,” were the most common of poultry facility, and sheltered a small flock. The buildings vary in construction types and materials used. The most common extant style is a wood-framed and sided coop with a semi-monitor roof, which provides increased light exposure and air circulation. Multiple windows and a door were usually located on the coop’s south-facing facade for maximum sun exposure.

Brooder or laying houses were built for larger poultry operations. They were designed to promote increased egg production and to improve sanitation standards. Brooder houses are usually long, rectangular buildings of one or two stories. Construction types and materials included wood frame, and concrete block, or cinderblock construction. “Solar” brooder houses feature a shed roofed building with its south façade covered with a band of long, vertical windows.

Hog Shelters

Individual Shelters—The individual hog house, sometimes referred to as a “cot,” can be built in many forms. The most common type is the A-frame hog house, usually built on skids for easy movement. These individual shelters are useful for sows when they are ready to give birth, and after the birth for nursing their offspring. The A-frame form also prevents the sow from rolling over onto her babies and smothering them.

Secondary Agricultural Structures

Loafing Sheds

“Loafing Sheds” is a colloquial term for animal shelters in the barnyard. The shelter is usually only partially enclosed, either on one or three sides. They are rectangular in form, and covered with a shed roof. The sheds can be of wood frame, post-and-pole, concrete or cinderblock, or stone rubble construction.

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Corrals

Corral is a Spanish term that describes a tightly fenced pen or enclosure. On farmsteads, most corrals are attached to the barn or stable. Freestanding corrals are found at various locations on ranches, and sometimes on farms. In Ada County, corrals are constructed of wood posts and barbed wire, posts and wood poles, metal posts and metal poles or rods, and concrete posts and metal rods.

Feeding/Watering Troughs

Feeding troughs or mangers are found both in the barn and outside in association with a corral. They are usually constructed of wood, concrete, or metal. Watering troughs are constructed of metal or concrete. Deluxe dairy barns sometime had individual drinking troughs for each stall or pen. Water was stored in a cistern inside or close to the barn, and a float system forced the water into the individual troughs.

Loading/Squeeze Chutes

A loading chute is a tightly fenced rampway used for loading cows into a truck from a corral. These chutes are usually constructed of wood posts. A squeeze chute is an individual holding pen constructed of wood posts and metal poles. The poles or posts can be moved, or "squeezed" against an animal for branding or castrating purposes.

Bull Pens

On farms and ranches that include breeding stock, a bull pen is a common feature. These pens are usually tightly fenced; some with concrete poles and metal bars. Sometimes a small, gable-roofed structure is inside the pen, providing a tightly enclosed space for breeding purposes.

Storage Structures

Granaries

Granaries dating before the 1940s are usually of wood frame or cribbed construction. Their main function is to store and protect grain from moisture and vermin. Consequently, the walls of a granary are usually reinforced with exterior framing, tightly cribbed horizontal planks, or tongue-and-groove siding placed horizontally or vertically. The structures can be rectangular, round, or octagonal in form, with gable, shed, or conical roofs. After 1940, circular metal grain

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bins became the dominant type used for storage. Many were ordered through kits or bought already constructed. Some bins had electric fans inside them to help keep the feed dry and mold-free.

Corn Cribs

Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century corn cribs are usually rectangular buildings with horizontally laid lath or slat walls for ventilation. They were often placed on blocks or pilings to prevent rodent infiltration, and the walls are slanted to present a narrower base. The cribs in Ada County usually have a gable roof. Some structures have a central driveway, where corn can be loaded and unloaded into cribs on each side. The driveway also allows for better air circulation. A later invention is the metal corn crib. It is usually a tall, circular structure composed of wire mesh, a metal floor, and a metal roof.

Silos

Silos are tall, narrow structures used to store grain or ensilage. The earliest forms were square in plan and constructed of wood. No square silos were documented in Ada County, but numerous types of cylindrical silos are still standing. The wood cylindrical silos were constructed from 1890 to the 1920s. Wood stave silos were constructed similarly to a wooden barrel, with tight tongue-and-groove vertical siding used for the double walls. A coat of tar or creosote was used to seal the interior wall. Wood silos usually had a wood or concrete slab foundation, a conical shingled roof, and were externally bound by iron cables, hoops, or bands. They were still built after the advent of concrete silos, because they were less costly and the building materials were more readily available. Octagonal silos were wood frame, constructed of cribbed horizontal planks butt-notched at the corners, or vertical or horizontal tongue-and-groove siding.

Poured concrete (sometimes referred to as monolithic concrete) and concrete stave silos were built after 1910, with the advent of technical publications and plans made available through USDA programs, the Portland Cement Company, and vocational agriculture textbooks developed by private publishing companies. Poured concrete silos are constructed with the use of wooden forms three feet high and four to six inches apart, with scaffolding used to hold the form in place. The concrete mixture is poured into the form, allowed to set, then the next layer is poured into another form and scaffolding above the first one. Reinforced iron bars (rebar) or

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iron mesh are sometimes used to reinforce and bind the concrete as it is setting. A slightly later innovation was concrete stave silos, which are constructed from high-quality, pre-formed concrete blocks that interlock when slid together vertically. These silos are reinforced on the exterior by metal cables, hoops, or bands. No forms are required when constructing them. Few concrete-stave silos were constructed in Ada County, but two examples of concrete-stave, double silos used for grain storage are located west of Meridian.

A more recent type of silo is called the "Harvestore." Built of glass fused to sheets of metal, these silos provided greater storage capacity and were considered more durable than previous types. The Harvestore silos were also touted as providing better environmental conditions for grain and silage, but some local farmers quit using them because the silage got too hot.

Trench silos were developed in the 1920s, though few Ada County farmers used them at that time. One located in Ada County had a narrow, concrete-lined trench dug into a hillside, and was topped with a full monitor roof cover with open spaces under its eaves. Bunker silos began to appear in the 1950s in connection with large feedlot operations. They are constructed above ground, with a concrete slab floor and slanted concrete walls.

Ice Houses

Ice houses are a rarity on Ada County rural sites. They are insulated buildings used to store ice for sale or for cooling dairy products, such as milk. The walls would have exterior and interior siding, with hay, straw, or sawdust packed between the two walls. They usually have gable roofs and no windows. One ice house surveyed in Ada County had exterior walls constructed of "Miracle Brick," or preformed concrete blocks that imitate rough-faced stone masonry. The interior walls were composed of vertical wood tongue-and-groove siding.

Milk Houses

These dairy buildings have a variety of uses, including storing milk and veterinary supplies. The milk house also provided a place to wash milk cans and conduct various tests on the milk and its butterfat content. These structures were sometimes attached to the dairy barns. Milk houses are constructed of wood frame, poured concrete, or concrete block. Milk storage required a method for keeping the product cool. Older milk houses often had cold water piped into a trough or tank from a well. More modern milk houses contain refrigerated tanks for milk storage.

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Water Tanks

Water tanks were important structures on semi-arid ranch lands, where there are long distances between watering holes and drought is a possibility. Tanks can be constructed of wood, metal, or concrete.

Other Agricultural Outbuildings and Structures

Machinery/Equipment Shed

Farm machinery and large trucks are often stored in a long, low building with a shed or gable roof. The buildings are of wood frame or metal pole construction, and are usually enclosed on only three sides. Some larger sheds may be fully enclosed and have sliding or hinged doors on the long side. More recent prefabricated "Butler" types of buildings are used for storing machinery.

Pump/Well House

A pump or well house provides an enclosed shelter for the farmstead's water supply. These structures can be one story to less than a half story in height, and are usually wood frame with a gable or shed roof. At least one pump house in Ada County was constructed of basalt rubble masonry.

Smokehouse

Smokehouses are used for smoking and curing meat and fish. They can sometimes be distinguished from other outbuildings by chimneys and vents on the gable walls, and only one or two windows. At least one smokehouse in Ada County was constructed of basalt rubble.

Miscellaneous Sheds (coal sheds, tool sheds, etc.)

Sheds are small outbuildings used for a variety of purposes. On a farmstead, they have historically been used to store tools, wood, coal, or other materials. They often are wood-framed and wood-sided with shed or gable roofs. An unusual outbuilding found in Ada County was constructed of used railroad ties laid horizontally and square-notched at the building's corners. This type of construction is similar to building log structures. Railroad-tie buildings erected from the 1920s to the 1940s have been previously documented on ranches in Paradise Valley, Nevada.

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Hay Derrick

Hay derricks are vernacular structures that became common in the semi-arid West, particularly in Utah and Idaho, around the turn of the century. There are many subtypes of the derrick, representing different construction techniques or plans. Local blacksmith shops sometimes constructed the derricks for farmers. These structures were used to load hay onto wagons and into barn lofts. A large, four-pronged fork (referred to as a "Jackson Fork") or a large sling constructed of leather or rope was attached to a cable. The pole to which the cable was attached could be pivoted to load or unload hay from a wagon or into a barn.

THE DOMESTIC SUBGROUP: DWELLINGS AND OTHER RELATED OUTBUILDINGS

Single Domestic Dwellings

Initial Public Land Claim Dwellings

Settlers who filed claims for public lands under the Homestead Act and other related federal laws were required to construct dwellings on their claims. Most selected to build one of two types of buildings. The earliest type constructed during the Preemption-claim era was a one-room cabin constructed of notched logs. Few of these dwellings are still extant in the Boise Valley.

The second type of structure was a wood-frame dwelling called a "homestead shack" or "prove-up shack." These structures were one-story, one-room dwellings constructed of wood balloon framing, with a gable or rounded roof. Their dimensions were typically ten feet by twelve feet. Sometimes building plans or prefabricated shacks could be purchased or ordered through local lumber companies. These buildings were often incorporated into new, larger buildings as fortunes grew; or, if a new house was built elsewhere on the property, they were relegated to storage or other ancillary purposes.

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Permanent Residences

Permanent residences within the Ada County Historic Sites Survey represent many popular architectural styles, both planbook and architect-designed, from the 1890s to the 1970s. Many houses exhibit classical architectural details mixed with traditional or vernacular plans. As is the case with farm buildings, many of the farmhouses surveyed during this project were altered over time.

In Ada County, the most prevalent architectural styles found in a particular area reflect the period in which settlement occurred. Star was one of the earliest settlements in Ada County, and many of the dwellings in the surrounding area were influenced by the Queen Anne style of architecture. The Queen Anne style was popular in the United States from 1880 until 1910. Features of Queen Anne architecture include a steeply pitched and irregular-shaped roof, patterned shingles, and cutaway bay windows. Modest dwellings influenced by the style are still extant in Star. These houses have decorative details such as decorative shingles, bay windows, and wrap-around porches.

Houses of no particular architectural style, but based on traditional and vernacular plans, were also built in the county from the 1880s to the 1900s. The gable-front-and-wing plan, a house common in the early 1890s, is composed of two wings forming an L-shape. Many of the earliest farm homes in Ada County were constructed as gable-front-and-wing.

Another popular form found throughout Ada County is the one-story cube. This plan consists of a one-story structure with square massing topped with a simple or flared hipped or pyramidal roof. These modest structures were popular from the early 1900s until the 1940s. Construction material used includes wood frame, brick, or stone.

The "I-house" plan is an early folk house form used from the 1870s to the 1900s. An I-house has two stories that are two rooms wide and one room deep. The stories are connected by a central stairway. The front façade is symmetrical, with a central doorway flanked by double-hung sash windows.

The "four-square" plan was also commonly used throughout the county. Four-square dwellings were largely constructed between 1900 and 1910. The four-square house plan consists of two stories of four rooms each, topped with a hipped or pyramidal roof. As the name indicates, the dwellings are almost perfectly square in shape. Construction materials include wood frame, stone, or "Miracle Brick."

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The Colonial Revival style of architecture was popular in Idaho towns from in the first decades of the 20th century. Elements of the style include classical columns, decorative pediments over an accentuated front door, and multi-paned sash windows. There are subtypes of the Colonial Revival, including hipped roof, side gabled, and gambrel roof. The gambrel-roofed subtype is sometimes referred to as “Dutch Colonial.”

From 1910 into the 1930s, the Craftsman style of architecture dominated middle-class residential construction throughout the United States. The rustic Craftsman “bungalow” was popularized in southern California from 1903 to 1909. Identifying features of the Craftsman style include low-pitched gable roofs, unenclosed roof eaves with exposed rafters, triangular knee braces added under the gables, and porches supported by substantial tapered columns. Numerous examples of the style’s subtypes—front-gabled, cross-gabled, side-gabled, and hipped roofs can be found throughout Ada County. A variety of materials was used in their construction, from basalt rubble (native lava rock), brick, concrete, poured-concrete “Miracle Brick,” cobblestones, wood frame, and stucco.

In the 1930s, the Tudor Revival style of architecture became popular in Ada County and other parts of Idaho. Tudor Revival became fashionable nationwide in the 1920s, and reached its height of popularity in the 1930s. Common characteristics of the Tudor Revival style included a steeply pitched roof, usually with a dominant front or cross gable, decorative half-timbering, tall and narrow windows, and massive chimneys. Tudor Revival-style homes were made more affordable to the average person by the use of stucco, and brick and stone veneering.

A few residences influenced by the Spanish Revival style were constructed in the county during the 1930s. Spanish Revival characteristics include red tile roof coverings, low-pitched roofs, stucco walls, with arches above the doorways and windows

During the 1930s and 1940s, housing plans were influenced by both the Great Depression and World War II. The earliest house form to reflect changing tastes was the Minimal Traditional form. These dwellings were low, long, and lacking in ornamental details. Most were built as one-story, side gabled dwellings, with low-pitched roofs and minimal decorative accents.

Examples of the Ranch style or form of architecture can be found throughout Ada County. The Ranch style, like the Craftsman and Spanish Revival styles, originated in California during the late 1940s. The style spread throughout the United States, and by the 1950s and 1960s it became the dominant building type. Identifying features of the Ranch style include asymmetrical

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one-story dwellings with low-pitched roofs and wide eaves. Three roof forms are used: hipped, cross-gabled, and side-gabled. Large picture windows are also a common feature. A private outdoor area or patio is located to the rear of the house. The Ranch style's popularity marked a change in both suburban and country living, with social activities occurring in the back yard instead of the front yard. In some Ranch-style house plans, garages were also moved forward and attached to the side of the house.

Bunkhouses or Tenant Houses

Bunkhouses are usually small, one-room dwellings framed and sided with wood and topped with a gable roof. Tenant houses are usually larger dwellings with a kitchen and bedrooms. Bunkhouses are typically associated with ranching operations, and tenant houses with farms. Hired workers lived in these dwellings.

Secondary Structures

Garages

A garage is a building used for parking and storing automobiles. A few small stables or other outbuildings were sometimes remodeled to serve as garages. Typically, historic garages stored only one automobile. A few structures contained workshop areas. Garages are usually one or one-and-one-half stories, wood framed and sided, with a gable or hipped roof. Swinging or sliding double doors are located at the building's gable end.

Privies

Privies or outhouses were usually constructed of wood. These small buildings have a square or rectangular plan (depending on the number of seats) and are topped with a gable or shed roof. Small holes or vents are located in the walls or door. Many privies were designed to be portable. During the Great Depression, federal New Deal programs such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) put many unemployed people to work building these structures on farms and ranches. A WPA toilet was a deluxe model of privy. A WPA structure has a concrete foundation, a redwood venting system, and sometimes had electrical lighting. In some structures, a rope pulley system attached the door to the toilet seat cover. When the door was opened, the rope pulled the lid to an upright position.

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Gazebos

Gazebos are partially enclosed structures that are usually located on the lawn area or garden adjacent to the main dwelling. They are usually round or octagonal in plan, and are partially enclosed with latticework and a conical roof. Gazebos were used for outdoor dining or entertaining.

Root Cellars

These structures are usually rock- or concrete-lined dugouts attached or adjacent to the main dwelling. A low, wood-frame building or a door covers the entryway to the root cellar. The cellars were used to store fruit, vegetables, and other products that required cool temperatures.

Bomb/Fallout Shelters

During Cold War era of the 1950s, many people in communities and rural areas built shelters for protection during air raid or missile attacks, and against fallout from a nuclear explosion. These concrete-encased underground bunkers were accessible through a door or entryway similar to a root cellar. Some shelters had ventilation pipes projecting from their concrete roofs.

OTHER AGRICULTURE-RELATED PROPERTIES

Granges

The Grange was an important organization for farmers from the mid-19th century throughout most of the 20th century. It kept farmers up-to-date on changing technologies, new ways of farming, and offered a centralized location for social activities. Most grange buildings are rectangular, wood-frame buildings, with a gable or hipped roof. They are usually one story in height and may have a basement.

Warehouses

Agricultural warehouses are usually large buildings located near the railroad tracks. They are used to store many types of agricultural products, such as produce, dairy products, grain, and wool. The warehouses are one-story or multi-story structures with open interior spaces. They can be constructed of wood, concrete, or cinderblock.

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Slaughterhouses

Slaughterhouses are buildings or structures where animals are butchered for food and for animal byproducts. These structures are not usually found on farmsteads, but are associated with the agricultural industry.

OTHER RELATED RURAL ADA COUNTY BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Schools

Most country schools are one-room or two-room buildings, constructed from plans that were disseminated by the state Superintendent of Public Instruction. The majority are modest wood-frame, one-story structures with gable or hipped roofs. A few schools were of more elaborate construction, and were composed of brick, concrete, or stone masonry.

Churches

Most rural churches are based on simple plans with little elaborate ornamentation. A few churches had Gothic Revival elements, such as a bell tower with a spire, and lancet-arched windows. Most country churches have a one-room first story, a half-story attic area and bell tower, and a basement area. They were historically wood frame with horizontal wood siding and had shingled gable roofs. The entryway and bell tower were located at the end of the gable ridge. Additions were put on many historic churches as their membership grew over the years.

Financial Institutions

The financial institutions of rural Ada County consist mainly of small banks. These important community institutions were usually constructed of substantial materials, such as stone, brick, or "Miracle Brick" masonry. An identifying characteristic of early twentieth-century banks was a corner entrance, usually with pediments or other elaborations surrounding the doorway.

Specialty Stores

Numerous specialty stores featuring hardware, dry goods, farm equipment or wagons, and other basic necessities were constructed along the main streets of early Ada County communities. Commercial storefront architecture of the 1920s included a large false front on the building's facade, large display windows, and a recessed entryway

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Hotels

Hotels were also substantial buildings of rural communities, usually located near the town's main street or near the railroad tracks. Like banks and specialty stores, early twentieth-century hotels were usually constructed of stone, brick, or "Miracle Brick" masonry. These buildings often consisted of two or three stories, a false front, and a large central entryway.

Streetcar Depots

Streetcar depots are small structures built to shelter people as they waited to board or after they disembarked from a streetcar. The depots still extant in the Boise Valley are all of similar construction, possibly based on a set of building plans owned by interurban railway companies. These one-story buildings consist of one or two rooms, and are constructed of wood frame with a flared hipped roof.

Bridges

Bridges provide important transportation links for trails, roads, and railroad systems. Early Ada County bridges were constructed of wood beams supported by heavy timbers. Later bridges were constructed of wood and iron, stone masonry, steel beams and rods, and reinforced concrete. Standard plans and materials for bridge designs were available from established bridge manufacturing companies by the late nineteenth century. By the 1910s, the most popular style was the arch bridge, because of its aesthetic appeal and ability to withstand high water flows.

One bridge located in southeastern Ada County was a small, segmental-arch bridge constructed of shaped basalt masonry. Similar types of stone masonry bridges appeared in plans developed by the Department of Interior and Bureau of Public Roads (the present-day Department of Transportation). Plans for arch bridges built of native stone were usually intended for national forest and national park highways constructed during the 1920s and 1930s.

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G.Geographical Data

The politic boundaries of Ada County, Idaho, excepting those properties within the present city limits of Boise and Meridian.

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H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

The multiple-property listing of historic and architectural properties of rural Ada County is based upon surveys of rural properties within the county. These surveys were conducted in 1998, 1999, and 2000, and included outlying towns surrounding the state capital of Boise (with the exception of Meridian). The first phase of reconnaissance-level survey was conducted by the consulting firm of Renewable Technologies, Inc., for the Ada County Historic Preservation Commission. This survey covered northwestern Ada County, including Star and a portion of Eagle. The majority of buildings described in the first phase were domestic dwellings, with associated features mentioned but not described in detail. A few barns were also recorded.

The consulting firm of The Arrowrock Group, Inc., conducted Phases II and III in 1999 and 2000 for the Ada County Historic Preservation Commission. Phase II covered the rest of the buildings within Eagle's city limits and the rural areas surrounding Eagle and Meridian. In the preliminary phase of the Phase II survey, it was determined that the rest of the survey would record significant farm structures and buildings, as well as domestic dwellings. Since this second phase documented more farmsteads than city residences, approximately 90% of the properties surveyed were multiple-feature sites.

Phase III of the survey included the southeastern and southwestern portions of Ada County, including the town of Kuna. Domestic dwellings and commercial structures were surveyed within Kuna city limits, and farmsteads or agricultural-related sites were documented in the outlying areas.

Over 300 residences, farmsteads, and other related structures were recorded in these three phases. The features (buildings and structures) on farms and ranches varied in number from 4 to 25 features per site. In all, approximately 1,000 rural and domestic features were described in the three phases of the Ada County Rural Sites Survey. Properties from vernacular to high style were recorded, with emphasis given to rarity and representativeness of type and style. Those

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sites or properties not recorded were not included because of extensive alterations that damaged their integrity. For each recorded property, their locations were noted on USGS topographical maps; computerized inventory forms were completed; photographs were taken; research into local history sources and Sanborn fire insurance maps was conducted; and narrative architectural and historical descriptions were written.

In conducting the fieldwork the following criteria were used to decide if a site should be surveyed: a primary building at the site that appeared to be fifty years of age or older and located on its original setting; the site as a whole displayed a level of integrity to remain evocative of a historic period and to allow the property to contribute to a potential National Register of Historic Places designation, such as an historic district or multiple-property listing.

The properties fall under two historic contexts that conform with the major themes that best define rural Ada County and its properties: (1) settlement and agricultural development of Ada County, 1860s-1950s; and (2) community development in rural Ada County, 1860s-1950s. The agricultural-related properties and the bridges are organized by type, function, and form. The domestic dwellings are organized chronologically by style, form, or plan.

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