

INVENTORY SHEET FOR GROUP NOMINATIONS: IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BOISE, IDAHO

✓ NOMINATION: (Lava Rock Structures in South Central Idaho TR)

✓ SITE NAME: Lee, J.O., House

SITE NUMBER: 96

✓ LOCATION: 324 ^{5th Ave., E.} ~~Fifth Avenue East~~, Jerome, Idaho

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Ronald Draper
324 Fifth Avenue East
Jerome, ID 83338

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Jerome, 7.5 minutes

ACREAGE: less than one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

This nomination includes the Lee House and the property on which it stands, Lots 15 and 16 and tax 2 of lot 14, Block 22, Jerome Townsite. Legal description on file at Jerome County Courthouse, Jerome, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/703620/4733525

DATE OR PERIOD: 1929

ARCHITECT OR BUILDER: O. J. Lee
Jeremiah Bryant

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: local

CONDITION: excellent, unaltered original site

DESCRIPTION:

This one and one-half story bungalow style house, measuring approximately 40 feet square, has a shingled, lateral, shallow gable roof with wide eaves and exposed rafters. There is a large gable-roofed dormer offset to the right on the front roof. It is balanced by an outset sunroom approximately twenty by eight feet extends beyond the left wall of the house approximately four feet. The sunroom has a low, intersecting gable roof. Another gable-roofed dormer is centered on the back roof. Each dormer has a panel of four windows, each two-over-one-light. A narrow, plain bargeboard is on each gable and on the dormers. The ridges of the roofs and dormers have decorative metal flashing ending in a ball. The one-story rubble walls of closely fitted stones with rounded faces have dark, brushed mortar in the joints, which have been raked out about one inch deep. A plain, wooden molding separates the dark brown shingled gables from the stone walls. Both gable walls have a centered panel of three double-hung windows. The windows in the dormers and the windows in the gable peaks have entablature heads. There is a first-story bay offset to the left of the left wall with a narrow pent gable roof above it. There is a concrete stoop offset to the extreme right of the rear wall of the house, where the rear door is located. A bulkhead entrance to the basement is to the left of the stoop. To the left of the entrance on the right side of the front sunroom is a tapered, square, wooden column on a battered stone pier. There

are nearly flush concrete lintels about eight inches wide above the windows with narrower, sloping, outset lug sills. Decorative nine-pane casement windows partially enclose the sunroom. Double-hung windows placed singly and in pairs have two three, and four panes over one pane. The wood trim on the house is painted white.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Lee house is significant as an example of bungalow style and as an example of craftsmanship in lava rock construction. This house, prominently located on a corner, is a very attractive example of the continued acceptance of the bungalow style in Jerome. Asymmetrical balance is achieved in the design through the dormers and the outset sunroom. The contrasting textures of shingles, wood, and stone are very pleasing. Its attractiveness is enhanced by landscaping on all sides. It has continued to be an admired house in Jerome, as is evidenced by the 1976 headline of a local newspaper story which stated, "Rock House Built in 1928 is One of City's Show Places." The Lee house is one of the last large stone bungalow style houses built in Jerome. The house was started in 1928 by J. O. Lee. He was an engineer who worked on irrigation projects in the Boise area in the early 1910's before he came to Jerome and became a rural mail carrier and bee keeper. He also built the honey house next door (site 84). He shipped a carload of honey to Germany, and, in anticipation of receiving payment for it, started to build this fine home. Payment for the honey was never received, and it took Mrs. Lee many years after Lee's death in 1932 to pay for the house. Mr. Lee laid much of the rock himself but was assisted for ten days by Jeremiah Bryant, Canadian-trained mason from Twin Falls, Idaho. Lee wanted the rock to look as natural as possible, so he picked rock with a naturally weathered surface. No squaring of the rock was done. Bryant also preferred natural faces on stones. The rock was hauled by truck from several locations near town where good ledges appeared in the farm fields. Lee also did the carpentry work on the house. The family moved into the house in September, 1929, before it was completed. They lived on the subfloor for several years. Gradually the woodwork was added and the basement partially finished. In 1934, Mrs. Lee had the upstairs finished into a rental apartment and finished and enclosed the sunroom. In the late 1930's, she had another apartment made of two downstairs bedrooms. After Mrs. Lee's death in 1967, the present owners purchased the house and returned it to a one-family home. This is one of the most outstanding examples of owner-built structures in the survey. It is also the only identified example of Jeremiah Bryant's skilled masonry work within the area of this nomination. (The James Alvis House, Twin Falls County, Idaho, also built by Bryant, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.)

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Lee, Helen. "Rock House Built in 1929 is One of the City's Show Places." North Side News (Jerome), July 1, 1976, section B, page 3.

Lee, Dick, interview with Marian Posey-Ploss, Jerome, Idaho, August 20, 1978.



Lava Rock Structures in South Central Idaho
Lee, O. J., House, site 96

324 Fifth Avenue East
Jerome, Jerome County, Idaho

Photograph by Marian Posey-Ploss
Summer 1981

Negative on file at the Idaho State Historical Society,
Boise, Idaho

View from south

Photograph one of one