

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Vinther and Nelson Cabin

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number T60N, R4W, B.M. Sec. 3, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$, Lot 6,
summer residence lot 21 N/A not for publication

city, town Coolin X vicinity of congressional district First

state Idaho code 016 county Bonner code 017

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
☐ district	☐ public	☒ occupied seasonally	☐ agriculture
☒ building(s)	☐ private	☐ unoccupied	☐ commercial
☐ structure	☒ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☒ private residence
☐ object	☒ in process	☒ yes: restricted	☐ religious
	☐ being considered	☐ yes: unrestricted	☐ scientific
	See Continuation Sheet.	☐ no	☐ transportation
			☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple ownership (see continuation sheet)

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bonner County Courthouse

street & number Box 1009

city, town Sandpoint state Idaho 83864

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Idaho State Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ no

date 1972 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Idaho State Historical Society

city, town Boise state Idaho 83702

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered	☒ original site	
☒ good	☐ ruins	☒ altered	☐ moved	date <u>N/A</u>
☐ fair	☐ unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Vinther and Nelson cabin is the only structure on Eight Mile Island in Priest Lake. The cabin is set among a heavy growth of trees on the eastern point of the island but is still visible from the water. While the island setting is probably much as it was originally, newer summer homes line the opposite shore across the narrow channel which separates the island from the mainland.

The original cabin is a one-story log building approximately twenty-five feet by twenty-nine feet in size. The sill logs are set on round cedar posts, raising the cabin up off the ground. All of the logs in the structure are cedar, a tree which is abundant on the island. The wall logs have been carefully hewn with a broadaxe on both interior and exterior sides, while the upper and lower faces have been left untouched. The logs are joined at the corners with a tenon or log lap notch and the ends are trimmed off flush with the face of the adjoining logs to form a square corner.

The lower walls, from the top of the windows down to the sill log, are chinked with wooden splints. These sections of wood are wedged into the cracks tightly, lying flush with the wall surface. This is done so carefully that it gives the impression of a solid wooden wall. The gables, however, have larger gaps between the logs, which are filled with mortar.

The lopsided gable roof is longer on the west side and thus comes closer to the ground. The roof is supported with round log purlins set on each gable log. Hand-split cedar shakes are laid directly on top of these purlins. Some purlin ends are cut off evenly, flush with the edge of the overhang, while some are still pointed.

Windows in the cabin are of two types. The north and east walls feature pairs of wood-framed casement windows with six panes in each side. There are three evenly spaced pairs on the north side and two pairs on the east side. The west side of the cabin has two groups of three windows each. The middle one of these wooden-framed four-paned windows is set to slide in a groove to provide ventilation. The main door on the north wall is handmade from three vertical boards while the other two doors on the east are commercially made.

According to a drawing made in 1934 by a family member, the original cabin contained a large kitchen and living room on the north side and a smaller dressing room, tool room and open back porch along the south. About 1935, extensive alterations were made to the interior to accommodate the two families who shared the cabin. Apparently the back porch in the southwest corner was enclosed with logs and the interior was then divided in half. The Vintners used the north half while the Nelsons used the south. Each family had a kitchen along the west end and the stoves still share a brick chimney built at that time. There was also a large living/sleeping room for each.

In the mid-1930's, when the interior was changed, other alterations were made in the forty-year old cabin. The rotting floor was replaced, using unpeeled logs to support two-by-six joists. The floors are now covered with either lineoleum or rugs. The

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400–1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500–1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600–1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700–1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☒ 1800–1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☐ 1900–	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates 1897

Builder/Architect L. and Curtis Crenshaw

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Vinther and Nelson cabin is architecturally significant as a good example of an early settlement structure using local materials. Construction details on the cabin are similar to and representative of other log buildings in north Idaho: the tenon notch, one of the most common notches in the area; logs hewn on the interior and exterior, leaving the upper and lower faces rounded; gable roofs; and chinking of wooden splints. The Vinther and Nelson cabin's original character and design can still be discerned. There used to be many of these small cabins dotting the countryside, but most have long since fallen into ruin or have been torn down. Many others have been lost through extensive remodeling or changes. The Vinther and Nelson cabin remains in quite good condition. The Vinther and Nelson cabin is historically significant as the oldest documented building in the Priest Lake area. The late 1880's and early 1890's saw quite an interest in mineral exploration in the Idaho Panhandle. By the 1890's, prospectors were poking around the shores of Priest Lake, including L. and Curtis Crenshaw, who located a mine on May 10, 1897, on Horton's Island. The Crenshaws did not stay around long, however, and sold their claim on January 1, 1898, to W. J. Anders for \$65. Included in this exchange were the log house and outbuildings. Anders remained until February 9, 1900, when he sold the claim and buildings for \$75 to Samuel H. Vinther and Nels M. Nelson. The island retained Anders' name for a number of years after this. Vinther and Nelson were first cousins who had immigrated together to the United States from Denmark at the ages of fifteen and sixteen, respectively. The cabin has remained in the hands of their extended family (now with eighty-two members) for the past eighty-one years.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Priest Lake SE, Idaho

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

UMT References

A

1	1
---	---

5	1	2	0	5
---	---	---	---	---

5	3	8	0	5	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

Only the cabin on Eightmile Island is included.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy Renk, Architectural Historian

organization Idaho State Historical Society date August 18, 1981

street & number 610 North Julia Davis Drive telephone 334-3356

city or town Boise state Idaho 83702

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Merle Wells

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 28, 1982

For HCRRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date 7-21-82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest *Emma Jane Sax*

date 7-16-82

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Vinther and Nelson Cabin

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 3

Page 1

Public Acquisition in process:

When Samuel Vinther and Nels Nelson bought the cabin in 1900, it was part of the Deer Trail Lode mining claim staked out on United States Forest Service property. The partners tried to patent the claim but ultimately failed in this effort and their case was closed in June 1909. The land reverted to Forest Service ownership while the cabin remained in Vinther and Nelson's hands. To secure the use of the property on which the cabin was built, Vinther and Nelson applied for a Special Use Permit. The permit was issued on January 10, 1910, making it the first summer home Special Use Permit in the old Kaniksu National Forest.

In December 1961, the Forest Service cancelled the Vinther and Nelson families' right to use the lot, since the Forest Service wanted the one-acre lot for public use. When the families protested, they were issued a Term Special Use Permit in 1966 which is due to expire on December 31, 1981. At this time, the lot will once and for all revert to the Forest Service. The families will be given six months from the date of termination to remove all their personal belongings, including the cabin, if they wish. If they choose to remove the cabin, it will result in the destruction of the eighty-four-year-old building, which is the oldest and best-documented site in the Priest Lake area. Should the Vinther and Nelson families choose to leave the cabin, it will become the property and responsibility of the U. S. Forest Service. The families are currently appealing their case to the Forest Service.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Vinther and Nelson Cabin

Continuation sheet

Item number 4

Page 1

Mrs. Arthur (Helen) Heigo
3110 Riverview Drive
Spokane, WA 99205

Alvin C. Vinther
2501 S. Browne Street
Spokane, WA 99203

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Vinther and Nelson Cabin

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

1

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

interior walls originally had common building paper over the logs, but this was later covered with knotty pine paneling, probably in the 1930's. The original ceilings remain, featuring hand-hewn log beams overlaid with split cedar shakes, which form the ceiling.

The foundation of the cabin has been improved over the years, which has probably helped to save the building. According to a senior family member, the rotting sill log on the west side was replaced about twenty years ago and the other foundation changes may have been made at the same time.

Old photos, as well as the 1934 drawing, show the windows as smaller double-hung sash. The change to casement was probably made in the 1930's. Apparently, the door on the north side was also cut in at that time to provide outside access to the Vinther kitchen.

Porches have been altered over the years. A 1910 photo shows a shed-roofed porch on the east side. Mr. Vinther relates that in about 1917, Fred Meyer and Ernie Nelson, two family members, added the screened porch on the east side. It is unclear whether or not the original porch was changed in the process. According to the 1934 floor plan, the porch in the southwest corner was open, with a post in the corner to support the roof. This part of the cabin is now filled in with squared logs to match the rest.

In about 1965, members of the family who were spending a long period of time at the cabin during the summer felt the need for more space and added an approximately ten-by-forty-two-foot two-story addition on the south side. This structure is frame, with a gable roof and board-and-batten siding. Windows include two double-hung sashes upstairs, a third downstairs on the south side, a six-paned single sash on the south, and a group of three single-paned aluminum frame windows. The east end has three tall single-paned aluminum frame windows set in a group, while the north side has a large aluminum frame picture window. Access to this addition is through the door on the south wall, through a door off the east porch, or through the Nelson part of the cabin.

While the changes sound extensive, aside from the large addition, they have not altered the exterior appearance of the original cabin. Some changes were made to accommodate two separate families, some to add light, and some to preserve the structure. The original texture and construction remains however, visible and clearly distinguishable from the 1930s and 1965 alterations.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Vinther and Nelson Cabin

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Vinther, Alvin C. Kaniksu and Tales of Priest Lake. n.p., n.p., 1976, pp.3-15.

"Communication to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Idaho Panhandle National Forest regarding Permittee Lot 21, Eight Mile Island, Priest Lake, Idaho;" compiled in 1980 by members of the Vinther and Nelson families, particularly Dr. Robert Sealey and Mrs. Eileen Bach Bech. Contains six-page article by Mrs. Bech, "History of Vinther and Nelson and Eight Mile Island, Priest Lake, Idaho." Copy is on file at the Idaho State Historical Society, Boise.

Documents on file at U.S. Forest Service, Idaho Panhandle National Forest, 1201 Ironwood Drive, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814:

- a) Letter from B. O. M'Connel, Forest Supervisor, Priest River Forest to The Forester, Forest Service, Washington, D.C., February 20, 1906; states that the consensus of opinion is that Vinther and Nelson were trying to patent their claim to obtain a pleasant place to spend their summers.
- b) Letter from James B. Adams, Acting Forester to the Commissioner of the General Land Office, January 27, 1908. Requests that action on Mineral Entry No. 428 be expedited and notes that it is desired to withdraw the land and use it for a ranger station site.
- c) Report on Mining Claim, filed on June 23, 1908 by C. P. Keating, Forest Guard. Lists buildings on claim.
- d) Report on Special-Use Applications by S. T. Bryan, December 29, 1909; recommends granting permit to Vinther and Nelson.
- e) Special-Use Follow-Up, December 9, 1931 by C. B. S. Gives condition of log cabin and other buildings.
- f) Letter from A. C. Vinther to Mr. J. E. Ryan, Forest Supervisor, Sandpoint, Idaho, dated October 15, 1934. Requests permission to remodel and add onto cabin. Includes floor plan of old cabin and one of proposed additions and alterations.
- g) Letter from J. E. Ryan, Forest Supervisor, to Vinther and Nelson, October 22, 1934. Suggests that cabin is in poor condition and not in a proper location so the family should consider building a new cabin.
- h) Letter from Alvin C. Vinther to Mr. J. E. Ryan, Forest Supervisor, November 16, 1934. Claims cabin is in very good condition and requests permission to make other changes.
- i) Letter from J. E. Ryan, Forest Supervisor, to Vinther and Nelson, November 22, 1934. Does not feel condition of cabin justifies expenditures for additions. Says that any interior changes are up to Vinther and Nelson.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Vinther and Nelson Cabin

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Documents on file at U.S. Forest Service, Idaho Panhandle National Forest, 1201
Ironwood Drive, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814 (continued):

- j) Annual Report, Condition of Special Use, dated September 25, 1939
by V. H. Eastman. Gives condition of cabin and other buildings.



Vinther and Nelson Cabin

T60N, R4W, B.M. Sec. 3, NW $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{2}$, Lot 6
summer residence lot 21

Coolin vicinity, Bonner County, Idaho

Photographer: Nancy Renk
1981

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

View from east

Photograph one of one