

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NRHP#: 100005362  
Date Listed: 7/27/2020  
IHSI#: 01-958

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House

other names/site number Star Rooming House; Aguirre, Francisco and Gabina, House; IHSI# 01-958

Name of Multiple Property Listing N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

street & number 512 W Idaho Street  N/A not for publication

city or town | Boise  N/A vicinity

state Idaho code ID county Ada code 001 zip code 83702

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Signature of certifying official/Title: Tricia Canaday, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date \_\_\_\_\_

Idaho State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register

other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
		buildings
		site
		structure
		object
0	0	<b>Total</b>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- HEALTH CARE / clinic
- DOMESTIC / multiple dwelling; hotel
- RECREATION & CULTURE / outdoor recreation
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- COMMERCE/TRADE / business
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- LATE VICTORIAN / Italianate; Queen Anne
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- foundation: STONE; BRICK; CONCRETE
- walls: WOOD / Weatherboard
- roof: OTHER / Asphalt
- other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

#### Summary

The Corilla J. and Orlando Robbins House – also known as both the Star Rooming House and Aguirre House – is located at 512 W. Idaho Street in downtown Boise, Ada County, Idaho (2017 pop. 228,790), just two blocks south of the Idaho Statehouse. It occupies a mid-block parcel on Lot 4 in Block 41 of the Boise City Original Town plat, an area known today as Old Boise. The downtown street grid is situated at an angle and is parallel with the Boise River south of the downtown. As a result, the Robbins House faces southwest toward W. Idaho Street, a one-way thoroughfare that carries traffic northwest. Completed in 1890, the two-story, wood-frame building is a good example of a modestly styled late 19th-century residence that functioned as a boarding house and hotel. It was converted for use as offices in 1973. Today, the former residence functions as a small office building and is one of the oldest extant buildings in Old Boise.

The building contributes to the Old Boise Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. It reflects the late 19th-century Victorian era in its modest Italianate-style, box-like form, near-square plan, shallow hipped roof with bracketed cornice, and tall, rectangular windows. It also reflects the Queen Anne style in its turned porch supports, modest spindlework ornamentation, three-sided bay windows, and decorative front door with multi-colored lights. The building has had a rear gabled wing since it was built. A cross-gable addition was built onto the rear wing in 1987. A masonry wall at the rear of the property is what remains of a fronton (Basque handball court) constructed in 1911.

The building is in excellent condition and retains a good degree of integrity, including its historic design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its historic setting has been somewhat altered with new construction, but this does not detract from its overall integrity. Through its character-defining features, massing, and materials, the building clearly conveys its original function, historic associations, and period of construction.

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### Narrative Description

#### *Location & Setting*

Boise is located on a broad, flat plain along the Boise River in southwest Idaho (figures 1 and 2). The Rocky Mountain foothills rise northeast of Boise and the Owyhee Mountains are to the southwest. Downtown Boise is the civic and cultural center of the capital city. The statehouse and related government office buildings are situated among small- and medium-sized commercial and mixed-use buildings, parking garages, and surface parking lots. Within the downtown is the Old Boise Historic District, the city's most significant concentration of commercial architecture from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This includes the historic Basque Block on Grove Street, which survives as the heart of the Basque cultural and ethnic center in Boise. Old Boise's extant buildings represent a variety of historic functions, including commercial, social, civic, and residential, and reflect an assortment of styles and historical trends spanning more than a century.

The Robbins House is a wood-frame building located on a narrow rectangular parcel among mostly brick and masonry buildings (figure 3). The immediate environs include the imposing brick fire station (1903) at 520 W. Idaho and the associated Fire Station Alarm Building (mid-20th century); a two-story, early 20th century commercial building at 500 W. Idaho; an eclectic brick rowhouses known as the R.Z. Johnson

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Building (1892) at 515 W. Idaho; and a new, multi-story brick building at 505 W. Idaho called the Gibson, named after the historic Gibson Funeral Home that it replaced in 2019.

The Robbins House occupies much of the single lot on which it sits. Small outbuildings associated with the subject property originally lined a rear alleyway that bisects the block, but these buildings were removed and replaced by the fronton in 1911. Only a portion of the fronton survives - a masonry wall built of concrete blocks finished with cement that stands approximately 12' to 15' high. Although no historic photographs of the fronton have been found, the outdoor court had a floor of cement, 27x75 feet, surrounded on the end and one side by masonry walls that stretched 30' high. A roof was later added to the fronton for all-weather use, but this is no longer extant (figures 9, 15 and photo 5). Due to lost integrity, this feature is noncontributing. A flagstone walkway and patio extend along the west side of the building and are enclosed by a masonry wall. A short driveway occupies the area behind the building adjacent to the alley.

### *Exterior*

The two-story, wood-frame building is comprised of three masses: the primary, hipped-roof section that measures approximately 34'-4" x 25'-9"; an historic gable-roof wing that extends approximately 36' from the rear of the primary section; and a non-historic, cross-gable wing at the rear of the property that measures approximately 21'-6" x 34'-6". Together, they form an irregular footprint and massing (figures 4 and 5). The building sits on a foundation that includes a mix of older materials (stone and brick) and later poured concrete sections. The exterior walls are clad in horizontal wood drop siding with corner boards. Each building section has different window types, suggesting it was built in phases: one-over-one wood sash windows are found in the primary section; two-over-one wood-sash windows occupy most of the openings in the historic gable-roof wing; and non-historic, one-over-one vinyl windows are in the rear addition. The roofs are clad in composition shingles; the rear sections have non-historic skylights. There are two chimneys - an internal brick chimney in the hipped-roof section and an external, painted-brick chimney in the historic gable-roof wing.

#### *Hipped-Roof Section*

The primary hipped-roof section is the most character-defining and publicly visible part of the building. It is situated on the south part of the parcel closest to W. Idaho Street. This section features tall, one-over-one wood windows with modest square-edge trim, headers, and sills. The second-story windows are framed by a bracketed cornice.

A two-tiered porch with a shed roof spans the full width of the primary (south) elevation, projecting 6'-3" from the front of the building. The porch features turned-wood support posts and decorative spindlework ornamentation. The first-story porch is encircled by a balustrade with turned wood balusters; the second-story porch is enclosed by a modest wood-plank half-wall. The elevation is composed of three bays: a central door on each story with windows on either side. The first-story entrance has a decorative Queen Anne-style, panel-and-glass door trimmed with stained-glass lights. On either side of the entrance is a one-story, three-sided bay with beadboard paneling above and below the fixed-sash windows. The right (east) bay window is historic and appears in older photos. The left (west) bay window replaced a single one-over-one window in 1986. Above, a central entry opens onto the second-story porch. There is a single one-over-one wood sash window on either side of the door.

The east and west elevations of the primary section mirror one another. Each elevation has four single one-over-one wood sash windows – two on each of the first and second stories. They are positioned at the four corner interior spaces. The second-story windows are framed by a bracketed cornice.

The rear (north) elevation of the primary section includes just two one-over-one wood sash windows, one on each story, located in the west bay. A narrow two-story bay with a hipped roof projects from the center

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of this north elevation and includes first- and second-story entries. The first-story entry is connected to an accessibility ramp (1995), and the second-story entry is attached to a stoop and a spiral staircase. The bay and staircase were installed in 1974. The east half of the elevation is obscured by the gable-roof wing.

### *Rear Sections*

The rear two-thirds of the building is composed of historic and non-historic sections. The historic section, which possibly pre-dates 1890,<sup>1</sup> extends north approximately 36' and features a rectangular plan (figure 6). Its east and west elevations have three bays, each defined by tall, two-over-one windows and an exterior chimney on the west side. Historically, the northernmost bay was a single story (figures 7 through 11), but it became two stories when the rear cross-gable addition was constructed in 1987. These changes are reflected in the windows, with the 1987 addition featuring smaller, one-over-one vinyl sashes.

The non-historic addition extends the building north another 26' and features an L-shaped plan. The north (rear) elevation reflects the cross-gable form and includes two single-bay, unadorned, overhead garage doors made of wood on the first story; one one-over-one vinyl window on the second story; and mechanical ductwork affixed to the exterior wall. The addition's west elevation includes a projecting gable with a hinged, full-glass, double-door entrance on the second story that is accessed by an exterior wood staircase with turned balusters.

### *Interior*

The building exhibits a symmetrical and orderly interior plan (figure 5). The front section has a center-hall plan that is three rooms wide (including corridor) and two rooms deep. The historic rear wing also is typical of its era and is secondary to the main hipped-roof section. The first floor functioned as a kitchen and dining area and served other domestic functions.

### *Hipped-Roof Section*

The first- and second-floor plans of the hipped-roof section generally mirror one another. Both floors have a center, double-loaded corridor that extends the depth of the building, as they did historically. While the interior plan is largely intact modifications have been made to interior features and materials over time. For example, the interior corridors and office spaces have a mix of old and new baseboards and door and window trim. The multi-light office doors are newer replacements. The interior was converted to office spaces in 1974 and was most recently updated in 2005, according to City permit records. (For more, see below – *Change over Time and Integrity*).

Just inside the primary entrance along the east wall is a historic straight-run staircase, with two turned newel posts and turned balusters, that leads up to the second floor. At the base of the staircase is a double-door entry into suite 103, and behind the staircase along the east wall is a single-door entry to suite 104. In the floor in front of the door to suite 104 is a hatch-door that opens to a stair-step ladder leading to the basement. There are single-door entrances to suites 101 and 102 along the west wall of the corridor. Between the doors, the wall has a decorative surface treatment, a newer pressed-metal paneling, that is painted and framed by a baseboard and wainscot cap. All are painted black. The second-floor corridor accesses suites 201 and 202 on the west wall and 203 and 204 on the east wall. A glazed, two-panel door at the front of the building opens to the second-story porch. Opposite this is a four-panel door leading to the exterior spiral staircase.

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<sup>1</sup> The 1888 Sanborn Co. map shows no building on this lot. An 1890 *Bird's Eye View of Boise* (figure 6) depicts the residence before the front, hipped roof section was built.

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The door and window trim pieces in the corridors and throughout the first- and second-floor suites have a molded pilaster finish with bulls-eye corner blocks. The tall baseboards and trim are painted throughout. The trim pieces and baseboards include a mix of new and old material. The first-floor corridor has newer wood flooring beneath which is an older wood-plank flooring, while the second-floor corridor has carpet tiles. Some suites have wood floors and others have carpet tiles.

The full-height basement is located directly below the hipped-roof section. The footprint measures approximately 12' x 34', and it has concrete flooring and walls and a gravel base and drainage system. The basement was constructed in 1987 and was situated inside an existing partial basement.

#### *Rear Sections*

The center corridor of the hipped-roof section leads to a single-loaded corridor in the historic rear wing. The corridor has newer wood floors, non-historic pendant lighting, and two windows and an exterior door along the west wall. The east wall has entrances to restrooms and meeting rooms. The door and window trim pieces in the corridors and throughout the meeting rooms have a molded pilaster finish with bulls-eye corner blocks. The tall baseboards and trim are painted throughout.

The second floor of the rear sections is largely composed of open meeting spaces with minimal partitions and ceilings that conform to the shape of the gable roofs. Skylights illuminate the space. These areas have newer wood floors. The door and window trim pieces and baseboards are square and unadorned.

#### *Change Over Time & Integrity*

The Robbins House has functioned as a residence, clinic, boarding house, or hotel from 1890 to 1973. It was converted for office use in 1973-74, and it continues to function as rented office space. The property's physical change over time is illustrated in five editions of Sanborn maps spanning 63 years (figures 7 through 11), as well as in *Idaho Daily Statesman* newspaper articles and City of Boise permit records. The following information comes from these sources:

- 1890: The *Idaho Daily Statesman* provides the only known source for the building's date of construction. One account recalled many of the buildings erected in Boise in 1890, including: "Ex-Sheriff Robbins' dwelling" on Idaho Street.<sup>2</sup> Another reference tells of a fire "in the residence of Sheriff Rube Robbins on Idaho Street between Fifth and Sixth streets." It said, "The fire originated in the room over the kitchen, from some cause unknown, and its ravages were confined almost exclusively to two rooms in the second floor in the rear of the house. The new part of the house was not touched in the least."<sup>3</sup> This account suggests that the historic rear wing was built *before* the hipped-roof section, which explains what is reflected in the 1890 Birds Eye View of Boise (figure 6).
- 1911: Plans drafted by architect J.W. Smith for a fronton at Antonio Azcuenaga's Iberia Hotel on Ninth Street were reportedly used to build the fronton at José Uberuaga's Star Rooming House, 512 W. Idaho Street. The *Idaho Daily Statesman* reported that each court consisted of "a floor of cement, 27x75 feet, surrounded on the end and one side by walls called 'fronton,' built of concrete blocks and lined with cement, about 50 feet high. At the very top and on the side opposite the side wall is stretched a wire netting to prevent the ball's getting too far away."<sup>4</sup> The new fronton was noted on the 1912 Sanborn map, but it was described as being 30' high (figure 9).

<sup>2</sup> "Boise in 1890," *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Jan. 1, 1891, 8.

<sup>3</sup> "Rah for Chemicals' – The Residence of Sheriff Robbins Damaged," *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Dec. 4, 1890, 1.

<sup>4</sup> "Mystery Is Explained: High Walls, Just Completed, Part of Foreign Game," *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Dec. 7, 1910, 6. This account noted that the court at 512 W. Idaho was not yet completed.

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- 1914: The *Idaho Daily Statesman* reported, “The Basques residing at the Star rooming house are roofing over the handball court in the rear of the boarding house, to make it possible to play their national game in all weather.”<sup>5</sup> The covered fronton appears in the 1949 Sanborn map but is absent from the 1956 map, suggesting it was largely removed by the early 1950s (figures 10 and 11).
- 1951: Contractor R.F. Austing completed a project that involved re-shingling the roof with asbestos shingles, repairing the exterior wood siding, painting, and rebuilding a shed. The shed was described as measuring approximately 10' x 32' with a concrete foundation and floor, pumice block exterior walls, and a “sheet iron roof.” The shed is no longer extant. - City of Boise permit records
- 1955: Contractor T.J. Dunlap completed a small remodeling project that involved applying sheetrock to the kitchen walls. No other clarifying information was noted. - City of Boise permit records
- 1974: New property owner and contractor Lyle Small completed interior renovations according to plans drafted by Thurber Marler Architects, Boise, dated January 1974. The site plan includes a note that the existing rear structures were to be removed as was part of a rear, freestanding wall. The first floor included four rooms to be rented, one in each corner of the main section and accessed by a center corridor. The rear ell included men’s and women’s restrooms and a larger space for rent in the rear section. The second floor included four roughly square spaces in the main section, with a lounge, storage room, and attic space in the rear ell. Changes during this renovation included the installation of an exterior spiral staircase behind the main section, the removal of an interior rear staircase in the rear ell, the removal of some interior partition walls, and the partial frame-in of the second-floor staircase area. The construction documents listed the building’s total floor area as 2,472 sq. ft. - City of Boise permit records
- 1983: Contractor Strite Construction removed and moved interior, non-load-bearing walls to open up space for tenants. No other clarifying information was noted, but it was a relatively small project valued at \$750. - City of Boise permit records, Permit #1013699
- 1986: Contractor Strite Construction installed a new bay window on the primary elevation “to match existing bay window on east side.” The plan was reportedly reviewed by the local historic preservation commission and issued a Certificate of Appropriateness. - City of Boise permit records, Permit # 1024234
- 1987: Contractor Jim Strite, Wood Stove Works, constructed a new basement and a new two-story rear addition, according to plans drafted by architect Billy Ray Strite. The basement addition measured approximately 12' x 34' and consisted of a concrete foundation and walls with a gravel base and drainage system. The new structure was situated inside the existing partial basement located directly below the main section. The new wood-frame addition with a cross-gable roof measured approximately 21'-6" x 34'-6". The exterior roofing, siding, fascia, and trim were built to match the existing materials. The interior remained unfinished. The project brought the total first floor to 2,268.5 sq. ft. and the second floor to 2,145 sq. ft. - City of Boise permit records, Permit # 1024549

<sup>5</sup> “Brief City News – Roof Ball Court,” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Nov. 22, 1914, 10.

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- 1995: Contractor Rogers Home Specialists completed a project to finish the interior of the 1987 addition and was overseen by BRS Architects. An exterior ramp in the courtyard was constructed.  
- City of Boise permit records, Permit # BLD95-1881
- 2005: The permit records do not list a contractor. Trout Architects, Boise, drafted plans to make changes to the interior of the existing building. Work included changes to non-load bearing walls, interior doors, millwork, and finishes. Two restrooms were renovated for accessibility. The first-floor corridor carpet was removed, which exposed the basement hatch. - City of Boise permit records

Although the above-noted changes have affected the property's historic integrity in some ways, it remains a good example of its type and is reflective of its historic function. The construction of a rear addition in 1987 has compatible massing with the historic building and is concentrated at the rear of the property. The other changes to the site and building interior over time are modest and do not detract from the property's ability to convey its historic significance. The building remains in its original location, thus retaining its integrity of location. Although the surrounding blocks have been altered over time by demolition and new construction, its setting retains the character of an early- to mid-20th century commercial district.

Its historic identity – including its original function, historic associations, and period of construction – are clearly conveyed through its retention of character-defining features, as well as its original design, workmanship, and materials. By virtue of its good integrity, the Robbins House continues to convey its historic feelings and associations with the growth and development of Old Boise during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- ETHNIC HERITAGE / European (Basque) (Crit. A)
- SOCIAL HISTORY / Women's History (Crit. B)
- POLITICS / GOVERNMENT (Criterion B)
- ARCHITECTURE (Criterion C)

**Period of Significance**

1890-1973

**Significant Dates**

1890; 1894-1896; ca. 1903, 1911, 1973

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Robbins, Corilla J.

**Cultural Affiliation** (if applicable)

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance for the Robbins House begins in 1890 when completed and placed into service. It includes 1894-1896, when Corilla J. Robbins rose to statewide prominence as a clubwoman and was active in the suffrage movement in Idaho, and the many decades it functioned as a Basque boardinghouse. It ends in 1973 when the last residential tenant moved out and the primary use changed.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The Robbins House, located at 512 W. Idaho Street in Boise, Ada County, Idaho, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of ETHNIC HERITAGE (European Basque), under Criterion B in the areas of both SOCIAL HISTORY (Women's History) and POLITICS/GOVERNMENT, and under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE. Completed in 1890, the building is locally significant in the areas of Social History (Women's History) and Politics/Government as the residence of Corilla J. Robbins, an early Boise resident, active clubwoman, and suffrage leader during the late 19th-century campaign for women's suffrage in Idaho. The building also is locally significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage for its associations with Boise's Basque history during much of the 20th century, when it functioned as the Star Rooming House. As one of the oldest extant buildings in Old Boise, the two-story, wood-frame building is a good example of a modestly styled, Victorian-era residence that functioned as a boarding house and hotel.<sup>6</sup>

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### *Early Settlement*

Boise is situated along the Boise River, a tributary of the Snake River, in southwest Idaho. It occupies the ancestral lands of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, which encompassed vast stretches of land in present-day Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana. Tribes to the north included the Nez Perce, the Coeur d'Alene, and others. An important source of life was the fertile Snake River Valley and its tributaries, which served as an important transportation corridor, not only for native tribes but also for European-American fur traders, missionaries, gold-seekers, and Oregon-bound settlers in the 19th century.

The arrival of gold-seekers and miners in the early 1860s prompted the establishment of Idaho Territory in 1863 and the formation of Fort Boise, a military post along the Boise River. The new fort marked the beginning of Boise City, a small trading post settlement that was platted on July 7, 1863.<sup>7</sup> It was named the county seat when Ada County was created in 1864. The lack of a developed transportation network attracted few to the large, rugged, and arid Idaho Territory, where only 14,999 residents lived in 1870. The first railroad to develop into Idaho Territory was the Utah Northern, a narrow-gauge line built from Ogden to Franklin in 1873-1874. With its continued development and the arrival of the Northern Pacific and Oregon Short Line railroads in the late 1870s and early 1880s, the population doubled. The Oregon Short Line (OSL) and Union Pacific (UP) railroads developed through the Snake River Valley in the 1880s, and a branch line connecting Boise with Nampa was completed in 1893.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Author's Note: This nomination was prepared on behalf of the Idaho State Historical Society as part of Idaho Women 100, an initiative to recognize and celebrate the contributions of women to the story of Idaho on the 100th anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment giving women the right to vote. The Robbins House reflects not only early Boise's residential history and the story of Basque immigrants but also that of Corilla J. Robbins, an early settler, caretaker, and active clubwoman who was involved in the 1895-1896 campaign for women's suffrage in Idaho. This property's history is presented in this nomination through an assortment of archival and web-based primary and secondary sources, including photographs, period newspaper accounts, and carefully selected published histories. The author wishes to thank state historian HannaLore Hein and the staff of the Idaho State Archives for their work in transcribing, compiling, and making accessible online relevant suffrage-related materials, and Patty Miller of the Basque Museum and Cultural Center for her assistance in searching for photographs.

<sup>7</sup> Leonard J. Arrington, *History of Idaho, vol 1*, (Moscow, ID: University of Idaho Press, 1994), 196-197.

<sup>8</sup> Arrington, vol. 1, 313, 322.

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Table 1 – Census Data<sup>9</sup>

Year	Idaho	Ada County
1870	14,999	2,675
1880	32,610	4,674
1890	88,548	8,368

Boise was an established capital city in Ada County, which had 8,368 residents when Idaho became a state in 1890. The original town center, what is now called Old Boise, was a thriving commercial and civic district located in an area roughly bounded by 5th, Capitol, Front, and Bannock streets. By 1893, the area had convenient access to the OSL Railroad, which ran along Front Street, and its passenger depot at 10th and Front Streets. In and around the district were single- and multi-family residences and religious, educational, and social buildings to serve the growing population.

### Property History

In 1871, the City of Boise sold several lots in Block 41 for \$37 to the Episcopal Diocese of Montana, Utah, and Idaho, which subsequently owned it for eighteen years. An 1888 Sanborn map of this block shows a dwelling occupying parts of Lots 5 and 6, but it was removed within a few years. The Diocese sold Lots 4, 5, and 6 for \$1,800 to Thomas and Anna Woodcock in April 1889. The Woodcocks subdivided the property and sold Lot 4 for \$600 to Corilla J. and Orlando (Rube) Robbins in August of that year.

Although it is possible the lot was improved when the Robbinses purchased it, they made significant improvements to the property that resulted in the residence we see today. *Idaho Daily Statesman* pieces published in late 1890 suggest the residence was built in phases. For instance, the earliest-known reference to the residence is this brief announcement in the November 19th *Statesman*: “Lieutenant Governor N. B. Willey is domiciled at Rube Robbins’ new house.”<sup>10</sup> Another *Statesman* piece published a few weeks later reported a fire at the residence: “The fire originated in the room over the kitchen, from some cause unknown, and its ravages were confined almost exclusively to two rooms in the second floor in the rear of the house. The new part of the house was not touched in the least.”<sup>11</sup> This account suggests that the rear, two-story gabled section is older than the hipped-roof section. Adding weight to this version of the construction timeline is an 1890 *Bird’s Eye View of Boise*, which depicts a two-story gabled building on the lot (see above).



Partial image of 1890 Bird’s Eye View of Boise (see figure 6).

By late 1890 the Robbinses were living at 512 W. Idaho Street and using it as a boarding house, a typical property type in this neighborhood at the time. By staying there, Willey, who became governor a short time after his stay, was within close proximity to the old statehouse on Jefferson Street between 6th and 7th Streets.

<sup>9</sup> Richard L. Forstall, compiler and editor, *Population of States and Counties of the United States: 1790 to 1990*, (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Population Division: Washington DC, 1996), 44-5. Accessed Dec. 2, 2019, <https://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/PopulationofStatesandCountiesoftheUnitedStates1790-1990.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> “Personal,” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Nov. 19, 1890, 4.

<sup>11</sup> “‘Rah for Chemicals’ – The Residence of Sheriff Robbins Damaged,” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Dec. 4, 1890, 1.

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The statehouse is depicted on the *Bird's Eye View of Boise*, shown in the lower right corner of the image above.

During their decade of ownership, the Robbinses used the property for other functions. As a caretaker and nurse, Corilla partnered with local doctors to care for patients and used the building as a clinic. In August 1891, the residence was advertised as the Boise Sanitary Home with Dr. George P. Haley in charge. It had been “beautifully fitted up for the accommodation of patients, where they will find large airy rooms well furnished, good board and homelike comforts.”<sup>12</sup> At the same time, it also was advertised as the offices of “Dr. Blakeslee’s Medical and Surgical Institute – for the treatment of chronic and difficult cases.”<sup>13</sup> A local branch of the Ensor Institute, a program for the treatment of addictions to alcohol, morphine, opium, and tobacco, located at the Robbins property in late 1892 and was overseen by Dr. W. D. Springer.<sup>14</sup> Newspaper clippings and city directories suggest none of these medical-related endeavors were based in the residence for very long.

The Robbinses owned the property for a decade, selling it to Ralph P. Quarles for \$3,250 on January 2, 1900. Quarles, a native of Kentucky and early settler of Salmon, Idaho, served on the Idaho Supreme Court from 1897 to 1903.<sup>15</sup> Quarles and his family lived at 224 W. State Street, and it appears he purchased this property as an investment. The 1901-1902 Boise City Directory listed the property as a rooming house with several tenants, including clerks, saddlemakers, a stonecutter, a dressmaker, and a stenographer. The 1903 Sanborn map noted the property as having furnished rooms (figure 8). This was around the time that José and Felipa Uberuaga began operating the property as a boarding house. Quarles sold it for \$6,500 to the Uberuagas on April 28, 1905.

A native of the Basque region of northern Spain and southern France, José Uberuaga arrived in Boise around the turn of the 20th century. He was a sheepman and a carpenter and would come to manage several boarding houses in Boise. His association with this property began a long and significant chapter in its history during which it functioned as a rooming house that catered largely to Basque immigrants. During Martha Trow’s brief ownership from 1916 to 1919, Basque immigrants Francisco (Frank) and Gabina Aguirre began managing the boarding house. They purchased it from her for \$4,000 on June 27, 1919. Frank managed a shoe sales and repair shop in the front, south corner space, which is today’s office suite 103 (figure 5).

The Aguirres owned and managed the property for several decades. The last boarder moved out in 1973. Lyle Small purchased the property to restore and convert it for use as offices in late 1973 and 1974.<sup>16</sup> The property is now owned by 512 Group LLC and continues to function as leased office spaces.

*The Robbins Era (1890-1900)*  
*Criterion B: Social History/Women’s History*  
*Politics/Government*

Corilla and Orlando Robbins owned and lived in the residence at 512 W. Idaho Street during a significant time in Idaho and Boise history. They purchased and improved the property as Idaho Territory transitioned to statehood and as Boise became the capital city. Situated in close proximity to



Orlando Robbins, 1879.  
Source: ISHS Archives, 70-1.10.

<sup>12</sup> “Boise Sanitary Home,” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Aug. 27, 1891, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Advertisement, *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Sept. 30, 1891, 4. This is the first of many advertisements that appeared through February 1892.

<sup>14</sup> “Local Brevities,” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Nov. 17, 1891, 8.

<sup>15</sup> “Lemhi Pioneer Crosses Divide,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Nov. 27, 1921, 2.

<sup>16</sup> City of Boise permit files; “Boise Businessman Promotes Restoration of ‘Star Rooming House,’” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Oct. 10, 1973, 4B; “Public Open House Set at Star Rooms,” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Nov. 22, 1973, 15.

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the statehouse, railroad depot, and business district, this property and the Robbinses were in the center of activity during these formative years.

The Robbinses were married almost seven years when they purchased the property in 1889. Both were married before and had lived in the Idaho Territory for many years, counting themselves among the earliest waves of permanent European-American settlers. Orlando (1836-1908) began his long career in law enforcement as a young deputy sheriff in Boise County in the early 1860s. He subsequently served as a Deputy U.S. Marshal in the Idaho Territory, Ada County sheriff, a member of the Idaho Territorial Legislature, as warden of the Idaho State Penitentiary, as a traveling guard, and as a scout during the U.S. Government's war with American Indians, including the Nez Perce and Bannock Tribes. Orlando was a well-known lawman when he married the widowed Corilla J. Brassfield (1842-1926) on December 9, 1882.<sup>17</sup>

A native of rural Iowa, Corilla married fellow Iowan and Civil War veteran Tolman Brassfield in December 1864. They lived first in Iowa and then in Kansas, from 1872 to 1877, before migrating west in the late-1870s with their four children Lillie, Frank, Jared, and Allie. Their son Walter was born in 1879 in Boise and died there in 1881. Tolman died in 1880, leaving 40-year-old Corilla to raise their children. She remained in Boise and was working as a seamstress and caregiver when she married Orlando Robbins.<sup>18</sup>

The Robbinses were active in Boise social and political circles. In addition to his service as a territorial legislator and lawman, Orlando was a member of the International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF). But it was Corilla who rose to prominence as a clubwoman and suffragist. Both her social standing and her work as a caretaker and nurse aligned her with the interests of other clubwomen in 1880s and 1890s Boise, who were focused on social causes involving literacy, children's welfare, and health and hygiene. She was a charter member, officer, and longtime participant in the Unity Lodge No. 8 of the Daughters of Rebekah, a service organization affiliated with the IOOF, which organized on June 3, 1889, with 21 members.<sup>19</sup> Corilla participated in the statewide organization of lodges, the Rebekah Assembly of Idaho, which organized in 1892. She served as vice president of the Assembly in 1894 and was elected president in October 1894.<sup>20</sup> The slate of officers with whom she served during her term as president included a young Minnie Priest Dunton of Idaho City (and later of Boise), who herself would rise to prominence in social, civic, and political circles.<sup>21</sup>



Corilla J. Robbins, ca. 1890.  
Source: IDS, Jan. 22, 1911, 7.

Corilla's statewide leadership in the Rebekah organization coincided with an effort to organize support for women's suffrage in Idaho, and there was considerable overlap in ideas and membership between the club and suffrage organizations. Suffrage campaigners in Idaho were "predominantly white society women, with alliances between elite activist women, LDS [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints] members, and key male allies."<sup>22</sup> Literary, civic, and social clubs provided women leadership training and a forum for suffrage

<sup>17</sup> "Another Pioneer Gone Beyond," *Idaho Daily Statesman*, May 2, 1908, 5; Arrington, *History of Idaho*, vol. 1, (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1990), 248. "United States Census, 1880," database and "Idaho, County Marriages, 1864-1950," database. *FamilySearch*, <http://FamilySearch.org>, accessed Oct. 29, 2019; for more on Orlando Robbins, see Linda Hopfenbeck, *Lawmen: The History of Idaho Sheriffs, 1863-2000*, (Boise, ID: Idaho Sheriff's Association, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> "Kansas State Census, 1875," database and "United States Census, 1880," database. *FamilySearch*. <https://FamilySearch.org>, accessed Oct. 29, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> "Secret Societies," *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Jan. 22, 1911, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Corilla Robbins was the third woman to serve as president of the Assembly. Only Alwida Smith and Addie Leonard preceded her as president.

<sup>21</sup> The Idaho State Archives includes a collection of Dunton's papers related to her civic, social, and personal life. Her residence at 906 Hays Street, Boise, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 for its architectural significance.

<sup>22</sup> Rebecca Scofield and Katherine G. Aiken, "Balancing Act: Idaho's Campaign for Women's Suffrage," *Western Legal History: The Journal of the Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society* 30, no. 1-2 (2019): 34.

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activism, and that “club and suffrage organizations frequently found common cause with other groups, such as the WCTU [Women’s Christian Temperance Union], to form the backbone of the suffrage movement.”<sup>23</sup>

While women’s suffrage was debated during the leadup to statehood at the Idaho Constitutional Convention in 1889, there was not a single suffrage organization with a united message that was dedicated to advancing the cause.<sup>24</sup> Women’s suffrage failed to gain the support needed at the convention and was left out of the constitution at statehood in 1890. Nevertheless, suffrage remained a topic of discussion in Idaho political circles.<sup>25</sup> It wasn’t until *after* the Idaho Legislature voted in 1895 to include a women’s suffrage constitutional amendment on the statewide ballot for the November 1896 election that suffrage organizations formed to mount a singular campaign.<sup>26</sup>

With the focused support of national and regional suffrage leaders like Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, and Elizabeth Smith DeVoe, approximately 100 delegates to the Idaho Equal Suffrage Association met on November 20, 1895, to adopt a constitution, elect state officers, and select provisional county presidents.<sup>27</sup> Although Robbins’ name does not appear in the accounts and minutes of the organizing meeting, she was eventually selected to serve as president of the Ada County Suffrage Association and was active in the Boise Equal Suffrage Association (BESA), which formed on June 2, 1896.<sup>28</sup>

The BESA met several times in June 1896 to share ideas and to plan activities, including a “Woman’s Edition” of the *Idaho Daily Statesman* to be published on June 20 and a statewide meeting of suffragists in early July. The June 23 meeting minutes record Robbins as presenting an “excellent” paper that was “received with applause,” although no detail is given as to her remarks. At the June 6 meeting, Robbins seconded a motion to invite Laura Johns, president of the Kansas State Equal Suffrage Association and field organizer of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), to make a public speech at the July convention.<sup>29</sup> Johns accepted the request.<sup>30</sup>



MRS. C. J. ROBBINS.  
[President Ada County (Idaho) Suffrage Association.]  
Source: *Chicago (IL) Tribune*, Dec. 26, 1896, 16.

At the July convention, the suffrage organizations voted to invite Carrie Chapman Catt of the NAWSA “to pay Idaho a visit during the summer to assist us in the interest of equal suffrage in our state.”<sup>31</sup> Catt accepted the invitation and played a critical role as speaker and organizer during her visit to Boise in August 1896.<sup>32</sup> She

<sup>23</sup> Sandra Haarsager, *Organized Womanhood: Cultural Politics in the Pacific Northwest, 1840-1920*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 267.

<sup>24</sup> Indeed, two diverging voices were heard at the Idaho Constitutional Convention. The first was that of WCTU president Henrietta Skelton, whose real priority was Prohibition, argued that women were “the weaker vessels,” but “urged them to give women the vote so that they could ‘protect our homes.’” The second was that of Abigail Scott Duniway who invoked the language of early-day patriots, such as “government by consent of the governed” and “no taxation without representation,” in pursuit of liberty and justice for all, not just women. Scofield and Aiken, 36-37.

<sup>25</sup> T. A. Larson, “Woman’s Rights in Idaho,” *Idaho Yesterdays* 16 (Spring 1972): 9.

<sup>26</sup> Sociologist Holly J. McCammon offers excellent statistical analysis on factors leading to statewide suffrage organizing across the country. She concluded that, “In the West, both the WCTU and other women’s organizations helped ignite suffrage organizing... The national movement itself...fueled statewide mobilization.” Holly J. McCammon, “Stirring up Suffrage Sentiment: The Formation of the State Woman Suffrage Organizations, 1866-1914,” *Social Forces* 80, No. 2 (Dec. 2001): 458, 467.

<sup>27</sup> Abigail Scott Duniway had hoped to lead a statewide organization effort in Idaho, but her husband’s poor health and an order from Susan B. Anthony to step away combined to keep her from doing so. Scofield and Aiken, 38; “For Equal Suffrage,” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Nov. 20, 1895, 3; “Suffrage Organization,” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Nov. 21, 1895, 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Minutes of First State Suffrage Association Organization, Boise, Idaho, Nov. 20, 1895*, Idaho State Archives (MS2.100), and *Minutes of Boise Equal Suffrage Association (B.E.S.A.), Boise, Idaho, 1896*. Idaho State Archives (MS2.1364). Both transcribed by Bertha Barton, 2018-19. Accessed Dec. 20, 2019, <https://www.idahowomen100.com/toolkit>

<sup>29</sup> *Minutes of Boise Equal Suffrage Association (B.E.S.A.), Boise, Idaho, 1896*.

<sup>30</sup> “Suffrage Organization,” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, July 4, 1896, 3.

<sup>31</sup> “Suffrage Meeting Ends,” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, July 4, 1896, 3.

<sup>32</sup> G. Thomas Edwards, *Sowing Good Seeds: The Northwest Suffrage Campaigns of Susan B. Anthony* (Portland, Or.: Oregon

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gave numerous talks and speeches, including addresses to the conventions of the Republican, Democratic, Populist, and Silver Republican political parties.<sup>33</sup> The highlight of her visit was a packed-house event on August 17, 1896, at the Sonna Opera House during which she spoke passionately and convincingly for an hour-and-a-half in support of equal suffrage. Seated on the platform with Catt were a who's who of Idaho suffragists and their husbands, including "Major and Mrs. Wood, Mr. and Mrs. H.W. Dunton, of Idaho City; Mr. and Mrs. D.L. Bradley, of Meridian; James A. McGee, of Nampa, Mrs. Robbins, Mrs. Whitman, Mrs. Johns, Mrs. Athey and others."<sup>34</sup>

The Idaho equal suffrage campaign of 1896 was a success. On November 3, 1896, 65.9 percent of voters approved the Idaho Women's Right to Suffrage Amendment, making Idaho the fourth state in the Union where women could vote, behind Wyoming (1869), Colorado (1893), and Utah (1896). Women in the western U.S. won the right to vote before their peers in other parts of the country. While credit is due to many individuals and organizations for Idaho's successful grassroots campaign, it was the women leaders of the literary, social, and civic clubs in Idaho that united around the issue of suffrage to push it to final passage.<sup>35</sup>

A recent article by historians Rebecca Scofield and Katherine Aiken shines a light on the many Idaho women who contributed to the statewide suffrage campaign.<sup>36</sup> Although Corilla Robbins' name is not among those mentioned, surviving records show she was a leading Boise clubwoman involved in the suffrage cause in Idaho. Her roles as president of the Ada County Equal Suffrage Association and as a member of the BESA, as well as her term as president of the Rebekah Assembly of Idaho, overlap with the years she is associated with the residence at 512 W. Idaho Street. It is possible she may have hosted meetings and activities related to her work on behalf of these organizations, but no sources have been found to confirm this.

Although research uncovered no additional links between Robbins and the women's suffrage movement following the November 1896 vote, she remained an active clubwoman and member of the Boise community well into the 20th century. In late 1896 and early 1897 she took in several homeless and orphaned boys who were part of a local training school run by F. B. Steinberger.<sup>37</sup> Even after selling the property and briefly relocating to Portland, Oregon, in 1900, she returned to campaign with the Assembly of Idaho Rebekahs to lobby the IOOF for control of the apparently struggling Idaho Odd Fellows Home. Alongside Assembly president and fellow suffragist Minnie Priest Dunton, Robbins spoke in favor of ceding control of the home to the Rebekahs, which they won.<sup>38</sup> Following Orlando's death in 1908, Corilla lived the remainder of her life and worked as a caretaker at their residence on Warm Springs Avenue.<sup>39</sup> Following her death in December 1926, the *Idaho Daily Statesman* ran a remembrance of her under the headline "Early Suffrage Worker and Rebekah Organizer, Dies."<sup>40</sup>

*The Basque Boarding House Era (ca. 1903-1973)*  
*Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage (European / Basque)*

The Robbins residence entered its long run as a boarding house that catered to Basque-American immigrants when José and Felipa Uberuaga opened the Star Rooming House in about 1903. At first glance, this transition in ownership – from early-day society types to immigrant shepherd and hotel keeper – seems jarring.

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Historical Society Press, 1990), 180.

<sup>33</sup> Scofield and Aiken, 38.

<sup>34</sup> "For Equal Suffrage," *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Aug. 18, 1896, 3.

<sup>35</sup> Haarsager, 260-261.

<sup>36</sup> Scofield and Aiken, 39-41.

<sup>37</sup> "Boys Training School," *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Jul. 16, 1896, 3; "Mrs. Robbins Volunteers to Take Charge Temporarily," *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Dec. 21, 1896, 4.

<sup>38</sup> "Rebekahs in Charge of Home," *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Oct. 18, 1901, 5.

<sup>39</sup> Boise City Directories, newspaper accounts, and U.S. Census records give various addresses, including 219 and 229 Warm Springs Avenue.

<sup>40</sup> "Early Suffrage Worker and Rebekah Organizer, Dies," *Idaho Statesman*, Jan. 16, 1927, 18.

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However, this transition reflects the evolution taking place in Old Boise in the early 20th century, where Basques, Chinese, and other minorities lived and worked.

According to the Pedro Anchustegui Pelota Court National Register Nomination, “The majority of Basques came to Idaho between 1890-1925. Concentrating in the Boise-Mountain Home area these people initially found employment as sheep herders. When not tending the flocks the men came to town and lived in Basque boarding houses, as almost all of them had left their families in Europe. Coming from a rural, tight community, large family heritage, the Basques found the boarding house to be an excellent transitional institution which softened their adjustment to an otherwise foreign environment.”<sup>41</sup>

Boarding and rooming houses, along with hotels, were a fixture in Basque-American communities, providing room and board for new immigrants as well as for young male immigrants who worked seasonally in the sheep industry. They also provided a place of employment for young immigrant and first-generation Basque women, many who met their future husbands there. In addition, boarding houses provided social contacts and entertainment in the form of dancing, games, and music. The network of boarding houses throughout the American West and those who managed them “were critical to the immigration story of the Basques, especially during the peak years of immigration, 1890-1930.”<sup>42</sup>

The Basque homeland is in northern Spain and southern France, and large numbers immigrated to the Americas during the 19th and 20th centuries. The California gold rush first attracted Basque immigrants, mostly men, to the American West, where they found employment in mines and quarries and on ranches. They were drawn to southwest Idaho by the ideal sheep-grazing land in the Owyhees and the Great Basin, and many found their way to Boise. Their numbers remained low – the 1891 Boise City Directory “listed only 35 Basque surnames in a population of 4,400,” – until after the turn of the century and especially after 1920. During the 20th century, “the eight decades of Basque hotel keeping in Boise that ended in 1978 generated one of the most popular and visible Basque communities in the American West.”<sup>43</sup> Serious decline in the sheep industry between World War I and the Great Depression, combined with legislation such as the 1934 Taylor Grazing Act which limited itinerant sheep herding and access to public lands, significantly impacted Basque workers who did not own their own property. As a result, many seasonal sheep herders sought new work and permanent housing as Basques continued to integrate into the larger community.<sup>44</sup>



Star Rooming House, 1970s. See figure 12.  
Source: Basque Museum and Cultural Center Collection.

The Star Rooming House was among Boise’s earliest and longest-tenured Basque boarding houses. In about 1903, the newly married Uberuagas began operating the boarding house. José (1868-1942) had immigrated to the U.S. in the late 1880s, settling first in Nevada before making his way to Boise in the 1890s. Felipa (1884-1967) immigrated in 1900, shortly after her marriage to José in Spain.<sup>45</sup> They lived at the Star for at least a few years, according to the Boise City Directories, and

<sup>41</sup> Don Hibbard, National Register of Historic Places Form, “Pedro Anchustegui Pelota Court”, Boise: Idaho State Historical Society, 1977.

<sup>42</sup> Jeronima Echeverria, *Home Away from Home: A History of Basque Boardinghouses*, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1999), 1, 7-8, 226-227.

<sup>43</sup> Echeverria, 166-167.

<sup>44</sup> Madeline Buckendorf, National Register of Historic Places Form, “The Rialto Hotel”, Caldwell: Madeline Buckendorf Consulting LLC, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> “Succumbs [José Uberuaga obituary],” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Feb. 11, 1942, 2; “Regional Obituaries: Mrs. Felipia [sic] Uberuaga,” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, Jan. 29, 1967, 2-D.

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purchased the property from Ralph P. Quarles in 1905. They built a Basque handball court (fronton) behind the residence in 1911 and added a canopy in 1914. It was one of only a few frontons in Boise at the time, and it pre-dated the well-known fronton inside the Anduiza Hotel at 619 Grove Street.<sup>46</sup> Although only a portion of the Star's original fronton remains, it is the only surviving outdoor fronton in Boise.

The Uberuagas sold the property to Martha Trow in 1916 during which time Basque immigrants Francisco (Frank) and Gabina Aguirre managed the boarding house. They purchased the property from Trow in 1919. It remained the Star Rooming House, but it also was known as the Aguirre House. Frank (1878-1975), whose nickname was Zapatero (Spanish for shoemaker or cobbler), ran a shoe sales and repair shop in the front, south corner space of the building. Gabina (1890-1990) managed the often-grueling daily operations of the boarding house. To help her with the work and care for her young children, she requested her fifteen-year-old niece, Lucy Aboitiz Garatea, leave Spain for Boise. She arrived in 1920, and many years later, Garatea recalled the grueling work and that both she and her aunt suffered "bleeding knuckles from cleaning clothes by hand using washboards, sore backs from long hours of work, and 'housemaid's knees' from crawling on their hands and knees while polishing floors."<sup>47</sup> Garatea later ran the Plaza Hotel in Burns, Oregon. The Aguirres managed the boarding house and lived in the residence at 512 W. Idaho until the early 1970s. The last tenant moved out of the Star in 1973 and the Basque boarding house-era in Boise drew to a close.

#### *Property Type and Architecture (Criterion C)* *Victorian-era Boarding House*

Boarding houses were found in most American cities in the late 19th century, and they ranged from substantial, purpose-built buildings to modest private homes with rented rooms. Boarding houses typically provided tenants small, minimally furnished, single rooms, with meals that were provided in a communal dining area. Rooms usually featured little more than a place to sleep, and restrooms were shared among tenants.

Buildings functioning as boarding houses often reflected popular architectural trends and styles from the period in which they were built. The Robbins House was no different. Completed in 1890, it reflects the late 19th-century Victorian era in its modest Italianate-style, box-like form, near-square plan, shallow hipped roof with bracketed cornice, and tall, rectangular windows. The Queen Anne style is evident in its turned porch supports, modest spindlework ornamentation, three-sided bay windows, and decorative front door with multi-colored lights. The rear gabled wing served as a kitchen and dining area.<sup>48</sup>

While not a high-style building, the Robbins House is significant as a rare surviving and intact example of a modestly styled, Victorian-era boarding house in Boise. Through its good integrity and character-defining features, the building clearly conveys the era in which it was constructed.

#### *Summary*

The Robbins House is an important surviving remnant of 19th-century Old Boise, when optimism about the city's future growth was high. Completed in 1890, the residence reflects the city's transition from a small trading post settlement into a thriving capital city. Its rich history includes themes relating to local and state politics, Basque-American settlement history, and a recurring theme of strong, resilient women caretakers that began with Corilla J. Robbins and continued through Felipa Uberuaga and Gabina Aguirre and her niece Lucy Garatea.

<sup>46</sup> The Anduiza Hotel was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

<sup>47</sup> Echeverria, 227. Echeverria personally interviewed Garatea in Boise, Idaho, on March 22, 1989. Her story also has been recorded and retold by the Basque Museum and Cultural Center, Boise. A lengthy account of her life can be found online at: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/61726139/luciana-celestina-garatea>

<sup>48</sup> Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 2014), 283-302 and 345-370; Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular: Buildings and Interiors 1870-1960*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 2009), 167-175.

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The property retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Thus, it clearly communicates its architectural character and significant historic associations with Corilla J. Robbins (Criterion B), Boise's Basque-American heritage (Criterion A), and as rare surviving boarding house architecture in Boise (Criterion C).

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"'Rah for Chemicals' – The Residence of Sheriff Robbins Damaged," 4 December 1890.

"Boise in 1890," 1 January 1891.

"Boise Sanitary Home," 27 August 1891.

Advertisement, 30 September 1891.

"Local Brevities," 17 November 1891.

"For Equal Suffrage," 20 November 1895.

"Suffrage Organization," 21 November 1895.

"Suffrage Organization," 4 July 1896.

"For Equal Suffrage," 18 August 1896.

Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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- "Boys Training School," 16 July 1896.
- "Mrs. Robbins Volunteers to Take Charge Temporarily," 21 December 1896.
- "Rebekahs in Charge of Home," 18 October 1901.
- "Another Pioneer Gone Beyond," 2 May 1908.
- "Mystery Is Explained: High Walls, Just Completed, Part of Foreign Game," 7 December 1910.
- "Secret Societies," 22 January 1911.
- "Brief City News – Roof Ball Court," 22 November 1914.
- "Lemhi Pioneer Crosses Divide," 27 November, 1921.
- "Early Suffrage Worker and Rebekah Organizer, Dies," 16 January 1927..
- "Succumbs [José Uberuaga obituary]," 11 February 1942.
- "Regional Obituaries: Mrs. Felipia [sic] Uberuaga," 29 January 1967.
- "Boise Businessman Promotes Restoration of 'Star Rooming House,'" 10 October 1973.
- "Public Open House Set at Star Rooms," 22 November 1973.

Koch, Augustus. *Bird's Eye View of Boise City, Ada County – the Capital of Idaho*. 1890.

Larson, T. A. "Woman's Rights in Idaho." *Idaho Yesterdays* 16 (Spring 1972): 2-15, 18-19.

McAlester, Virginia. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014.

McCammon, Holly J. "Stirring up Suffrage Sentiment: The Formation of the State Woman Suffrage Organizations, 1866-1914." *Social Forces* 80, No. 2 (Dec. 2001): 449-480.

Metsker, Thomas C. *Metsker's Atlas of Ada County State of Idaho*. Tacoma, WA: Metsker Map Company, 1938. Accessed Dec. 11, 2019. <http://www.historicmapworks.com>

*Minutes of Boise Equal Suffrage Association (B.E.S.A.), Boise, Idaho, 1896*. Idaho State Archives (MS2.1364).  
Transcribed by Bertha Barton, 2018-19. Accessed Dec. 20, 2019,  
<https://www.idahowomen100.com/toolkit>

*Minutes of First State Suffrage Organization, Boise, Idaho, Nov. 20, 1895*. Idaho State Archives (MS2.100).  
Transcribed by Bertha Barton, 2018-19. Accessed Dec. 20, 2019,  
<https://www.idahowomen100.com/toolkit>

Sanborn Map Co. Fire Insurance Maps. Boise, ID. 1893, 1903, 1912, 1949, and 1956.

Scofield, Rebecca, and Katherine G. Aiken. "Balancing Act: Idaho's Campaign for Women's Suffrage." *Western Legal History: The Journal of the Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society* 30, no. 1-2 (2019): 33-44.

Ware, Susan. *Why They Marched: Untold Stories of the Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): IHSI# 01-958

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 0 (previously listed acreage)

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>43.614962</u>	<u>-116.199597</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Robbins House is located in Section 10, T3N, R2E in Ada County, Idaho. The parcel number is R1013002720. The property description is as follows, according to the Ada County Assessor: Lot 4, Block 41 – Boise City Original Townsite.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The above-noted property – Lot 4, Block 41 in the Boise Original Town Plat – reflects both the historic and present-day property boundary and includes the former Robbins House / Star Rooming House.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Sarah J. Martin, historian, with research assistance from Kerry Davis date March 23, 2020  
organization SJM Cultural Resource Services telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number 3901 2nd Avenue NE #202 email SarahMartinCRS@gmail.com  
city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98103

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Attached below:

- Figure 1: Regional Location Map
- Figure 2: USGS Quad Map / Local Location Map
- Figure 3: Ada County Parcel Map
- Figure 4: Site Plan
- Figure 5: Floor Plans
- Figure 6: 1890 Bird's Eye View (partial)
- Figures 7 through 11: Sanborn Co. Maps
- Figures 12 through 17: Scanned photographs

Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Name of Property:** Robbins, Corilla J., and Orlando, House  
**City or Vicinity:** Boise  
**County:** Ada County **State:** Idaho  
**Photographer:** Kerry Davis  
**Date Photographed:** November 27-28, 2019

*All digital images labeled as follows: ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_000#.tif*

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #1	Overview of property, from Idaho Street, looking east
Photo #2	Primary (south) elevation, looking northeast
Photo #3	Primary (south) and east elevations, looking north
Photo #4	Rear (north) and east elevations, looking west
Photo #5	Rear (north) elevation, looking southwest
Photo #6	View from alleyway showing remains of fronton, looking south
Photo #7	West elevation, with masonry wall in foreground, looking southeast
Photo #8	Partial view of west elevation, with spiral staircase at the center, looking south
Photo #9	View of two-tiered porch and sidewalk, looking northwest
Photo #10	View of primary entry, a Queen Anne-style, panel-and-glass door trimmed with stained-glass lights, looking southeast
Photo #11	Interior, view of staircase and corridor just inside primary entry, looking southwest
Photo #12	Interior, view of staircase and corridor just inside primary entry, looking northeast
Photo #13	Interior, first-floor corridor wall and trim detail, looking northwest
Photo #14	Interior, hatch-door to basement in first floor corridor, looking south
Photo #15	Interior, first-floor corridor in historic rear section, looking northeast
Photo #16	Interior, view of second-floor corridor, which terminates at door to front porch, looking southwest
Photo #17	Interior, second floor of 1987 addition in foreground and historic addition behind partial wall, looking southwest

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

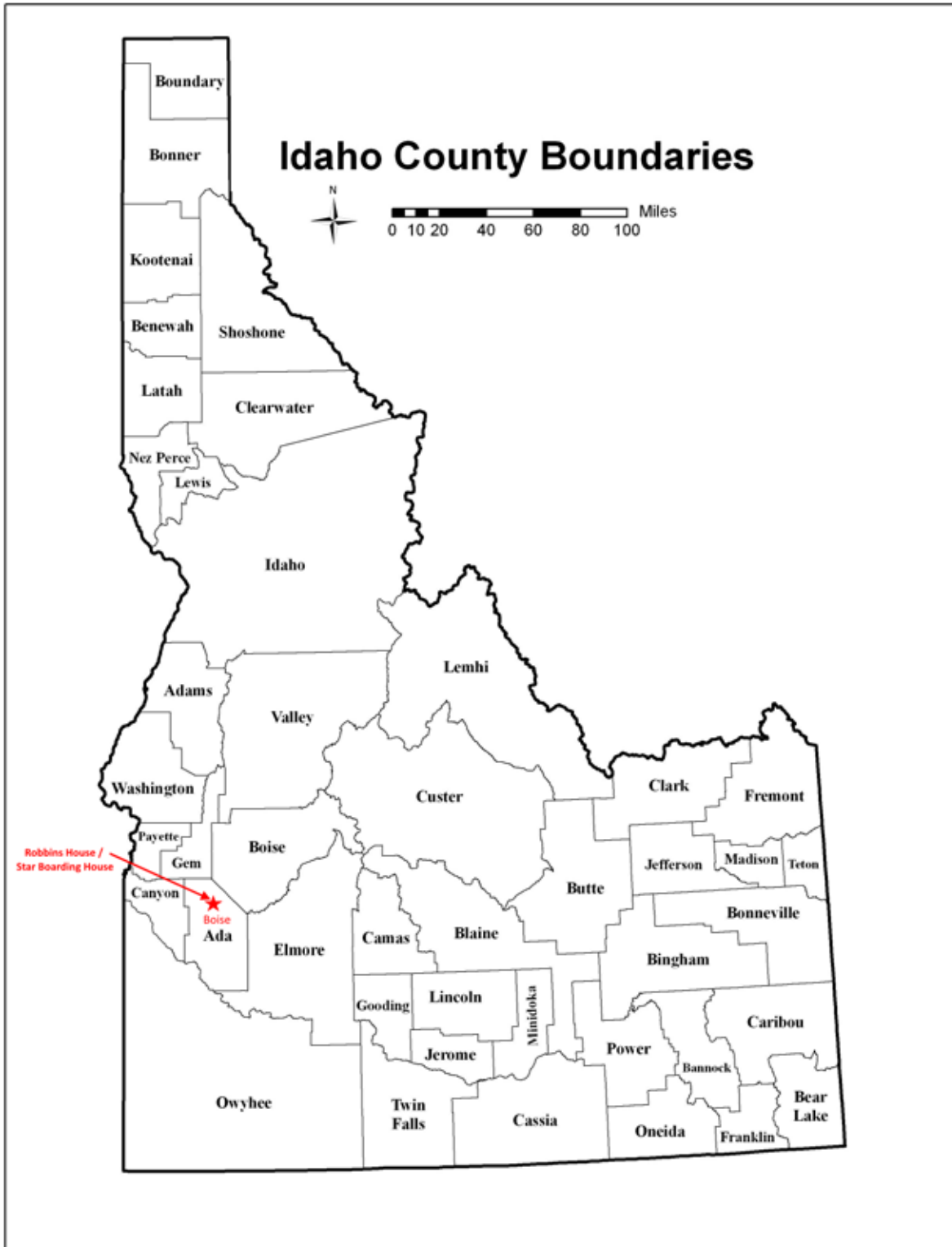
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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**Figure 1. Regional Location Map**

Map of State of Idaho showing counties, state capital, and the location of the Robbins House in Boise, Ada County.







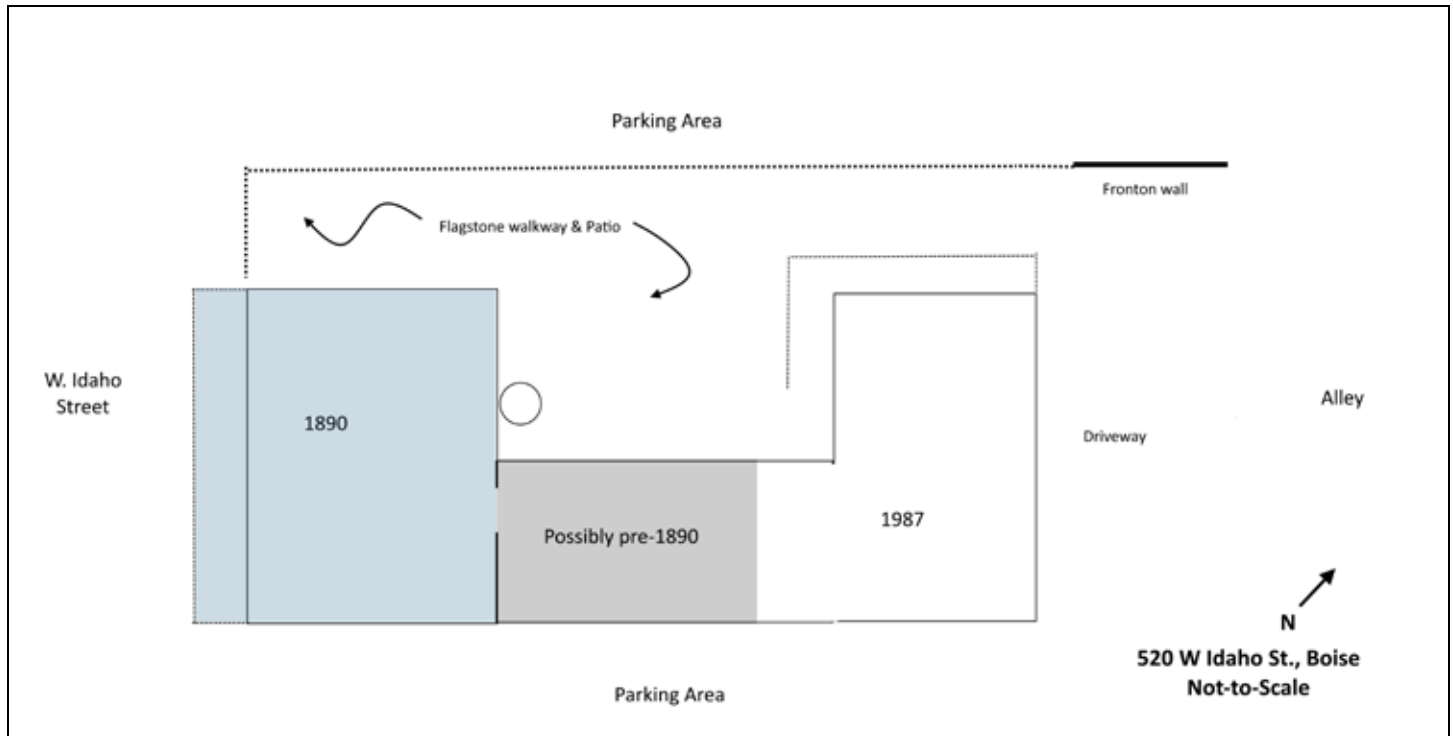
Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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**Figure 4. Site Plan.**

Lot 4, Block 41, Boise Original Town Plat

The blue and gray shaded areas in the image below denote the historic portions of the Robbins House.



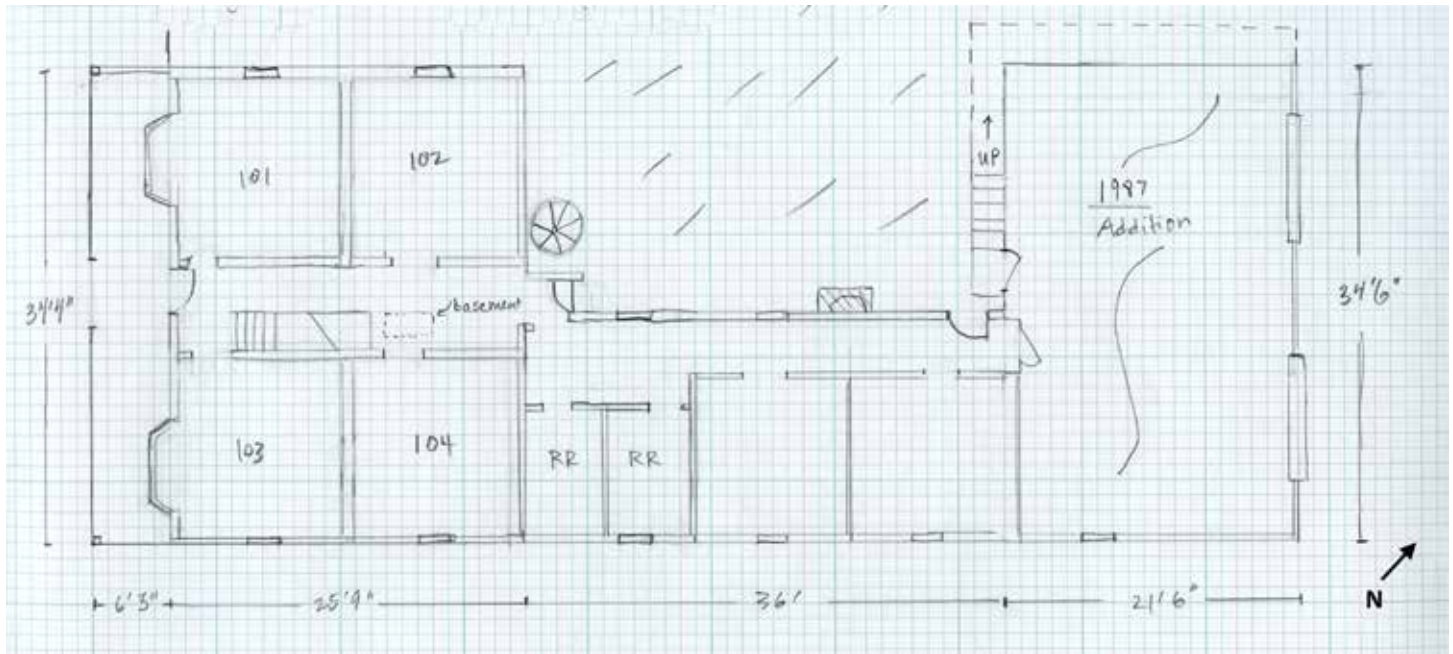
Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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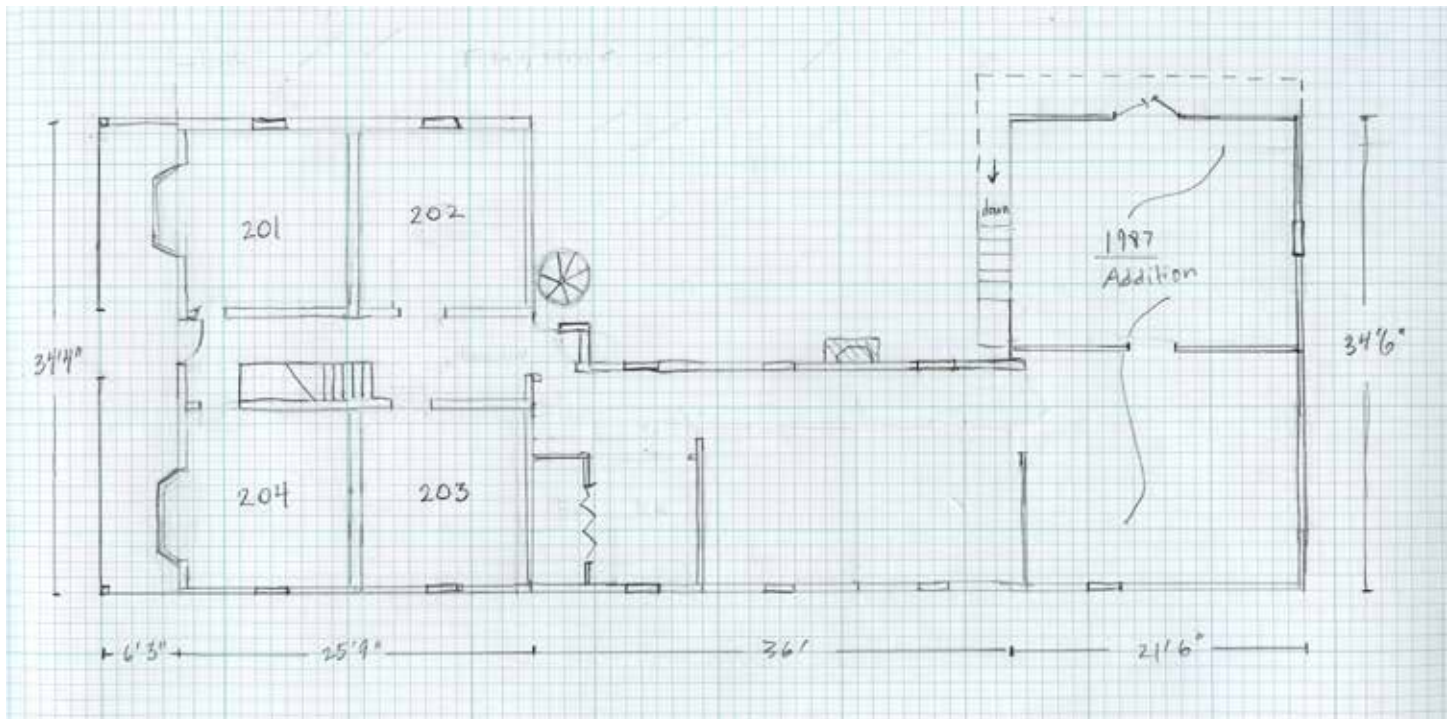
**Figure 5. Sketch Plans.**

These sketches reflect the current building plan and are derived from both on-site observations (November 27, 2019) and information gathered from building permit files. The sketches are not to scale and building measurements are not field verified and should be considered approximations.

*First Floor Sketch Plan*



*Second Floor Sketch Plan*



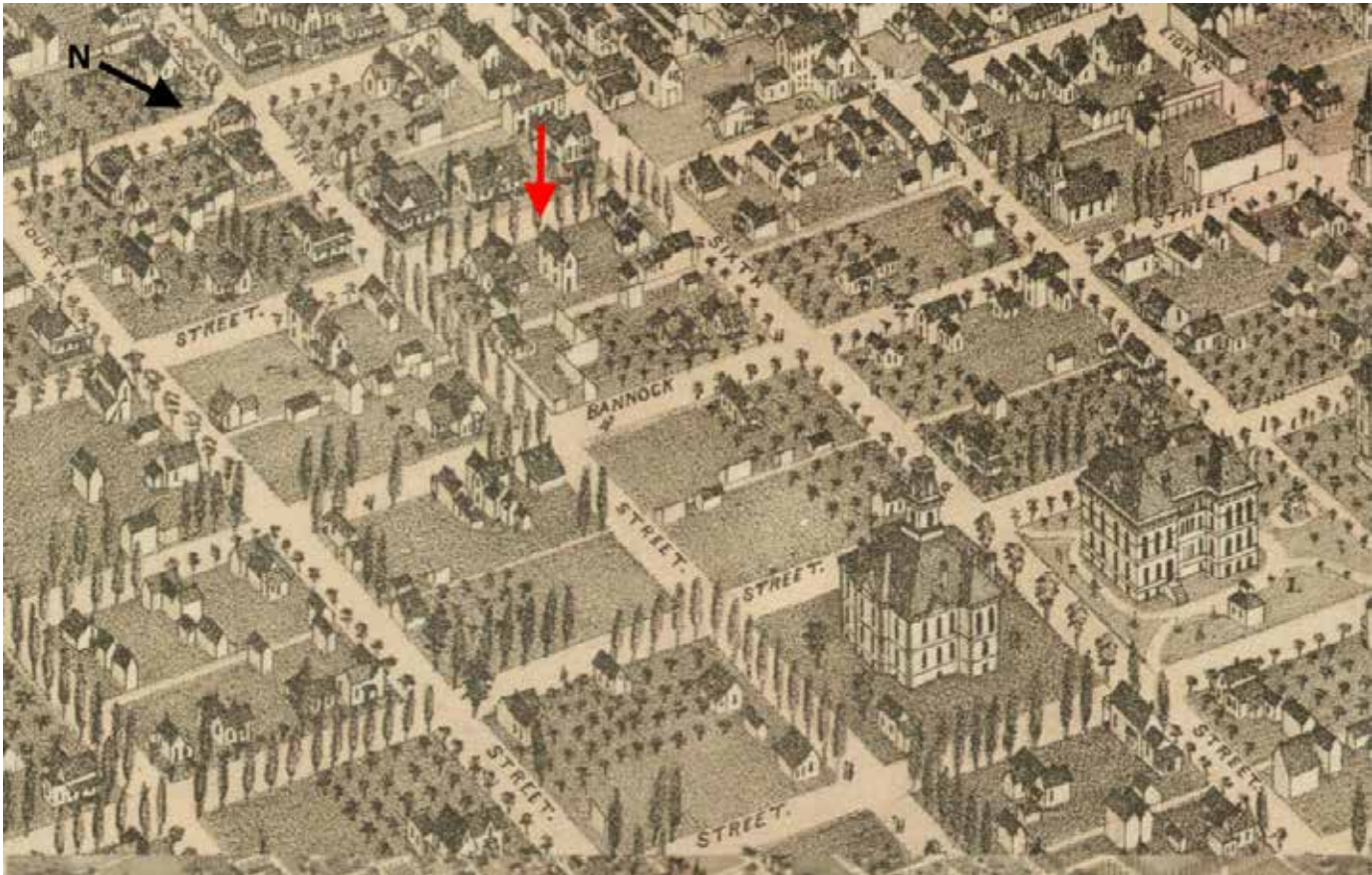
Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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**Figure 6. Bird's Eye View, Boise, 1890.**

Source: Augustus Koch, *Bird's Eye View of Boise City, Ada County – the Capital of Idaho*, 1890.

Partial image of the Old Boise area. The red arrow points to the subject property – Lot 4, Block 41. This depicts the residence before the front, hipped roof section was built.

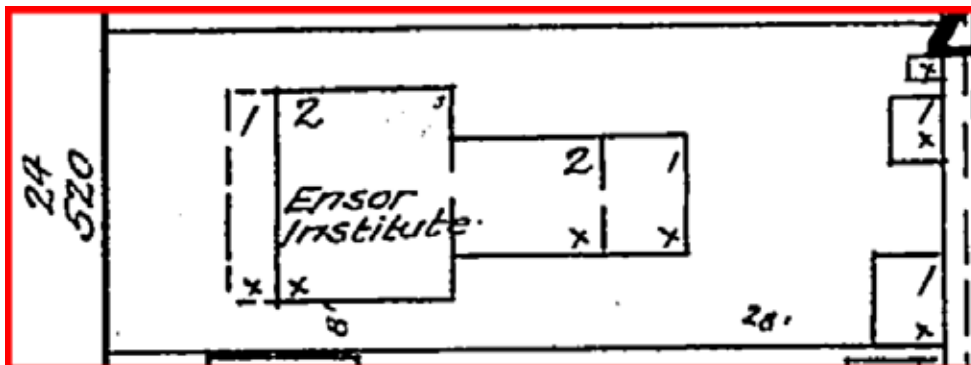
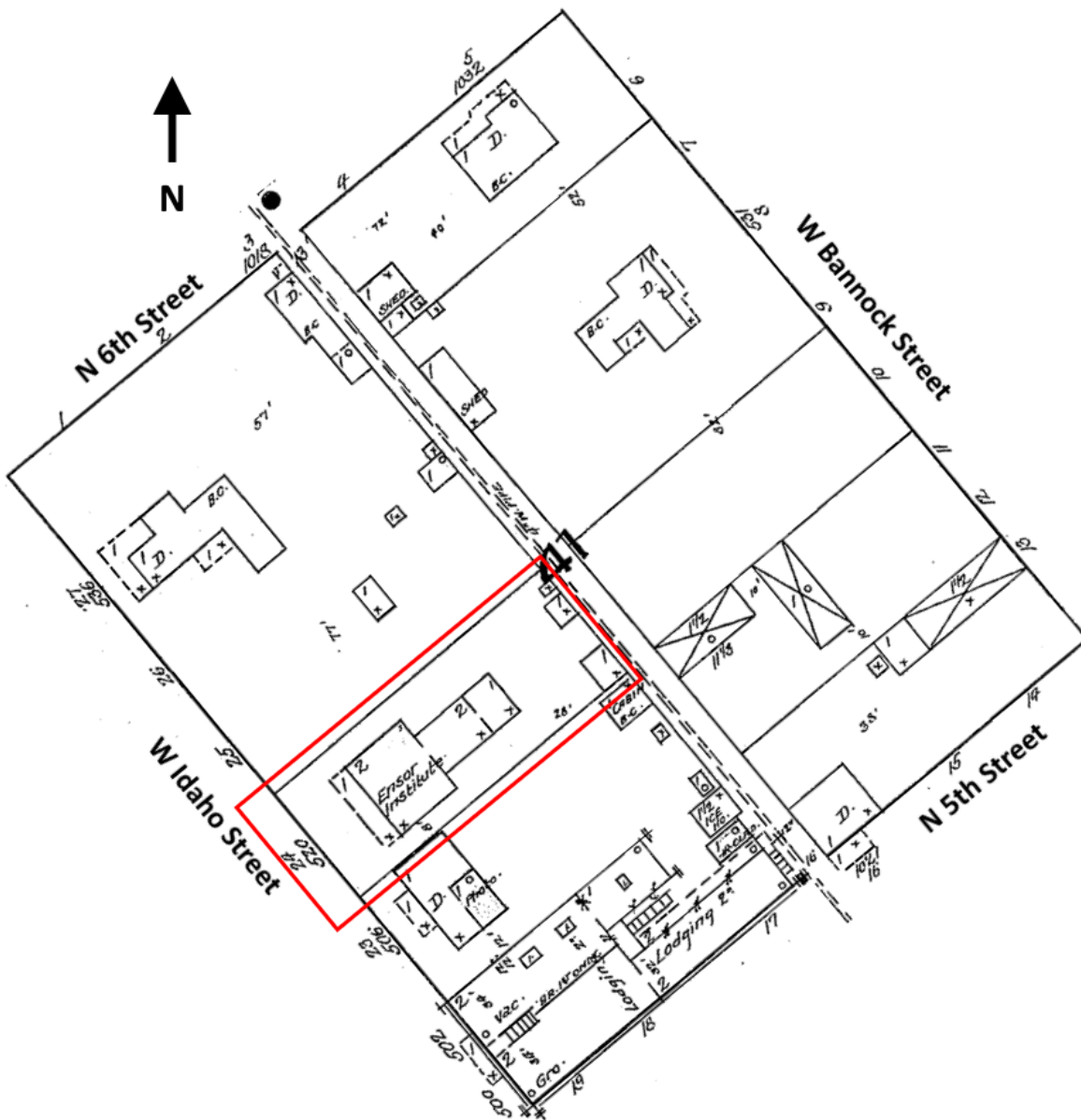


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**Figure 7. 1893 Sanborn Map**

*Insurance Maps of Boise, Idaho.* New York: Sanborn Map Co., January 1893 edition. Sheet 15.  
Image shows subject property at 512 W. Idaho Street in red, with a close-up image below.



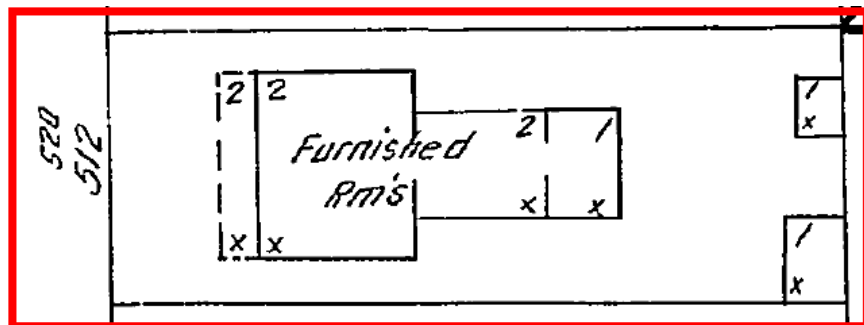
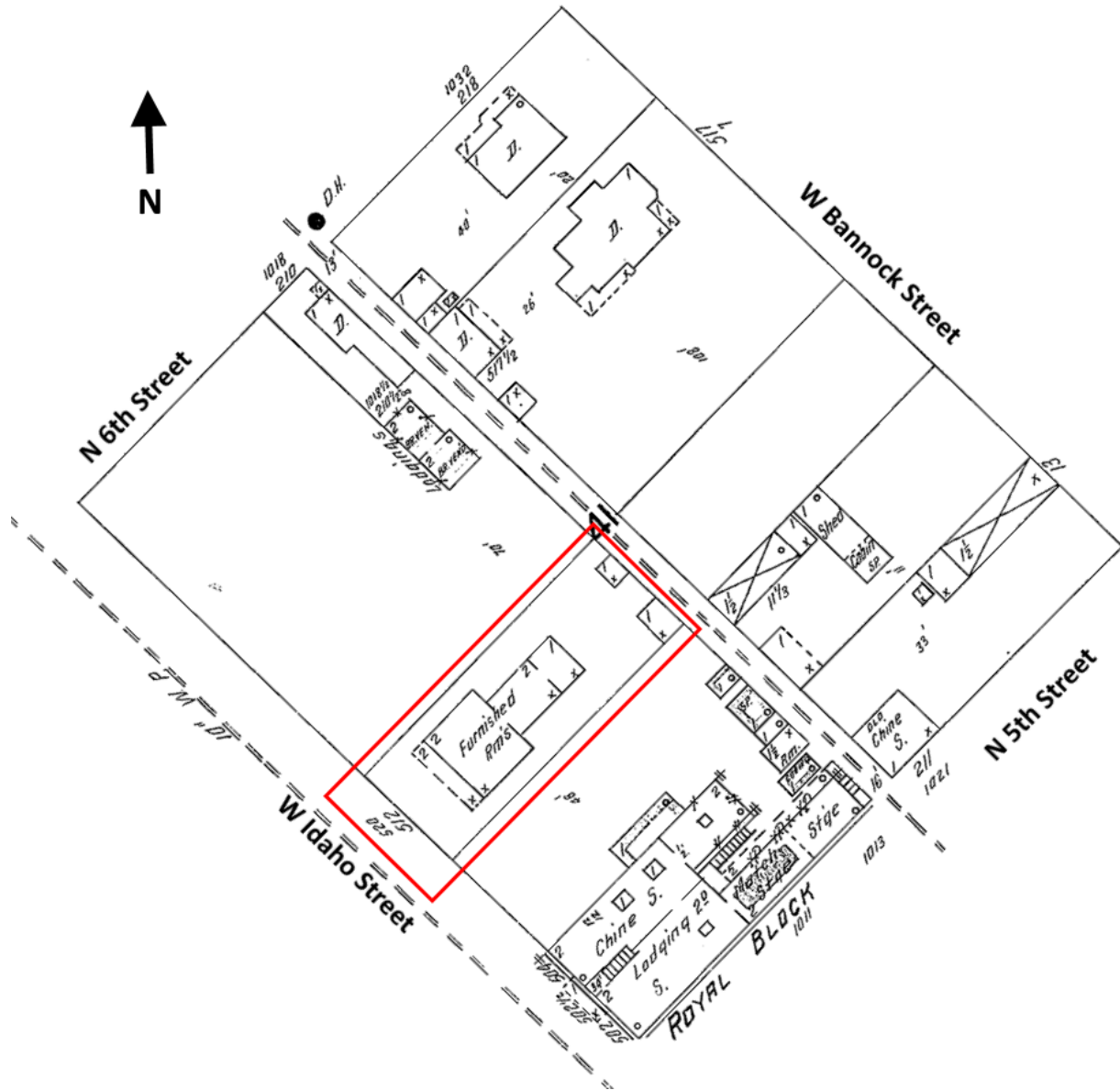
Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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**Figure 8. 1903 Sanborn Map**

*Insurance Maps of Boise, Idaho.* New York: Sanborn Map Co., June 1903 edition. Sheet 17.

Image shows subject property at 512 W. Idaho Street in red, with a close-up image below.

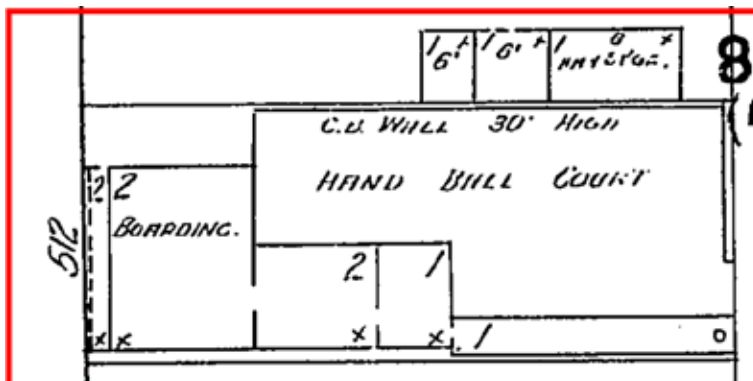
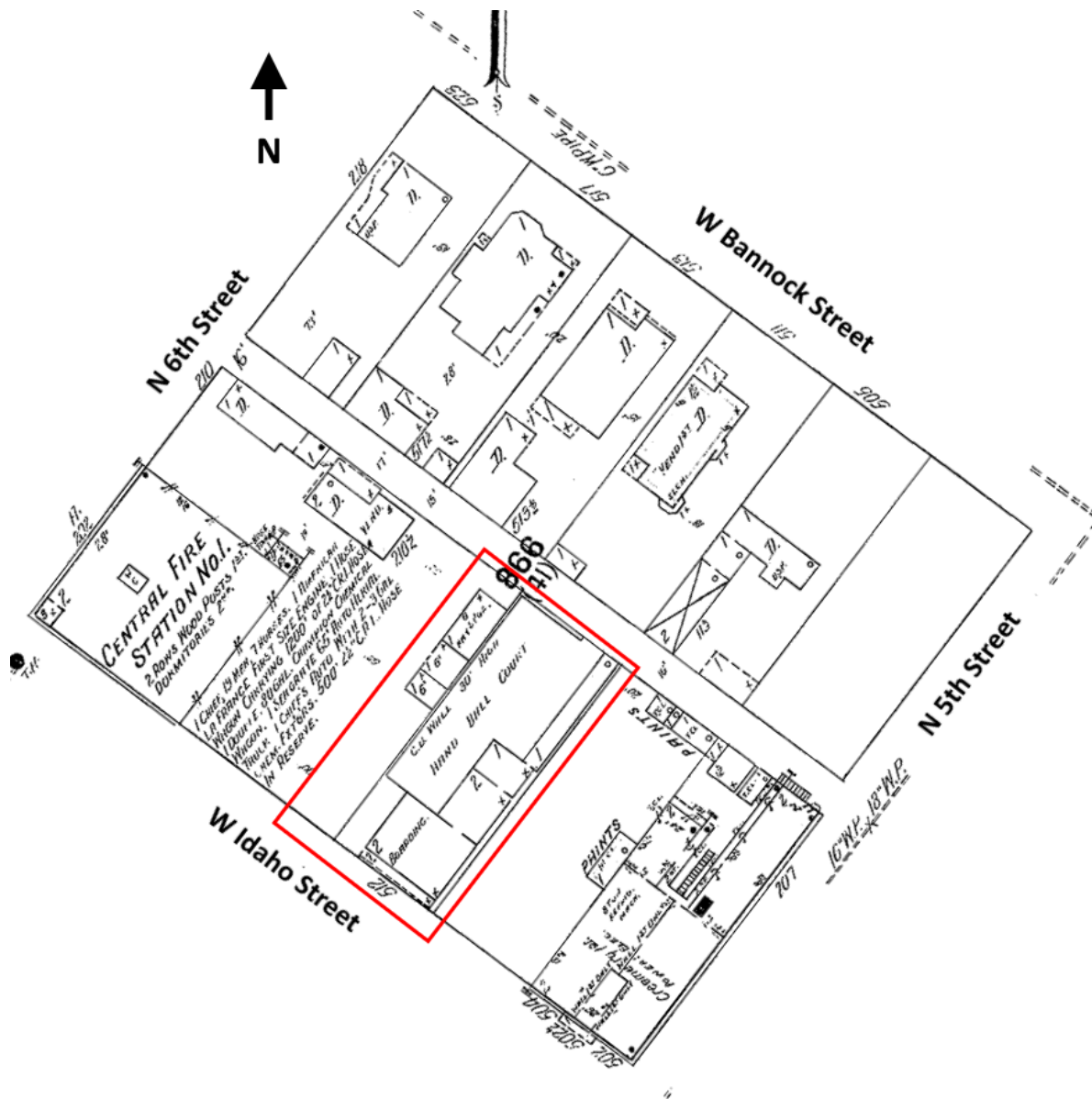


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**Figure 9. 1912 Sanborn Map**

*Insurance Maps of Boise, Idaho.* New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1912 edition. Sheet 55.  
Image shows subject property at 512 W. Idaho Street in red, with a close-up image below.

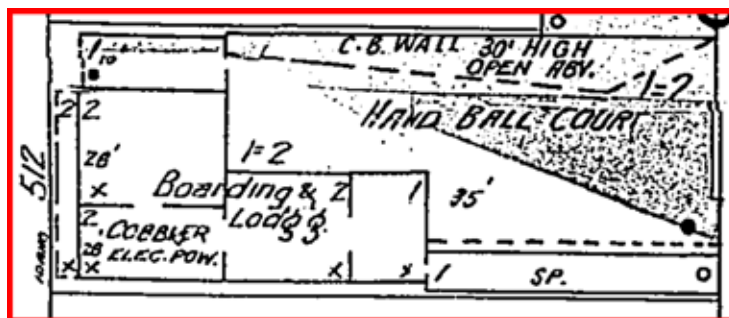
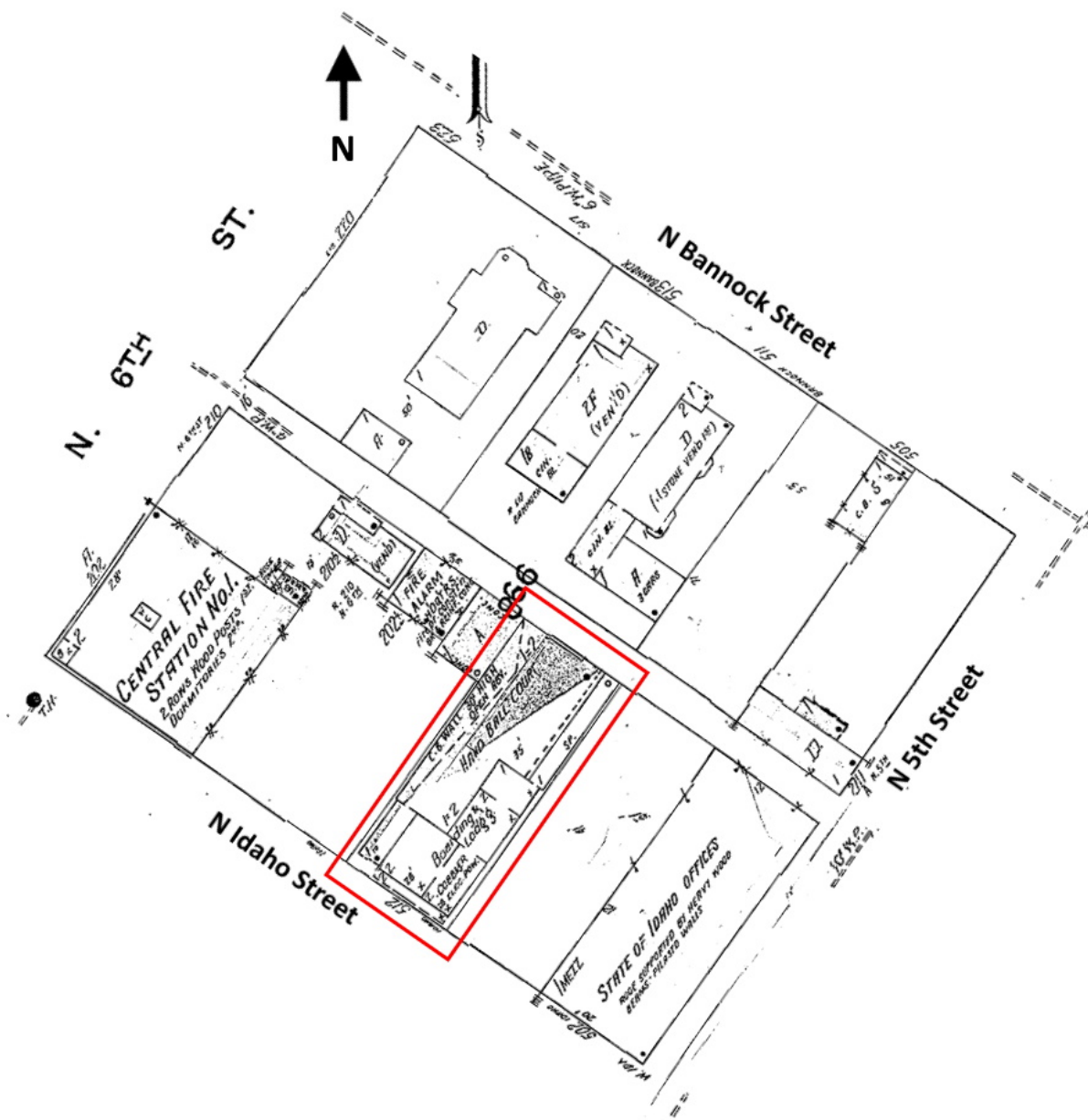


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**Figure 10. 1949 Sanborn Map**

*Insurance Maps of Boise, Idaho.* New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1912 edition, updated 1949. Sheet 55. Image shows subject property at 512 W. Idaho Street in red, with a close-up image below.

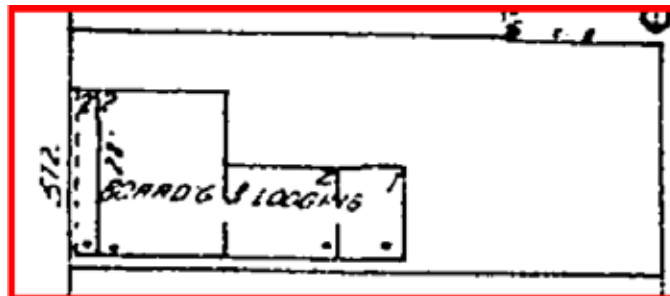
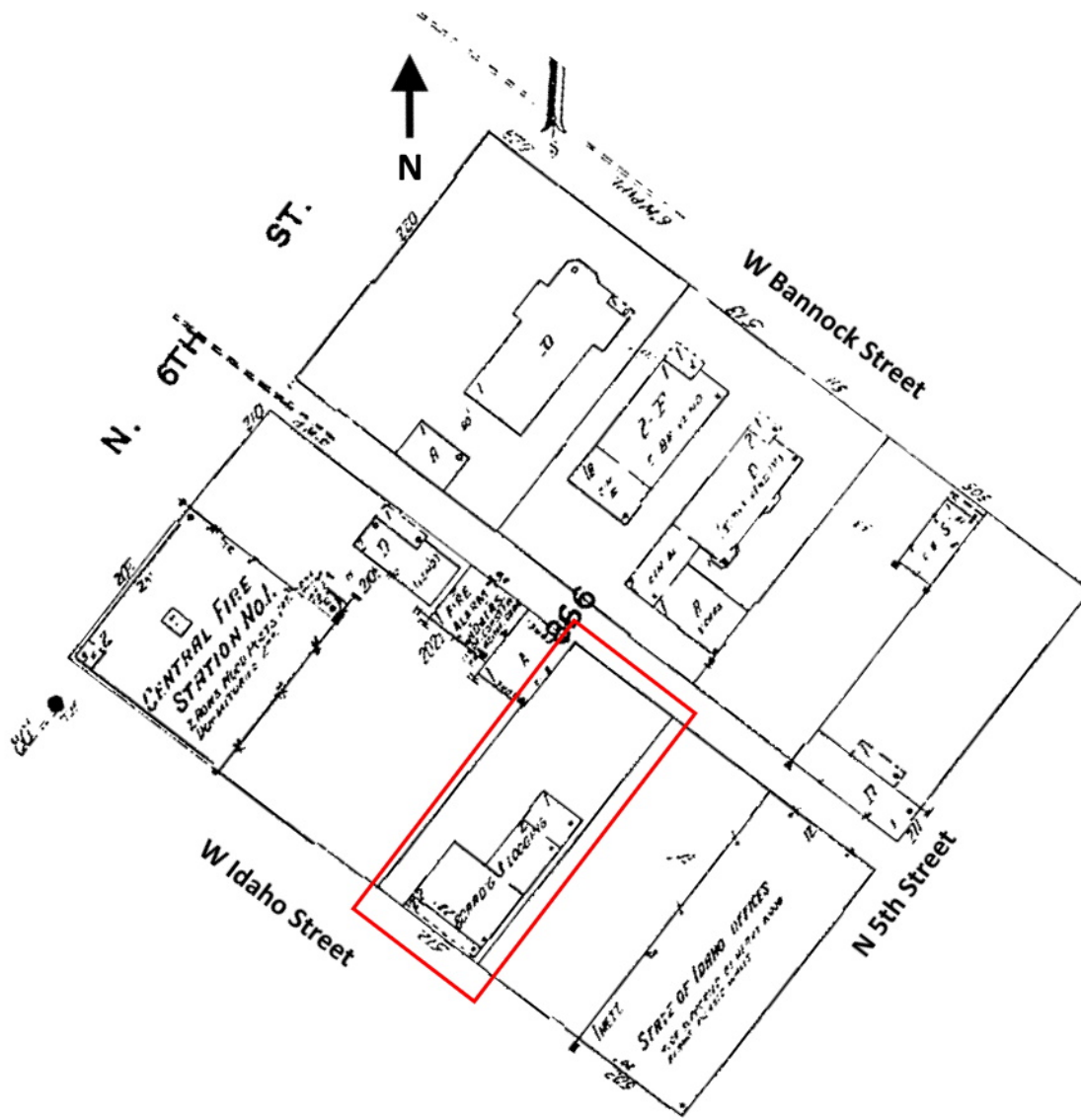


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**Figure 11. 1956 Sanborn Map**

*Insurance Maps of Boise, Idaho.* New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1912 edition, republished 1956. Sheet 55. Image shows subject property at 512 W. Idaho Street in red, with a close-up image below.



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**Figure 12. Star Rooming House, 512 W Idaho St, Boise, undated**

Source: Basque Museum & Cultural Center Collection

This ca. 1970s photo of the property appears, in edited form, on the interpretive signage that hangs to the right of the front entrance.



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**Figure 13. 512 W Idaho St., Boise, ca. 1975**

Source: Idaho State Historical Society Archives, F754 .B62, 75-5.52



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**Figure 14. Streetscape of W. Idaho Street, April 1986**

Source: Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, Boise

Description: Streetscape of W. Idaho Street. 512 W Idaho St. is at far right. View looking north.



**Figure 15. 512 W Idaho Street, undated**

Source: Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, Boise

Description: View of fronton, looking west



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**Figure 16. Streetscape of W. Idaho Street, undated**

Source: Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, Boise

Description: Streetscape of W. Idaho Street. 512 W Idaho Street is at far right. View looking north



**Figures 17: 512 W Idaho Street, 1999**

Source: Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, Boise

Description: 512 W Idaho Street, front porch, view looking east, 1999



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**Recent Photographs**

Taken November 27-28, 2019

**Photo 1. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0001.tif**

Overview of property, from Idaho Street, looking east



Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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**Photo 2. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0002.tif**  
Primary (south) elevation, looking northeast



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**Photo 3. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0003.tif**  
Primary (south) and east elevations, looking north



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**Photo 4. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0004.tif**  
Rear (north) and east elevations, looking west



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**Photo 5. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0005.tif**  
Rear (north) elevation, looking southwest



Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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**Photo 6. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0006.tif**  
View from alleyway showing remains of fronton, looking south



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**Photo 7. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0007.tif**  
West elevation, with masonry wall in foreground, looking southeast



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**Photo 8. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0008.tif**  
Partial view of west elevation, with spiral staircase at the center, looking south



Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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**Photo 9. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0009.tif**  
View of two-tiered porch and sidewalk, looking northwest



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**Photo 10. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0010.tif**

View of primary entry, a Queen Anne-style, panel-and-glass door trimmed with stained-glass lights, looking southeast

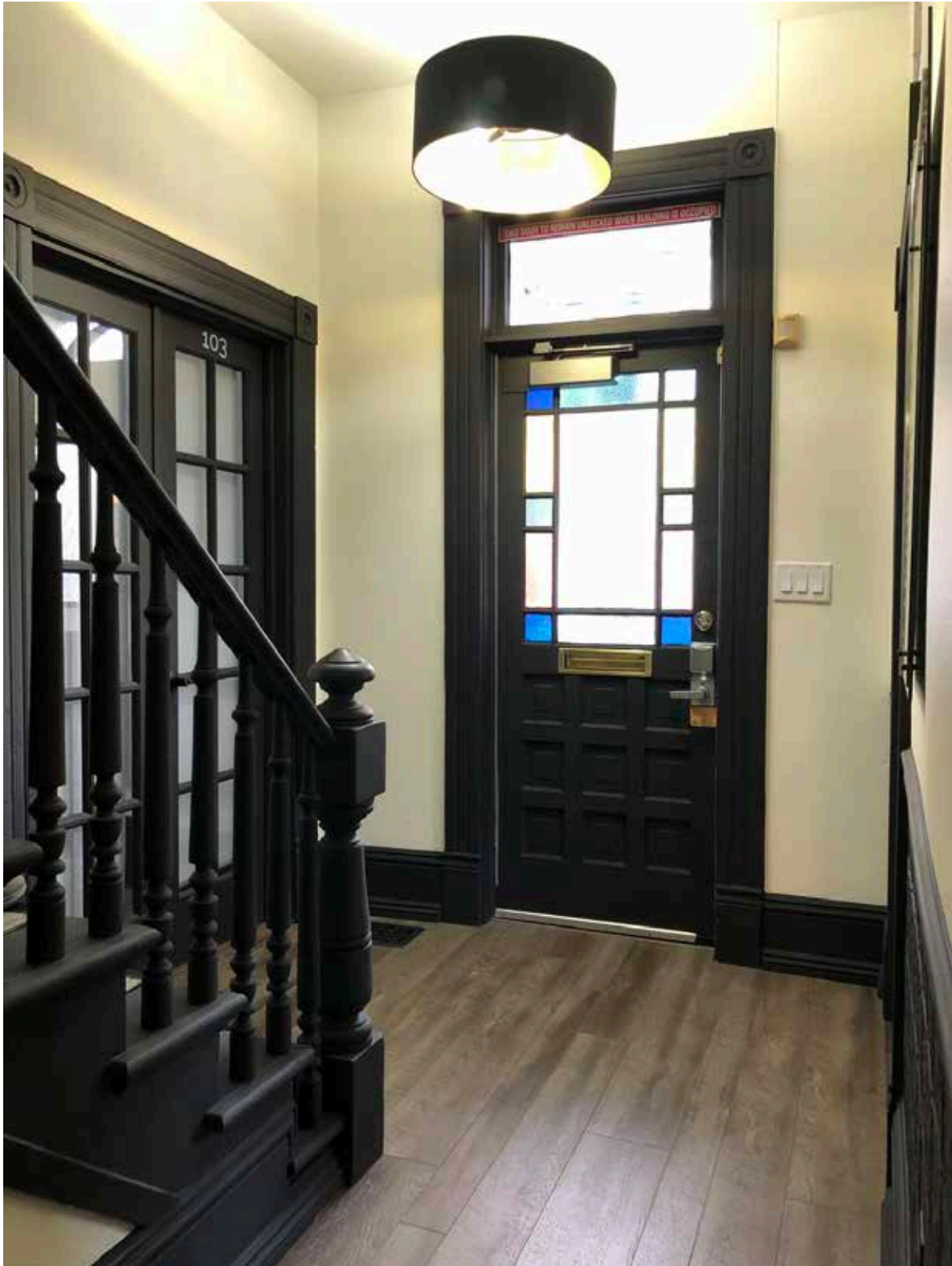


Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
Name of Property

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**Photo 11. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0011.tif**

Interior, view of staircase and corridor just inside primary entry, looking southwest

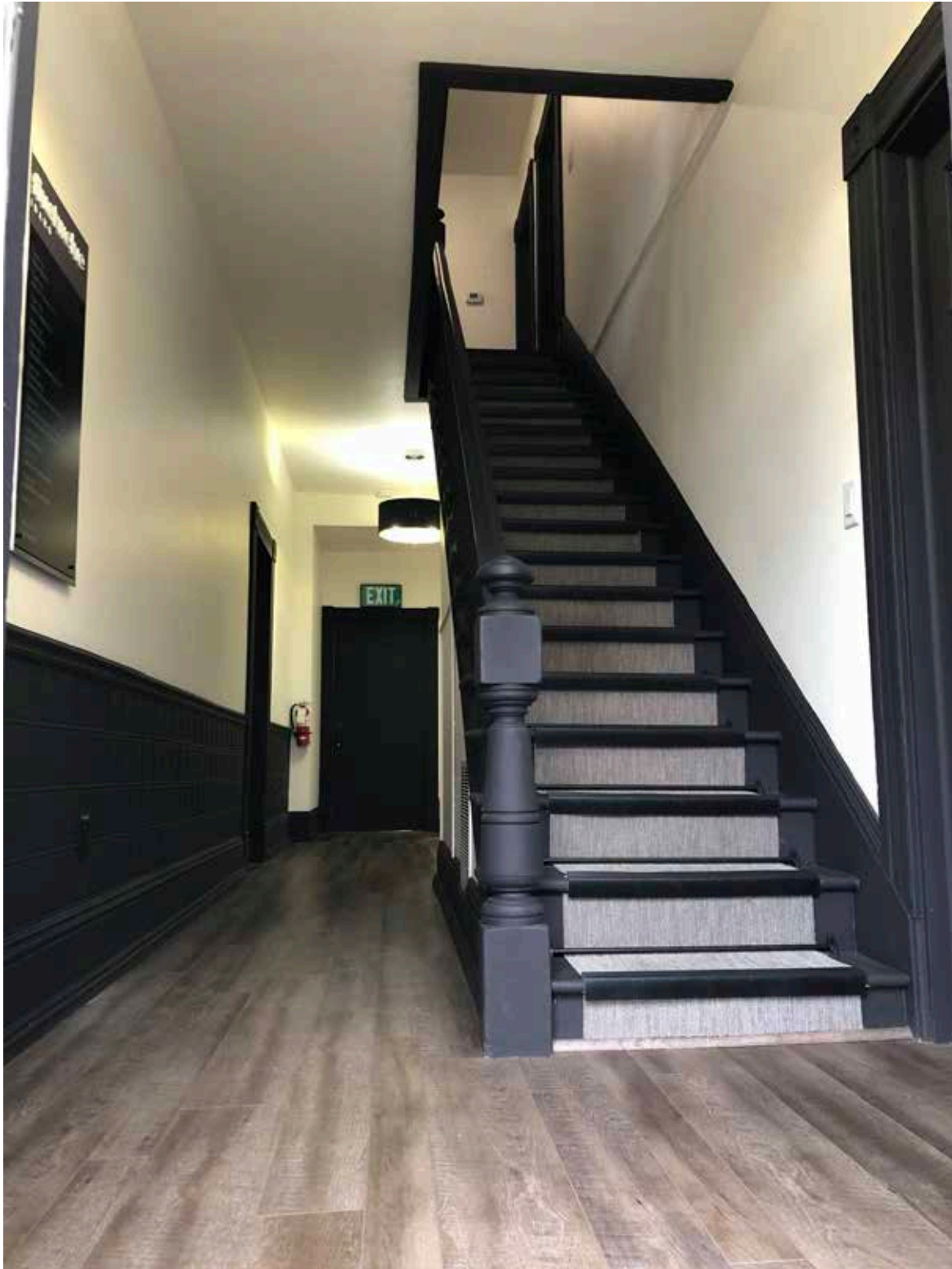


Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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**Photo 12. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0012.tif**

Interior, view of staircase and corridor just inside primary entry, looking northeast



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**Photo 13. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0013.tif**  
Interior, first-floor corridor wall and trim detail, looking northwest



Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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**Photo 14. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0014.tif**  
Interior, hatch-door to basement in first floor corridor, looking south



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**Photo 15. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0015.tif**  
Interior, first-floor corridor in historic rear section, looking northeast

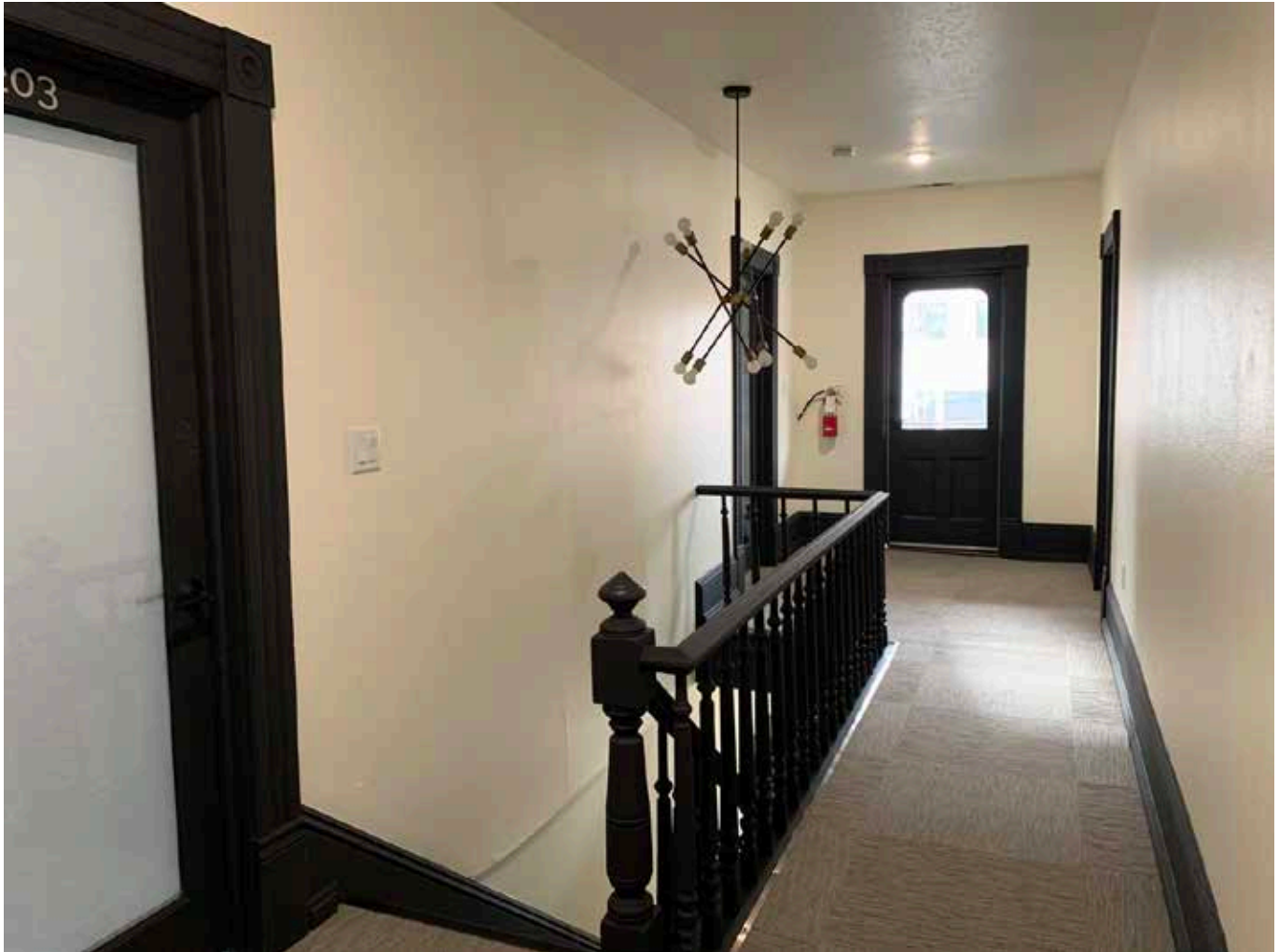


Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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**Photo 16. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0016.tif**

Interior, view of second-floor corridor, which terminates at door to front porch, looking southwest



Robbins, Corilla J. and Orlando, House  
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**Photo 17. ID\_AdaCounty\_RobbinsHouse\_0017.tif**

Interior, second floor of 1987 addition in foreground and historic addition behind partial wall, looking southwest

