Swan Falls Village
Snake River
Kuna Vicinity
Ada County
Idaho

HABS No. ID-105

HABS
ID.
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of Interior
San Francisco, California 94102

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SWAN FALLS VILLAGE HABS No. ID-105

Location: On the right bank of Snake River, about 40 miles southwest of Boise, Idaho, and 18 miles south of Kuna, Idaho, in SE 1/4 of Section 18, T.2 S., R.1 E., Boise Meridian; Ada County, Idaho. UTM: 11/550700/4787800.

Present Owner and Occupant: Idaho Power Company.
P.O. Box 70
Boise, Idaho 83707

Present Use: The residential cottages in the village are vacant and will be demolished in 1993. Previous occupants were employees of Idaho Power Company who worked at Swan Falls Dam; they and their families have been moved into new, modern housing nearby.

Significance: Swan Falls Village is a functioning residential complex for the employees at Swan Falls Dam, the first hydroelectric power plant (built 1900-01) on the Snake River in Idaho. Because the plant was remote from towns, crew housing at the site was the only practical option. The village has evolved over time to accommodate changes in the demographic characteristics of the employees and their housing needs. Changes have been consistent with management efforts to run the plant at the lowest practical cost; they demonstrate a spirit of resourcefulness, adaptation, and innovation by village residents.

The village consists of the Club House (a boarding house), cottages, garages, sheds, a road, lawns and gardens, animal enclosures, a boat dock, children's play areas, and systems providing domestic water, irrigation, and sewage collection and disposal. The earliest of the existing cottages was built in 1918, although the foundation of another cottage dates before 1910. In the first 30 years of the dam's operation, most of the crew were single men housed in a boarding house; only the supervisor and chief operator lived in cottages. When it became difficult to retain single men at the site, the company built cottages for employees and their families. When the number of families grew, so did the number of cottages. When the number of automobiles grew, so did the number of garages. When the number of children grew, one of the cottages was used as a school. Residents developed spaces such as orchards, gardens, pastures, play areas around the village to suit their needs and interests.

The village reflects a utilitarian approach to design; the small, white, unembellished cottages represent an integrity of location, setting, feeling, and materials--as well as what David R.M. White called "continuity of use."

Introduction

Swan Falls Village is the name given to the collection of cottages, the boarding house known as the Club House, garages, gardens, sheds, and other outbuildings on property owned and managed by Idaho Power Company at Swan Falls Power Plant on the Snake River in Idaho. The village houses the employees who operate and maintain the power plant. "Village" is a traditional name, used by the company and employees to refer to the housing complex; at times, residents have also referred to it as "the camp." Swan Falls Village never was incorporated, never had a post office, and never functioned as anything other than the private residential facilities of Swan Falls employees and their families and construction crews. Because of their isolation, the people who lived there developed a special sense of community feeling and identity. The customary use of the term "village" perhaps reflected this community feeling. The company supported family life and encouraged the personal investments that employees made in planting landscape vegetation and fruit orchards, keeping up a trim appearance, and otherwise contributing to a sense of permanent settlement.

The Swan Falls Power Plant and dam are located on the Snake River at a place where the river flows through a spectacular vertical-walled canyon over 600 feet high. This stretch of the canyon is part of the Snake River Birds of Prey Area, a federally designated preserve protecting falcons, hawks, and other raptors. The canyon walls reveal formations of basalt interbedded with sedimentary layers. Lava rocks that have broken away from the canyon walls, along with debris from the great Bonneville Flood of 15,000 years ago, form huge mounds of talus and boulders in the canyon. These limit the amount of flat terrain for housing and other buildings, so the village structures were built at several elevations, the ones closest to the shore of the reservoir being lowest; the ones further back, higher.

The dam and power plant at Swan Falls were built in 1900-01. The village began as a work camp for the horses and construction laborers who built the dam. The nearest towns were remote and difficult of access, particularly in the first decades of the project's existence, a situation that reguired the company to house laborers at the dam site. That early camp consisted of tent-houses, toilets, showers, mess hall, steam heating plant, equipment storage yard, cement plant, light rail tracks, and stiff-leg cranes to move machinery. The construction project included the boarding house, the building intended to house the operating crew at the dam. This building is the oldest dwelling at the site.

For its first 15 years, Swan Falls was owned by predecessor companies of Idaho Power Company. In 1916 Idaho Power became the

owner and has been the owner ever since. A detailed history of the dam and power plant and the companies that owned it has been documented in HAER No. ID-20. The reader should consult that report and its Appendix A, "Life at Swan Falls Village," for information about the construction history, ownership, significance, and other information about Swan Falls. The present study will supplement that report and not duplicate material found there.

As of 1992 Idaho Power is replacing the ten generators and turbines at Swan Falls with two new turbines and a new powerhouse. These will be in operation in 1994. The company will require only five employees to operate the new plant instead of the nine now employed. The road to Swan Falls from the town of Kuna has been paved and improved, making access much easier than in the past. The popularity of the Snake River Birds of Prey Area has brought growing numbers of tourists and visitors to Swan Falls for sight-seeing, boating, and other excursions; the road to the public boat ramp and other destinations in the canyon passes through the village, compromising the privacy and security of the company's employees and their children. The company has built five new identical houses a few hundred yards further upstream of the existing village and out of the travel path of the public. (See Photo Index HABS No. 105-4 for a general view of the new houses.) For all of these reasons, most of the older cottages and other obsolete structures constituting the present village will be removed. The Club House and Cottage 521 will not be removed.

Idaho Power gave each of the cottages and other buildings at Swan Falls an identification number. The first two digits correspond to the year in which it was built; for example, buildings with 36 as the first two digits were built in the 1936. The third digit is a sequence number and represents the order in which it was built that year at that site. Building 362, for example, was built in 1936 and was the second building erected at Swan Falls that year. These numbers are marked on the site map attached as Appendix A to this report and will be used in the descriptions below. Idaho Power's property management department has a basic record of the dates of cottage construction and major remodels. Some construction drawings exist, but a complete record for each cottage is not extant. See Appendix B for available drawings. For the period after January 1950, the company retains a series of "Monthly Reports for Swan Falls Power Station." These detail the progress of remodeling after this date. Company publications that described parties and picnics at Swan Falls provide an additional source of information about the village and its occupants.

Idaho Power leased its residential facilities to employees, charging rent for the cottages or room and board at the Club House. Taking the payments from employee paychecks, the company

paid for part of the maintenance costs and contracted a cook to manage the Club House. The Club House cook was phased out in 1956 when most employees lived in the cottages with families, and the cost of providing eating facilities for only two or three people could not be justified.[1]

Idaho Power owns other power plant sites and houses employees at most of those sites. In 1955 the company had 88 cottages at 14 sites. Swan Falls was still the most isolated and had 12 cottages. Most of the company's cottages had two bedrooms and a full or partial basement. The company conducted an annual program for cottage improvements, gradually adding small comforts as each year passed. The company also supplied materials for reasonable interior changes requested by an occupant.[2] Between 1955 and 1992, a number of cottages, garages, and other buildings were removed as they became obsolete or were found to be in the way of new road or other construction at the dam.[3]

The number of employees stationed at Swan Falls has ranged between 9 and 15, fewer during wars. The number grew for temporary periods when mobile work crews visited the dam to do specialized maintenance or repair jobs at the dam or power house. Older superintendents also recall that when other company power plants had to shut down during winter months, employees were sent to Swan Falls for the duration in order to be kept busy. In the 1930s the Ada County commissioners extended a new road between the town of Kuna and Swan Falls. The previous road did not go to Kuna, but took a circuitous route to Boise, which was farther away. With this improved access, there was less reservation among crew members to move their families into the canyon. By the late 1930s the company fount it increasingly difficult to maintain young single men as permanent employees at the camp.[4] Idaho Power began building more cottages and families began arriving. Three were built in 1936 and another two in 1943. The 1943 cottages were removed in 1984 because they were in the path of a major improvement to the road. After World War II, families became larger, inspiring the enlargement of several of the

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[1] See "Agreement between Idaho Power Company and E.E. Terry for Maintaining Rooming and Boarding Facilities at Swan Falls Power Plant," December 1939, and memorandum from T.E. Heikes to H.B. Eddy, May 18, 1956, Idaho Power Records Center, Box 3266.

[2] Current News, April 1955.

[3] Continuing Property Records, Swan Falls Account (331). (Hereafter referred to as Property Records.)

[4] Lester Garlinghouse, superintendent from 1938-1946, interview with author, September 23, 1992.

cottages in the 1950s. Reports of attendance at Christmas gatherings mention as many as 35 people in 1949.[5] The company also sent new employees and entry-level engineers to Swan Falls for training in the summer or for other short periods of time. The power plant, which contained equipment requiring manual operation, provided an efficient means of teaching young engineers and others the fundamentals. The list of Swan Falls "graduates"--and their stories of tomfoolery and practical jokes--among Idaho Power employees and retirees is a long one.[6]

Available company records indicate that the cottages built or expanded after 1937 were designed by Idaho Power engineers and built by contractors. It is certain that the earliest cottages were also designed in-house, but it is not known who built them. Inspiration for cottage design, at least in the 1930s and 1940s, might be inferred from a collection of files recently discovered in the basement of the Idaho Historical Society. The donor is not known, but was probably a retired employee of Idaho Power. The files contain pencil sketches and hand-drawn floor plans and elevations of cottages planned for Idaho Power's hydroelectric plants at Upper Salmon, Malad, and Bliss. With the drawings are clippings from magazines such as Architectural Record, Building News, Ladies Home Journal, and Architectural Forum. One clipped article was entitled "Staggered Floor Levels in this Modern Colorado House," and attached to it was a hand-drawn floor plan based on the one in the magazine. A Ladies Home Journal article was titled "A One-Story House" and discussed the "growing appreciation" in the United States for the California style. The house plan, available for $1, was described as a one-story "pleasantly rambling," three bedroom house, with an open porch and a laundry near the kitchen. The Idaho Power employee traced the house plan and modified it, making it less "rambling." Other clipped articles dealt with such matters as kitchen layout and closet design.[7] While none of the sketches were marked as Swan Falls Cottages, it is noteworthy that cottage designs for different power plants were unique to their sites, not the same design duplicated at every site. The material also suggests that the company engineers, probably more used to designing

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[5] See Current News, April 1930, p. 32; and September 1949. Ted Heikes reported that in 1924 there were 9 men in the crew, compared with 15 in 1949. Only two married couples were in camp in 1924.

[6] See for example, Tom Purton, "Foggy Memories of Swan Falls Days," June 4, 1985, Swan Falls Notebook, Volume 3, Idaho Power Records Center.

[7] "House Sketches," Manuscript #583, Idaho Historical Society, Boise, Idaho.

complicated electrical apparatus, substations, and power plants, made use of the national architectural magazines for ideas about small house design rather than hire outside architects. However, as will be seen below, when two or more cottages were built at one site at the same time, they were typically identical.

Maintenance of all village buildings and the presentable appearance of the camp was a responsibility of the power plant superintendent. His monthly reports identify the routine and sometimes not-so-routine maintenance work done on the cottages. In addition to performing normal repairs such as re-roofing, interior and exterior painting, and sanding and revarnishing hardwood floors, the Swan Falls crew maintained the domestic water, sewer, and irrigation systems, the grounds, and the roads in the village. As needed, they replaced toilet bowls, kitchen sinks, windows, light fixtures, and household hardware. The newest crew member and lowest man on the totem pole got to do septic tank cleanout and other nasty tasks. After about 1964, monthly reports began to skip the details and simply stated, "Many routine maintenance tasks done this month."

Space heating for the oldest cottages and for the three cottages built in 1936 was supplied by coal furnaces. These were phased out not long after 1936 in favor of electric resistance space heaters manufactured by employees in the machine shop at Swan Falls.[8] Writing in October 1951, after the crew had replaced a number of the heaters with improved 3,000-watt models, the superintendent wrote that the new ones were "a much better and safer all around heater than can be found on the open market."[9] Three houses were equipped with electric furnaces in 1979, but the rest continued to use village-made heaters until they were recently vacated.[10] The Swan Falls cottages were not air-conditioned.

A characteristic feature of the cottages was the presence of fruit cellars. The first superintendent of the plant, Samuel Glass, had an orchard about a quarter of a mile downstream from the dam on the north side, and also raised pigs, cows, and chickens, all of which contributed to the village food supply.[11] (See Field Record Photo HABS No. ID-105-24, which shows the

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[8] Lester Garlinghouse, September 23, 1992.

[9] H.B. Eddy, "Monthly Reports for Swan Falls Power Station," October 1951. (Hereafter referred to as "Monthly Report.")

[10] Property Management; also, Rick Kirtley, superintendent at Swan Falls,, interview with author, September 22, 1992.

[11] Electrikat, May 1922, p. 15.

location of the orchard in relation to the dam and village.) Several of the cellars were removed in 1920.[12] However, the fruit-raising tradition revived when the crew planted a new orchard between the dam and the downstream end of the village in April 1952.[13] This orchard was displaced by new construction in 1991. "Putting up" fruit has always been a domestic practice at the camp; residents still use the commercial-sized Edison electric range at the Club House during the canning season.[14] Animals, too, have always been part of Swan Falls life. Work horses helped to build the dam and later provided transportation to rail heads at Kuna or Murphy. In the 1960s one family raised burros, and today the attraction is a herd of three llamas owned by the current superintendent.[15]

The cottages have basements excavated under all or part of the house. These are roughly or minimally finished, some having been given some attention by recent inhabitants. They function mostly as housing for ventilation and hot water equipment and storage cellars.

Near many of the cottages are small wood frame and wood sided sheds or storage buildings. Several have concrete ramps leading to their doors. In general these sheds were built by various residents for the storage of lawn mowers, garden supplies, and household overflow and were not built at the same time as the houses. In 1991 the crew designed and built five or six wood frame sheds and poured concrete foundations for them next to several of the cottages. When the crew moved to the new houses, they decided to move them to the new housing sites where they poured new concrete pads for them.[16] As the photographs were taken for this report, a few of these sheds had already been moved to the new houses on the hill. Concrete foundations remain to show their former location.

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[12] "Inventory of Swan Falls Hydro-Electric Power Plant as of July 31, 1925," (Exhibit R), December 31, 1927, part of application for license to Federal Power Commission. Original located at Idaho Power Company offices, Boise, at Legal Department, License Book #1, Project 503.

[13] Monthly Report, April 1952. This orchard was removed when construction began on the new powerhouse in the late 1980s.

[14] Randy Hill, assistant supervisor at Swan Falls, interview with author, October 12, 1990.

[15] Current News, August 1968. The burros were pets, but also helped plow eight family gardens that spring.

[16] Tom Paulin, interview with author, September 21, 1992.

Beneath the surface at Swan Falls lie the pipes and conduits of the service systems. Irrigation water for the lawns, park areas, and orchards (not including the first orchard of Sam Glass) comes from the reservoir. An electric pump pumps water through buried pipes to all of the settled areas of the village. The lift up to Cottage 521 is about 85 feet. The system is believed to have been first installed around 1920, some time after Idaho Power acquired a water right for irrigation water from the Snake River. As is typical with the houses and other systems at the village, it has been repaired, maintained, improved, and expanded as conditions have warranted. See Building 201 on site plan for location of irrigation pump house. Irrigating the grounds has always been one of the responsibilities of the dam operators. In the last two years, the system has been extended to reach the five new houses on the hill, where new trees have been planted and new gardens begun by the occupants.[17]

The sewage system from 1900 to the mid 1920s relied on privies. One outdoor toilet was built in 1905 and retired in 1942. The first indoor system was installed some time before 1928. By 1928 there were 1,260 feet of tile buried two feet deep in trenches or, in some areas, through solid rock.[18] The basic sewage treatment system consists of septic tanks and leach fields. Most of the houses had one septic tank and leach field, routinely installed when a new cottage was built, although sometimes houses were paired on one tank. Remains of vitrified clay tiles can still be found by excavating around the village. The sections were not tightly joined, so there was a gradual draining from the pipe. When a leach field wore out, the crew abandoned it and rerouted the distribution pipes to a new one. As material standards changed, the type of pipe also changed. All of the sewer pipe installed before 1928 was replaced in 1965, the year a general upgrade of the sewer system began. New 920-gallon septic tanks were provided that year for Cottages 101, 521, the Club House, 362 and 363, and 431 and 432. The pre-1928 pipe was completely abandoned in 1967. Engineers in recent years have studied the older system in the process of designing an extension to the new houses. They have found that the company's maps and drawings do no justice to the realities under the ground. There are "surprise leach fields" in unexpected places and pipelines that are not shown on drawings. There is some oral tradition to explain why certain features are where they are, but much of such wisdom has been lost to time.[19] To serve the five new houses,

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[17] Jeff Osterman, interview with author, September 17, 1992.

[18] Property Records.

[19] Jeff Osterman, Idaho Power engineer, September 17, 1992. Also, Property Records.

the company installed a pressurized system in 1991. It is still fundamentally a septic tank and leach field system. Sewage from the houses drains to a pressure tank that also serves the public restroom and restrooms at the new power plant. The leach field is located between the old village and the new one on the north side of the road. The small family of llamas graze above it.

Potable water was originally provided by a well or a spring from above the village. A water tank numbered Building 053 suggests that it was erected in 1905 by a predecessor company to Idaho Power. It has since been removed. Another tank, Building 173 on the site plan was built in 1917 as part of the general site upgrading performed after Idaho Power took over the property; this structure is still present on the site, although its use has been abandoned. (See also Photo HABS No. 105-16 and C-4.) The year 1917 also saw the installation of a well house and pump at the upstream end of the village on the south side of the road, Building No. 172. The well was 20 feet deep, concrete lined, with a reinforced concrete floor about 12 feet below ground level that supported a direct motor driven pump. The work was protected by a wood frame and wood sided well house 10' 6" square. (See Photo Index HABS No. 105-11.) The distribution system, made of galvanized pipe and fittings, carried water to the powerhouse and to the residences through a main line in the main village road that branched to each house.[20] With the new houses built in 1991, this pump and well have been abandoned in favor of a new 118-foot deep well located behind the five houses.[21]

The domestic water system also serves the needs of fire protection, irrigation water not being available or reliable for 12 months of the year. The first two hydrants were installed in 1929; several more have been added since then and are located throughout the village along the main road. Hoses are stored in small wooden "hose houses" where they are available to be brought to the appropriate hydrant in the event of a fire. According to Idaho Power's property records, the first hose house was built in 1910. Extensions and improvements were added in 1938 and 1939 with 196 feet of iron pipe and fittings and new fire hose reels. In 1948, 504 feet of high-pressure galvanized iron pipe were extended throughout the camp.[22] Aside from the fire that destroyed one of the cottages in 1921, other major structural fires have not been reported.

Electrical power generated at Swan Falls power plant supplies the

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[20] Property Records.

[21] Jeff Osterman, September 17, 1992.

[22] Property Records.

village buildings. A reference in the January 1925 issue of Electrikat mentioned that a mobile maintenance crew was at Swan Falls overhauling the lighting systems and rewiring the cottages.[23] Originally, power came to the village buildings from a feeder directly from the power plant. However, around 1945, a new substation was built on the north rim of the canyon just where the road descends to the Swan Falls site. At that time, the feeder to the village was routed from that substation instead of directly from the plant.[24]

In summary, the underground systems appear to have evolved in a manner similar to those above the ground. The operators of the dam had be self-sufficient and handy enough to respond to problems, new demands, expansion, or emergencies as time and materials allowed. Since the village was isolated, necessity was sometimes the mother of invention; some of these inventions never made their way to official drawings or maps or reports. In any case, the underground systems, no less than the village itself, demonstrate a continuity in use and function that continues today.

A visitor approaches the village by descending from the north rim of the canyon on a steep road that was narrow, rough, and unpaved until 1984. After one or two switchbacks, the visitor may turn off to approach Cottage 101 or 521, buildings located higher on the hill than the main village. The road continues to the flatter area adjacent to the river and forks. To the right is the dam and powerhouse area. On the left is a small turfed park for public use equipped with picnic tables under shady trees. (See Photo Index HABS No. 105-15.) Straight ahead, the road parallels the river in an upstream direction (southeast), approaches and passes through the main residential village, and proceeds to the boat launch and the old ferry landing site. The cottages and other buildings are situated along each side the road, their fronts facing the road. The sides face up or down stream. Houses on the north side of the road were built abutting the side of the hill, and rock retaining walls were constructed behind them. These, and a retaining wall supporting Cottage 231, made use of the native lava rock within the canyon. As public visitors began to increase in number in the 1970s, Idaho Power installed the picnic tables in a shady and grassy lot where the road forks off toward the dam. A public restroom is nearby.

Idaho Power employees have, since they began living in the canyon, planted shade trees around the houses. These have grown up to provide deep shade over the homes and are one reason why

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[23] Electrikat, January 1925, p. 18.

[24] Lester Garlinghouse, September 23, 1992.

most older photographs of the area show little of the buildings. The canyon can become extremely hot in summer months, but a breeze and the shade of the trees ameliorate the heat. Over the years a number of domestic improvements have been initiated by residents and maintained by subsequent occupants of the houses. Thus, flowering shrubs, vegetable and rose gardens, grape arbors, pasture or animal enclosures, a fruit orchard, a children's play ground, clothes lines, outdoor fireplaces for barbecue, small sheds, and other signs of domestic use and enjoyment characterize the environs of the village.

The present appearance of the village has changed considerably from that of its earliest decades. From what can be observed in older photographs and written accounts of the area, the environment has always been somewhat customized by inhabitants according to their needs and interests. Food preparation and animal husbandry were always part of the activity at the village, but much more so in the first 30 years of occupation. In those years there were more animal sheds and barns than today; residents raised chickens, pigs, goats, cows, and horses. The Club House cook, known as the "King" or "Queen" to the boarders, relied on cows for fresh milk. Animal feed storage was the function of a number of miscellaneous small sheds no longer present today. Since horses were a need of the labor force, not a recreational pastime, their needs occupied more space in the way of pasture, barns, and blacksmith shops than after they were replaced by trucks. It also appears that in the earlier decades, when the only dwellings were the Club House and one or two cottages, there was less of a boundary between the residential areas and the shops and storage areas necessary for operating the dam and powerhouse. As more houses were added and children and wives grew in number, storage buildings and shops were removed from the residential areas for both safety and aesthetic reasons. Over time, the raw appearance of an industrial site on a desert with few or no trees, with its disorderly assemblage of wood sheds and shacks, dust and mud, and outdoor storage of equipment, has given way to an orderly scene of lush green grass and foliage reminiscent of an oasis.

Cottage 101 and Garage 281:

A. Physical History

A predecessor company built this one-story cottage in 1910; floor plans are no longer extant. (See Photo Index HABS No. 105-A for views of this house.) The earliest written description is in a report dated 1911 and states that the house is a "new five room, plastered frame house, with two baths, [and] is arranged for

officials and guests."[25] The same report mentioned only the superintendent's house and the boarding house as other residences. A photograph appearing in the same report shows the structure at an elevation somewhat higher than the other buildings in the village. The house had a good view of the canyon and the power plant below. (See Photo HABS No. 105-20 in Field Records.) The house was surrounded on its south, upstream and downstream sides by a covered porch. Gabled dormer windows on the east and west ends of the structure functioned for ventilation. A later undated photograph, probably made in the early 1920s, shows a view of the building from the north and at a higher elevation. (See Photo Index HABS No. 105-21.) It shows sheds and outbuildings behind the house situated on the downstream end of the cottage.

The property management records of Idaho Power, which were organized in 1928, describe the house as it existed in 1928 as a "frame bungalow" with eight rooms, 1 story, 38 feet long, 24 feet 3 inches wide, with an original cost of $3,198.69. Remodeling the cottage in 1955 cost $2,066.[26] This remodel was needed, in the opinion of the superintendent, because the kitchen is "so small as to be entirely inadequate," the bathroom needed cupboards, and the ceiling and walls needed to be covered with wallboard.[27] According to the monthly reports, the plans for the remodel were prepared by Idaho Power and executed by a building contractor. The remodel began on March 26 and consisted of replacing windows, erecting new partitions inside the house, and placing new ceiling joists and wallboard. Re-wiring the house had not been included in the contractor's bid materials, so Swan Falls employees re-wired the house themselves. Most of the porch was removed and a new lawn started in its place. Employees installed concrete steps.

Shortly after the contractor completed the remodel, employees discovered that termites infested several sills running the length of the structure. These had to be removed and treated, a project that required excavating additional crawl space. The remaining part of the porch, which rested on posts, had to be raised and a concrete foundation run. Some of the siding on the house had to be removed and replaced. After this was done, an

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[25] (Unnamed) general manager, Idaho-Oregon Light and Power Co., "Report to William and Sinclair Mainland, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on The Property of the Swan Falls Power Company, Idaho," April 12, 1911, page 12. Idaho Power Records Center, Boise, Idaho, Box 2-5354.

[26] Property Records.

[27] Monthly Report, September 1951.

exterminator treated the house with chlordane.[28]

B: Historical Context

Visitors to the site must have been frequent during the period from 1910-1920 because of major construction work underway expanding the dam and power house. In addition, this decade saw the bankruptcy of the predecessor companies and the creation of Idaho Power Company out of the financial wreckage. These events must have generated considerable interest by agents of banks and investor groups who inspected the various power company properties.[29] At the time, Swan Falls was the largest supplier of electricity in Southwest Idaho. The building eventually housed the chief operator and became known as the Chief Operator's Cottage.

The remodel of this and other cottages in the 1950s was part of a larger post-war reconstruction program at Idaho Power facilities. Prior to the remodels at Swan Falls, similar projects had been completed at the company's Shoshone Falls and Thousand Springs power plants.[30]

C: Architectural Information

The wood frame house with horizontal wood siding has a pair of gabled dormer windows on the east and west ends of the hipped roof. The structure is clad with horizontal wood siding below the main eaves, while the dormers have wood shingle siding. After the remodel of 1955, the original appearance of the building was considerably altered by removal of the generous wrap-around porch, removal of the old siding, and replacement of windows. It is possible that the shingle siding of the present dormers is original or similar to the original. A portion of the basement is excavated and contains hot water heater and ventilation machinery. The house is rectangular in shape, except for the addition of a utility shed on the downstream side. Windows are generally 1/1 double-hung sash windows, although set-in windows in the living room have six panes. Before the remodel, the main entrance door on the south side opened to the front porch and a view of the canyon. The remodel retained the porch only on the downstream side. The door on that end had easy access to the garage and seems to have become the most-used entrance to the

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[28] Monthly Reports, March through December, 1955.

[29] Susan M. Stacy, Legacy of Light, A History of the Idaho Power Company (Boise: Idaho Power Company, 1991), chapters One through Three.

[30] Current News, December 1949.

house, although concrete steps still serve the south-facing door from the living room. Above the door is a gabled canopy overhead, braced to the side of the house and similar to gabled canopies over doorways on other houses in the village. Roof is of wood shingle, installed in September 1961 by an Idaho Power mobile work crew.

The interior offers a simple and basic floor plan typical of bungalow living. Front entry is directly into the living room, with kitchen and dining areas in one direction and two bedrooms and bathroom in the other. The 1955 remodel created new room partitions. Arched openings off the living room are straight, parallel to the ceiling, with a beveled corner; doors and windows have plain wood moldings. The cottage has an oak floor, installed in 1960 in the living room, hall, and bedrooms, although in recent years these have been carpeted. The kitchen cupboards below the counter (as seen in Photo No. A-6 in Photo Index) follow the plans drawn for a set of cottages built in 1936 and 1937. Fixtures in the kitchen and bathrooms have been regularly upgraded, although the lion's foot tub may be among the remains of the original building. Swan Falls-made heaters were used for space heating.

A 20' x 40' detached two-compartment garage (Building #281), wood frame with horizontal wood siding, concrete footings, and a metal roof is to the north of the house and will be removed. Built in 1939, it replaced a smaller one in existence in 1928.

Cottages 181 and 191:

A. Physical history

Cottage 181 was built in 1918, just as Idaho Power Company completed a major expansion and upgrading of the power plant. Cottage 191, based on the same floor plan, was built the next year. Original plans are not extant. (See Photo Index HABS No. 105-B and HABS No. 105-C respectively.) The new cottages undoubtedly represented a general improvement in housing opportunities necessary to retain good management and a reliable crew in the canyon. The 1928 property management report states that each structure was 12 feet x 40 feet, with double-walled 1" x 12" sheathing.[31]

The cottages were remodeled in 1937 with new "tub, lavatory, WD closet combination, plumbing and wiring." A concrete foundation for 181 was added in 1941. Three years later a new bedroom was added to each building "complete with doors, windows, and

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[31] Property Records.

wiring."[32]

In 1950 the houses were enlarged again with the addition of 300 new square feet, apparently by the crew rather than a contractor. Reconstruction plans dated November 1949 show a basement plan, a new floor plan, and kitchen cabinet details. The monthly report for January 1950 states that for Cottage 181 the "work of applying SHEETROCK...is proving to be more of a job than anticipated as the ceiling joists are too far apart to give proper support, and some 1" x 4" strips must be nailed on to give support to the SHEETROCK." Used flooring from another cottage was used for this purpose. After this work was done, "interior decorating," repainting inside and out, and the installation of a ventilator in the basement was accomplished, and the shingles stained as time permitted.[33] Ceiling insulation was added in 1955.[34]

Both houses were located below a slope, across the road and upstream of the Club House. A low rock wall which had been built to keep the slope from caving off onto the back walls of the houses had been removed to make room for the construction of the new additions. This was rebuilt when the remodel was completed.

The remodel history of Cottage 191 is similar to that of Cottage 181: kitchen sink, "WD closet combination and lavatory" installed in 1937, a new bedroom complete with doors, windows, and wiring in 1944, and the addition of 300 square feet in 1950. The 1950 remodel began with the removal of the boulders behind the cottage. The existing bedroom and washroom were torn down to make way for reconstruction. Freezing weather and the large size of some of the boulders delayed the work. Since there was also no foundation under the building, this was installed. While excavating the basement, the crew had to blast some of the boulders because they were so large. Others were winched out intact. While doing this, they found an old 3" cast iron line running under the new space at an angle. After they determined that the pipe was not irrigation or water pipe, "it was finally decided to build up the south wall wide enough to include the whole pipe...only a few feet of wall will have to be widened. By using large rocks plastered up with concrete, it will not require much additional cement. As the pipe is located about half way, or 4 feet down, the upper 4 feet of wall can be only 6" thick."[35]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Monthly Reports, January through November, 1950.

[34] Property Records.

[35] Monthly Report, February 1950.

The episode is typical of the practical management of construction by the crew at Swan Falls. Eventually, the basement walls and floor were poured.

The superintendent reported that the remodel of this cottage went faster than 181's "due to experience." The roof and chimney were installed. Treatment of interior walls was "painting and kalsomining." SHEETROCK was installed in all of the new parts of the house, the plumbing rearranged and moved, and the water tank moved to the basement. By June of 1950, all that remained to do was to paint the new part of the kitchen, "decorate" the bathroom and hallway, apply SHEETROCK in one bedroom, apply half of the new siding, and install a ventilator in the basement. The requisition of a spray paint outfit later in the summer speeded up the painting and "paid for itself in the time saved."[36] In December, the rock wall behind the house was rebuilt to protect the house from the caving-in of the slope above it.[37]

The 1955 termite invasion of Cottage 101 inspired the employees to examine the other cottages. In January 1956, Cottage 181 was found infested. Since there was no crawl space under one of the rooms to provide access, the crew excavated a window well and broke a hole in the foundation to give access. They removed several truckloads of dirt to expose joists and sills and provide room for spraying with chlordane.[38]

Later in 1956, the decking around the sinks in the kitchen were found to be badly deteriorating because of leakage around the sink rims. It was torn out and new decking built, with "a better type of sink frame" used together with a "vinylyte covering and water proof cement."[39]

B. Historical Context

These new houses represented the first major residential facility added to the village by the Idaho Power Company after it was created from the merger of the predecessor companies. They were small, functional, utterly without frills. However, their numerous remodels and enlargements indicate a continuing adaptation by the company to the domestic needs of its employees. The new spaces added after 1950 were a response to the fact that Idaho Power employees were having children and needed additional

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[36]Monthly Report, September 1950.

[37]Monthly Reports, January through November, 1950.

[38]Monthly Report, January 1956.

[39]Monthly Report, April 1956.

bedroom area.

C. Architectural Information

The photographs of these cottages reveal that the 1950 remodel added new space to the rear of each building, the side that abutted the slope to the north. The north side of the gable roof was extended and the hillside in the rear cut back to make room. Most of the windows are characteristic 1/1 double-hung sash, with set-in windows consisting of eight panes. In the front of the houses on the south side, the gable roof was extended to form a wide canopy over the front door, a concrete stoop, and the living room windows. A door on the gable end of either building has a flat sloped canopy over the door and its stoop. Each building has two doors, the main entrance facing the river, and a side door on the downstream side of the house.

The interior plan and fixtures of these cottages are nearly identical. The front door enters the living room. Entry to the two bedrooms and bathrooms is towards the upstream side, while access to the dining area and kitchen are toward the rear and downstream side. Interior photographs of Cottage 191 are representative of both cottages. The view out of the kitchen windows (Photo No. C-5 in Photo Index) supply a detailed look at the rock wall at the back of each house. In general, bedrooms were originally built without closets, so later remodels built cupboard or cabinet-style closets as a feature of interior redecoration.

A detached wood frame storage shed, clad in vertical board siding, is located at the upstream side of Cottage 191. It will be removed along with other similar outbuildings around the houses in the village. Constructed by one of the occupants of the house, date unknown, the shed rests on a concrete foundation. A short concrete ramp provides entry to the shed door.

Cottage 231: (Known as "Superintendent's Cottage".)

A. Physical history

A 1911 photograph of the village shows the superintendent's cottage somewhat higher in elevation than the Club House, but lower than Cottage 101, the original guest house. (See Photo Index HABS No. 105-20.) According to the 1911 report, of which this photograph was a part, "A five room plastered frame house with two baths accommodates the plant superintendent."[40] The photograph shows the house with the axis of its gable roof

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[40] "Report to William and Sinclair Mainland," p. 12. See Note 12 for full citation.

parallel to the river, a covered porch on the south side supported with wooden posts. The house was built on a pad amended with fill to provide a flat construction space. A rock wall supported it. This house burned down in 1921. None of the available sources explain the cause of the fire.

In 1923 a new house was built upon the same foundation as the old. (See Photo Index HABS No. 105-D for views of this house.) Sewer and water were available, according to an article in Electrikat, the company's monthly magazine. The main part of the house was to cover the same space as the former 2-story house, but additional room was to be provided by adding large porches with glassed in sections.[41] Plans for this house are available. The property management record describes it as a seven-room frame bungalow, one story, 32 feet by 38 feet. Built-ins were installed in the kitchen in 1929, ceiling insulation in 1955 and again in 1977.[42] Typical upgrades in the 1950s included painting and kalsomining, repair of loose plaster, and "interior decoration." In September 1950 the kitchen was being remodeled, new plumbing and a new sink installed. By October, it was "fully modern and very convenient," according to the superintendent's report. A ceiling-high cabinet was installed in the utility room to replace open shelves; similar work was done in the bathroom. The supports on the front porch had been weakened when the new sink plumbing required cutting into the floor joists, so new shoring was provided.[43]

In 1954, some of the sewer line to the house was replaced. It had been "choking steadily for years. Trouble may stem from time a house burned on this spot...some evidence that sewage burned to that section that is on or near the surface..." New asphalt base paper shingles were applied to the roof in June 1954.[44]

During the termite infestation, some were found at Cottage 231. A new concrete wall was built along the riverfront side of the cottage to prevent any wood from coming into contact with the ground. Concrete steps replaced the wooden ones, and all was sprayed with chlordane.

Later modifications were identified as typical maintenance jobs - new roofing over the porch, new fixtures, "remodeling" in preparation for new occupants, new kitchen and other appliances,

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[41] Electrikat, May 1923, p. 40.

[42] Property Records.

[43] Monthly Reports, March though October, 1950.

[44] Monthly Reports, February and June, 1954.

new sink, repainting, new kitchen counter tops. In 1980, the floor and subfloor were replaced.[45]

B. Historical Context

As the traditional home of the superintendent, this cottage was the site of ceremonial gatherings, Christmas parties, and other celebrations in the village. Considerably larger than the other cottages at 50 feet by 32 feet, this was the only practical place for such congregations. This is the only cottage with space identified on the plans for an "office," in recognition of the duties of the superintendent requiring file storage, conferences, personnel management, and other administrative work.

C. Architectural Information

Two floor plans are extant, the original dated 1923 and one labeled as a reconstruction dated November 1947. In comparing the original plans with recent photographs, it is clear that this cottage retains more of its original appearance than the others so far mentioned. The gable roof, with its axis parallel to the river, has a generous eave on all sides of the house, and is supported by triangular knee braces on the gable ends. Exposed rafter tails definitely indicate the influence of the Craftsman (bungalow) style popular when the cottage was built. On the front side facing the river, a shed dormer with three rectangular windows adds interest to the building. The gable ends are sheathed with shingle siding, while the rest of the structure has horizontal siding. Aside from this detail, the house has no other exterior elaboration. The cottage has a generous complement of windows, with 12 on the front, four to six on each end, and five in the back, all double-hung sash with 1/1. (The original 1923 design showed 6/6 or 3/1 windows, more typical of the Bungalow style.) The exterior photos show the remodel additions to the structure, one on the upstream side and one on the north side.

Interior remodels removed the details marking the 1920s period, especially the wooden posts resting on bases of bookcases used at the opening between the living and dining rooms. The floor plan was altered by rearranging interior partitions between rooms. The front porch and sleeping porch were enclosed to enlarge the front rooms of the house: a bed room and the living room. Part of the porch was made into an office, which previously had been located at the back of the house on the north side. The old office became a laundry room and part of an enlarged kitchen. There are three bedrooms today. Two doors access the house, one in the front on the south side and one on the side addition on the upstream side.

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[45]Monthly Report, November 1980.

This house was originally equipped with a coal furnace, but residents supplement it--or possibly substituted the Swan Falls space heaters for space heating. Several rooms still contain the old heaters.

On the downstream side of the cottage is a small storage shed similar to the one next to Cottage 191. (See Photo Index HABS No. 105-D-2.) The wood frame structure is clad with vertical wood siding and a slightly sloping roof.

Cottages 361, 362, 363:

A. Physical History

These three identical cottages were built in 1936-1937. They are situated three in a row just downstream of the Club House on the south side of the road. The property management record describes the cottages in 1937 as wood frame bungalows 18 feet by 24 feet with an 8 feet by 16 feet screened front porch complete with plumbing, hot water tank and fixtures. In 1941 basements were excavated, finished with concrete, and equipped with door, frame, and hardware. (See Photo Index HABS No. 105-E, F, and G for views of Cottage 361, 362, and 363 respectively.)

In 1952, a bedroom was also partitioned into the basement of Cottage 363 using NU-WOOD on the walls and ceiling.[46] Later, in 1953, part of the general construction activity in camp performed by employees was to enlarge cottages 361 and 363 by enclosing the porch and adding a bedroom onto the back, "which are badly needed," according to the superintendent. The same work was done on cottage 362 in May 1956.[47] The wooden posts supporting the porches were rotting and had to be replaced. The crew scrounged around camp and found six windows and a door that were used for the additions. Defense against termites was provided by a concrete foundation under each porch. After the jobs were completed, "It makes a very substantial addition to the cottages and appearances are much improved."[48] In 1957 the crew repaired the back porches and steps on the three cottages. Clothes closets were installed in March 1961. In 1987, rear entry porch enclosures (facing the river) were added.

B. Historical Context

Writing in August 1936, before these cottages were built, Idaho

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[46] Monthly Report, May 1952.

[47] Monthly Reports, September 1953 and May 1956.

[48] Monthly Reports, September through December 1953.

Power chief engineer Hank Sengar wrote that there were 10 cottages at Swan Falls. Family life was already emerging as a characteristic of the place, and in January of 1938, after the three new cottages were added, the first school at Swan Falls had one teacher and seven children. The children were from three families. Their photograph published in the company's Current Bulletin does not make it clear which cottage was used as the school house.[49] In 1939 the Bulletin reported at least three charivaris for just-married Swan Falls crew members, a promise of yet more children to come. The company responded to the need for more married employees, built the cottages at the absolute minimum size, and then enlarged them when it was expedient to do so.

C. Architectural Information

The original cottages were enlarged by attaching shed-roofed extensions to the back. The gable roof, with its axis parallel to the river, is supported by triangular knee braces and the eaves show exposed false rafter tails. The gable ends are clad with vertical siding, while the main walls have horizontal wood siding. Window treatment was modest, with eight-paned set-in windows in the new enclosed front porches and 6/1 double-hung sash windows elsewhere. One door accesses the front side facing the road, and a second faces the river at the rear. A recent resident of Cottage 363 built a sloping metal canopy over the rear door, but the other two cottages are sheltered only by an eave.

Inside the cottages, the original location of the porch is apparent because the front door and windows of the original wall were left in place. (See Photo No. E-5 in Photo Index.) As is typical of all Swan Falls cottages, the house is compact, with plain moldings around doorways and windows. Bathrooms have the minimum accoutrements and use a metal ring suspended from the ceiling for a shower curtain. The cottages each have one bedroom on the first floor, with basement space available for an additional bedroom.

As mentioned earlier, recent occupants felt the need for additional storage space and installed small sheds at the rear of each building. Similar to others in the village, these wood frame buildings have vertical siding and low-angle gabled roofs. The sheds are visible in Photo Index HABS No. 105-E-3 and 4, F-3 and F, and G-3 and 4. The photographer had to retake photo E-3 a few weeks after the others of Cottage 361. In the interim, the occupant moved the shed to his house in the new village. The

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[49] Hank Sengar, "The Swan Falls Power Plant," Idaho Power Bulletin, August 1936, page 1-2; and Bulletin, January 1938.

photo therefore shows the side of the shed in Photo E-4, but only the concrete foundation pad in E-3.

Garage, Building 393:

This six-bay garage was built in 1939. At the time, the village consisted of at least 13 cottages. None of them had been built with their own garages, so employees who had their own automobiles had to leave them on the street, an unpopular option. The company obliged by building this and other garages in the village. Plans for the garage are not extant. (See Photo Index HABS No. 105-H for views of the garage.)

The wood frame structure with horizontal wood siding is 20 feet by 56 feet, has concrete footings and a metal roof. Each compartment is 9 feet 4 inches by twenty feet. A single "China hat" type exterior light fixture is positioned in the center of the front side. On the upstream side of the building, a resident has attached metal pipes to support a grape arbor.

Club House, Building 011

A. Physical History

The Club House was built in 1901 to house the permanent operating crew at Swan Falls Dam. For views see Photo Index HABS No. ID-105-I.) This building was occupied by single men working at the power plant. It was run by a cook and manager hired by Idaho Power on contract. The cook often had a family and was entitled to two rooms at the Club House; later, some cooks lived in a vacant cottage at the camp if there was one available. The cook "shall have entire charge of said Club House," read the contract, "and be in charge of dusting, making the beds, laundry of linen." The cook had full charge of the refrigeration plant and bought groceries and supplies.[50]

The property records indicate a continuing history of improvements and changes to the house as the company and its occupants repainted, modernized, and redecorated from time to time. In 1925 a major improvement took place when a York refrigeration and cold storage plant was installed in the basement. This plant was complete with cooling coils, a heavy cork-lined cooler, a storage room, ice plant, and an ice house. It cost $2,324.68. Photo Index HABS No. 105-I-4 shows the coils

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[50] "Agreement between Idaho Power Company and E.E. Terry for Maintaining Rooming and Boarding Facilities at Swan Falls Power Plant," December 1939, Idaho Power Records Center, Box 3266.

and part of the cooler.[51] In February of 1955, the ammonia from the compressor was leaking and noticeable on the upper floors. Venting caused the condenser to freeze solid. This stripped the threads on the bolts securing the end plates. The company shut down the old York system and replaced it with an 11 cubic foot food freezer.[52]

In 1937 a new five-foot bathtub and fittings were installed. The next year the sleeping porch on the rear--the side facing the reservoir--was glassed in. The partitions in the attic and the steel fire ladders that extend from the attic dormers were constructed in 1941. The electrical hot water heaters, wash machines, ranges and other appliances in the Club House were upgraded and enlarged a number of times. However, a heavy duty Edison range installed in 1931 is still a dominant feature of the kitchen and occasionally in use today.

Likewise, the furnishings in the Club House, purchased and owned by Idaho Power, have been replaced during periodic remodels. The inventory of furnishings in 1959 included assorted wood tables, benches, buffet, "Oregon Trail easy chairs," straight backed chairs, beds and bedding, storage chests (that still contain blankets and bedding), small tables and chests for the bedrooms, china closet, and one rocking chair. Cast-off furniture from the cottages often ended up in the Club House.[53]

In 1957 Mrs. Davidson, the cook, retired. Ted Heikes, the superintendent of power plants at the time, evaluated the situation and concluded that unless one of the wives at the camp were willing to take on the job, "it will no longer be possible to provide eating facilities for personnel." There were only three boarders left. Monthly costs for another cook to provide the service would be $650, but the three boarders would only pay $50 each per month. The era of the Club House King--or Queen, in the case of women cooks--ended.[54]

The crew routinely undertook general improvements such as repainting, installing new ventilating fans in the attic, repair of windows and window screens, and refinishing floors. A 1955 "remodel" mentioned lining one of the first-floor bedrooms with NU-WOOD, reframing and refitting the back door, laying new

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[51] Property Records.

[52] Monthly Reports, February 1955.

[53] Property Records.

[54] Ted Heikes to H.B. Eddy, May 18, 1956, Idaho Power Records Center, Box 5266, File "651 Swan Falls PP--General.

linoleum over a freshly sanded floor, replacing a rotted post on the corner of the porch.[55] The termites of 1956 hit the back porch, where a concrete foundation replaced the rotten wood and concrete steps were provided to the back door.[56] New windows were installed in 1963.

B. Historical Context

Boarding houses were a common solution to employee housing at isolated sites all over the West. Mining and timber companies also provided this type of housing, a practical method for housing all-male and mostly single crews. For over fifty years, the Club House served this function. In 1951 the Swan Falls plant superintendent wrote to his superior, "Because of the difficulty of keeping single men in the camp and the expense of operating the boarding house, it would seem worthwhile to redesign the Club House and make it into a duplex, leaving one room on the third floor for single men, who could board with one of the families."[57] The company did not act upon his suggestion, but rather proceeded to build Cottage 521 the next year.

Nevertheless, the Club House continued to be used by visitors, mobile construction crews, and occasional single men. In 1984 a team of biologists stayed at the Club House during several weeks of field work in the Snake River canyon. The residents of Swan Falls hold parties and meetings in the building.

C. Architectural Information

The two-story building has a third-floor attic that was partitioned into two bedrooms. The wood frame building has horizontal wood siding and a hipped roof composed of wood shingles. The upstream and downstream ends of the building have gabled dormers. These each have a large 1/1 double hung sash window on the front. Above the window is wood shingle siding arranged in a crescent curve. A metal fire escape ladder leads from the dormer to the ground.

On the front of the building facing the road is a one-story front entry porch, screened on the upstream side and covered on the downstream side. Within the porch, one door leads to the kitchen and another into the pantry. On the rear is a sleeping porch on the first floor, also roofed with a shed gable. It was originally open, but was enclosed and converted to use as living quarters

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[55] Monthly Reports, January 1955.

[56] Monthly Reports, September 1957.

[57] Monthly Reports, June 1951.

for the cook's family. The bank of three 6/9 double hung sash windows on the downstream end of this porch and a bank of four 4/6 on the back have all been painted shut. A steel fire escape ladder provides exit from a second floor window across the porch roof and down to the ground. The rear porch siding is of several unmatching widths, most horizontal, some vertical, indicating a history of ad hoc repair with materials at hand. One window is boarded up.

Wood doors provide access to the building on the front and rear of the building. A concrete stair leads down to an entry into the basement on the downstream side. Windows on the second story are located directly above a similar window on the first floor. On the front, there is one on either end and a double bank in the center. In the rear, a double bank is on either end and a single one in the center. On the upstream side, there is a pair close to the front of the building and a single window closer to the rear. On the downstream side, one window is on the side near the front porch, and one other towards the rear porch. All windows are 1/1 double hung sash with plain wood casings and simple wood crown.

Several original interior features of the building are notable because they present more decorative details than any of the cottages. Of particular notice is the wooden lathe-worked bannister and posts. See Photo Index HABS No. 105-I-5 through I-7. Wide wooden doorway moldings on both the first and second floors offer interesting detail with a toothed motif at the top corners. The four bedrooms on the second floor were large enough to accommodate two people. Plenty of light enters each room from generous windows. Swan Falls space heaters replaced original wood stoves in the rooms. Most of the wood floors are covered with linoleum. A brick chimney that rises through the center of the building takes a slanting course in the attic. Two full bathrooms serve the building, one each on the first and second floor.

Cottage 521

A. Physical History

This cottage was built in 1952. The contractor cost of $12,065.07 included the water system, sewer system, insulation, and light fixtures. An electric furnace was installed in 1979.[58] As space was somewhat constricted in the main part of the village, this house was situated higher up on the hill.

During construction of the house, the superintendent noted progress in his monthly reports. The cellar was excavated in May along with the ditches for the water and sewer lines. He observed

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[58] Property Records.

that there was no need to haul gravel from the south side of the river as there was sufficient on the north side. In June the subflooring was laid, the sides sheathed, and the shingling begun. The contractor used the company bulldozer to level a lawn area 20 feet all around the house. In July plastering had begun, and the chimney was half done. In August the hardwood flooring was laid. Everything was done except for plumbing and lighting fixtures and doors. Work slowed down and the contractor finished in early 1953. The occupant designated for the house lived in Kuna and commuted from there to the dam site while waiting for the house to be finished. Each day he hauled a load of top soil or fertilizer for the lawn. He moved in on February 5, 1953.[59]

In subsequent years, "remodels" took place to spruce up the house for new occupants, and the usual maintenance work was done. The roof needed repair in 1958, new flooring was installed in 1969. In 1979 an electric furnace was installed.

B. Historical Context

This house was the last of the residential cottages built at Swan Falls until the five new cottages erected in 1992. It represents the Idaho Power Company's ability to accommodate the entire crew at the plant with their families. By 1952 the severe isolation at the site had diminished considerably because of improvements in road access to the site, better transportation, and better telephone communications. Travel to schools, hospitals, and to town for entertainment and supplies became much easier.

This house is the only cottage that is not planned for removal in 1993. The crew member who is living there, an employee now in his fifties, expressed a preference to remain where he is rather than move to one of the houses at the new village. His superiors agreed to this arrangement and also felt that even after he retires, an extra residence might be useful in the event that the company decides that an additional crew member or other employee is needed at the site in the future.

C. Architectural Information

Cottage 521 is a modest wood frame building with horizontal wood siding. The gable roof has wood shingles and exposed rafter tails. (For view see Photo Index HABS No. ID-105-8 and 19.) The gable axis of the one-story house is parallel to the river, with its front entrance facing the river. The front door is served with a concrete stoop and five steps. Above the door is a small gabled canopy, with knee braces on the side of the house and similar in style to the gabled canopies found on other houses in

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[59]Monthly Report, 1952-1953.

the village. Another door offers access on the upstream end of the house and also has a concrete stoop and small gabled canopy. The windows are 2/2 double-hung sash with plain moldings. A plywood patio roof attached on the north side provides cover for an automobile and other household items. On the upstream end of the house is a small plywood storage shed on a concrete pad built by the Swan Falls operating crew.

Conclusion

Although none of the Swan Falls cottages are intact as examples of original architectural design, the Village represents a continuing and functioning residential complex for employees required to work at this isolated location. Wood frame structures were enlarged and improved as conditions warranted; the crew members themselves performed most maintenance and remodeling tasks. The landscaping around the houses and the addition of sheds, animal pens, gardens, arbors, orchards, playgrounds, a boat dock and other resident-made improvements converted the houses to homes.

The residential function exists today and will continue even after these structures have been removed. Five employees and their families will continue to live at Swan Falls. Even though the buildings described in this report will disappear from what employees are already describing as the "old village," the "new village" gives testimony to the concept of "continuity of use" in considering historical integrity. David R.M. White suggested this concept in an essay in Hydroelectric Development in the United States, 1880-1940, a context study prepared by the Edison Electric Institute in 1991.[60]

Idaho Power is an investor-owned utility, and, as such, has always had to justify its expenditures to shareowners, board members, and lending institutions. The company also had to be pragmatic about supplying housing in order to retain competent workers at its dam sites. The history of each of the cottages follows a similar pattern: it began small, was enlarged as the need warranted, was modernized gradually, and was "redecorated" many times over as occupants came and went. The pattern shows a concern with cost-effectiveness, a concern possibly shared by employees who were themselves shareowners. Living arrangements were comfortable, but without the slightest appearance of luxury. The situation encouraged in the residents a spirit of self-

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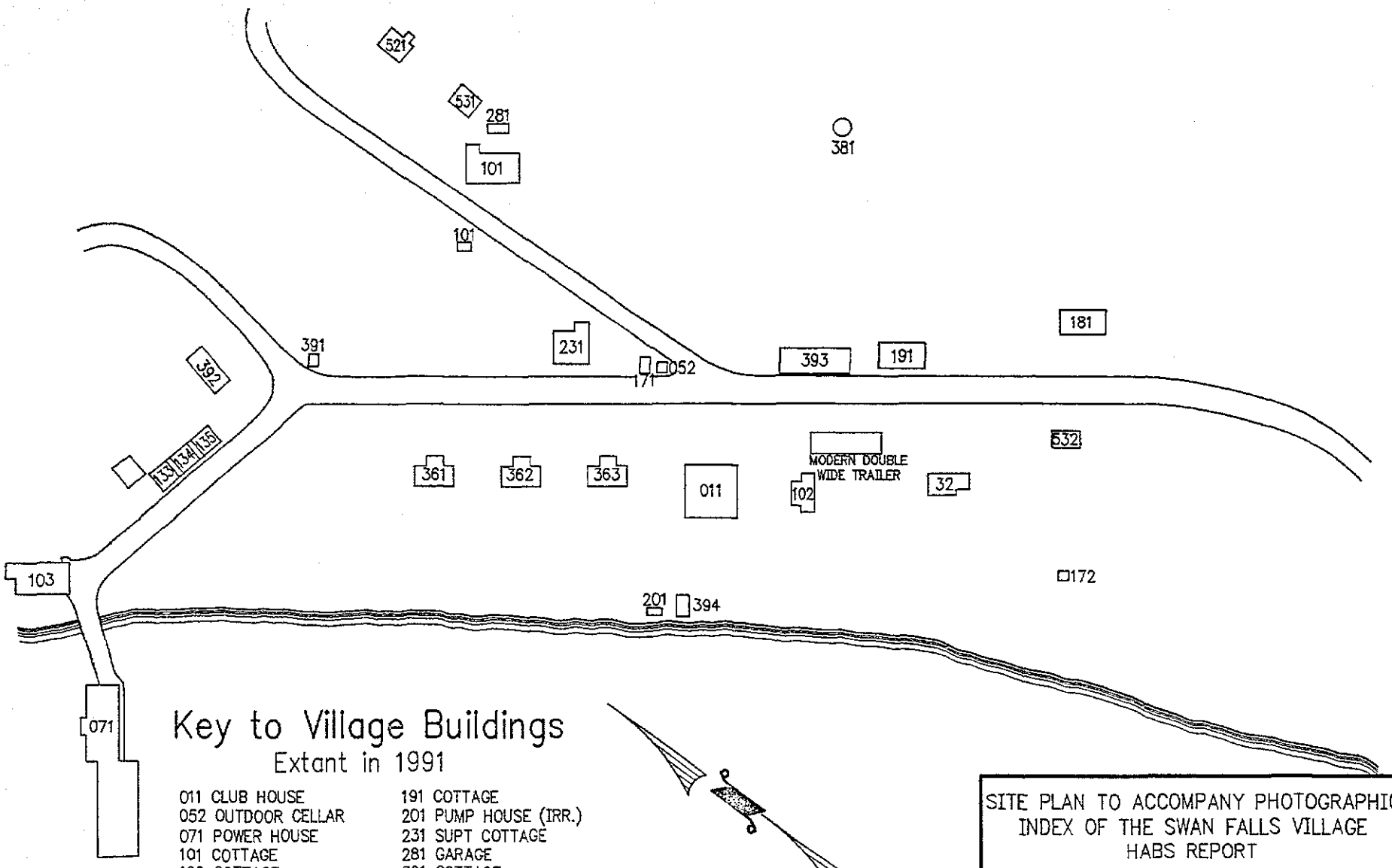
[60] See "Appendix B: Continuity of Use: A Potential Approach to the Management of Historic Hydroelectric Facilities," in Duncan Hay, Hydroelectric Development in the United States, 1880-1940 (Washington, D.C.: Edison Electric Institute, 1991), p. 151-160.

reliance, re-use of available materials, a sense of company pride, and the creative adaptation of available space for creating a home in the canyon.

Project Information:

Construction of a new powerhouse at Swan Falls and the installation of high-efficiency turbines will negatively impact living conditions at the Swan Falls Village, a place eligible for consideration for nomination to the National Historic Register. The present plans of Idaho Power call for the removal of Cottages 101, 181, 191, 231, 361, 362, and 363; Garages 393, 281, and 531; and a public rest room. The Club House and Cottage 521 will remain. In pursuit of Article 404 of the FERC order in License for Project 503-006, Idaho Power consulted with the Idaho State Preservation Office and the National Park Service in order to arrive at a mitigation plan. The plan is set forth in a Memorandum of Agreement among the three parties entitled "Disposition Option and Implementation Schedule for Mitigation of Adverse Effects to Historic Structures at Swan Falls Village (FERC Project No. 503)," and dated September 10, 1991. The plan requires that Idaho Power prepare photographic and historical documentation of several of the buildings in the Historical American Buildings Survey format. In 1992 Idaho Power contracted with Brent Smith to prepare the photographic documentation and Susan M. Stacy to prepare the narrative documentation and index to photos. This report was prepared under the guidance of Dr. Mark Druss, cultural resource officer for Idaho Power.



Key to Village Buildings

Extant in 1991

011 CLUB HOUSE
052 OUTDOOR CELLAR
071 POWER HOUSE
101 COTTAGE
102 COTTAGE
103 MACHINE SHOP
133 MATERIAL SHED
134 CARPENTER SHOP
135 MATERIAL SHED
171 CONCRETE CELLAR
172 DOMESTIC WELL
173 WATER TANK
191 COTTAGE
201 PUMP HOUSE (IRR.)
231 SUPT COTTAGE
281 GARAGE
361 COTTAGE
362 COTTAGE
363 COTTAGE
381 WATER TANK
391 HOSE HOUSE
392 GARAGE (4CAR)
393 GARAGE (6CAR)
394 BOAT HOUSE

SITE PLAN TO ACCOMPANY PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX OF THE SWAN FALLS VILLAGE HABS REPORT

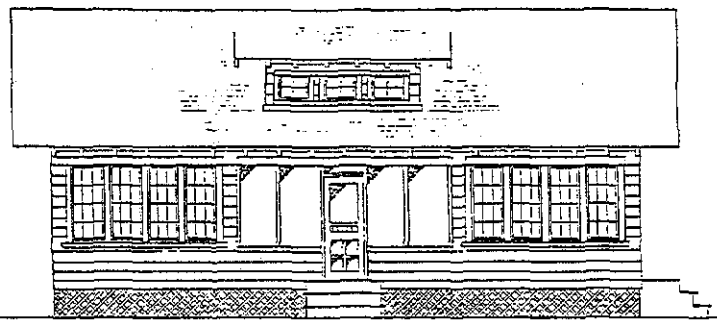
HABS No.ID-105

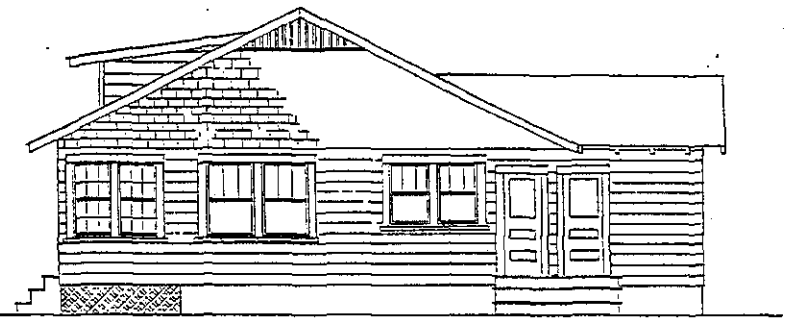
IDAHO POWER COMPANY
BOISE, IDAHO

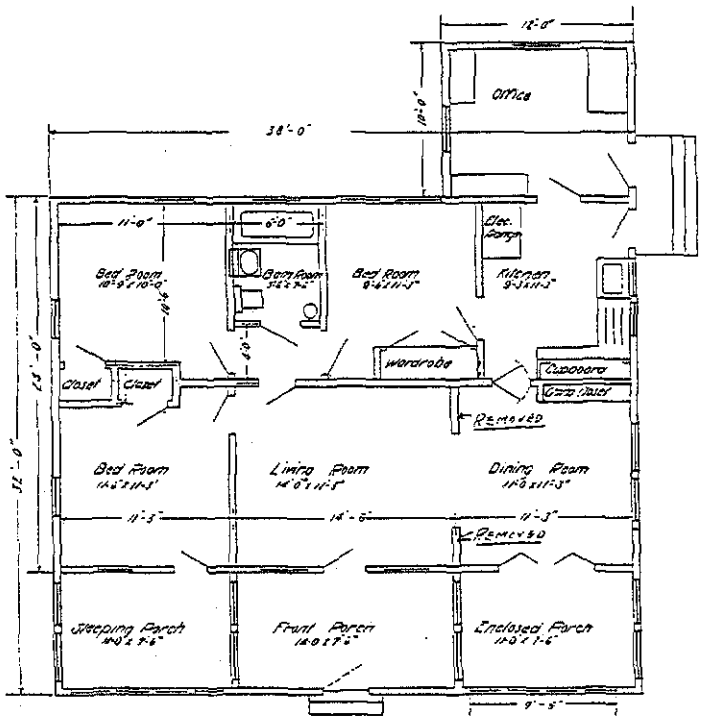
SCALE: NONE DATE: 9-21-92

DS. SS
DR. VDO

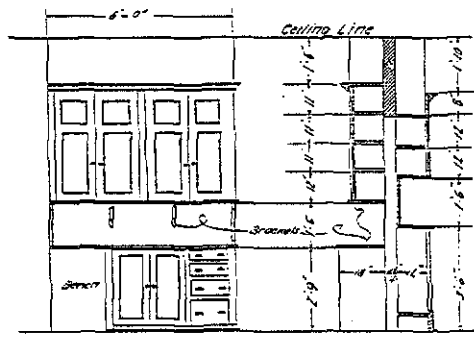
CADA988



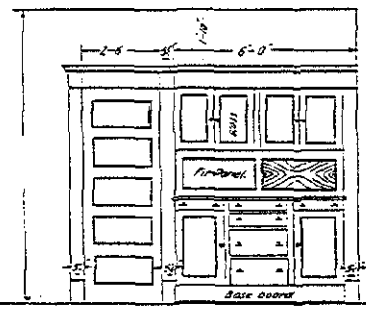




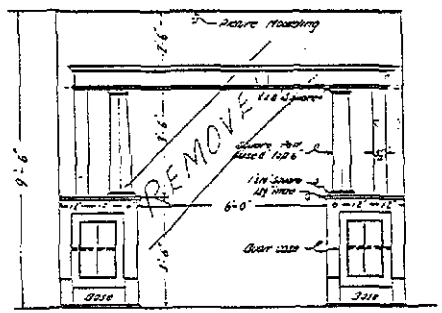
PLAN



ELEVATION KITCHEN CUPBOARD.



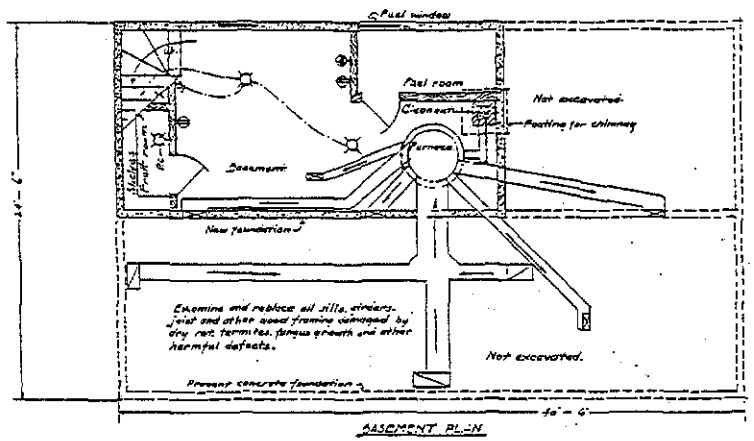
SWING DOOR ELEVATION CHINA CLOSET

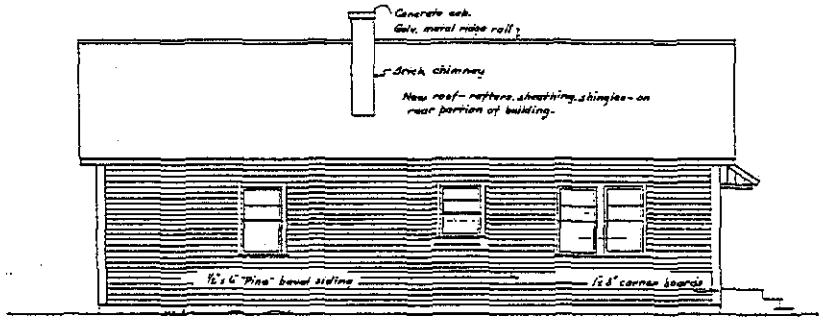


ELEVATION OF OPENING BETWEEN LIVING AND DINING ROOM
ELEVATION ON LIVING ROOM SIDE

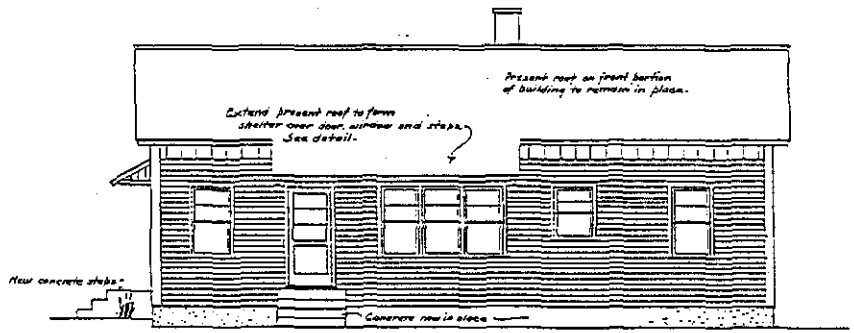
Approved
Ch. Engr.

Swan Falls Development Chief Operators Cottage	
Idaho Power Co. Boise - Idaho. Scale 1"=1'-0" May. 1923.	20-D-1647.

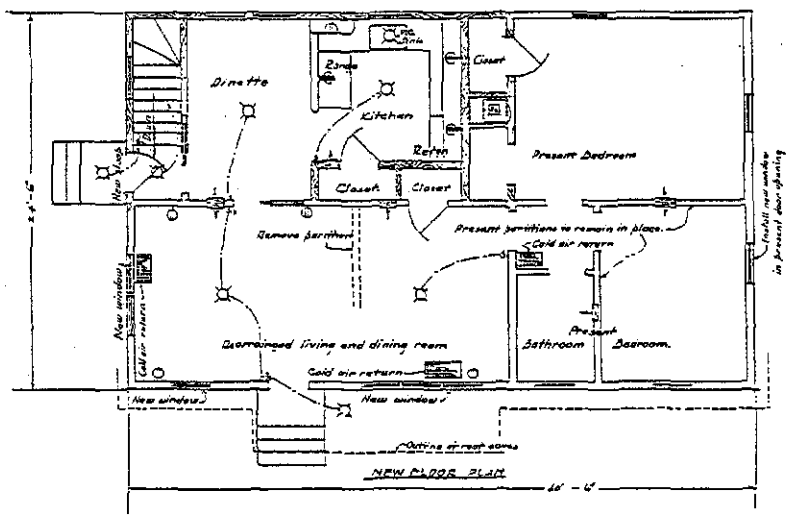




Note - all corner boards to be 1x8 and to be sawn. Kerfed lengthwise on the back. Fit closely with 1/4" between butts well nailed in place with the 1/2" bevel siding butt jointed against them.

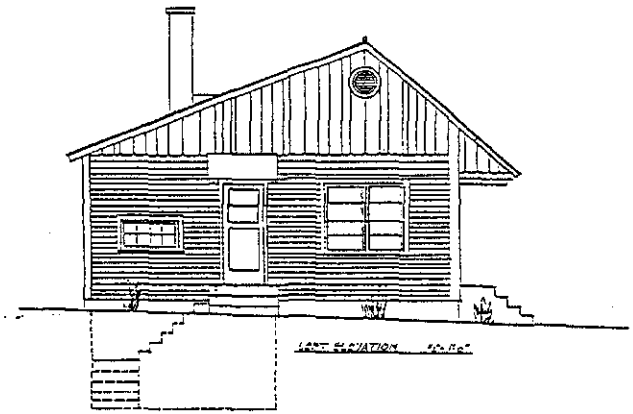


Note -
Remove all present 1" battens, corner boards, examine all wall sheathing and renail where required, cover with one layer of asphalt building paper before applying the pine beveled siding.

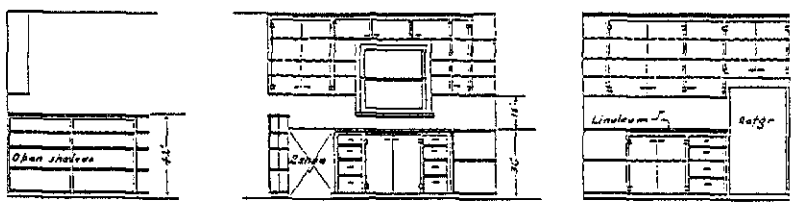


SWAN FALLS H.E. DEV. OPERATORS COTTAGES - 101-191 RECONSTRUCTION	
IDAHO POWER CO. BOISE, IDAHO	
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"	DATE Nov 25-1949
DR. R.C.W. / CH. / CK.	APPROVED TRN
1 of 2	D-8842

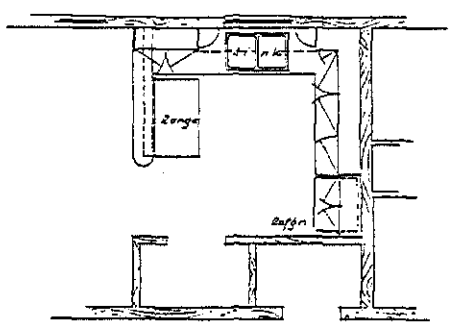
SWAN FALLS VILLAGE
HABS No. ID-105 (Page 31)



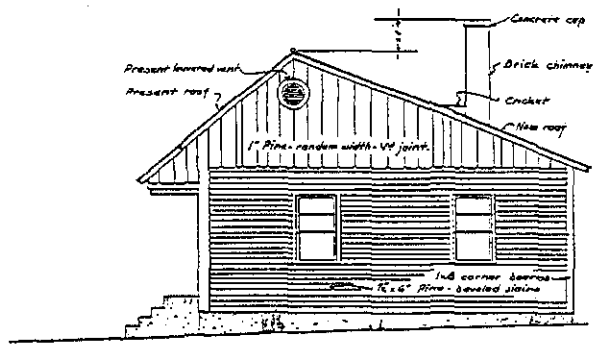
LEFT ELEVATION



ELEVATION -C- ELEVATION -A- ELEVATION -L-



KITCHEN CABINET DETAILS



RIGHT ELEVATION

SWAN FALLS VILLAGE
HABS No. ID-105 (Page 32)

SWAN FALLS H.E. DEV.
OPERATOR'S COTTAGES -181-191
RECONSTRUCTION

IDAHO POWER CO.
BOISE, IDAHO

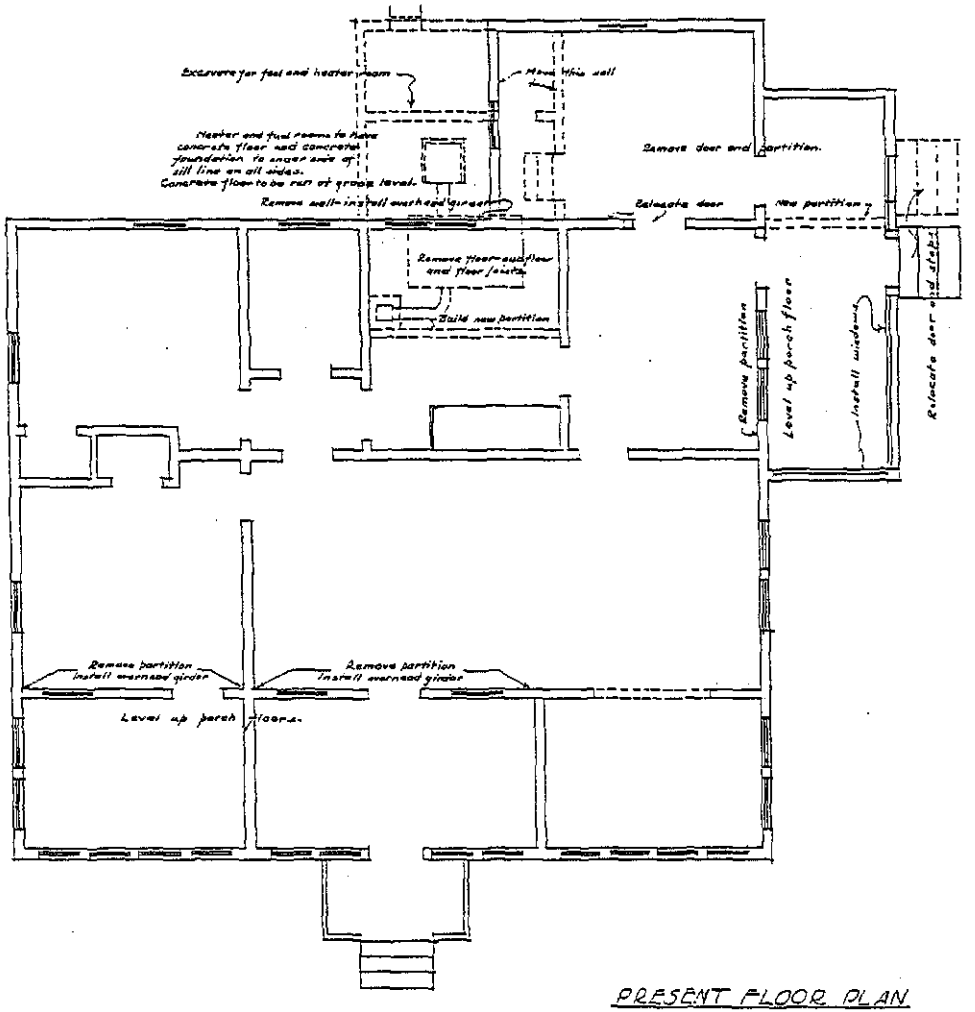
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0" DATE Nov. 25-1949

APPROVED

4 of 4

D-8842

12-1



PRESENT FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

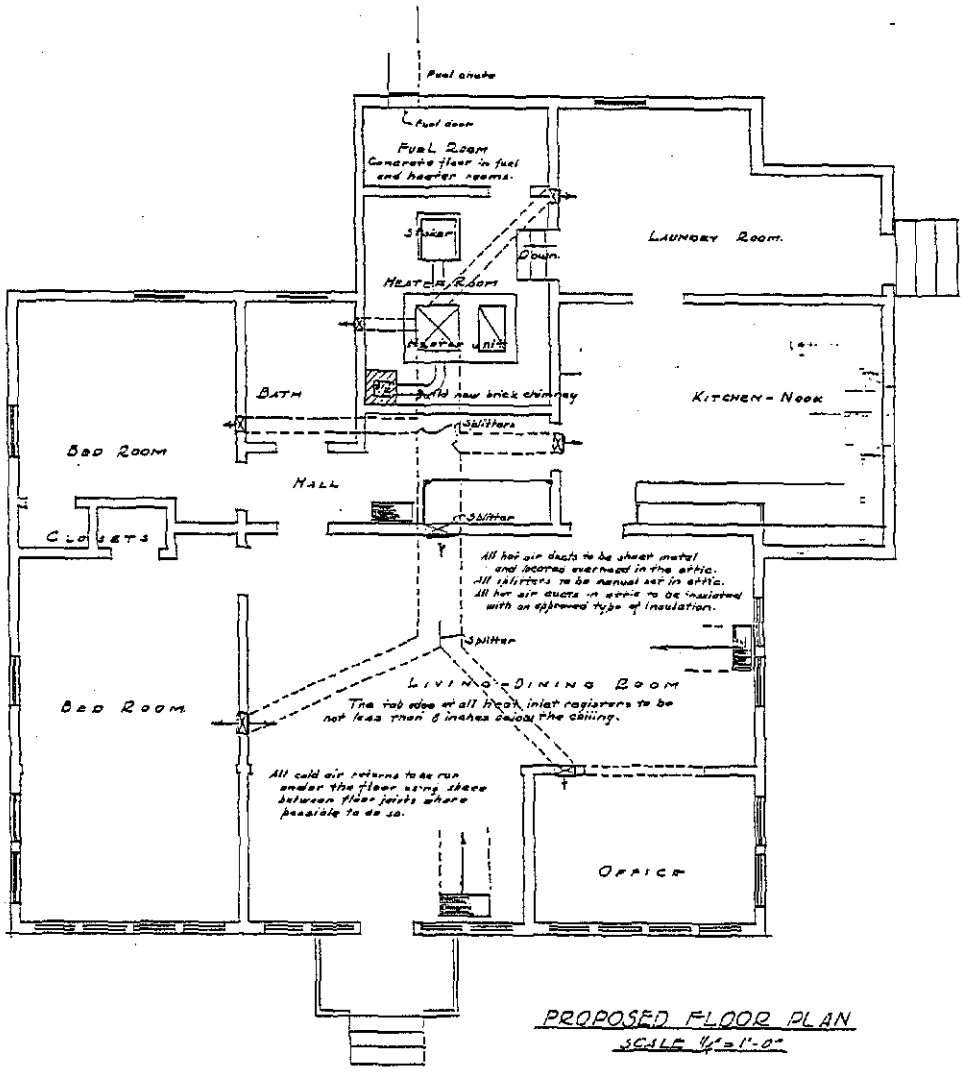
SWAN FALLS VILLAGE
HABS No. ID-105 (Page 33)

SWAN FALLS H.E.DEV.
CHIEF OPERATOR'S COTTAGE
RECONSTRUCTION

Idaho Power Company
Boise Idaho

Scale: as shown			Nov. 1947
Dr. 2CW	Approved	Sheet 1 of 2	C-7161
Tr. 2CW			
Chk.			

SEP 4 1992



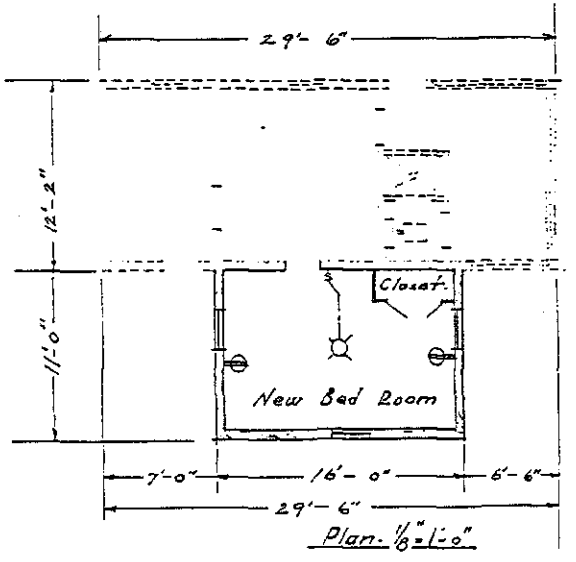
PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

SWAN FALLS H.E.DEV.
CHIEF OPERATOR'S COTTAGE
RECONSTRUCTION

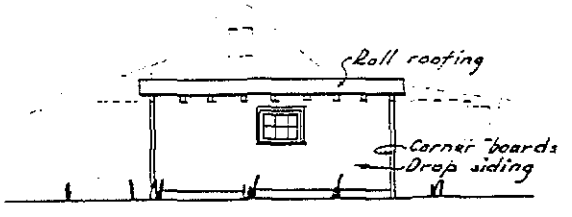
Idaho Power Company
Boise Idaho.

Scales as shown			Nov. 1947
Dr. RCW.	Approved	Sheet 2 of 2	C-7161
Tr. RCW.			
Chk.			

SWAN FALLS VILLAGE
HABS No. ID-105 (Page 34)

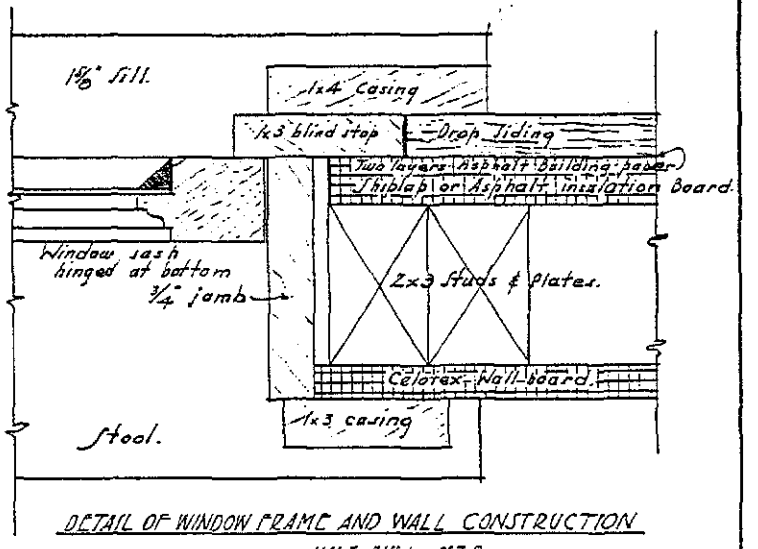


Plan. 1/8"-1'-0"



Elevation-1/8"= 1'-0"

-Note- Present part of Cottage shown by dotted lines -



DETAIL OF WINDOW FRAME AND WALL CONSTRUCTION

HALF FULL SIZE

Memoranda- The floor joists are to be 2x6 set 16" O.C. with T.&G flooring. Studs are to be 2x3- set 16" O.C. with ¼" matched lumber or ½" celotex insulation board or sheathing- then two layers of asphalt type building paper befor applying the ¾" drop siding. The roof joists are to be 2x6- set 16" O.C. covered with matched lumber and roll roofing. the under side of roof joists are to be covered with the same material as the sidewalls.

DRAWN BY	RCW.
TRACED "	"
CHECKED "	"
CORRECT	EAW.

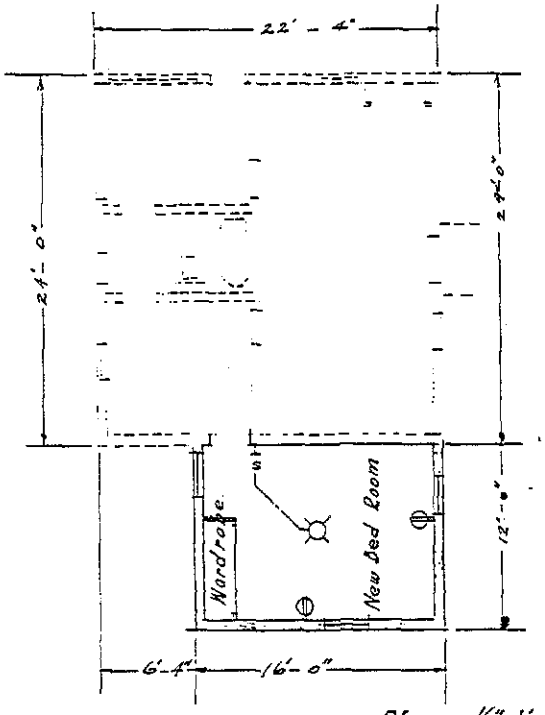
APPROVED Leroy L. Morgan
CHIEF ENGINEER.

-COTTAGE-NO-102-
SWAN FALLS POWER PLANT
ADDITION OF BED ROOM
TO COTTAGES NO-102-132-181-191
IDAHO POWER COMPANY
BOISE IDAHO
MARCH 1944 SHEET-1-OF 4-
3127B-6109.

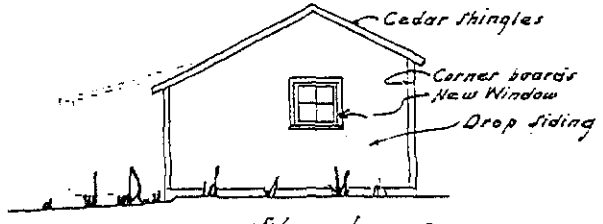
04-1

SEP 4 1992

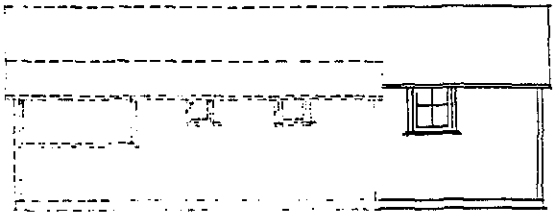
SWAN FALLS VILLAGE
HABS No. ID-105 (Page 35)



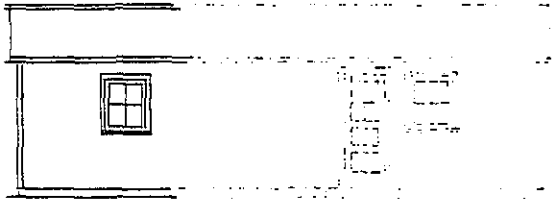
·Plan - 1/8"=1'-0"·



·Elevation·



·Rear Elevation·



·Front Elevation·

Memoranda·

The floor joists are to be 2x6 set 16" O.C. with shiplap sub-flooring laid diagonally over the subfloor lay 1x4 T & G finish flooring, studs are to be 2x3 set 16" O.C. with ¼" matched lumber sheathing or ¾" celotex insulating board, apply two layers of asphalt type building paper befor applying ¾" drop siding. The rafters and ceiling joists are to be 2x4's set 16" O.C.. Roof sheathing to be 1x6 covered with cedar shingles laid to match the shingles on the present roof. The ceiling and side walls are to be covered with an approved type of wall board. All millwork and hardware to be of approved types. See plans for cottage 102 for window frame details.

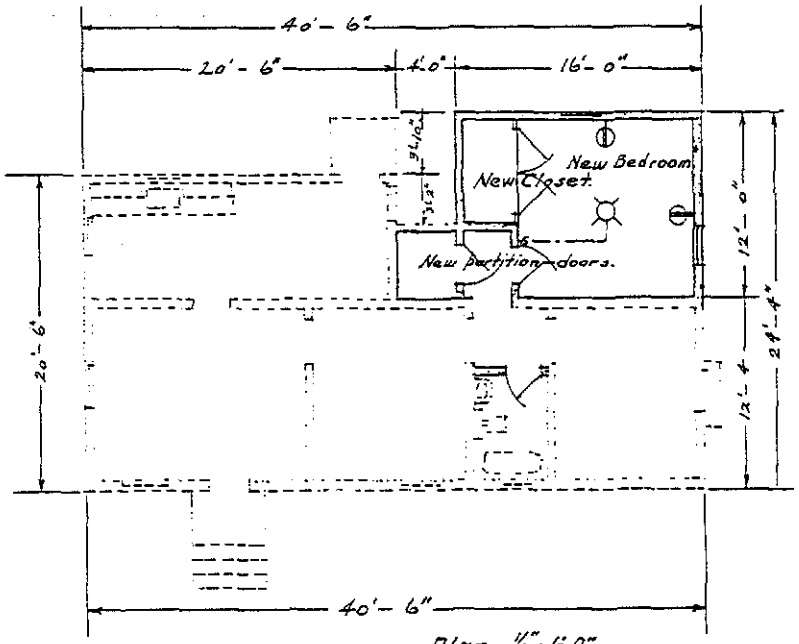
·COTTAGE-NO-132·
SWAN FALLS POWER PLANT
ADDITION OF BED ROOM
TO COTTAGES NO-102-132-181-191
IDAHO POWER COMPANY
BOISE IDAHO
MARCH 1944 SHEET-2-OF 4-
27 B-6109.

DRAWN BY	RCW
TRACED	
CHECKED	
CORRECT	LAH

APPROVED Henry L. Reuter
CHIEF ENGINEER.

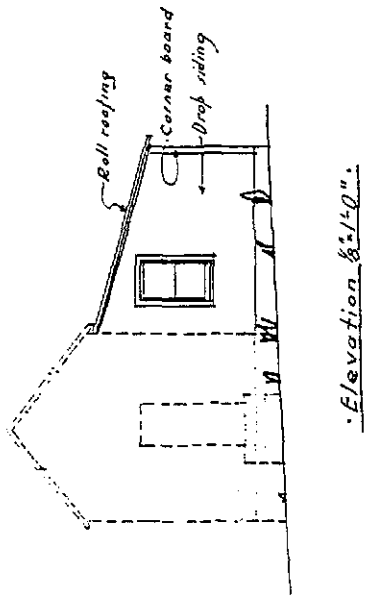
04-1

SWAN FALLS VILLAGE
HABS No. ID-105 (Page 36)



Plan- 1/8"=1'-0"

Note- Present part of cottage shown by dotted lines.



Elevation 1/2"=1'-0"

Memoranda- The floor joists are to be 2x6 set 16" O.C. with T. & G. flooring - studs are to be 2x3 set 16" O.C. with 1/4" matched lumber or 3/4" celotex insulation board or sheathing, then two layers of asphalt building paper over which 1/4" drop siding shall be applied.
The roof joists are to be 2x6 set 16" on center covered with matched lumber and roll roofing. Cover the under side of the rafters and the inside edge of the stud walls with an approved type of wall-board.
All millwork and hardware to be of an approved type.
See plans for Cottage No. 191 for window frame details.

COTTAGE NO. 181
SWAN FALLS POWER PLANT
ADDITION OF BED ROOM
TO COTTAGES NO 102-132-161-191
IDAHO POWER COMPANY
BOISE IDAHO
MARCH 1944 SHEET-3-OF 4
27B-6109-

DRAWN	BY	JCW
TRACED	"	
CHECKED	"	
CORRECT		EAA

APPROVED Leroy A. Berger
CHIEF ENGINEER

04-1

SWAN FALLS VILLAGE
HABS No. ID-105 (Page 37)

-COTTAGE-NO-191-
SWAN FALLS POWER PLANT
ADDITION OF BED ROOM
TO COTTAGES NO-102-132-181-191-
IDAHO POWER COMPANY
BOISE IDAHO
MARCH 1944 SHEET-4 OF-4
27D-6109.

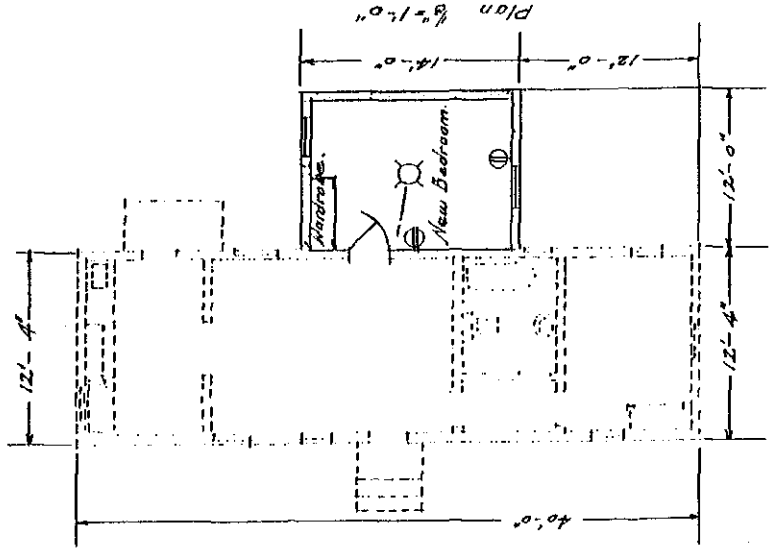
04-1

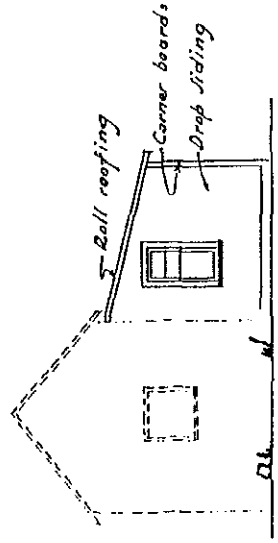
SEP 4 1992

Memoranda- The floor joists are to be 2x6 set 16" on center with T & G. flooring. Studs are to be 2x3 set 16" on center boarded or sheathing, then two layers of asphalt type building paper applying the ¼" drop siding. The roof joists are to be 2x6 set 16" on center and covered with ¾" matched lumber and roll roofing. the under side of roof joists and the inside edge of the studs are to be covered with an approved type of wall-board.
All millwork and hardware to be of an approved type.

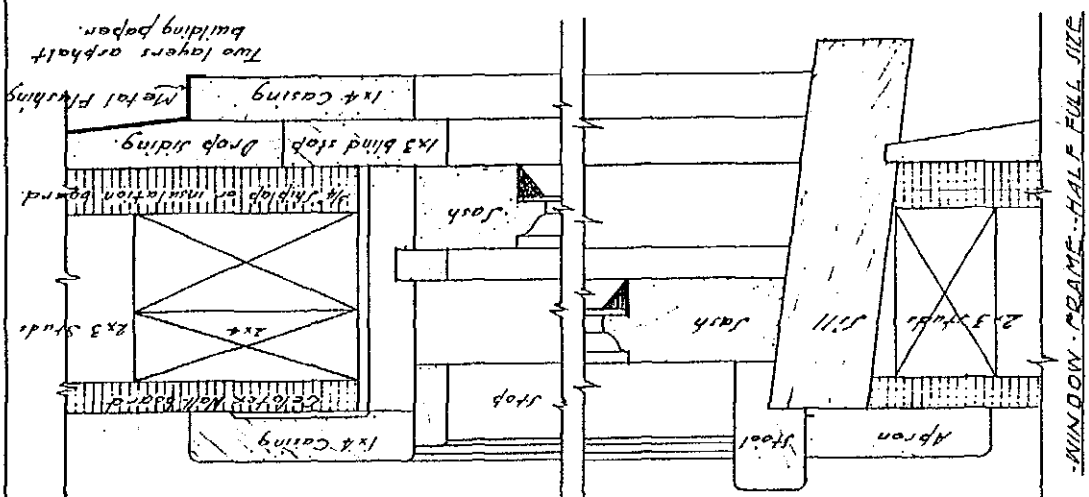
Note- Present parth of cottage shown by dotted lines

Plan ¼"=1'-0"





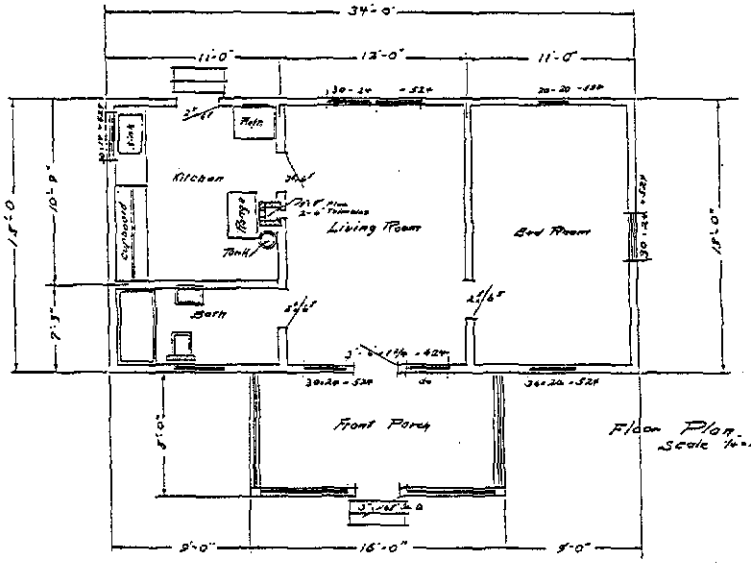
Elevation ⅛"=1'-0"



WINDOW-FRAME-HALF FULL SIZE

APPROVED Henry L. Reuter
CHIEF ENGINEER.

DRAWN	BY
TRACED	"
CHECKED	"
CORRECT	

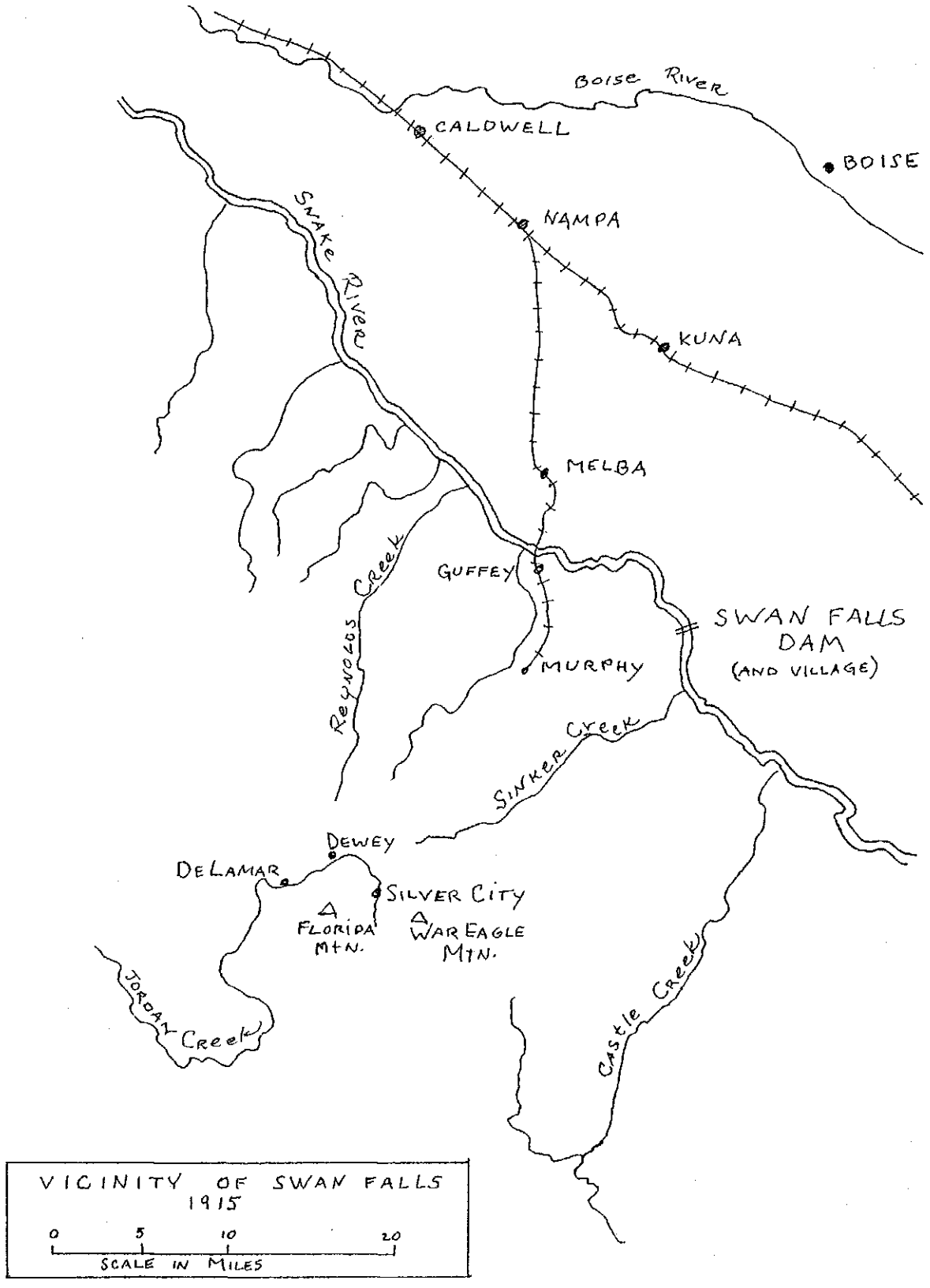


SWAN FALLS VILLAGE
HABS No. ID-105 (Page 39)

SWAN FALLS HYDRO ELECTRIC STATION
PLAN AND ELEVATION OF COTTAGE
IDAHO POWER COMPANY
BOISE IDAHO
JAN. 1936 SCALE NOTED 20D-3611

DRAWN BY Chief Engineer
TRACED RMT
CHECKED
CORRECT

SEP 4 1992


BOISE RIVER
CALDWELL
BOISE
NAMPA
SNAKE RIVER
KUNA
MELBA
GUFFEY
REYNOLDS CREEK
SWAN FALLS DAM
(AND VILLAGE)
MURPHY
SINKER CREEK
DEWEY
DELAMAR
SILVER CITY
FLORIDA MTN.
WAR EAGLE MTN.
JORDAN CREEK
CASTLE CREEK
VICINITY OF SWAN FALLS
1915
0 5 10 20
SCALE IN MILES

APPENDIX D

SWAN FALLS VILLAGE
HABS No. ID-105 (Page 41)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings

The original of each of these drawings is located in the map vault at Idaho Power Company, Boise, Idaho. All were produced by the Idaho Power Company in Boise.

1. 20 D-1647 May 1923. Floor plan and elevations: cottage 231

2-3. 20 C-7161 [Two sheets] November 1947. Reconstruction of cottage 231

4-5. 20 D-8842 [Two sheets] November 25, 1949. Floor plan and elevations: cottages 181, 191

6-9. 27 B-6109 [Four sheets] March 1944. Addition to cottages 181, 191.

10. 20 D-3611 January 1936. Floor plan and elevations: cottages 361, 362, 363

B. Historic Views

Although the dam and power house at Swan Falls have been extensively recorded, deliberate photographic records of the village buildings have not been. Most views of them are incidental background for other subjects or are obscured by a heavy cover of vegetation. However, field records included in this HABS report include the oldest views available of the village.

C. Bibliography

Idaho Power Company Records:

"Agreement between Idaho Power Company and E.E. Terry for Maintaining Rooming and Boarding Facilities at Swan Falls Power Plant," December 1939, and related letters and memoranda, Idaho Power Records Center, Boise, Idaho, Box 3266.

Continuing Property Records, Swan Falls Account (331).

Bulletin, a quarterly bulletin published from January 1936 to present containing general news of interest to shareowners and others.

Current News, a monthly magazine published from January 1944 to present containing news of interest to Idaho Power employees.

Electrikat, a monthly magazine published between January 192 and May 1931 containing news of interest to Idaho Power employees.

"Monthly Reports for Swan Falls Power Station," a series of reports sent to the general office by the superintendent of Swan Falls Power Station. They are extant from January 1950 to present.

"Report to William and Sinclair Mainland, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on the Property of the Swan Falls Power Company, Idaho," April 12, 1911, Idaho Power Records Center, Boise, Idaho, Box 2-5354.

Stacy, Susan M. Legacy of Light, A History of the Idaho Power Company, 1916-1991. Boise: Idaho Power Company, 1991.

Sengar, Hank. "The Swan Falls Power Plant," Bulletin (August 1936), p. 1-2.

Swan Falls Notebooks, a clipping file consisting of three binders containing all articles referring to Swan Falls found in the company's employee magazines. Volume Three contains letters from retirees such as Tom Purton's, "Foggy Memories of Swan Falls Days," June 4, 1985.

Other sources:

Idaho Historical Society, Manuscript #583, "House Sketches."

Hay, Duncan. Hydroelectric Development in the United States, 1880-1940. Washington D.C.: Task Force on Cultural Resource Management, Edison Electric Institute, 1991.

Stacy, Susan M. "Swan Falls Dam," Historic American Engineering Record No. ID-20. The bibliography in this report contains additional reference sources on the history of the broader operations and history of Swan Falls.