

Spokane International Railroad, Eastport House #4
Tract 39, Site 4
Eastport
Boundary County
Idaho

HABS NO. ID-121-A

HABS
ID
11-EAPO,
2A-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING^S SURVEY
Columbia Cascades Support Office, National Park Service
909 First Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104-1060

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
Spokane International Railroad, Eastport House #4

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Location:

Tract 39, Site 4
Eastport
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U.S.G.S. Eastport, Idaho Quadrangle (7.5)
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
11. 559800 5427540

Present Owner:

Terry Davis
Eastport, Idaho

Present Use:

Residence

Significance:

House #4 is part of a housing development for workers on the Spokane International Railroad. The railroad, constructed in 1905/6, built a group of six dwellings adjacent the Eastport station. This site represents a part of railroad operation that once was a common feature on many lines. The railroad housing in most areas have been sold to private parties or destroyed. House #4 is considered eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C due to its association with the Spokane International Railroad and being typical of railroad housing in general.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: @1914.
2. Architect: unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners:
1914 - 1975 Spokane International Railroad
1975 - Present Terry Davis, Eastport, Idaho
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: No original plans known.
6. Alterations and additions:
Alterations to the original structure include adding a shed roofed addition on the northwest, adding a deck porch on the east and replacing the original wood shingle roof with metal roofing.

B. Historical Context

Eastport house #4 is part of the Spokane International Railroad Eastport Station development.

The Spokane International Railroad history is summarized in an anonymous paper entitled "Brief History - Spokane International Railroad" written in about 1975 and which included the following information.

F. C. Corbin, a pioneer construction magnate in Spokane, Washington, considered the building of the Spokane International Railway as his most significant achievement, climaxing previous ventures that included establishment of the first irrigation project, sugar refinery, iron works and one of the first railroads in the region.

At the turn of the century Corbin envisioned an alternate to existing transcontinental routes by connecting the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company at Spokane with the Canadian Pacific which controlled the Soo Line into the Twin Cities and Chicago.

Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, President of the Canadian Pacific; favored the plan because it would give him a direct connection with Portland, Oregon, and all Pacific Coast points.

With a favorable traffic agreement and some financial support from CP, the proposed company was chartered in the State of Washington Jan. 1, 1905 as the Spokane International Railway.

Physically the line starts at Spokane, Washington where it now has connections with Union Pacific, Milwaukee Road, Great Northern and Northern Pacific, and Travels northeastward to Eastport, Idaho on the Canadian border where it connects with the Canadian Pacific Railway. The SI also has Idaho connections with the NP and GN at Sandpoint and at Coeur d'Alene, with the Milwaukee at Grand Junction and Coeur d'Alene, and with the GN at Bonners Ferry.

Corbin arranged financing for the New Company with a group of New York Associates and issued \$4,200,000 in bonds and an equal amount in capital stock.

Construction started shortly after the company was founded following a route between the Selkirk and Cabinet Mountains skirting Pend Oreille Lake. Building through this rugged and scenic country required 28 bridges and three tunnels on the 13.26-mile main line.

The railroad began operation November 1, 1906 with D. C. Corbin as president. Under his management a 10-year option to purchase the company was extended to the Canadian Pacific. Transcontinental passenger service was started over the route in 1909. Union Pacific timetables carry the first listing of the Soo-Spokane - Portland trains May 16, 1909. Apparently the service was not entirely successful because the "Soo" trains disappeared from the schedules after Feb. 8, 1914.

During the fourth year of operation Corbin decided his railroad should have branch lines to serve the towns of Bayview and Coeur d'Alene in Idaho. Following his original pattern, the Coeur d'Alene and Pend Oreille Railway was incorporated March 29, 1910 in Washington as a subsidiary of the SI. On July 1, a 9.04-mile branch from Coeur d'Alene Junction to Coeur d'Alene and an 11.61-mile branch from Corbin Junction to Bayview were put into operation. In 1917 the Canadian Pacific exercised its option and acquired the SI. They brought E. S. McPherson from the Minneapolis office of the Soo Line to Spokane to operate the Railroad first as assistant to the president and later as vice president and general manager.

The financial condition of the railroad was changeable in the 1920's and by 1925 there was a definite trend of declining passenger revenues caused by the rising popularity of automobiles and improved roads. By 1930 operating losses were accumulating successively. The financial woes of the railroad reflected the low level of business activity following the stock market crash and were further aggravated when both the United States and Canada attempted to protect their teetering business structures with protective import tariffs. Among the changes imposed by the US was a duty on coke and an increased tariff on coal. One of the Canadian moves took the form of an import duty on agricultural products.

These actions dealt a mortal blow to the SI because the commodities covered were the most important sources of revenue to the railroad. In 1933 the Spokane International filed a petition of bankruptcy. The U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Washington, Northern Division, at Spokane appointed McPherson to continue to guide the road's operations as trustee.

Three years later a relaxation of the tariff barriers stimulated traffic for the SI and helped reduce the railroad's operating deficit. McPherson filed a reorganization plan for the Spokane International. A second plan was filed by a committee representing three bondholders. In 1937 the Bureau of Finance of the Interstate Commerce Commission filed a plan that was opposed by both previous parties.

McPherson attempted to reduce the deficit further in 1938 by applying to the ICC for abandonment of the Bayview branch which he said had been an unprofitable operation for at least 10 years. The commission approved his request and the operation ceased January 12, 1939.

During 1939, a compromise reorganization plan for the Spokane International Railway and the Coeur d'Alene and Pend Oreille Railway was approved by the ICC, and the District Court. It was submitted to creditors for approval on March 2, 1940.

On April 1, 1941 the Spokane International Railroad was incorporated to take over the defunct Spokane International Railway. With E. S. McPherson as president, the new company assumed control of the railroad property on October 1.

Under the terms of the ICC reorganization plan, SI capital stock -- Canadian Pacific owned 39,418 of the 40,000 outstanding shares -- was determined to be without value and eliminated as was the capital stock of the Coeur d'Alene and Pend Oreille which was owned by the SI. Holders of \$1000 5 percent gold bonds were given \$600 income bonds and 6 shares of no par value common stock in the reorganized company. Claims entitled to priority over outstanding mortgage bonds were assumed by the new company.

McPherson died August 26, 1948 and was succeeded on November 1, by F. C. Rimmel, a member of the SI board and chairman of the executive committee.

Rummel immediately began a sweeping motorization program which had been partly outlined and recommended by McPherson. Few of the half-million ties on the railroad were chemically treated and required replacement every 10 years. To achieve 30 years of use from ties, he started a program of installing creosoted ties at the rate of approximately 60,000 a year. He also started relaying the mainline with heavier 90-pound rail.

In 1949 Rummel executed a dramatic change by retiring all of the road's 13 steam locomotives. The last steam run was made on December 26; then nine 1,000 horsepower diesel-electrics started hauling SI trains. The move made the SI the third Class 1 railroad in the nation to fully dieselize. During the first year of operation motive power costs were cut 24 percent.

In 1954 passenger service was discontinued and a fast perishable freight train schedule was inaugurated. At the same time all SI trains were equipped with radio communication equipment to expedite their movements.

The following year Union Pacific Railroad offered to acquire the SI with an exchange of stock. This transaction was approved by the Interstate Commerce Commission and executed October 6, 1958. Operation under UP management began January 1, 1959.

While the SI is operated separately from the Union Pacific, its principal officers hold the same positions with the parent company. After the change in ownership, Rummel served for a short time as a special representative in Spokane for Union Pacific President A. E. Stoddard.

The railroad built residences at Eastport in about 1914 to house the station crew at this point. Automobiles and improvements in roads combined with the bankruptcy in the 1930's lead fewer employees needing residences at Eastport and the company to rent some of the residences to employees of the Department of Customs. Over time people working for other employers occupied the residences. Finally the railroad sold the buildings to the occupants and subleased the land to them. In 1975 only one of the residences was occupied by a railroad employee. As a result the Forest Service revoked the railroad's special use permit and took over administration of the residence leases directly.

Part II. Architectural Information

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The building is an example of the simple frame structures constructed by railroads in the early 1900's for their permanent employees. Stylistic influences are vernacular and craftsman.
2. Conditions of Fabric: The interior and exterior condition is good. The current owners keep the building well maintained.

Back Porch: The character of the original back entry is unknown. A shed roof addition was constructed over the original entry prior to 1958.

Front Porch: The current front porch consists of a 8" high uncovered wood deck constructed in the last 10 years.

Roof: The original wood shingle roof was replaced by a metal roof at an unknown date.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 32' x 47' 6". The building is one story single detached structure. The original building was an offset "T" shaped with a later one room addition over the original back entry.
2. Foundations: The low foundation consists of treated timber piers.
3. Walls: The exterior walls are covered by cedar shingles painted red and trimmed with 1 x 6 boards at the buildings corners and around the windows and doors.
4. Structural Systems, Framing: The structure is a balloon frame building with approximately 6" walls and framed roof.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The front door is a single leaf two panel wood door with a lite in the top panel. The back door is a single leaf hollow core door.
 - b. Windows: The original windows consist of one-over-one-lite double-hung wood frame windows, single lite sliding sash wood frame windows and two-over-lite casement windows. The trim on both windows and doors is plain.
6. Roof: The roof is a 12/12 pitch intersecting gable with plain projecting verges. An attached shed roof covers a one-room addition. The original covering consisted of wood shingles. The covering now on the roof is sheet metal.

C. Description of Interior:

1. The present floor plan is attached; the interior has been the same for more than 40 years and probably is largely unchanged from the original. The building is divided into a living room, bedroom, kitchen, bath, sewing room and laundry/back entry. An "L" shaped root cellar, accessed from the sewing room by a trap door is situated under part of the sewing room, is situated under part of the sewing room and part of the kitchen and extends eight feet south beyond the building. In this area the cellar is protected by a low wood and metal cover.
2. Flooring: The flooring consists of vinyl and carpet over wood flooring.
3. Wall and Ceiling Finish: The walls and ceiling are covered by wall board.
4. Mechanical Equipment: The current heating system consist of wood heat. The current occupant used a propane gas furnace before converting to wood stove heat. The propane furnace had replaced the original heat source for the building which was probably either coal (obtained from the railroad) or wood.

D. Site:

1. The building faces east and toward the railroad yard south of the Eastport Railroad station.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Bibliography

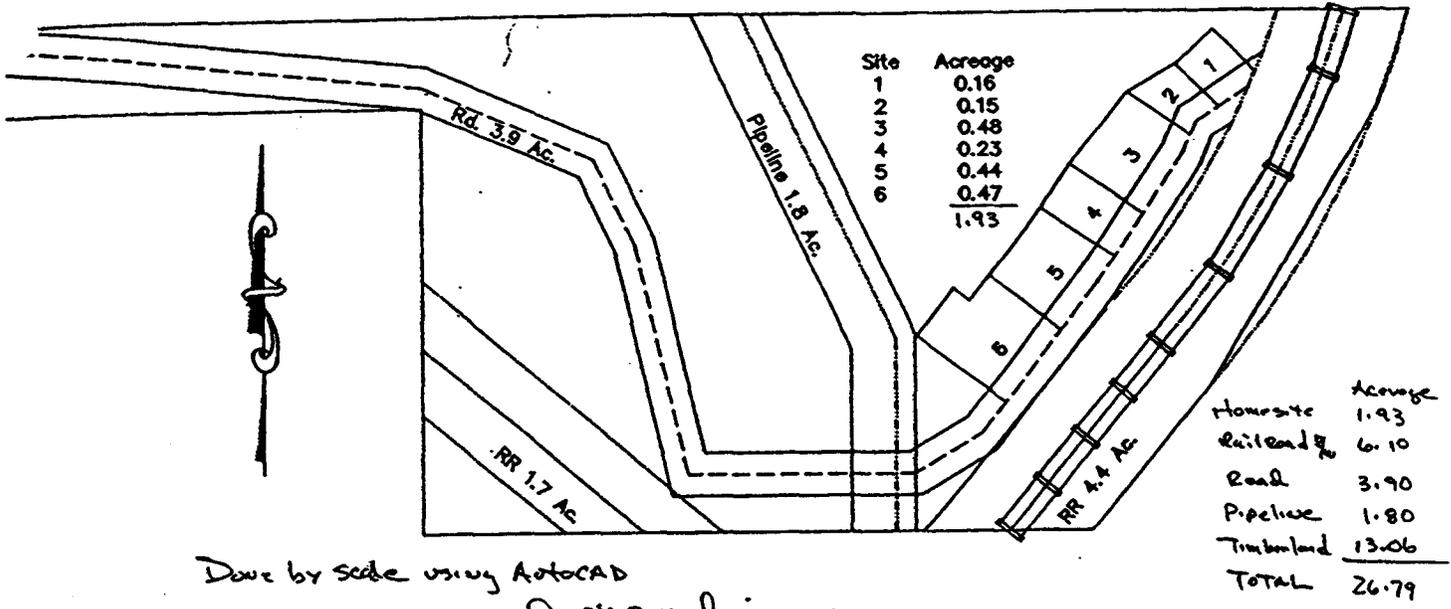
Anonymous

n.d. Brief History - Spokane International Railroad. Paper on file at the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, Coeur d'Alene.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project is a mitigative recording required by a memorandum of Agreement between the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. Cort Sims, Forest Archaeologist for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests prepared the written documentation. Major sections of the documentation are taken verbatim from a an anonymous paper entitled "Brief History - Spokane International Railroad".

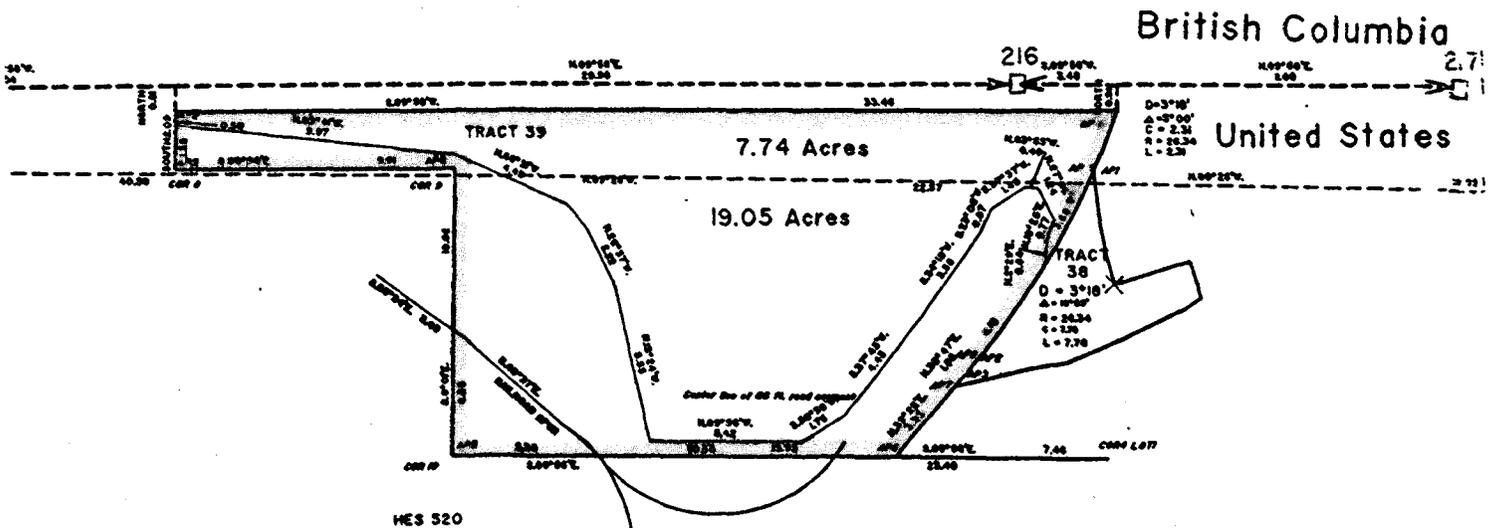
Tract 39 - Eastport



Done by site using Autocad

D. S. Malin Forest Law Surveyor

TOWNSHIP 65 NORTH, RANGE 2 EAST, Boise Meridian, Idaho

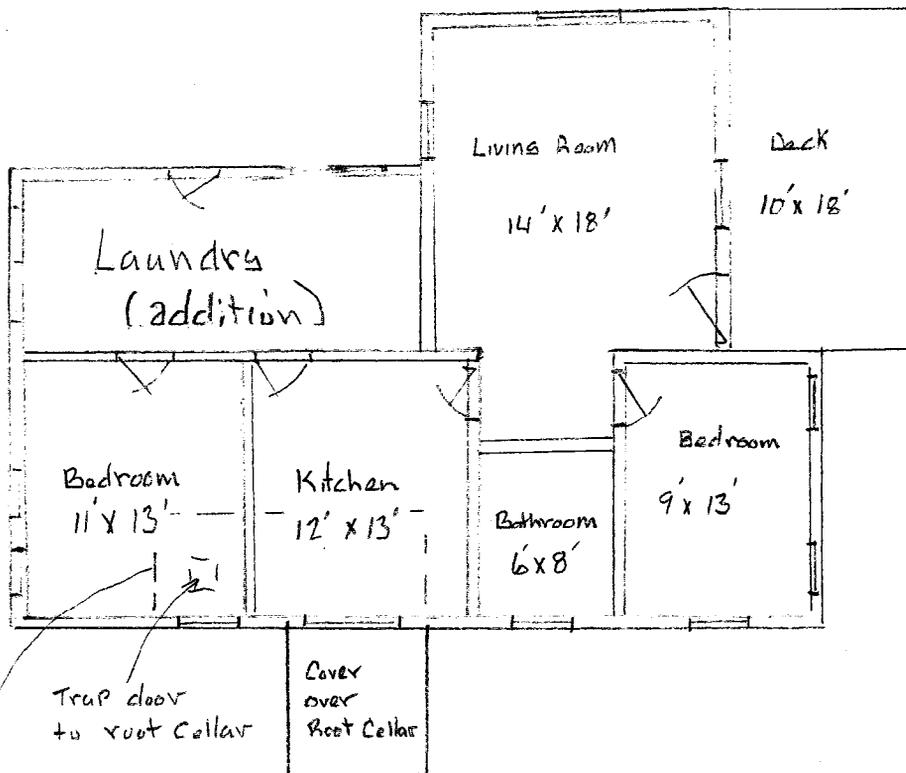
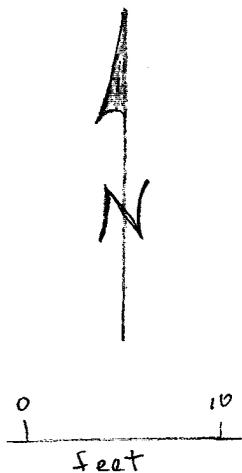


5430 Exchanges
Clearwater Realty-Upper Priest Lake

Federal Land (26.79 Acres)
T. 65N., R2E., section 10, Tract 39
Eastport

Eastport

House #4



"L" Shaped Root Cellar
under house