

Pioneer Lodge No. 1,
Independent Order of Odd Fellows
East Commercial Street
Idaho City
Boise County
Idaho

HABS No. ID-8

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ID-8

PIONEER LODGE NUMBER ONE, INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS

Location: East Commercial Street,
Idaho City, Boise County, Idaho.

Latitude: 43° 49' 43" Longitude: 115° 49' 50".

Present Owner
and Occupant: Pioneer Lodge Number One, Independent Order of
Odd Fellows.

Present Use: Meeting and social place of the Odd Fellows.

Significance: The Pioneer Lodge Number One is both the oldest continuing lodge (1864) and the oldest lodge building (1875) in the state of Idaho. Although considerably altered, this wooden frame structure exemplifies early Idaho territorial architecture.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The construction of the Lodge was completed on September 15, 1875.
2. Architect: The building was designed by D. Ferguson, a member of the Lodge. The plans and specifications cost \$18.00 which Mr. Ferguson donated back to the Lodge. Apparently he was not an architect.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Lodge stands on Lots 3 and 4, Block Q in the townsite of Idaho City.

1875 "We have carefully examined the various locations suggested. First: Having in view the necessity of being safe from fire. Second: The most eligible site. We have come to the unanimous conclusion and have taken all things into consideration: The best place is on the hill between Mr. W.W. West's house and the Old Catholic Church, and behind Mr. Strong's house, at the head of the Commercial Street." (From Lodge Minutes, Pioneer Lodge No. 1, I.O.O.F., 1875, p. 393). Reference to the title is at the Boise County Recorder and Auditor's Office in Idaho City, Idaho.

1915 Deed, September 21, 1915, recorded in Deed Record 44, p. 501. John H. Myers, Probate Judge of Boise County, granted Pioneer Lodge No. 1, I.O.O.F. Lot 3, Block Q.

- 1955 Warranty Deed, April 22, 1955, recorded in Deed Record 54, p. 518. On April 25, 1955, the Pioneer Lodge No. 1, I.O.O.F. was deeded Lot 4, Block Q from Edward F. and Julia Rodenburgh for \$2,100.
- 1955 In June 1955 the Lodge bought a log cottage just to the south of the building. In 1968 the cottage was sold for \$4,750.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: A.B. Morrill and Company was the builder. His bid of \$1,974 was accepted by the Odd Fellows on April 2, 1875. They agreed to make their first payment thirty days after the "cornerblock of stone is laid." This was done on July 12, 1875, when A.B. Morrill and Company was paid \$737.
 5. Original plan and construction: The Pioneer Lodge was originally built as a two-story meeting hall, and measured 24' x 48'. The upper floor has always been used as a ceremonial lodge room, and the lower floor as a social hall. The porch on the second floor is original. The front facade has always been painted white. The board and batten pine siding on the north side is original.
 6. Alterations and additions: The building has undergone many changes over the years. The lower floor was completed in 1888, and in 1890, linoleum was laid in the anteroom. The ceremonial lodge room was wallpapered in 1895, and in 1897, a cloakroom and a wardrobe were built, and the stairway was shingled. The "reconstruction" of the Pioneer Lodge began on November 4, 1940 and ended on May 3, 1941. Jack and Waletta Morrow describe the reconstruction in their book, So Firm Thy Faith in Odd Fellowship.

"Much of the reconstruction was completed when more than 200 people came from all parts of Idaho and Oregon to attend the housewarming on May 3, 1941: the old building had been raised; new foundation placed under the Hall; maple floor added to the dining room downstairs; new kitchen constructed across the end of the building; and the exterior of the addition "weathered" to match the age of the old Hall; a new electric range, a large coffee maker, a modern sink, built-ins, new electric wiring, and a chimney were added; restrooms and a fuel room were also included in the addition at the rear of the property. Everything possible was done to preserve and protect the fine old building as well as modernize it without spoiling its charm of the bygone years." (p.161)

In April 1949 the kerosene chandeliers in the ceremonial lodge room were wired for electricity. Minor repairs were made on the electrical wiring in 1949 and 1958. The columns on the lower floor were added in 1966. The new board and batten siding was placed on the south side of the building in the early 1970s.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The Odd Fellows, like everyone else, came to the Boise Basin after the discovery of gold in 1862 on Grimes Creek. They first met in Idaho City, the largest of the early gold camps, in 1864. Until February 25, 1867, they met in the Masonic Hall, and then they purchased their own Hall on Main Street from a Mr. Smith for \$1,000. The Odd Fellows occupied their new Hall for only a few months because on May 18, 1867, the Hall was destroyed in a second major fire that swept the town. The Lodge meetings again took place in the Masonic Hall until 1875, when they built their own Hall on the hill just north of the city.

The November 19, 1875 dedication of the new Odd Fellows Hall was a grand affair. People came from Placerville, Centerville, Granite Creek, Pioneer City and Quartzburg to attend the dedication ceremonies. A brass band began the day's proceedings. The Reverend D.W. Strang gave the oration at the Methodist Church, and he praised the Odd Fellows and their new structure. The Idaho World reprinted the speech on two pages of the November 19th issue.

The building has been in continuous use since its erection in 1875 by the Odd Fellows and other local groups. Currently, the Lodge holds meetings four times a year. Despite considerable alterations, the Pioneer Lodge Number One still reflects its era.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: A photocopy of old photo shows a general view of the Lodge, date unknown. Original photograph at Idaho Historical Society, Boise, Idaho. Included in the HABS collection.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Books: County Recorder and Auditor's Office,
Idaho City, Idaho.

Pioneer Lodge No. 1, I.O.O.F. Lodge Minutes, 1875, pp. 373-503.
The ledger is kept at the I.O.O.F. Historical Building in
Caldwell, Idaho.

Pioneer Lodge No. 1, I.O.O.F. Record of the Odd Fellows
Building Committee, 1875. The ledger is kept at the
I.O.O.F. Historical Building in Caldwell, Idaho.

b. Secondary and published sources.

Idaho World. Newspaper articles, November 5, 1875, vol. XII,
No. 2 and November 2, 1875. Idaho City, Idaho.

Morrow, Jack and Waletta. So Firm Thy Faith in Odd Fellowship.
Caldwell: Grand Lodge Printing Press, 1971

Prepared by Alan Minskoff
Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Summer 1974

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is the oldest Independent Order of Odd Fellows building in the state of Idaho. The building is a typical example of the wooden frame architecture of the 19th century frontier mining towns in the northwest United States.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The lodge hall is 24' (three-bay front) x 76'. It is a two-story building with the exception of a one-story, 16' x 24' kitchen and bathroom addition on the east end of the Lodge.
2. Foundation: The foundation is concrete and is in poor condition. Originally it was stone.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The west (front) face of the building is original clapboard siding painted white. The north, south and east elevations have rough-sawn vertical board and batten siding. The siding on the north and second floor east walls is original, and the circular saw marks can be clearly seen on these boards. The connectors are old square nails. This original siding has "weathered" naturally into a rich, warm black patina. The rear one-story 1940-41 addition siding was stained to match the existing color of the original siding. The siding on the south face of the building, which was replaced circa 1971, is not stained for a weathered look. The walls of the original structure are insulated with the coarse sawdust typical of the circular sawmill waste.
4. Structural system, framing: The building is a wooden frame structure with wooden peg and square nail fasteners with three steel tie rods used at both the first and second floor ceiling levels across the 24' width of the building. The bolted tie rod connectors can be seen on the north and south sides of the building. The roof structure is a scissor truss system with tie rods.

5. Porches and stairway: There are two enclosed porches at the first and second floor levels on the front elevation. Plain columns support both porches, and a simple balustrade surrounds the second floor porch. An exterior stairway on the north side of the building is the only access to the second floor lodge room. It has a shed roof and original board and batten siding.
6. Chimney: On the northeast corner of the building is a brick chimney which is a 1940 addition to the building. Physical evidence of pipes on the roof suggests that there was once a wood burning stove inside the building.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The first floor entrance consists of double doors each containing two long panels and two small bottom panels. A two-light transom is over each door. Another entrance door leading to the second floor ceremonial lodge room is a twelve-light door with a bottom panel.
 - b. Windows and shutters: The windows on both the first and second floors are wooden double hung sash windows. The first floor windows are four-over-four light sash, and the second floor windows are six-over-six light sash. There are plain shutters on all first floor windows.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: A gable roof is over the original building. The painted letters, "I.O.O.F." and the symbols, three chain links each containing the letters, "F", "L", and "T", which stand for Friendship, Love and Truth, occupy the front gable end. Shed roofs cover the second floor porch and the rear addition. All roofs are covered with corrugated, galvanized steel roofing, which replaced original pine shingles in 1941.
 - b. Flag poles: The original pine flag pole is located at the front peak of the roof. A newer flag pole has been bolted onto the northwest corner of the second floor porch.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: The main entrance opens directly into the social hall, and a secondary entrance exists at the first floor landing of the exterior stair on the north elevation. The kitchen, bathrooms and storage rooms, located in the rear side, are entered from the social hall.

- b. Second floor: The main entrance opens into a vestibule leading to either the ceremonial lodge room, or the small ante-chamber, which is used as a room for doffing ceremonial regalia.
2. Flooring: In the 1940-41 alterations, a maple floor replaced existing flooring on the first floor. Carpeting covers pine flooring on the second floor. A 2 1/2' x 4" raised platform on either the north or south end of the second floor ceremonial lodge room is covered with linoleum. The raised platforms at the east and west ends of the same room are carpeted.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: The first floor walls are a vertical wooden siding which is painted an off-white color. The ceiling is wood painted a similar off-white. There is a chair rail at the window sill level in the first floor social hall painted to match the walls. The second floor walls are wooden siding covered with muslin as backing for heavy patterned wallpaper. A chair rail is painted with a graining technique to make the pine appear to be a rich hardwood. The ceiling in the second floor curves up on the sides on a three foot radius and then flattens out. The ceiling material is pine, and the three steel tie rods are exposed below the second floor ceiling.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors. The doors are simple panel doors.
5. Decorative features and trim: The Lodge Room is a museum of memorabilia. The walls are lined with old gavels, pictures of early members and officers, three Charters (1874, 1879, 1883), symbolic paintings, delegate badges from conventions and an old shovel with three links of Odd Fellowship (Friendship, Love, and Truth) inlaid in local gold. Straw-filled benches covered by old rugs with the three links motif, a pot bellied stove, a rolled top desk, and an organ purchased by the Rebekahs in 1896 are among additional objects of note in this room.

The trim is simple, but the interior shutters on the second floor windows are a cherry wood with operable horizontal louvers.
6. Hardware: The locksets are surface mounted on most of the second floor doors and most of the hardware on the first floor is recent.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, ventilation: Wood burning stoves are still in use in this building although the stove in the second floor vestibule has been removed. Evidence of a stove pipe connection in the ceiling can be seen in this room. The second floor ceremonial lodge room still has the original wood stove, although now the stovepipe is vented to the brick chimney, and not directly through the roof as existing evidence suggests. The first floor social hall is heated by a wood burning stove which is now vented to the brick chimney. No evidence exists of its previous venting through the roof.

The two small box-like projections at the first floor level on the north elevation are snorkel vents. These boxes are used for venting, and were placed only on the north side because of snow build-up at this face of the building all through the winter. There are semi-circular attic vents for the second floor attic space in the east and west gable ends.

- b. Lighting: The electrical wiring dates mainly from the 1940-41 restoration, and is mainly surface mounted conduit, although on the exterior stair there is some knob and tube type of wiring. The two chandeliers in the second floor lodge room were converted from kerosene to electricity in 1949.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The building faces west, and stands alone on the crest of a hill in the south central section of the community. The building is approached through a footpath (excavation of gold bearing gravels since the building was constructed makes it impossible to drive up the street) from the lower main street of town.
2. Historic landscape design: The only traces of original landscaping are the two apple trees on the corners of the west end of the building.

Prepared by William B. McCroskey
Project Director
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Summer 1974

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Idaho City project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), in cooperation with the Idaho Bicentennial Commission in the summer of 1974. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed by William B. McCroskey (University of Idaho), the project director, Alan Minskoff (University of Chicago), the project historian; Jack W. Schafer (University of Cincinnati), the project foreman, and the student assistant architects, Rae F. Noritake (University of Idaho), Laurence Ferar (University of Oregon), and Mark T. Wellen (Texas Tech University). William Klein, a HABS staff architect in the Washington office, edited the drawings in 1975. The written architectural and historical data was edited in April 1980 by Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington Office. The documentary photographs were made by Duane Garrett in 1976.