

15TH ANNUAL

HERITAGE HOMES TOUR

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1ST 2017

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WELCOME



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Hello and welcome to the 15th Annual Preservation Idaho Heritage Homes Tour.

Preservation Idaho has been working to preserve and celebrate Idaho's historic and cultural resources for over 44 years. As a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization, we receive no State or Federal operating funds and rely solely on our members, sponsors, businesses, and grants as well as collaborations with government and partner organizations to support our mission of "preserving Idaho's historic places through collaboration, education, and advocacy."

The Heritage Homes Tour is our Signature Event and our largest annual fundraiser. This year, we are delighted to be in the beautiful Randolph Robertson neighborhood on one of Boise's iconic benches. These homes are all a wonderful reflection of the post WWII era influence on America's lifestyle, all variations on the popular Ranch style that was part of the mid-century modern movement. For many of us, these homes were built within our own lifespan. It's important to remember that a home built in the 1950's is already over 60 years old, considered historic, and deserving of historic protection.

Visiting neighborhoods on foot is a great way to really get to see the details of each home and to experience the feel of the neighborhood. As we look at this community, and our own, we can ask ourselves, what do we want our cities and our communities to be and are we doing the right things to preserve our heritage while we grow?

As always, we are so appreciative of the homeowners who steward these beautiful historic homes and allow us to share them with you. Individual stewardship is the starting place for all preservation. We hope it leads all of you to expand your sense of stewardship in your own community, your city, and across our state. Thanks also to our members and volunteers who have organized the tour and worked to make today memorable for you. We couldn't do it without them and we can't do it without you! Thank you for coming today. Have an enjoyable time and, please, join your friends and neighbors and consider membership in Preservation Idaho.

Paula Benson
Preservation Idaho Board President



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An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood, showing streets, houses, and some commercial buildings. A black banner with the word 'WELCOME' in white, serif, all-caps font is superimposed over the top center of the image. On the left side of the banner, there are several white diagonal lines.

WELCOME

Welcome to the Boise Bench and the Randolph-Robertson Heritage Home Tour! Randolph- Robertson has many wonderful examples of mid-century architectural styles, and we are forever thankful to our neighbors who have opened up their homes to tour. We are also very fortunate to enjoy a strong relationship with Preservation Idaho and appreciate their dedication to the historic preservation of our state. It is our pleasure to welcome you to our neighborhood!

Our neighborhood boasts gorgeous views of the valley and surrounds Grace Jordan Elementary, Borah Park and Borah High School. Borah High was built in 1958 and is named after former presidential candidate and Senator William E. Borah the “Lion of Idaho”. Prior to construction of the school, the property was used as a home field for Boise High, Boise Junior College, and the University of Idaho football games. The baseball field, Wigle Field, was the former home to the Boise Hawks. Big Bun has been making burgers and shakes for the neighborhood since 1954, and Overland Park Shopping Center has been taking care of neighborhood needs since 1979. Our residents also benefit from a central location near I-84 and the Connector with easy access to all areas of the city.

The Borah Neighborhood Association is dedicated to the preservation of the unique character of our surroundings, and we strive to make this neighborhood among the most pleasant places to live in Boise. If you reside in the neighborhood, please consider joining us for our quarterly meetings. Our association meetings are held the second Wednesday of March, June, September and December from 7pm-9pm at Grace Jordan Elementary.

Thanks again for visiting our neighborhood! We hope you enjoy your tour.

Sincerely,

Chris Cromwell, Borah Neighborhood Association President

Edenn Jablonski, Borah Neighborhood Association Vice President



AERIAL VIEW OF RANDOLPH ROBERTSON FROM OVERLAND/CURTIS, C. 1958

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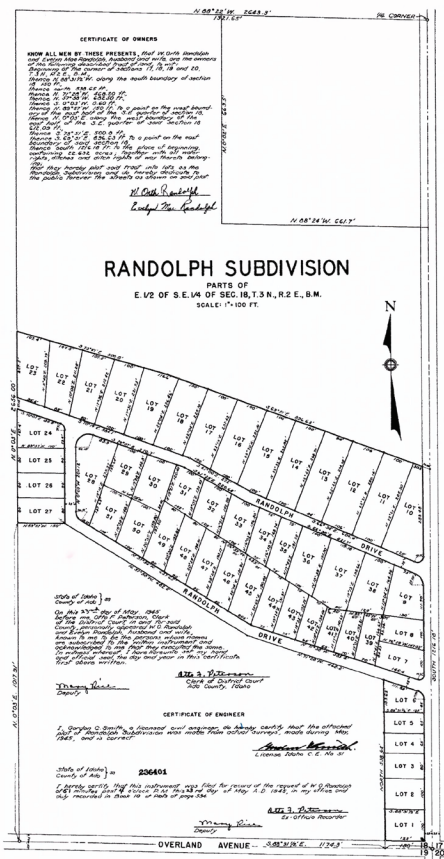
NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

The Randolph-Robertson neighborhood is located along the rim of a bluff known locally as the “Bench,” a geologic formation that emerges from the Boise River. Settlement on the Bench, which lacked easily available water supplies, developed later than land near the river which provided water for small farms and orchards. Few people located on the Bench until large irrigation projects were underway in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The arrival of water opened up the area to farms, small orchard tracts, and dairies. Arian T. Thomas and William A. Rankin were two early settlers who claimed land in what eventually became Randolph-Robertson subdivision. Other sections were owned by William Ridenbaugh, Daniel D. Drake, and Asaph D. Clark.

Unlike Thomas, Ridenbaugh, Drake, and Clark, who all were investors who did not live on the land, farmer William Rankin lived on his Bench farm. He used water from the Farmers Lateral canal to irrigate the hay, potatoes, and other crops that he planted. Making a living from the land on the Bench was difficult and the land in these sections changed hands several times until the 1940s when W. Orth “Duffy” Randolph purchased 70 acres.

Randolph-Robertson Subdivision is named for the men who partnered in its development. W. Orth “Duffy” Randolph was born in Missouri in 1907 and moved with his family to a farm northeast of Nampa in 1916. He later moved to Boise and began work as a delivery driver for Baird’s Cleaners.



neighborhood history, cont...

The Robertson brothers were born and raised in Oklahoma. They operated a dry cleaning and laundry business in Yellowstone National Park during the 1920s and moved to Boise in the early 1940s, where they met Duffy Randolph. Before long the three men were partners in a 120-acre farm in the Five Mile area as well as in several business enterprises, including the Boise Cleaners, the Idaho Laundry, and a tailor shop at Gowen Field.

In 1946, Duffy and his wife Evelyn wanted to purchase a house on acreage west of downtown. The land, located at Curtis and Overland Roads, was bisected by the Farmers Lateral Canal. According to Duffy's daughter, Sharon, the farmer who owned the property would not sell the house without the 70 acres of farmland surrounding it. Duffy and Evelyn bought the acreage and built a home along the edge of the Bench. They divided the remaining land into Randolph Subdivision on the south side of the canal and Randolph Acreage on the north side. To attract homebuyers to the area they hired Jay Amyx, Jr., a contractor and builder, to design and build a model home.

Advertisements in local newspapers announced a special home showing to introduce the new subdivision to interested home buyers. Like many communities across the country, Boise experienced a post-war population boom. During the years of World War II, new house construction was limited by the scarcity of building materials and labor, both of which were directed toward the war effort. After the war, the Randolph-Robertson partnership was ready and able to meet the demand for new housing.

By 1950, Randolph and the Robertsons continued to run their cleaning companies but also started to develop the 92-acre Randolph-Robertson Subdivision on property adjacent to the first 70 acres purchased by Duffy and Evelyn. The Randolph-Robertson agency sold lots, leaving it to the buyer to contract with builders for house construction. The realtors developed the Overland Water Company and dug wells to serve the subdivision and some adjacent properties, eventually selling it to Boise Water Company. Duffy Randolph, Bob and Fred Robertson formed a partnership with Bob Vincent, a local builder and established R & V Construction, which then began to build homes on the property the agency sold.



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The Randolph-Robertson Subdivision followed the pattern of subdivisions created between 1940 and 1965 throughout the United States. Subdivisions varied in terms of scale, street layout, size and shape of blocks and lots, amenities, protective covenants, inclusion of special use areas, and the manner in which development proceeded. In size, subdivisions ranged from small block or half-block undertakings to ones comprising large areas covering several acres of land. Subdivision configurations were varied rectilinear grid layouts to curvilinear plans with loop roads and cul-de-sacs which were aimed at curbing

through-traffic and eliminating dangerous intersections. Blocks assumed various forms, from simple rectangles to organic, curving shapes; lots varied in shape from rectangles to wedges and trapezoids. Several of Boise's subdivisions were platted to take advantage of the topography that followed the river and benches of the city.

Like Boise's earlier developers, Randolph and the Robertson brothers acquired and surveyed the land, developed a plan, laid out building lots and roads, and improved the overall site. The range of site improvements varied, but usually included utilities, graded roads, curbs and sidewalks, storm water drains, tree planting, and graded house lots. Lots were then sold either to prospective homeowners who would contract with their own builders, to developers who would buy several parcels at once to construct homes for resale, or to speculators intending to resell the land when real estate values rose.

Bob Vincent built many of the homes in the subdivision. He based many of his plans on the popular Ranch style using his creativity to design one-story houses that were compact, yet served the demands for growing families.

neighborhood history, cont...

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Randolph-Robertson Subdivision, promising “better living in Boise,” ballooned from 70 acres to 320 acres with 400 homes by 1956. The cost of homes was between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Selling points for the subdivision included the location, a quick ten-minute drive from downtown, wide streets and large frontage lots. There were soon two neighborhood schools, McKinley elementary school, constructed in 1951 and expanded in 1955, and Borah High School, a 53-room building costing \$1.75 million, constructed in 1957. Southminster Presbyterian Church, designed by church architect Glenn Bickerstaff, was constructed on Overland Road in 1955 and dedicated in 1956.

Along with homes, schools, and a church, a commercial district began to grow on Overland Road. “The Big Bun,” a drive-in designed by Bob Vincent, opened in 1959 at the corner of Overland and Curtis roads. The partners (Duffy, Bob Vincent, and the Robertson brothers) built an office building on the 6000 block of

Overland Road. Since they all lived in the neighborhood, they had a short commute to work. The new building housed the offices for their many businesses, including Randolph-Robertson Realty, Overland Water Company, R & V Construction Company and Randolph-Robertson Insurance Agency. Other new commercial buildings on Overland included a barber and beauty shop, grocery and clothing stores, all in new modern buildings designed by Bob Vincent.

In 1959 the Randolph-Robertson Subdivision was highlighted as one of three neighborhoods that participated in the Boise Home Builders Association Parade of Homes. Five model homes built by five different contractors were built at the intersection of Palmwood Street and Hummel Drive. The event brought realtors, builders, and interior designers together to showcase new house styles and furnishings.

Bob Vincent was one of several contractor builders for the neighborhood. Among the other builders were Jay Amyx, Jr. and A. T. Sorensen. A few homes were designed by local Boise architects including Art Troutner and Joe LaMarche.

Duffy Randolph, the Robertson Brothers, and Bob Vincent continued to develop the neighborhood. By the late 1960s hundreds of houses dotted the area that extended from the rim of the Bench to Curtis, Cole, and Overland Roads.



Randolph-Robertson neighborhood is an important part of Boise's history. The homes that make up are good examples of mid-century architecture and reflect postwar patterns of design. Variations on the Ranch style dominate the neighborhood. The design emphasizes ample windows and open floor plans, which open interior spaces to bring the outdoors in. Large lawns provide plenty of space for children to play and accommodated the baby boom following World War II and the subdivision reflects the prosperity and optimism which followed. Several residents still live in homes they built when the neighborhood developed in the 1950s. Today, Randolph-Robertson is a sought after location for homebuyers who want to invest in intact examples of mid-century architecture.

Although it is not designated as a historic district, many Randolph-Robertson houses are more than 50-years old, the age at which the National Park Service will consider buildings for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Boise has not yet listed a mid-century neighborhood in the National Register of Historic Places as a local historic district and there is no protection for houses in Randolph-Robertson subdivision from inappropriate alterations or demolitions. Architectural diversity with examples of housing styles from all eras is important to creating a livable community. One of the goals of the Heritage Homes Tour is to help educate homeowners and prospective homebuyers about architecturally and historically diverse neighborhoods and the importance of preserving them in our communities.



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1308 South Albright

WILLIAM AND ROBERTA STITH HOUSE



In June 1952 William and Roberta Stith finalized a mortgage in the amount of \$8,500 for Lot 8, in Block 6 of Randolph-Roberson Subdivision with the Continental State Bank. That amount likely covered the cost of the land and the construction of their three-bedroom brick Ranch-style house.

The house exhibits many characteristics of the Ranch-style. It is one-story and has a low-pitched roof with moderate roof overhang and an attached garage. The front entry is recessed under the main roof of the house with a large picture window centered on the wall. Brick and wood are used for the wall cladding and creates a subtle decorative detail. The cross-hipped roof design was popular and is seen elsewhere in the neighborhood.

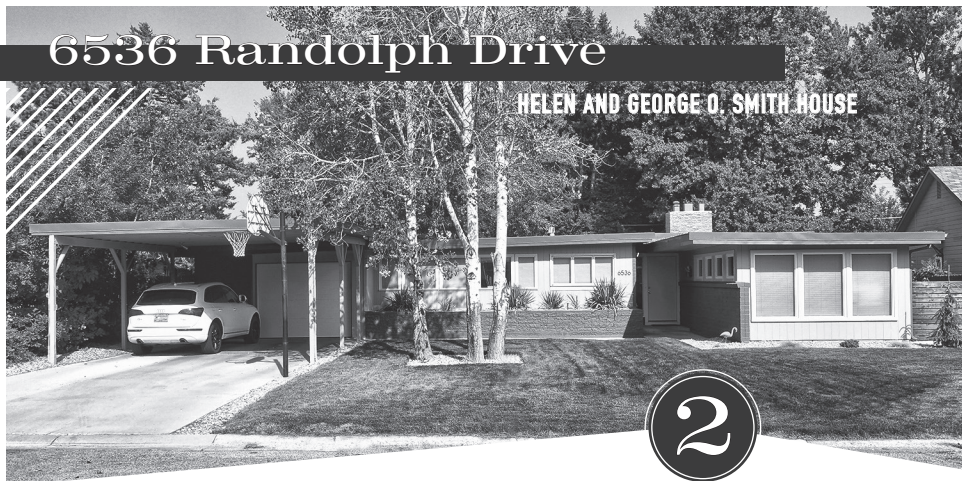
William “Bill” Stith was born in Nebraska in 1923. In 1932 his family moved to Murtaugh, Idaho, for his father’s health. His family lived in Murtaugh briefly before returning to Brule, Nebraska, where Bill attended high school. After graduation he joined the Navy Bill served as a Motor Machinist Mate, Second Class, and was trained in machinist and electrical work. He did two tours of duty before he was honorably discharged in 1945. Bill married Roberta Ann Gilbert in 1944. In 1950 the young couple and their new baby son arrived in Boise.

After moving to Albright Street, the family grew and the Stiths raised a family of five in their comfortable home. In 1964 Bill and Roberta started Tri-State Electric in their garage. The company is still in business today with over 100 employees. Bill and Roberta died in 2012 having lived in their home for 60 years.

Current Owner - Jessica and Sam Luque

6536 Randolph Drive

HELEN AND GEORGE O. SMITH HOUSE



In 1954 George and Helen Smith moved from Pershing Street off of Overland to their new home in Randolph-Robertson Subdivision No. 2. Their new home, like many contractor-built houses, was built by an unidentified builder. The house design features components of Contemporary architectural trends, which are seen in the low-pitched roof with deep eaves, a recessed front entrance, and a planter box. An attached garage is expanded with the addition of a carport. The Smiths hired Bob Vincent to design an addition to the front of the house. It provides additional interior space and is sympathetic to the original design.

George Oliver Smith was born in Weiser to Oliver and Bess Foster Smith. He grew up helping his parents with their ranch but developed a fascination with movies. He started taking pictures and creating movies when he was 13 years old. During World War II he was part of a unique program developed by the Army and the research council of Academy of Moving Pictures Arts and Sciences which partnered to quickly train camera men for use in the military. Amateur film makers were invited to enlist in the signal corps reserve and receive professional training from directors in the Hollywood studios. Smith enlisted and during the war served as a cinematographer for Army training films. In 1944 he married Helen Stanfield who was also from Weiser. The couple had three children.

George and Helen founded Film Originals, based in Boise and produced many documentary films. The films covered a variety of topics from health care to wilderness safety. Helen wrote the scripts. The husband and wife team produced dozens of films including “Folks around Here Fly” and “Lost Hunter.” They also were part of group that produced “Idaho” in 1963 as a celebration of the territorial centennial. Helen died in 1990 and George in 2005. George and Helen were profiled on an episode of “Vanishing Idaho” in 1996 for Idaho Public Television. The episode is available for viewing online at idahoptv.org.

Current Owners: Rob Baker and Carrie Quinney

6400 Randolph Drive

LEWIS AND ANGELA GRUBER HOUSE



6400 Randolph Drive is among a handful of Boise residences designed by Art Troutner. An Idaho native, Troutner was a true Renaissance man; an architect, engineer, industrial designer, and businessman. In 1960 Troutner and Harold Thomas started Trus Joist Corporation, which manufactured a unique engineered wood product. According to noted architect and University of Idaho professor Nels Reese, “Troutner is arguably the most important single figure in the history of the development of wood technology for architecture. His work has changed the way wood is thought of as a structural building material and the way the forest is thought of as a resource.”

Lewis and Angela Gruber were already living in Randolph-Robertson at 1317 S. Newport Street when they commissioned Art Troutner to design a new house for them on a rim lot with views to Bogus Basin. Lewis was a career pilot who served in the Army Air Corps during World War Two. After the War, he became a commercial pilot and flew for many years before he retired as Captain of a Boeing 727. His wife Angela was a beautician and operated a salon at 6224 Overland Road.

Their rim house was departure from the Minimal Traditional-style house they lived in on Newport Street. The house features a low-pitched roof with a butterfly roof carport extending to the road. The front door is positioned between floor to ceiling glass windows. The walls feature “weeping” mortar between the bricks and clerestory windows provide privacy for the street facing elevations. Like many Randolph-Robertson houses the street view is deceptive as the house appears to be only one-story but actually has two levels that provide stunning views to the city below and the mountains to the North.

The Grubers sold their home in 1964 to Edward.L.”Nif” and Shirley Sullivan who lived in the home, raising four children there. The couple divorced and Shirley remained in the house until she sold it in 2000. The interior of the house has been updated but in keeping with the mid-century feel and style. The current owners have kept a closet that still retains the original materials used in construction of the house.

Current Owners: Michael and Crissy Hollenbeck

6710 Randolph Drive

FRED AND IRENE ROBERTSON HOUSE



Fred and Irene Robertson followed a common practice among real estate developers and built their personal residences in the subdivision they platted. They chose a Ranch-style house designed by Bob Vincent and selected a view lot on the rim of the Bench that provided spectacular views to the north.

The Ranch-style was introduced in California in the 1930s by architects who found inspiration in one-story buildings similar to the Spanish rancho of the Southwest with larger pitched-roof homes that featured private courtyards and covered inward-facing porches. Cliff May, a southern California builder, designer and promoter was instrumental in developing plans and drawings of the Ranch house. These drawings were reproduced in *Western Ranch Houses* written by May and published by *Sunset Magazine*. The book was met with success. By the late 1940s, this new house type, perceived as modern and unpretentious, caught on across the country as builders across the nation adapted the plans as a house suitable for middle income families. It combined elements of vernacular houses with the Craftsman Bungalow and typically featured a low-pitched roof with deep eaves and a low horizontal profile.

The exterior of the Robertson house retains its mid-century Ranch style. It has a low profile and has an irregular plan with a wing that angles to front. The front entry is sheltered under a deep roof overhang. There is a direct view through the house through a large picture window. Note the tan bricks that accent the red brick walls along the window sill and along the garage wall. The current owners have remodeled the interior and uncovered original features that were hidden in past remodels including the original living room fireplace and bathroom tile.

Current Owners: Steve Caulkins and Stephanie Menietti



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6832 Fairfield

STANLEY AND RITA GREEN HOUSE



In 1959 when Stanley and Rita Green moved to Boise with the Salt Lake Pipeline Company they purchased a new home on Fairfield Avenue. The Ranch house dominated the neighborhood but some builders constructed houses in the Minimal Traditional or Contemporary style.

The Contemporary style was favored by most American architects from 1945 to 1965. Some developers built Contemporary subdivisions. Perhaps the most well-known was Joseph Eichler in California who according to architectural historian Virginia McAlester built close to ten thousand homes in the San Francisco Bay area. Though the builder of the Green House remains unknown elements of the Contemporary style are exhibited in the house. Identifying features of the Contemporary style included a low-pitched gabled roof (sometimes flat) with widely overhanging eaves; exposed roof beams; and a recessed or hidden entry door. The Green house has large windows under a low-pitched gable roof, a carport, and a wooden screen wall. The multi-stone wall cladding with highlights of turquoise stone is unique for the neighborhood.

The Greens lived in the house briefly before they returned to Salt Lake City. They sold the house to Ellsworth and Panzie Pooley. The third owners were John “Jack” and Ruth Osgood who moved to the house in 1963. Jack joined the Army Air Corps in 1940. During World War II he served as B-24 Commander in the European Theater. He was awarded the Silver Star and the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism in combat. Jack met his wife Ruth in San Antonio, Texas and they traveled the world and raised a family during a career with the military.

In 1963, Jack retired from the military and moved to Boise where he started a second career in real estate. Ruth died in 1993. After her death, Jack became a dedicated volunteer at the World Center for Birds of Prey commuting from his Randolph-Robertson home two or three days per week. He resided at his Fairfield Street home until his death in 2012.

Current Owners: Jay and Kristi Hoover

6502 Robertson Drive

ROBERT AND BESSIE BINGHAM HOUSE



When Robert Bingham, manager of the local Skaggs Drug Store, and his wife Bessie purchased a lot in Randolph-Robertson Subdivision they hired their neighbor Robert “Bob” Vincent to design a modern and spacious Ranch-style house. The Bingham’s remained in their comfortable new home for five years before Mr. Bingham was transferred to Salt Lake. Constructed of yellow brick, the house features rectilinear massing, a shallow, cross-gabled roof with scalloped-edged trim, and a recessed entry with wrought iron supports, popular period details found on other houses designed by Bob Vincent. Vincent was a self-trained contractor builder and a partner with Duffy Randolph and Fred and Bob Robertson in R and V Construction Company. During the 1950s and 1960s the construction company built hundreds of houses in Randolph-Robertson Subdivision and in other mid-century subdivisions in Boise.

Although Bob Vincent grew up in California, he had strong ties to Idaho. His great-grandfather, Alexander Duffes, founded Nampa in 1885. His parents Eva and Howard Vincent moved to California where he was born. The family returned to Idaho to visit relatives and to hunt and fish. In 1948, Bob and his wife Jewel moved from Los Angeles, California to Boise. They rented a house in Boise before purchasing land for a new house on Perkins Road, now called Cole Road. Bob built a home there and when it was paid off in March, 1953 the young couple moved to the new Randolph Subdivision. They lived in the basement apartment of Duffy and Evelyn Randolph for three months while Bob completed building Fred and Irene Robertson’s house at 6710 Randolph Drive. After completing the Robertson home, Bob built a new home for his family at 6516 Robertson Drive.

The popular Ranch style house dominated housing stock in the new subdivision and Bob Vincent excelled at designing homes in the new style. Although not a trained architect he had the skill and vision to create house plans that embraced the Ranch-style and provide a family friendly house with modern amenities.

Current Owners: Brian and Pam Atkins



PRESERVATION IDAHO

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED TODAY'S TOUR.

As a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that receives no state or federal operating funding, Preservation Idaho relies solely on contributions by our members, donors and volunteers to fulfill our mission of preserving Idaho's historic places through collaboration, education, and advocacy.

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THANK YOU

15

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**RESEARCH + WRITING:
BARBARA PERRY BAUER**

**LAYOUT:
MELANIE FOLWELL**

**PHOTOGRAPHY:
DAVE CRAWFORTH
CY GILBERT**

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