

NPS Form 10-9000  
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Ola School

other name/site number: 010198

2. Location

street & number: 5 Ola School Road, P.O. Box 25

not for publication: n/a

city/town: Ola vicinity: n/a

state: ID county: Gem code: 045 zip code: 83657

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: public-local

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u>	buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Public School Buildings in Idaho

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ✓ nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ✓ meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria.      See continuation sheet.

Thomas J. Green Signature of certifying official 3-1992 Date

Idaho State Historical Society State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Autawell 5/5/92  
     See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register       
     See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

fn Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: EDUCATION Sub: school

Current : EDUCATION Sub: school

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

No style

Other Description: n/a

Materials: foundation concrete roof metal:aluminum
walls wood:weather-board other n/a

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : n/a

Areas of Significance: education
architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1910-42

Significant Dates : 1910

Significant Person(s): n/a

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Cantrall, John

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): n/a

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- X State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than 1 acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>11</u>	<u>556870</u>	<u>4891560</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Sec. 25, T10N, R1E of the Boise Meridian SW 1/4 NW 1/4 NW 1/4

Boundary Justification: X See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Elizabeth Egleston, State Architectural Historian

Organization: Id. State Historic Presv. Office    Date: 12/18/91

Street & Number: 210 Main Street    Telephone: (208) 334-3861

City or Town: Boise    State: ID Zip: 83702

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Located in the Squaw Creek Valley of Gem County, the Ola School is situated on top of a hill overlooking the small community of Ola. The building faces north. The overall mass of the building is that of a rectangular with a hipped roof, a cupola, and an open, front-gabled porch. At the rear (south) of the school is a smaller rectangular building which is front-gabled, and is connected to the school by an open porch. The front-gabled structure houses the library, and was moved from the now-defunct community of Jackknife, -- miles to the ----, in the 1970's. Corrugated metal covers the roofs of the school, the library and the connecting porch, and both the school and the library are of wooden frame construction and are sheathed with clapboards. A corrugated metal apron obscures the foundation of the school; the library sits on a concrete foundation.

Most of the windows are one-over-one double-hung sash. Two windows on the west wall and three on the south wall have been partially obscured by horizontal wood siding. The fenestration of the library is similar to that of the school, but for the most part, these windows also have been covered with wood siding. The main entrance to the school is located on the north elevation; the door is not original. Four steps lead up to a simple porch, which is covered by a roof supported by square posts.

Much of the interior plan is intact. The school contains two classrooms, which are separated by a hall and restrooms. The latter were installed in 19--; previously this space was used for book storage. Within the past two years linoleum was laid over the wooden floors, and in 19-- a gas furnace replaced a wood-burning stove. These changes, however, have not affected the original interior layout.

Two outbuildings associated with the period of significance are located nearby. To the southwest of the school is a small building that was used to store coal. It is a frame, one-story structure with a front-gable and is sheathed with board and batten. A diminutive outbuilding is situated to the northwest of the school. This also is front-gabled and constructed of frame. It has clapboard cladding.

The Ola School maintains a high degree of integrity; much of its original fabric is intact, and it still conveys its original purpose and appearance. Although the building has undergone some alterations, much of the school's massing, fenestration, materials, setting, design and workmanship are readily evident.

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The Ola School is significant within the context of public education in Idaho, and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. It represents the efforts of the residents to provide schooling for their children and the maturation of the local school district, and in turn, the school documents the development of this small, isolated community. Architecturally, the building represents the second wave of school construction in Ola, and is typical of school structures erected in the state's rural communities during the first decade of this century.

Constructed in 1910, the building is located on a hill that overlooks the town of Ola, population 40. Ola is situated in a narrow valley, known as Squaw Creek, and was settled by whites in 1863 with the arrival of the Carroll and Septema Baird family. The Bairds moved to the valley from Oregon. The long, lush grasses in the valley, coupled with the proximity of the booming mining town of Idaho City, enticed the Bairds to settle near present-day Ola. Raising cattle and other crops, the family profitted both from the Idaho City market and from miners who passed by the Baird's farm as they travelled east to the gold mines.

The Bairds were anxious to establish civic insitutions, but they remained the only settled family in the valley until 1872, when immigrants from Scotland, the Ballantynes, established a farm nearby. During the 1870's Ola grew gradually, gaining the public entities which marked its progress: a post office in 1875 and a school in 1877.

Ola was not the only community in this area -- several other small villages, such as Dry Buck, Timber Flats, Grass, High Valley and Indian Creek, were within a radius of ten miles. According to oral reports they were not much bigger than Ola, and consisted of only a few townspeople. The communities usually had a store, a post office and a school, all of which served the surrounding rural residents. Despite the proximity of these settlements, however, Ola remained isolated, separated by the mountains that demarcate the valley.

The first school was an 8' by 10' log structure, and was located a few feet south of the current cemetery; the building was also used for religious services. Children attended school for three months during the summer. In 1885, the school trustees decided that a new building was necessary. This was situated west of the present church, and was constructed by the recently-hired teacher, Charley Gillette. This building was of frame construction, sheathed with planks. It can still be seen, as it was moved in 1917 to serve as an addition to the dance hall, which is located in the center of town. In this same year, the dance hall was bought by the fraternal order "Woodsmen of the World."

Despite Ola's remote location and small population, by 1900 commercial activity and modern conveniences were made available to the area's residents. In 1902, a hotel and livery barn was built, and even though it burned soon after, other residents were successful at establishing similar businesses. In 1904 the first telephone line was installed and by 1906 residents had erected a church, which is still extant. By 1910, Ola was again ready for a new school.

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The Ola School was constructed by John Contrall, a resident of Long Valley. The school has always had two classrooms, but initially, only one was used, with all grades taught in a single room. The student body has fluctuated according to area economics and the consolidation of surrounding districts.

A letter written by Mrs. James Ware provides a revealing look at the customs of Ola students. She entered the Ola School in 1910, its first year, as a seventh grader. Concerning the dress of her classmates, she writes:

In 1910 the girls wore long underwear and long black stockings laced up ankle high shoes in the winter and usually a warm "petticoat" of flannel or outing flannel. In spring they changed to lighter underwear but they still wore long stockings and laced up shoes -- slippers were for Sunday with their Sunday dress. The boys wore long underwear, denim overalls with suspenders or bib overalls heavy boots or shoes, sometimes pullover sweaters or cotton shirts -- long sleeves or maybe cotton flannel shirts... (1)

She also described what the students ate for lunch:

We carried our lunches usually in five pound lard pails, a sandwich made with either homemade "light" bread or probably a soda, buttermilk biscuit, maybe a piece of cake or some homemaker [sic] sugar cookies, an apple or a little jar of canned fruit, hard boiled eggs were quite standard also. There were no thermos bottles so they were truly cold lunches. (2)

Mrs. Ware lived a mile from school, but often children had to travel farther -- some over three miles. Many children rode horses, and thus there was a stable, no longer standing, east of the school. The privies, located to the south, were razed many years ago, but the woodshed is still intact, as is a small shed.

Like many rural schools, Ola's adults attended many community functions in the school, although other buildings, such as the church and the Woodsmen of the World Hall, were available. Mrs. Ware stated in her correspondence that a literary society, which is described below, was held in the school:

At these meetings there would be readings and recitation of poetry, sometimes a little skit with three or four actors... (3)

Adults also used the school for dances and box socials.

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Change came slowly to the Ola School. An army truck, obtained in 1947, was used as the first bus. The classrooms were illuminated by an overhead hanging kerosene lamp and lamps attached to the wall with brackets; electric lights were installed in the 1940's. After the Jackknife School closed in 1950, it was moved to the rear of the Ola School. This small structure is still connected to the school by a porch, and has served as the physical education room and storage; today it is used as a library, which is available to the community. Indoor bathrooms were installed between 1954 and 1960. Coal and wood stoves heated the building until 1981. Consolidation occurred in 1950, and the Ola School is now part of a county-wide school district.

Today, the Ola School has two teachers, who divide the thirty-three students between grades K-4 and 5-8. The school is described by local residents as the heart of the community, as it still serves not only as a school, but also as a gathering place for adults as well. Box socials, ladies club meetings and Bible studies are still held at the school, as are book discussions and 4-H Club meetings.

Architecturally, the Ola School is significant as a representation of many one-, two- and three-room school houses that proliferated throughout the state during the period from 1900 to 1915. Its similarity in plan, massing and materials indicate that the community had reached a point of maturation whereby residents were aware of standardized school construction. This is in comparison to the community's previous schools, which were purely vernacular, in that the most available materials was used by the most available labor for purely functional purposes.

The evolution of school construction in Ola is typical for Idaho, in that a log building, representing a familiar building type, first served as a school. The second school was less rustic in appearance, but still lacked any ornamental pretension, and did not follow any formal pattern of school construction. On the other hand, while the 1910 building was plain in appearance, it is of sturdier construction, is situated on a prominent location overlooking the town, and achieves a similar appearance to countless schools in Idaho. These characteristics include a hipped roof of a shallow pitch, a belfry, and a symmetrical plan consisting of classrooms flanking a cloakroom space, and in this case, a library.

1. Mrs. James Ware to Mary Lee Beal, 5 May 1978.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

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Beal, Mary Lee and Sutton, Gloria and Perry. Ola, ID. Interview, 4 May 1991.

Blessinger, Io. "History of Ola, Idaho," 13 May 1942. Files of the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, Boise, ID.

"First Gem Settlers Came by Ox Team in '61." Idaho State Journal, 6 April 1962, p. 4.

Mills, Nellie Ireton. All Along the River. Montreal: private printing for Payette Radio Ltd., 1963.

Ware, Mrs. James to Beal, Mary Lee, 12 April 1978. Files of the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, Boise, ID.

\_\_\_\_\_, 5 May 1978.

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BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the school and the associated surrounding property.



Ola School

Ola, Idaho

Elizabeth Egleston

May 4, 1991

Idaho State Historical Society  
view from the south



Ola School

Ola, Idaho

Elizabeth Eggleston

May 4, 1991

Idaho State Historical Society  
view from the east



Ola School

Ola, Idaho

Elizabeth Egleston

May 4, 1991

Idaho State Historical Society

view from the north



Ola School

Ola, Idaho

Elizabeth Egleston

May 4, 1991

Idaho State Historical Society  
view from the northeast