

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## REFERENCE SERIES

### SITE REPORT - PIERCE-WEIPPE

Number 194

December 1981

Historic-site reports contain information designed to assist in two preservation functions. One is preservation planning at the local level. The other is the work of federal agencies in carrying out their responsibilities to comply with historic-preservation requirements prescribed by federal statutes and regulations. These reports summarize local archaeological, historical, and geographical contexts; existing surveys of historic sites; architectural, engineering, industrial; and other cultural resources; and available maps and literature concerning each area. Natural geographical, rather than governmental, boundaries have been used to identify seventy-two areas that vary greatly in size. Site reports reflect a broad cultural and geographical disparity characteristic of diverse regional components found in Idaho, but the areas are designed to incorporate cultural elements of immediate local significance that need to be taken into account for preservation planning.

1. Geographical context: Orofino Creek drains an important mining and logging area north and west of Weippe prairie--a plateau north of a deep stretch of Clearwater canyon. Orofino Creek and Lolo Creek, with a similar forest drainage, surround most of Weippe prairie--a farming area also noted for its camas fields. Elevations range from \_\_\_\_\_ at Orofino to \_\_\_\_\_ at Hemlock butte. A railroad up Orofino Creek and a state highway and Forest Service road system serve this area, although mountains and canyons act as barriers to development of this transportation system.
2. Prehistory and significant archaeological sites: after the last great Missoula-Spokane flood, which surged and splashed from Pasco up Snake River past Lewiston into Idaho some 12,000 years ago, people moved back into Snake and Clearwater canyons, where they have been active ever since. Traces of human occupation of higher canyon and prairie country also go back for eight thousand years or so, and lower Clearwater pit houses have been in use for five thousand years or more.
3. Cultural resource surveys and archaeological literature:

4. Historical summary:
5. Historical documentation and literature:
6. Historic sites inventory:
7. Industrial archaeological and engineering sites summary:  
 Surface evidence of placer mining in this area offers opportunities for study of industrial procedures utilized in historic production. Hydraulic pits, patterns of dredging operations, or tailings that distinguish hill claims from stream claims--or that identify Chinese services--provide information of historic importance. Prospector's pits disclose gravels that were searched unsuccessfully for gold. Ditches, flumes, stream diversions, and similar evidence of water sources also are important.

Lode mining operations left a variety of indications, many of them relatively permanent in nature. Disturbance of surface outcrops includes trenches and exploratory shafts. In other places, tunnels and raises or stopes that reached surface outlets reveal important aspects of mining activity.

If accessible, underground workings have still greater importance for industrial archaeology and engineering analysis. Abandoned tools and equipment, along with items like timbering in tunnels and stopes, add to this record.

8. Architectural resources: The Pierce-Weippe area was settled beginning in 1860, when gold was discovered near Pierce on Orofino Creek, and subsequent settlement has taken the form of small homesteads and mining towns. Significant buildings survive from the mining rush, including the Pierce Courthouse (1861), a hewn horizontal timber building.

All parts of the Pierce-Weippe area need to be examined for architectural remains. Only four sites have been recorded, three of them in Pierce. Towns and centers that have received no attention include the following:

Cardiff	Grangemont	Weippe
Caribel	Greer	Woodland
Glenwood	Jaype	

National Register sites of architectural significance include the Pierce Courthouse, Pierce.

9. United States Geological Survey Maps.

Boundary Peak 1966  
 Brown Creek Ridge 1966  
 Dent 1969

French Mtn. 1965  
Glenwood 1966  
Grangemont 1969  
Headquarters (15') 1938  
Hemlock Butte 1966  
Musselshell 1966  
Orofino East 1967  
Pierce 1966  
Rydo 1967  
Sixmile Creek 1967  
Snowy Summit 1966  
Syringa 1966  
Weippe North 1966  
Weippe South 1966  
Woodland 1967

10. Cultural Resource management recommendations: