

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## REFERENCE SERIES

### THE NAMES COEUR D'ALENE AND PEND D'OREILLE

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The name Coeur d'Alene was applied by French-Canadian trappers to Indians in later Northern Idaho at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Traditionally it is thought to indicate that the Indians were sharp traders, and the early British equivalent of this name seems to have been "Pointed Heart." Arrowsmith's 1814 map of that part of the country shows modern Coeur d'Alene Lake as Pointed Heart Lake, and is an early record of this tradition.

Pend d'Oreille is a name derived also from early 19th Century French-Canadians, who used it for a tribe of Indians closely related to the Coeur d'Alene. These Indians (otherwise known as Flathead or Kalispell) probably were named before the trappers came in contact with them. In any case the name Pend d'Oreille is an inaccurate transcription of an unknown French word. Alexander Henry, an associate of David Thompson who established the fur trade in that part of the country, referred to the Pend d'Oreille Indians as Earbob Indians, and this name may have been intended as an English equivalent for the French word which British trappers recorded as Pend d'Oreille. No reliable explanation, either of the Earbob or Pend d'Oreille name for the Indians, is available.