

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

SITE REPORT - SALMON MEADOWS AND LITTLE SALMON RIVER

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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: Located in an area between volcanic slopes below Idaho's Seven Devils range and a Salmon River mountains granitic batholith formation, Salmon meadows occupies a fairly high valley watered well enough to permit ranching and farming. Extensive forests grow on ridges which encircle Salmon meadows. Early trails and later highways coming through this valley had to traverse difficult terrain regardless of direction, although a less formidable route to Weiser offered rail as well as early road connections with southern Idaho. A narrow rugged Little Salmon canyon drains this valley northward to Salmon River, which flows on through a still deeper canyon. Elevations range from at Riggins to at New Meadows and at Granite mountain above Salmon meadows.

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: Sites of architectural interest in the Salmon Meadows and Little Salmon study area include ranch complexes with a ranch house and related outbuildings, frame and log houses, frame churches designed in the Gothic Revival style, and brick and stone commercial buildings and schools. The latter employ false fronts and motifs drawn from the Colonial Revival, Italianate, and Renaissance Revival styles.

The Idaho Historic Sites Inventory records sixteen sites of architectural interest. All parts of the study area deserve further survey. The center of Pinehurst has received no attention.

National Register sites of architectural significance include the following:

New Meadows: Pacific and Idaho Northern Railroad Depot
Colonel E. M. Heigho House
Meadows Schoolhouse

9. United States Geological Survey Maps.

Bally Mtn. 1963
Black Tip 1963
Brundage Mtn. 1963
Cuprum (15') 1957
Granite Lake 1963
Hazard Lake 1963
Heavens Gate 1964
He Devil (15') 1957
Hershey Point 1963
Indian Mtn. 1963
Kessler Creek 1964
Meadows 1973
New Meadows (15') 1954
No Business Mtn. 1973
Patrick Butte 1965
Pollock 1964
Railroad Saddle 1963
Riggins 1964

10. Cultural resource management recommendations: