

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

SITE REPORT

MONTOUR-SQUAW CREEK-DRY BUCK-HIGH VALLEY

Number 607

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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: Dry Buck basin above Banks and a series of basins along Squaw Creek (High Valley and Upper and Lower Squaw Creek valleys) have ranch and irrigated farm land along a long north-south drainage that provided access to Smith's Ferry and Long Valley prior to road and rail construction in Payette Canyon past Banks. Montour valley continues this sequence where Payette River receives Squaw Creek above Black Canyon. Except for forested slopes on Timber Butte and along upper Squaw Creek on West Mountain, this area is relatively arid. From about feet near Montour, elevations in this area increase to 8,026 feet at Tripod Peak and on Snowbank Mountain.

2. Prehistory and significant archaeological sites: People have inhabited southern Idaho for fourteen thousand years or more. Until about eight thousand years ago they were noted primarily as big game hunters. Since then, they specialized more in camas, bitterroot, and other natural crops and seeds, as well as in smaller game. But they

continued to hunt large game that remained after earlier elephants, camels, giant sloth, and other ice age creatures left as climatic conditions changed. Timber Butte has a major obsidian deposit that provided tools and weapons used over a substantial Pacific Northwest area, reached as far as Kettle Falls, a Columbia River site not far from British Columbia.

3. Cultural resource surveys and archaeological literature:
4. Historical summary: major historical episodes include:
 1. Exploration and fur trade, 1824-1862
 2. Mining traffic, 1862-
 3. Ranching,
 4. Transportation improvement, 1920-1932
 5. New Deal and wartime adjustments, 1933-1945
 6. Contemporary life, 1946-
5. Historical documentation and literature:
6. Historic sites inventory:
7. Industrial archaeological and engineering sites summary:
8. Architectural resources:
9. United States Geological Survey Maps:
 - Banks (15') 1953
 - Dodson Pass 1970
 - Montour (15') 1953

Ola 1970
Smith's Ferry (15') 1953
Squaw Butte 1970
Twin Sisters 1970
Webb Creek 1970

10. Cultural resource management recommendations:

Publications--450 N. 4th Street, Boise, ID 83702--208-334-3428