

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

SITE REPORT - LITTLE LOST RIVER-PAHSIMEROI

Number 626

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 setting: This long valley, bordered by parallel Lemhi and Lost River ranges (Idaho's highest) offers Snake plains--Salmon River access along a route more important during prehistoric and fur trade times than in later years. Generally arid, even at higher elevations, this spectacular terrain has some timber but mostly range land. A limited amount of irrigated farming is possible. Important Pahsimeroi and Little Lost River mines, have diversified this valley's economy.

Several peaks located on both sides, exceed 12,000 feet: elevations range from at Ellis to 12,662 feet for Mount Borah.

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. Snake River plains big game hunters came into the Salmon River mountains to fish and to hunt mountain sheep and other local

game. Evidence of their activity there goes back for eight thousand years or so.

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 architecture of the Little Lost-Pahsimeroi study unit is dominated by log construction. On the area's many ranches and few small towns there are numerous log houses and outbuildings.

One architectural site has been recorded in May. All parts of the study unit deserve further survey. In particular, the following towns and centers have received no attention:

Berenice	Fallert	Howe
Clyde	Goldburg	Patterson
Ellis		

No sites of architectural significance have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

9. United States Geological Survey Maps:

Allison Creek 1962
Arco Pass 1969

Borah Peak 1967
 Burnt Creek 1967
 Challis (15') 1956
 Diamond Peak (15') 1957
 Dickey Peak 1967
 Donkey Hills (15') 1956
 Doublespring (15') 1956
 Eightmile Canyon 1969
 Elkhorn Creek 1967
 Gilmore (15') 1957
 Hawley Mtn. (15') 1957
 Howe 1969
 Howe NE 1969
 Howe NW 1969
 Leatherman Peak 1967
 Lem Peak 1962
 Little Antelope Flat 1963
 Little Lost River Sinks 1969
 Massacre Mtn. 1967
 May (15') 1956
 Methodist Creek 1969
 Patterson (15') 1956
 Ramshorn Canyon 1969
 Short Creek 1967
 Sunset Peak 1969
 Tyler Peak 1969

10. Cultural resource management recommendations: