

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

SITE REPORT - KAMIAH-KOOSKIA AREA

Number 645

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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: Clearwater River's middle fork below Lowell and south fork below Harpster run through deep canyons below farm prairies or forested ridges. River bottom valleys, particularly at Kooskia and Kamiah, provide a limited amount of fairly level terrain at lower elevations in this canyon system, which continues on west past Greer to Orofino and Lewiston. Forest and agricultural products characterize this area's economy. Rail transportation to Lewiston, highways to Lewiston, Missoula, Grangeville, and Elk City, and county and Forest Service roads make this area accessible to tourists as well as to commercial carriers. Elevations rise from at Greer to .

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: Major historical episodes include

1. Exploration and fur trade, 1806-1838
2. Kamiah Mission and Nez Perce acculturation, 1838-1860
3. Mining traffic and mission revival, 1860-1876
4. Nez Perce War, 1877
5. Acculturation and Nez Perce factionalism,
6. Nez Perce allotment,
7. Rail service and transportation improvement,
8. New Deal and wartime adjustments, 1933-1945
9. Contemporary life, 1946-

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 Kamiah-Kooskia Area developed with the opening of parts of the Nez Perce Indian Reservation to white settlement in 1895. Architectural sites are associated with the commercial shipping and supply roles of the Clearwater canyon towns. Frame, brick, and concrete block commercial buildings are influenced by the Romanesque and Renaissance

Revival styles.

Fourteen sites of architectural significance are recorded in the Idaho Historic Sites Survey, the majority of them in Stites, Kooskia, and Kamiah. No residential or rural sites have been recorded. All parts of the study area need further survey. The following towns and centers have received little attention and should be inspected for architectural remains:

Harpster
Kidder
Pardee

Architectural sites listed in the National Register include the following:

Kamiah: First Presbyterian Church
State Bank of Kamiah

Kooskia: State Bank of Kooskia

T22N, R4E, Section 18: Sue McBeth's Cabin

9. United States Geological Survey Maps:

Big Cedar 1966
Corral Hill 1963
Glenwood 1966
Grangeville East 1963
Harpster 1963
Kamiah 1967
Kooskia 1966
Lodge Point 1966
Lowell 1966
Nez Perce SE 1967
Pilot Knob 1962
Sixmile Creek 1967
Stites 1966
Syringa 1966
Weippe South 1966
Woodland 1967

10. Cultural resource management recommendations: