

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

SITE REPORT - POCATELLO-LOWER PORTNEUF

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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: A complex of ridges, canyons, and valleys west of Lava Hot Springs contains phosphate mines, Forest Service lands dry farms irrigated tracts, and major transportation routes. Portneuf River below Lava Hot Springs drains a varied area, including Marsh Creek and Ross fork. Pocatello is Idaho's major rail center, with lines to Utah, Montana, Wyoming, and west across southern Idaho. Much of this area is quite arid, but higher ridges and basins receive more precipitation. Elevations vary from west of Pocatello to 9,282 feet at Oxford Peak.

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.

3. Cultural resource surveys and archaeological literature:

4. Historical summary: Major historical episodes include
 1. Exploration and fur trade, 1811-1840
 2. Emigrant traffic, 1841-1867
 3. Fort Hall reservation, 1867-1882
 4. Rail construction and early Pocatello, 1878-1902
 5. Opening of Fort Hall lands,
 6. Forest Service operations, 19 -1919
 7. Transportation improvement and farm depression, 1920-1932
 8. New Deal era, 1933-1941
 9. Industrial expansion, 1942-
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:
 - Arimo 1968
 - Bancroft (15') 1948
 - Blackfoot 1976
 - Bonneville Peak 1968
 - Bradley Mtn. 1968
 - Buckskin Basin 1971
 - Clifton Creek 1968
 - Cottonwood Peak 1969
 - Dairy Creek 1968
 - Downey East 1968
 - Downey West 1968
 - Elkhorn Peak 1968
 - Fort Hall 1971
 - Hawkins 1968
 - Haystack Mtn. 1968
 - Inkom 1976
 - Jeff Cabin Creek 1968
 - Lava Hot Springs 1968
 - Lincoln Creek 1955

Lincoln Peak
McCammon 1968
Malad Summit 1968
Michaud 1971
Michaud Creek 1971
Oxford 1968
Pingree 1955
Pocatello North 1971
Pocatello South 1971
Schiller 1974
Scout Mtn. 1969
South Putnam Mtn. 1968
Swan Lake 1969
Wakely Peak 1968
Wheat Grass Bench 1974
Yandell Springs (15') 1955

10. Cultural resource management recommendations: