

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

SITE REPORT - UPPER WEISER RIVER: COUNCIL VALLEY, INDIAN VALLEY, MIDDLE VALLEY, UPPER VALLEY

Number 658

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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: Weiser River and its branches flow through four major valleys connected by canyons above Crane Creek. Each of them receives streams from higher ridges with Forest Service lands and smaller valleys. But most of this area is range land utilized for ranching, with irrigated farms located in larger valleys. Elevations increase gradually from Middle Valley (Midvale, feet), Upper Valley (Cambridge, feet), Indian Valley (feet), and Council Valley (feet), while Council mountain reaches 8,126 feet. Mesa hill, long a site of a large, unirrigated apple orchard, separates Council Valley from Indian Valley. Highways to Lewiston, Weiser, and Brownlee serve this area. Access to mining and recreational areas (Seven Devils and Cuddy Mountain) is gained through Council and Cambridge.

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. An archaeological site on Midvale Hill preserves evidence of early tool making in that area. In more recent times, Nez Perce and Northern Shoshoni bands came in contact here.

3. Cultural resource surveys and archaeological literature:
4. Historical summary: Major historical episodes include
 1. Exploration and fur trade, 1824-1861
 2. Goodale's Cutoff, 1862-
 3. Early ranching,
 4. Forest Service administration, 1906-1919
 5. Transportation improvement and farm depression, 1920-1932
 6. New Deal and wartime adjustments, 1933-1945
 7. Forest product industrial expansion, 1946-1980
 8. Contemporary economy, 1980-
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:
 - Cambridge (15') 1957
 - Cascade (15') 1954
 - Council (15') 1954
 - Crane Creek Reservoir (15') 1957
 - Cuprum (15') 1957
 - Granger Butte 1970
 - Hornet (15') 1957
 - Mann Creek (15') 1953
 - New Meadows (15') 1954
10. Cultural resource management recommendations:

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