

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

SITE REPORT - CRANE AND WILLOW CREEKS

Number 659

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 context: Crane Creek (Weiser drainage) and Big and Little Willow creeks (Payette drainage), rise north and west of Squaw Butte and flow through an arid range area with some reservoirs and irrigated farms in addition to large ranches. Along with some intermediate streams and Weiser cove, their area includes a large territory above Payette and Snake River valley irrigated tracts. An important mercury mine near Weiser adds a significant mineral resource to this area. A network of county roads facilitates transportation in this thinly populated section. elevations increase from about 2,200 feet near Weiser to at Squaw Butte.

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, 1824-1861
 2. Goodale's Cutoff, 1862-
 3. Ranching and reservoir construction,
 4. BLM administration, 19 -
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:
 - Birding Island 1952
 - Coonrod Gulch 1970
 - Crane Creek Reservoir 1957
 - Dodson Pass 1970
 - Granger Butte 1970
 - Hog Cove Butte 1970
 - Holland Gulch 1970
 - Letha 1971
 - Mann Creek (15') 1953
 - Montour (15') 1953
 - Northwest Emmett 1971
 - Ola 1970
 - Paddock Valley Reservoir 1970
 - Riley Butte 1970
 - Sheep Ridge 1970
 - Squaw Butte 1970
 - Twin Sisters 1970
 - Weiser Cove 1952
10. Cultural resource management recommendations: