

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY REFERENCE SERIES

UPPER SALMON FALLS

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Hagerman Valley has a number of natural sites of historic interest. These include large springs as well as major Snake River falls and rapids--some of which attracted Oregon Trail emigrant attention. Upper Salmon Falls, with its major fishing resources, had special appeal. A Northern Shoshoni band had fished there long before emigrants started to come by, and salmon trade formed a significant element in their economy after Oregon Trail traffic penetrated their domain. Similar fishing at Lower Salmon Falls did not profit from emigrant markets, because Oregon Trail wagons ascended a high bluff there to follow a direct route to Glenn's Ferry. When a twentieth century power dam was built there, its small reservoir separated emigrant road access from Upper Salmon Falls. Its rocky cascades, however, remain exposed in its undisturbed channel. Evidence of stream erosion survives in a great variety of rock sculpture that illustrates what fast water can do. When high water exceeds hydroelectric generating capacity there, Upper Salmon Falls regains its original character of Oregon Trail times, although salmon no longer can reach it to provide a spectacular display for Shoshoni fishing. Aside from that, it remains an emigrant road site of exceptional interest.

**(This information has not been edited.)**

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