

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## REFERENCE SERIES

### SHOSHONE FALLS

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Originally identified as Canadian Falls (as distinguished from American Falls farther up Snake River), Shoshone Falls was an impressive natural feature along an old Indian trail that Hudson's Bay Company packers used when they traveled between Fort Boise and fort Hall. Substantially higher than Niagara Falls (212 feet compared with 182), it occupies a deep lava gorge. When a United States Army company of mounted riflemen came by that way in 1849, they renamed it Shoshone Falls. Clarence King's federally sponsored geological survey followed with pictures in 1868 that gave it national recognition.

When Snake river fine gold deposits brought prospectors there in 1870, Shoshone Falls began to get a broader reputation as a scenic wonderland. Then--partly because a ferry there attracted vehicular traffic--many more people managed to reach that isolated location. After Union Pacific rail service advanced to Shoshone in 1882, national access improved sufficiently to make Shoshone Falls Idaho's leading scenic attraction. United States Senator George L. Shoup preferred to protect Shoshone Falls as a National Park in 1898, but his proposal lost out to a competing plan to divert much of Snake River for a large Twin Falls irrigation tract after 1900. But during seasons of high water, Shoshone Falls continues to regain its spectacular display.

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

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