

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY REFERENCE SERIES

LENORE

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People have lived in permanent settlements at Lenore for more than ten thousand years, and as soon as a gold rush commenced to Pierce following mineral discoveries there, September 30, 1860, a major steamboat landing and supply center was projected there. So Lenore has a variety of reasons for historic interest.

Four periods of occupation near Lenore have left useful archaeological evidence. Two eras of campground use there precede a more permanent group of house pits of about five thousand years ago. More recent house pits of one to three thousand years ago show continued occupation. These are explained in a National Park Service visitor center there.

An initial effort to open a mining service center in that area proved to be transitory. Seth S. Slater founded Slaterville May 6, 1861, at a Clearwater River landing as far up as initial steamboat service could get. A second steamboat trip ended in confusion, May 13, when its towline snapped in Big Eddy just below Lenore. (That interesting natural feature and obstacle to navigation still survives.) So a site for New Slaterville, immediately renamed Lewiston, came into use May 19. One more upstream steamboat trip got to Slaterville, which still served as a gold rush base on June 6. But Lewiston immediately replaced it as a commercial center when Clearwater River steamboat navigation had been demonstrated to be impractical. Anyone who looks at Big Eddy and other historic sites around Lenore can see why.

(This information has not been edited.)

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