



IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
REFERENCE SERIES

**FUR TRADE ACTIVITY IN BOISE VALLEY**

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Following an old Indian trail that came by here, Donald Mackenzie discovered Boise Valley early in November 1811. He was on his way west with a small party of six trappers headed for Astoria, Oregon. Wilson Price Hunt, who reached Boise River, "fringed with groves of cottonwillow," November 22, "made a sumptuous repast upon fish and a couple of dogs" that a local Shoshoni band provided them. Originally associated with John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company, Mackenzie returned to Boise Valley in 1818 as a partner in a Montreal beaver venture after his Astorian enterprise failed. That time he brought along a group of Iroquois trappers who spent a year here with Boise Shoshoni people.

Hudson's Bay Company trappers followed Mackenzie's Snake country trapping brigades, coming over this trail for thirty years. By 1826, mountain men from Saint Louis also joined in hunting beaver here. Together with their British competitors, they largely cleared out most beaver from their Boise River ponds. Beaver eventually managed a comeback here, but most Hudson's Bay Company hunters had to use this trail as a supply route to operations elsewhere. But Mackenzie and his fur hunters opened a route for later emigrants that emerged after 1840 as a primary road to western Oregon.