

## **BOISE VALLEY IRRIGATION**

Number 1036

September 1993

Mining demands for farm products ran so high that by 1864, all river bottom lands with access to canals were producing crops. Expansion of irrigated farming up to higher bench lands took a long time. But by 1878, canals that crossed Oregon Trail grades were beginning to transform a broader expanse of desert country. Finally, a really large mining and irrigation system projected in 1882 culminated in construction of a major diversion dam above Beaver Dick's ferry site in 1909. Except for river bottom lands, these canal enterprises did not affect very extensive Oregon Trail tracks severely. Since all tracks near river channels had been wiped out by an immense flood in 1862, and since Boise's road system replaced valley emigrant routes immediately after that deluge, local irrigation had a surprisingly modest impact upon Oregon Trail features in this area. For well over thirty years after 1862, Oregon Trail emigrant wagons continued to use city streets and local connecting roads. Then early twentieth century automobiles began to replace emigrant wagons.