

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## REFERENCE SERIES

### A GUIDE TO NINETEENTH CENTURY IDAHO RESORTS AND RECREATION AREAS

Number 1088

April 1995

This incomplete sample of Idaho scenic and recreational attractions that gained notice as early tourist or vacation centers includes places that commanded popular interest or that had commercial facilities.

1. Emigrant road locations recognized before 1860:
  - 1) Soda Springs, noted for its mineral and soda water, had been a fur hunters' attraction that continued to interest Oregon and California trail emigrants. After settlement there in 1863, it continued to function as a resort.
  - 2) City of Rocks, an outstanding California Trail attraction, also was adjacent to a road to Salt Lake and Kelton, with a connection to Boise that became important in 1863.
  - 3) American Falls was a point of Oregon and California emigrant interest.
  - 4) Fishing Falls (Kanaka Rapids), adjacent to Banbury Hot Springs, got wide national notice from John C. Fremont because of its major salmon fishery.
  - 5) Thousand Springs, another notable Oregon Trail landmark, retained its recreational area interest beyond its nineteenth century prominence.
  - 6) Salmon Falls, upper and lower in Hagerman Valley, joined adjacent Malad Gorge as an outstanding early recreational area. Upper Salmon Falls was, like Fishing Falls, an Oregon Trail supply point. Malad Gorge extended close to a later Kelton Road stage station.

- 7) Teapot Dome Hot Springs served as an Oregon Trail campground with an exceptional hot water facility of notable interest.
- 8) Givens' Springs provided an equivalent natural hot water attraction to Teapot Dome's source for emigrants who traveled an alternate Oregon Trail route because they could not ford Snake River below Glenns Ferry.

## 2. Mining era sites.

- 1) Warm Springs (near Idaho City) became an important resort during Boise Basin's initial gold rush years and has continued to thrive ever since then.
- 2) Redfish Lake and its Sawtooth range scenic area attracted miners to that vacation area at least as early as 1867.
- 3) Burgdorf Hot Springs became a vacation resort along an early miners' route to Warrens, where Fred Burgdorf developed a hotel.
- 4) Red River Hot Springs, another early resort area above Elk City, attracted miners long before a substantial hotel came there in 1901.
- 5) A large hot springs, to which Warm Springs Avenue from Boise led past Table Rock, became a popular resort long before Milton Kelly acquired it and undertook an expanded late nineteenth century development there.
- 6) Price's Hot Springs above Pine had been a popular resort long before John Price arrived to farm in that area in 1887.
- 7) A notable hot springs in Atlanta Basin only two miles or so above that area's major lode provided a fine recreation attraction for a mining area enclosed in brilliant resort surroundings anyway.
- 8) Shoshone Falls (known before 1849 as Canadian Falls, as distinguished from American Falls farther up Snake River, because it was on a Hudson's Bay Company supply trail to Fort Hall) became Idaho's primary tourist and resort attraction after 1870, when Snake River fine gold operations brought mining to that vicinity. Shoshone Falls gained a resort status unequalled elsewhere in Idaho when rail service gave it access through Shoshone in 1882.
- 9) Twin Falls, also a spectacular attraction a short distance above Shoshone Falls, likewise gained

prominence with Snake River fine gold discoveries in 1870.

- 10) Kirkham Hot Springs (South Fork, Payette River) was only about two miles above a major gold lode at Banner, discovered in 1864 and developed a decade later. Miners from Banner enjoyed Kirkham's convenient resort.
  - 11) A hot springs area at Sunbeam and Robinson's Bar was close enough to Yankee Fork mining camps at Bonanza and Custer to provide attractive resort possibilities after 1876.
  - 12) With an 1880 mining rush to Wood River, Guyer's Hot Springs on Warm Springs Creek near Ketchum had a major resort hotel during that era of mineral excitement.
  - 13) Hailey Hot Springs (1½ miles west of town) also had a major Wood River resort hotel from June 27, 1889 to July 27, 1899 when a fire destroyed it.
  - 14) Another early Wood River resort hotel also served Clarendon Hot Springs.
  - 15) With substantial mining traffic between Atlanta and new gold centers at Vienna and Sawtooth City, Alturas Lake became an attractive location for vacation homes.
  - 16) Jay Gould, because of his Union Pacific Railway interests, came out to Wood River and brought national attention to Silver Creek's exceptional fishing resources, August 10, 1891. In July 1892, he returned there, bringing more national publicity.
  - 17) With late nineteenth century Seven Devils mining excitement, Starkey Hot Springs became an upper Weiser recreation attraction.
  - 18) Twin Springs (a hot and cold springs area) realized recreational opportunities with late nineteenth century mining development there.
  - 19) An important upper Garden Valley hot springs needs documentation of nineteenth century resort and vacation use.
  - 20) Cape Horn Hot Springs needs documentation for recreational use by nearby nineteenth century Seafoam and Greyhound Ridge miners.
3. Nineteenth century farming recreation.

- 1) Bear Lake became a notable attraction when farm settlement reached that part of Idaho in 1863. (Earlier fur trade recreation there centered in its Utah area.)
  - 2) Lava Hot Springs, while not far from Hudspeth's Cutoff, became an important resort attraction when farming settlement expanded into that area.
  - 3) Rocky Canyon on Willow Creek--a gorge that rarely is visited anymore--was an important recreational destination for early Boise Valley communities that sought out interesting picnic areas.
  - 4) Stackrock--a notable granite peak on a projecting spur from Boise ridge that separated Dry Creek and Harris Creek--was close enough to Cartright Road to have easy wagon access to Boise Valley settlers who enjoyed its spectacular setting for recreational camping.
  - 5) Pickett's Corral--an exceptional Upper Payette Valley lava formation that gained early notoriety because of its reputation as a horse thieves' hideout in 1864-1866 during a vigilante campaign--became a local recreational attraction after settlement of that area brought recreational traffic there.
  - 6) Heise Hot Springs on Snake River's South Fork in later Jefferson County gained a good deal of recreational interest after farming settlement reached that area.
  - 7) Pincock Hot Springs, another Upper Snake River Valley recreational development west of Lower Teton Valley, also provided commercial opportunities when farming communities came to that region.
  - 8) Bruneau Hot Springs and adjacent Indian Bathtub have a resort establishment that served that recreational site as early as 1891.
4. North and central Idaho lakes.
- 1) Tolo Lake, mostly a nineteenth century Nez Perce attraction, is a Camas Prairie campground that gained special notice because of its military interest.
  - 2) Waha Lake, a resort center above Lewiston, was also an early attraction for early settlers of that area.
  - 3) Lake Pend d'Oreille has extensive natural features that made it an exceptional recreational attraction, particularly after Northern Pacific Railway service

brought heavy tourist traffic to that region.

- 4) Lake Coeur d'Alene also thrived as an early natural recreational attraction.
- 5) Spirit Lake had recreational advantages that made it an early resort attraction.
- 6) In central Idaho, Payette lakes became late nineteenth century recreational centers.

(This information has not been edited.)

*Publications--450 N. 4th Street, Boise, ID 83702--208-334-3428*