

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Number 1101

August 1997

Aside from a special campaign to establish a broad-based Nez Perce National Historical Park in 1965, Idaho has achieved remarkable success in resisting any acquisition of National Parks within its state boundaries. An unusual experiment in institutional development, that Nez Perce venture remains Idaho's only National Park after decades of controversy over other proposals. In addition, particularly in response to congressional designation of Nez Perce National Historic Trail, Nez Perce National Historical Park has enlarged its scope to include many more sites in four or five more states, and interested Nez Perce peoples regard Canadian locations in Alberta and Saskatchewan as appropriate for some form of suitable recognition as well. All of this sequence of park and historic trail development deserves special consideration as significant aspects of Nez Perce National Historic Trail operation.

Nez Perce park originated with a design that featured small units scattered over a wide area. Oregon and Washington sites were projected initially to join those in Idaho, but when local complications delayed their inclusion, Idaho went ahead with its share, anticipating future additions that eventually materialized. Anything as ambitious as so many remote units associated with Nez Perce National Historical Park had not been contemplated seriously during initial planning stages, but they arose as a natural result of later needs.

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