



# Reference Series #1125

## George C. Reed

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Upon becoming Idaho State Historical Society librarian in April 1921, Ella Cartee Reed appointed George C. Reed (an experienced Topeka archaeologist) as assistant librarian. He received a salary of \$100 a month for his efforts that continued for four years. But he accomplished a great deal during that time. Beginning with a series of four tours that covered all parts of Idaho in his search for archaeological treasures, he enjoyed special success at Fort Hall. There he found Shoshoni and Bannock leaders who felt highly pleased to be invited to join in Reed's project. They promised to provide "a good collection" of "their trappings, dress, weapons, utensils," and archaeological materials. An Indian cliff burial from Pocatello and a large fossil collection from American Falls accompanied their contribution.

Similar relics from North Idaho, along with items from adjacent areas of British Columbia and Washington, also enhanced Reed's collections. He showed special concern for retaining such valuable materials in Idaho at a time when wealthy eastern collectors were investing substantial funds and expending effort to acquire and remove outstanding specimens to their remote displays. His success accounted for most major Idaho State Historical Society collections obtained between 1921 and 1956. Prior to 1921, when museum display space—while inadequate—at last became available with statehouse expansion, museum materials generally had been accepted only as loans. Many items gathered that way had to be stored for lack of space. But a new policy emerged when an enlarged display area became available. Most loans were converted into donations: those which the owners preferred to retain were returned. From then on, loans for display rarely were accepted, except for short terms. After Reed's enterprise filled up what space was available, he went on to other projects elsewhere, and museum display remained quite static until a new building was completed in 1950.