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ORIGINS OF IDAHO'S BANNOCK INDIANS

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After eighteenth century Shoshoni-Comanche people introduced Spanish horses from New Mexico to a vast western area of mountains and plains other Pacific Northwest tribes developed a powerful interest in acquiring horses too. With that kind of improved transportation, they could travel over an enormous area in regular seasonal migratory cycles. They included trips to camas fields, along with salmon fishing sites, buffalo hunting country, and winter campgrounds. Other economic activities were facilitated. Horses from Shoshoni suppliers (peoples whom Spaniards referred to as Comanches) reached many other tribes. These included neighboring Nez Perce and Paiute peoples. Paiutes, in fact, were related closely in language and culture to their Shoshoni associates. In eastern Oregon, a substantial number of Northern Paiutes wanted to join their adjacent Northern Shoshoni travelers in their regular seasonal expeditions across southern Idaho's Snake plains. But they encountered firm Boise Shoshoni resistance for many decades. Finally one of Oregon's energetic Northern Paiute leaders--who was identified in later Bannock tradition as (translated into English) Mr. Foote--finally achieved enough power and respect that he managed to penetrate (in company with a large group of Northern Paiute associates) that forbidden Boise Shoshoni land. In later years, his Northern Paiute horse-travelers were referred to as Bannock. They did not succeed in obtaining Boise Shoshoni acceptance, but they contrived to join a Fort Hall Shoshoni group with whom they could travel in a large composite, but separate, band that more or less matched their Boise Shoshoni competitors in size, while traveling in an independent seasonal migratory cycle. In early fur trade times, those Bannock peoples often retaliated with militant action against trappers who invaded their relatively new domain, but their Boise Shoshoni rivals disapproved of such hostility. Important Boise Shoshoni leaders, most notably Peiem who denounced Bannock opposition to Donald Mackenzie and his fur traders, concurred in a peaceful acceptance of British trapping programs in their lands. At times, at least, such as in 1820 and 1824, Donald Mackenzie and Alexander Ross had successful meetings with southern Idaho Shoshoni elements, but Bannock resistance often proved very difficult for beaver trappers in Idaho and Utah.

(This information has not been edited.)

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