

# Boise Valley Shoshone



## Camping under “willows in multiple rows”



*Indian Encampment, Shoshone Village, 1860*, by Alfred Bierstadt

For possibly thousands of years—beginning as much as 8,000-15,000 years ago—the Northern Shoshone people visited the Boise Valley, calling it *Suhu Woki' (ih)*, meaning “willows in multiple rows”. They camped in riparian forests—dominated by cottonwoods and willows—along the Boise River and Cottonwood Creek. This Alfred Bierstadt painting entitled “*Indian Encampment, Shoshone Village, 1860*” could easily depict a camp under the cottonwoods along the Boise River.

About 1700, the Northern Shoshone became the first Northwest tribe to acquire horses which allowed the tribe to travel farther and faster and to expand their hunting and trading areas.

Smithsonian anthropologists Robert L. and Yolanda Murphy described the Boise Shoshone’s environment as relatively rich: “The streams gave a good yield of fish, roots abounded in the valleys, and game was found in the nearby mountains... Although the Shoshone...wandered far on occasion, a full subsistence could be obtained within the immediate area.”

“The Shoshone of the Boise, Payette, and Weiser rivers...occupied an environment that was favored by superior fisheries, a milder climate and good grasses. The grass supported horses, which gave them mobility to travel to Camas Prairie in the summer and to join the Fort Hall people occasionally in the buffalo hunt, but most of their subsistence depended upon the spring and fall salmon runs and hunting in the mountains to the east of their valley winter camps.”

**Note:** This area is private property and it is **not** the actual location of a known Shoshone camp. The Shoshone used the entire Boise Valley for camping, hunting, fishing, and gathering plants, gathering to socialize and trade.

