

Beaver Dick's Ferry



In 1863 and 1864, overland packers hauling supplies from Salt Lake City to Idaho City cut a steep grade from the Oregon Trail down to the river. They crossed the river near here on Beaver Dick's Ferry (operated by Richard "Beaver Dick" Leigh) and headed north to More's Creek. After the gold rush excitement ended, Idaho City traffic came into Boise and used a toll road further north to Boise Basin.

Beaver Dick's first customers were thrilled to see the Boise River from the trail along the canyon's south rim and to meet someone who knew something about the Boise Basin mines. Charles Nelson Teeter wrote: "Beaver Dick himself, accompanied by two or three of his men, brought over the ferry boat, and we were soon safely landed on the other side...; and I must say that our party had the honor (if indeed honor it may be called) of being the first that ever crossed this ferry."

"Here we spent the night, and as Beaver Dick was the first man we had ever seen who had personally visited the Boise gold mines, we had a thousand questions to ask concerning them..."

Beaver Dick spent most of his years in eastern Idaho, working as a trapper and guide in the Greater Yellowstone/Grand Teton area. He died in 1899. Leigh Lake in the Tetons is named for him and Jenny Lake is named for his first wife.

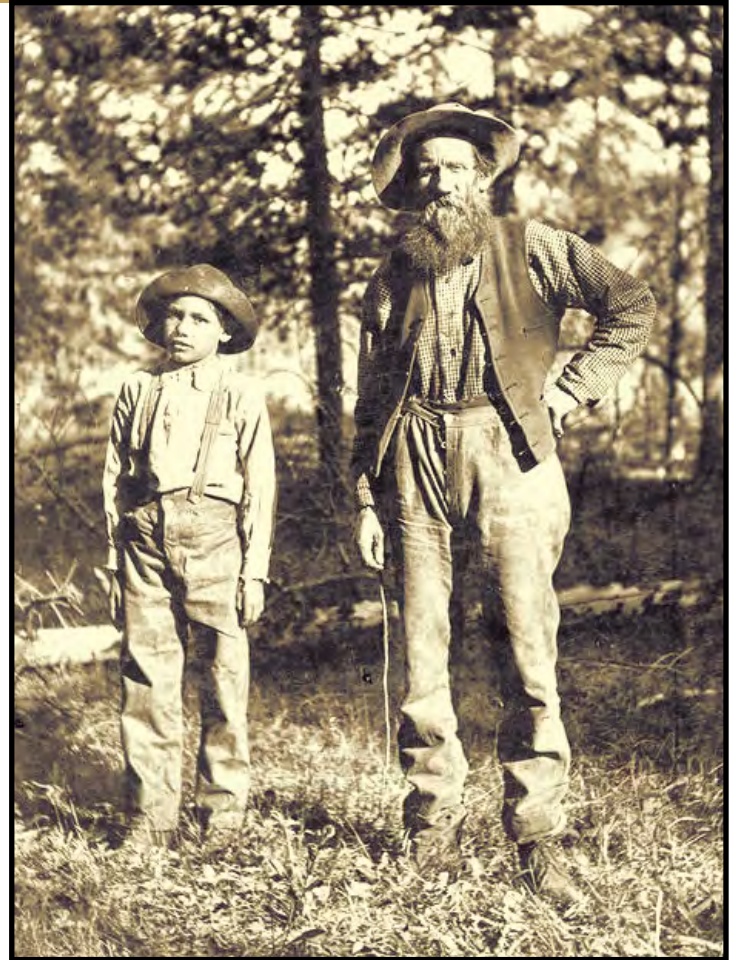


Photo: Richard "Beaver Dick" Leigh with his son, William "Bill" Leigh, ca. 1890.

We were unable to find a photo of Beaver Dick's ferry but it may have looked much like the Snake River ferry below. Photo: www.waterarchives.org

