

Kelton Ramp



Getting from Rim to River

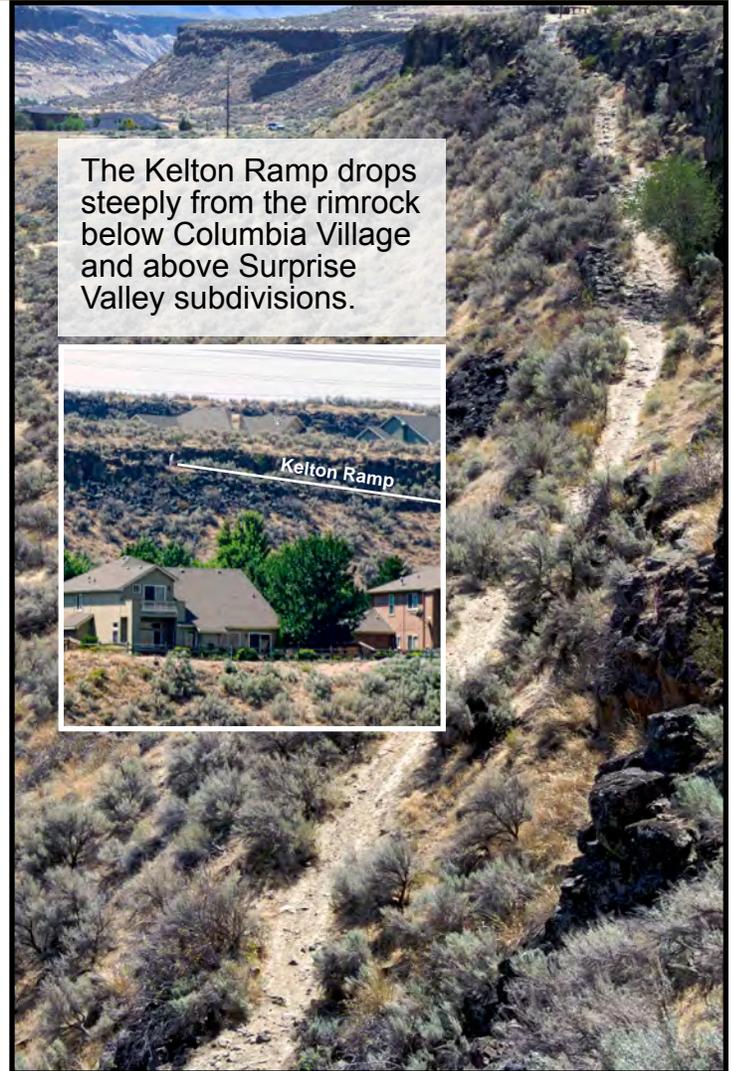
Almost directly across the Boise River from here you can make out a trail that angles steeply from the canyon rim down to the first housing development on the bench below. This is the Kelton Ramp, part of a trail that was constructed in the early 1860s mainly for people bound for Boise Basin's mines where they hoped to strike it rich—by mining for gold themselves or by selling supplies to miners. The Kelton Ramp also greatly improved access to the Boise Valley, helping the city of Boise grow.

The Kelton Ramp, which begins about 500 feet NW of Highway 21, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It cuts through the rim rock between the second and third terraces above the Boise River. Features of the ramp include rock art (pictographs)—possibly early advertising attempts—drawn on the face of the basalt. The route left the Kelton Ramp on the lower terrace, crossed the river at **Beaver Dick's Ferry**, then proceeded north over the mountains to Idaho City or west toward Oregon.

The 232-mile Kelton Road was originally established by freighters sent out in 1863 by William Purvine, John T. Heard, and **Charles T. Teeter** (see *the Beaver Dick story*). It became the main shipping route between Boise City and Kelton, Utah (just north of the Great Salt Lake on the Central Pacific Railroad) when John Hailey chose it as the stage route in 1864. Freight was transported overland by mules and later replaced by horses when stagecoaches came into use. The telegraph and Oregon Short Line Railroad replaced the Kelton Road in 1883.

The Oregon Trail

Remnants of the Oregon Trail can be seen along the rim of the canyon in the **Oregon Trail Reserve** on the south side of the Boise River. This 66-acre park and interpretive site was established as a partnership between the City of Boise, the BLM, and the residents of Surprise Valley to protect remnants of the Oregon Trail and educate the public about this historic resource. Oregon Trail travelers crossed the Boise River in several different places—generally downriver (west) from here.



The Kelton Ramp drops steeply from the rimrock below Columbia Village and above Surprise Valley subdivisions.

Photo: Mountain Visions

