

DUBOIS

Native American Heritage and Culture

Before the arrival of European trappers and early settlers the Headwaters area served as the central trail system for ancient cultures for more than 12,000 years. From Three Waters Mountain along Union Pass, water flows to the Pacific via the Columbia and Colorado River basins and to the Gulf of Mexico via the Missouri River basin creating this ancient trail system.

Descendants of these ancient people, the Sheep Eater Indians (Mountain Shoshone), developed a lifestyle perfectly adapted to their rugged mountain homeland that sustained them for hundreds of years. However, the Sheep Eater's harmonious way of life ended when the Yellowstone area became a national park. They were rounded up and moved to reservations.



Moragootch, Shoshone brave, 1884



The distinctive petroglyphs (rock art) pecked and carved on rocks in the Dinwoody and Torrey basins near Dubois are thought to have been the work of ancestors of the modern-day Shoshone tribes.



Denver Public Library, Western Heritage Collection



Shoshone village, circa 1870



Shoshone village, circa 1880-1910

National Archives, public domain



Shoshone braves, 1880s.



The remains of the Sheep Eater's hunting traps and blinds, teepee rings, and vision quest sites are still visible in the mountains around Dubois.



Shoshone pipe tomahawk, 1800s. Originally created by Euro-Americans, tomahawks were traded for Indian furs and other valuables. The bow is a hand-made replica of the tool created by the Mountain Shoshone out of bighorn sheep ram's horn.



Shoshone basketry, ca 1890s.

National Park Service artifacts



A number of Indian tribes have coveted the abundant natural resources found in this area. Some of these tribes are Shoshone, Crow, Gros Ventre, Blackfoot, and Nez Perce. The Northern Arapaho came here as a result of the reservation system.