

William Henson Wallace

5

First Territorial Governor of Idaho; Born JULY 19, 1811;
Died FEBRUARY 7, 1879

William Henson Wallace, Idaho's first territorial governor, was born July 19, 1811, on a farm near Troy, Ohio. His father, Andrew Wallace, was a close personal friend of President William Henry Harrison. His mother, whose maiden name was Jones, was a relative of John Paul Jones of Revolutionary War fame. His brother David was governor of Indiana. His nephew Lew, David's son, was a famous Civil War General, wrote the popular book *Ben Hur*, and served as territorial governor of New Mexico.

William H. Wallace was a pleasant person and was well liked wherever he went. As a young man, he was chosen speaker of Iowa's first territorial House of Representatives. He was a member

of the Iowa legislature for several terms.

Some time in the early 1850s, Wallace became a friend of Abraham Lincoln. At one time, while Lincoln was still relatively unknown, he arranged for the future president to speak at a public meeting. The two men stayed good friends until Lincoln died.

Wallace moved to Washington Territory (which then included what is now Idaho) in 1853. In April of 1861, while he was in the East on a business trip, President Lincoln showed his appreciation for him by appointing Wallace governor of Washington Territory. He returned to the territory to become governor, but before he could take office, Washington Republicans nominated him as a candidate for

GLOSSARY

- **Maiden name:** woman's last name before marriage
- **Nominate:** select as a candidate
- **Candidate:** person seeking an office (job)
- **Territory:** area of land that is not a state
- **Disposition:** personality habit
- **Integrity:** personal values; honesty, fairness
- **Yarn spinner:** story teller
- **Braille:** printing for the blind; raised dots
- **Recognition:** to notice or praise; honor



William H.
Wallace

First governor
of Idaho
Territory

ISHS 1895-C

William Henson Wallace

Twelve of sixteen men commissioned by the U.S. government actually served as territorial governors for Idaho

territorial delegate to Congress. He won the election in July of that year and so did not serve as governor of the territory. In Washington, William H. Wallace got Congress to establish Idaho as a territory. In return, Lincoln appointed Wallace the first territorial governor of Idaho. Governor Wallace took office July 10, 1863, and set up the government for the new territory that summer. In October of that same year, he was elected as a delegate to Congress from Idaho Territory, and he left Lewiston for Washington in December. This, of course, left Idaho without a governor. W. B. Daniels of Yamhill County, Oregon, secretary of the territory, then became acting governor.

Wallace was in Congress for two terms, 1862-63 and 1864-65. When he finished his second term of office he returned to Steilacoom in Washington Territory and practiced law until he died.

In the book, *Idaho of Yesterday*, Thomas Donaldson describes Governor



A portrait of Wallace hangs in Idaho's Statehouse

Wallace as "a man of lovable disposition and of splendid executive abilities. He won recognition for his personal integrity as well as for his marked ability.

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
education series

www.idahohistory.net

Over 300 informative flyers are available on Idaho history. For a complete directory, or for more information, visit our website, or contact us at the address below.

ON
THE
WEB!

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Education Program
610 N. Julia Davis Drive, Boise, Idaho 83702
Phone: 208/334-2120 Fax: 208/334-4059

