

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

IDAHO STATE SONG

Number 125

December 1964

The music for the Idaho state song, composed by Sallie Hume Douglas, was copyrighted on November 4, 1915, under the title "Garden of Paradise."

In 1917, McKinley Helm, a student at the University of Idaho, wrote the verse which became the chorus of the Idaho state song, and Alice Bessee set the words to the music by Sallie Hume Douglas. The song was popular then, and Alice Bessee had no idea of its origin. This song won the annual University Prize for that year, and eventually became the University alma mater.

Bethel Packenham, a student from Boise at the University from 1928 to 1932, provided new verses for the alma mater; and about the same time, Albert J. Tompkins, Director of Music in the Boise Public Schools, wrote still another set of verses for the song. The University obtained permission from Mrs. Douglas, by a contract executed January 2, 1930, to use the melody forever. Then the next year, by act of March 11, 1931, the Idaho legislature designated "Here We have Idaho," previously known at the University as "Our Idaho," as the Idaho state song. The statute did not identify the words to be used, but the verses published in the House Journal, February 24, 1931, are the Tompkins-Helm verses. These verses came from the University, and there is some indication they were in use there before the Packenham verses were. The Tompkins verses are more appropriate for a state song, while the Packenham verses are an alma mater.

Original McKinley Helm version: "OUR IDAHO."

Words by McKinley Helm, 1917; Music, Garden of Paradise, by Mrs. Sallie Hume Douglas, as arranged by Alice Bessee.

A pioneer state built a college to share
Its youth and its rigorous life
That flourished and grew from year to year,
Beset by political strife.

Then fire came destroying the child of the state,
But quickly she sprang up anew,
Upon the ashes that marked where the old
Had 'eft a bold spirit that grew.

And now on a hill that is searched by the winds,
There stands in security,
Proud of her youth and a pioneer still,
A staunch University.

CHORUS

And here we have Idaho,
Scourged on her way to fame,
Silver and gold in the sunlight blaze,
And romance lies in her name.

Singing, We're singing of you,
Ah, proudly, too,
All our lives thru, we'll go
Singing, singing of you, Alma Mater, Our Idaho.

Bethel Packenham's Revision: **"HERE WE HAVE IDAHO."**

Published about 1931. Music by Sallie Hume-Douglas; Chorus by
McKinley Helm. Words revised from original by Bethel Packenham.

Alma Mater, the hope of a pioneer race;
You're fashioned of dreams and of toil,
Thy walls and thy towers by stouthearted men
Were raised from the rock and the soil.

Now ours is the heritage, rich and so full,
The gain of their toil and their tears;
And ours is the fruit, and the harvest is ours;
O Idaho, gift of the years.

So we have fed of thy bounteous store,
Our voices now praise thee in song
We tearlessly smite at the oncoming years,
Yes, we, whom thy spirit made strong.

CHORUS

And here we have Idaho
Winning her way to fame
Silver and gold in the sunlight blaze,
And romance lies in her name.

Singing, we're singing of you,
Ah, proudly, too;
All our lives thro'; we'll go
Singing, singing of you, Alma Mater, our Idaho.

Official Idaho State Song, as adopted by the 21st Legislature, 1931; Words in House Journal, February 24, 1931, p. 16. "**OUR IDAHO.**"

You've heard of the wonders our land does possess
Its beautiful valleys and hills;
The majestic forest where nature abounds,
We love every nook and rill.

There's only one state in this great land of ours,
Where ideals can be realized;
The pioneers made it so for you and me,
A legacy we'll always prize.

CHORUS

And here we have Idaho,
Winning her way to fame;
Silver and gold in the sunlight blaze,
And romance lies in her name.

Singing, we're singing of you,
Ah, proudly, too, All our lives thru,
We'll go singing, singing of you,
Singing of Idaho.

Publications--450 N. 4th Street, Boise, ID 83702--208-334-3428