

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY REFERENCE SERIES

WILLIAM HORACE CLAGETT  
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Moving to Iowa from Maryland, W. H. Clagett studied law and was admitted to the bar in Keokuk at the age of 20. He then moved to Carson City, Nevada, in 1861, where he joined Samuel L. Clemens [Mark Twain] in a prospecting trip to Unionville which is described in detail in Mark Twain's Roughing It. Clagett specialized in mining law thereafter, and served in the Nevada legislature before moving on to Montana where he was elected as a delegate to Congress in 1870, the only Republican to win before 1888. He had considerable success in Congress, where delegates often fared poorly, getting Yellowstone National Park established among other accomplishments. After four more years in Montana, he moved on to Denver, then to the Black Hills of North Dakota, to Butte, Montana, and finally to Portland, Oregon, before settling in Idaho's new Coeur d'Alene lead-silver mining region.

In Idaho he served as president of the constitutional convention in 1889 and sought a position in the United States Senate in 1890. He was one of four United States senators elected by Idaho's first state legislature, but the Senate declined to seat so many, and he became the one left out. As attorney for Idaho's largest lead-silver mining corporation, he naturally joined almost everyone else in Idaho in upholding the cause of silver. But he did so as a Populist, rather than as a Silver Republican--much to the surprise of many of his political associates. He never did win the seat he wanted in the United States Senate, and finally settled in Spokane, the headquarters of Idaho's Coeur d'Alene mining region.

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