

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

JAMES DAVIS AGNEW
March 17, 1832-December 11, 1914

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James D. Agnew was born in Bedford, Virginia. He moved to Missouri in the 1850's, ran a pack train in Utah in 1857, then worked in California and Washington before coming to the Idaho gold fields and settling in Boise in 1863. Agnew is credited with helping survey the Boise townsite and with establishing one of the town's chief livery stables which he operated through the 1870's and 1880's. Thomas Donaldson, in Idaho of Yesterday, remembered him as one of "Boise's [four] chief funmakers"--early citizens who enjoyed pulling pranks and enjoying holidays like the Fourth of July to the fullest. Agnew served as a representative in the 1865-66 Idaho Territorial Legislature and was Ada County sheriff in the 1870's. In the early years of the 1900's, he worked as a guard at the Idaho State Penitentiary.

On January 31, 1866, Agnew married Francis Anvilla Call (born July 11, 1843, near Greencastle, Indiana), the daughter of another Boise pioneer, George Washington Call. While Agnew operated a livery stable, Mrs. Agnew ran a boarding house and raised five children: William B., Olive Elizabeth, James D., Laura, and Ella. Mrs. Agnew died July 22, 1931, in Moscow, Idaho. James D. Agnew, Sr. died December 11, 1914, at the Call Ranch in Canyon County.

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