

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

GEORGE AINSLIE

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George Ainslie spent forty-six years in Idaho establishing a distinguished career as an attorney, newspaper editor, and Democratic politician. Even Republican Milton Kelly, editor of the Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman, was moved to remark in 1879 that "though differing with Mr. Ainslie in politics, we freely accord to him the merit which he deserves."

Ainslie was born in Boonville, Missouri. Soon after, his family returned to their home in Scotland, but came back to Missouri in 1844. Ainslie attended St. Louis University, read law, and was admitted to the bar in 1860. After a stay in Colorado, he came back to the Elk City, Idaho, area in 1862, moving to Idaho City in 1863. There he practiced law, mined, and edited the Idaho World newspaper (1869-1873). He was also very involved in politics, serving as a member of the Territorial Council from 1865 to 1867, and as district attorney for the Second District from 1874 to 1876. In 1878 he was elected Delegate to Congress from Idaho Territory and served until his defeat in 1882. He was also a member of the Idaho constitutional convention. An active participant in Idaho's Democratic party, he served on the national Democratic committee from 1896 to 1900.

Ainslie moved to Boise in 1890 where he soon became involved in the formation of the Boise Rapid Transit Company and the Artesian Hot and Cold Water Company. He was vice-president of the latter for ten years and served as one of its directors until 1902.

George Ainslie married a fellow Missourian, Sara Owens, on March 27, 1866, in Boise. They had two children: Lucy L. (Later the wife of Dr. E. L. Perrault) and Adelma (later Mrs. John F. Nugent). Ainslie moved to California in about 1908 and died in Oakland.