

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## REFERENCE SERIES

FRANK R. COFFIN  
ca. 1840-May 25, 1920

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Frank R. Coffin was born in about 1840 in Parke County, Indiana. He attended a Quaker school in Richmond, Indiana, then in 1859 went to Leavenworth, Kansas, where he learned to be a tinsmith. In 1861 he went to California, settling in Yareka and working as a tinsmith. He moved on to the Florence gold fields in Idaho the next year. Coffin described his mining and settling in Idaho in a 1919 Idaho Statesman article: "for two years thereafter I followed all the mining rushes incident to placer discoveries in Idaho and Montana . . . . Coming to Idaho so early in its history, I am almost native and to the manor born. Not many of the pioneers are here who started with me, and with ever-increasing solemnity I am admonished that unless I go soon, I will be left alone on the trail."

Coffin came to Boise in about 1866, and worked for George Twitchell in his hardware and tin business. He bought the business from Twitchell in about 1873. In partnership with his brother, Sherman, he expanded the F. R. Coffin & Brother stores to Hailey, Bellevue, and Caldwell. They closed the Caldwell store in 1888 and Sherman moved to Seattle to open a store. In the 1890's, William and Courtland Northrop became partners, forming Coffin-Northrop Company, with Coffin as president. In about 1903, it became Coffin-Clinton Hardware Company with Coffin as president and James E. Clinton, Jr. as vice-president and manager. Coffin sold the business in about 1905 to the Carlson-Lusk Hardware Company.

Upon his retirement, Coffin became involved with the Boise City National Bank and was elected president in 1905. He was also president of the Boise Clearing House Association and a founder and treasurer of the Boise Artesian Hot and Cold Water Company. He married Irene Quivey in 1873. They had four children: Irene, Henrietta, Elma, and Craig. Coffin died May 25, 1920, in Boise.