

**IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
REFERENCE SERIES**

**ROBERT RAYMOND (RAY) MCKAIG
April 30, 1880-January 6, 1962**

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Robert Raymond McKaig, a prominent member of the Nonpartisan League and the Progressive Party, was born in Ligonier, Indiana, on April 30, 1880. His father was a Methodist-Episcopal minister and the family moved to various Nebraska towns and then to Minneapolis. Ray McKaig graduated from Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1900, and from Drew Theological Seminary in 1903. He was a minister in Wisconsin and Minnesota until 1913, when illness prompted him to leave the ministry and move his family to a North Dakota ranch.

While ranching, McKaig became involved in the Grange and politics. In 1916 he joined Arthur Townley's Nonpartisan League and began using his evangelistic skills to bring about political and economic change. His work for the League took him to Colorado and the Pacific Northwest in 1917, and the next year he was appointed National Nonpartisan League Field Secretary. Liking Boise, he moved his family there and used it as his base for expanding the League in Idaho. He was especially effective in organizing the farmers and he was an active member of the Idaho Grange until his death. In 1922, McKaig helped form the Idaho Progressive Party from a coalition of Nonpartisans, Democrats, and Republicans. Dissention within the party later led him to support the Republicans.

McKaig married his first wife, Emily, in 1908. She died in May 1931, and a few years later he married his second wife, Merle. His children included sons Robert B. and Arthur B., and daughters Jean and Joyce. Ray McKaig died January 6, 1962, in San Antonio, Texas, and was buried at Morris Hill Cemetery in Boise.

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