

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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JAMES S. REYNOLDS
ca. 1830-September 14, 1897

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James S. Reynolds was born in about 1830 in New York. After living in Ohio, Wisconsin, and California, he went to The Dalles, Oregon. There he met printers Thomas and Richard Reynolds (no relation) of Missouri. The three decided to start a newspaper in Idaho City, so James Reynolds went ahead to Idaho and the brothers followed with the press. Before the brothers could reach Idaho City they were presented with a proposal from H. C. Riggs and other Boise businessmen to start a newspaper in Boise.

James Reynolds agreed, and the first issue of the Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman appeared July 26, 1864.

Reynolds was a staunch Republican and used the Statesman to voice his opinions on politics and the editors of rival newspapers. Politically, he was even at odds with his partners, the Reynolds brothers, with investors such as H. C. Riggs and James Agnew, and with A. J. Boyakin who joined the Statesman as a printer. Reynolds also supported the vigilante movement and campaigned for the removal from office of Territorial Governor Caleb Lyon. On January 30, 1869, Reynolds sold the newspaper to Democrats H. C. Street, A. J. Boyakin, and C. L. Goodrich. Reynolds intended to go to the White Pine Mining District in Nevada, but the sale fell through and he returned as editor on March 2.

Reynolds tried several times to hold a public office--running for probate judge, the legislature, and delegate to Congress, but he was unsuccessful against the Democratic opposition. After his wife left him, he sold the Statesman on January 2, 1872, to Milton Kelly, and left for California to look for her. He had first married in 1859, but his wife died in 1862 at The Dalles. On April 19, 1868, he married Adaline C. Gillespie in Boise. Reynolds spent the remainder of his life in California. He manufactured barrels in Vallejo and door hinges in San Francisco, practiced law, mined, and farmed. He died in San Francisco on September 14, 1897.

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