

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

HOSEA EASTMAN, TIMOTHY REGAN, AND FRANK BLACKINGER
(Advertiser Column By Nancy DeHamer)

Number 728

1971

Silver City, now a virtual ghost town, was once a thriving metropolis where many fortunes were won and lost. Even though it was isolated, the city enjoyed an active social and economic life until after the turn of the century when mining in the area stopped.

Many of Boise's leading citizens in the 1890's and early 1900's were Silver City pioneers. Three such men were Hosea Eastman, Timothy Regan, and Frank Blackinger. Though not related, these men came to have close family and business ties, and their lives had many parallels.

Eastman and Regan came to Silver City in the early 1860's as young men seeking their fortunes in the west. Both arrived penniless, but both were successful financially. Eastman was one of the first men in the state to sell gold quartz which was locally mined and milled. Later, he joined forces with his brother and together they operated the Idaho Hotel in Silver City.

During this time Regan was working as a miner, a wood chopper providing wood for the mines, a freighter hauling gold quartz and lumber, and a saw-mill operator. In 1875 he bought a one-half interest in the Idaho Hotel, and for two years he and Hosea Eastman were co-owners and proprietors. At the same time he was investing money in different Owyhee mines and eventually came to own several--which he later sold, at a tidy profit, to a Philadelphia company.

Blackinger came to Silver City as a boy with his parents and four sisters. His father, Valentine, operated the Silver City Meat Market and the War Eagle Hotel (for many years in competition with the Idaho Hotel). While Blackinger was helping his father with these enterprises, his sisters were adding their

charm and grace to the city's social scene, a fact not unnoticed by the local bachelors.

In 1872 Hosea Eastman married Miss Ann Blackinger. In 1878 Timothy Regan married Miss Rose Blackinger. Eastman and his wife moved to Boise in 1875 and he became manager of the famous Overland Hotel. Regan and his wife came to Boise in 1889. When he left Silver City, he left his brother-in-law, Frank Blackinger, as manager and proprietor of the Idaho Hotel.

In Boise, Regan and Eastman were involved in many of the same business ventures. Both were active investors in the Artesian Hot and Cold Water Company, with Regan serving as president and Eastman as general manager. Both were among the organizers and stockholders of the Boise City National Bank. After tearing down the old Overland Hotel, Eastman built the Overland Office Building (later renamed the Eastman Building; it burned in 1987) on the site and for several years served as president of the Overland Company, Limited, while Regan served as treasurer and general manager.

When Blackinger came to Boise in 1899 he and Regan formed the firm of Regan and Blackinger, which managed the Capitol Hotel and Bar, with Blackinger acting as proprietor. In 1908 Blackinger became manager of the Overland Buffet.

Pictures in the files of the Idaho State Historical Society show various aspects of these men's lives. One shows the four Blackinger sisters with their brother, Frank. Mrs. Eastman and Mrs. Timothy Regan are the two ladies on the right. (One interesting note: the second woman from the left married one of Timothy Regan's brothers.) Another picture shows the palatial residence that had been built by John W. Daniels in 1887, and later purchased by Timothy Regan. (The Regans were living there in 1891; it is uncertain when it was bought from Daniels.) Eastman later built an imposing residence on Warm Springs Avenue.

Among the photographs in the ISHS files are photos of the Idaho Hotel in Silver City. All three men worked in the hotel, and Silver City was where they began their long business and personal relationships.

Publications--450 N. 4th Street, Boise, ID 83702--208-334-3428