

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

TERRITORIAL GOVERNORS WHO DID NOT SERVE

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Several people appointed as Territorial Governor of Idaho never served for one reason or another. President Andrew Johnson's candidates all were requested by Idaho's Confederate Democratic congressional delegate--Edward Dexter Holbrook--and therefore were totally offensive to Senate Radicals who systematically rejected them.

John Miller Murphy was appointed January 2, 1867. Murphy--one of Idaho's most prominent early leaders--came from California to Boise Basin in 1862, where he became president of Idaho's Fenian Society. That organization was dedicated to starting a war with Britain to gain Irish independence, and sponsored some raids into Canada in 1866. [Imagine appointing that kind of leader as governor of Idaho.] Idaho Republican leaders, who had great influence in Congress, complained that Murphy had too much experience cracking safes and stealing funds. Such charges were standard political tactics of that time, but his opponents could have stopped Murphy's appointment without resorting to such tactics.

The next appointee was George Ceasar Bates of Illinois, who was appointed March 7, 1867, and was unconfirmed because of President Johnson's war against Radical Republican senators. Isaac L. Gibbs, a Mormon who had been United States Marshal of Utah, was appointed July 19, 1867, by President Johnson at the request of delegate Holbrook. Gibbs won Senate confirmation through a deception, but that action was rescinded a day later and Governor Ballard remained in office. A second effort to appoint Gibbs failed to gain Senate approval six months later,

and Ballard managed to complete his term as governor. Ulysses S. Grant was inaugurated president on March 4, 1869, and did not reappoint Ballard.

On February 4, 1870, President Grant appointed Samuel Bard, a Georgia newspaperman. Bard retained interest in Idaho just long enough to sign his oath of office, and to secure a leave of absence to remain in Georgia. Then he resigned his Idaho governor's appointment to accept a position as postmaster of Atlanta. Next Grant appointed Gilman Marston of New Hampshire, who discovered the salary was \$2,500 per year instead of \$25,000 and decided not to accept the position. Alexander Hamilton Conner, an Indiana lawyer and Indianapolis postmaster, was appointed June 21, 1870, but declined the honor.

On March 15, 1871, Ebenezer Dumont of Indiana was appointed Governor of Idaho, but died April 16, 1871, before taking the oath of office. John Philo Hoyt was appointed June 8, 1878, on the suspension of Governor Brayman. Hoyt did not wish to get into the political argument over Brayman's Indian policies and became a Washington supreme court justice instead.