

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## REFERENCE SERIES

### BOWN HOUSE

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Joseph Bown, February 18, 1829 - December 6, 1915

Temperance Statira Hall Brown, May 30, 1832 - January 15, 1904

A native of Nottingham, England, Joseph Bown accompanied his father as an immigrant to Illinois, where he arrived at Naperville (west of Chicago), June 12, 1841. After settling for a time north of Chicago, he married Temperance Statira Hall, November 19, 1853. A teacher who came from New York to Illinois, she joined him in a farming enterprise near Waterloo, Iowa, where they acquired a 280-acre tract. Finally in 1863, Joseph Bown took his five-horse team on a long trip west to Walla Walla. There, he joined a Pacific Northwest gold rush back to Boise Basin, where he became a placer miner at Idaho City until June 1864, when he decided to return to farming. He chose, though, to relocate in Boise Valley--a new agricultural area that offered better prospects for success than he could achieve with his land in Iowa. So he selected a Boise River site for a homestead adjacent to an Overland Road variant not far west of Beaver Dick's Ferry that provided a direct Oregon Trail access to Idaho City. Later in 1864, he returned to Iowa to prepare to bring his family via ox team to Boise, where they all arrived a year later after a hard trip by emigrant wagon. His superior new ranch, while somewhat smaller than his Iowa holdings, paid off: by 1879, he could manage to invest in a large, sandstone house that supplanted his earlier log cabin.

Bown hauled sandstone from a Table Rock quarry located

directly across Boise River from his house. He managed to bring smaller blocks without excessive difficulty, but large heavy ones had to be taken several miles west to a bridge in Boise and then brought back to his ranch. As a substantial and conspicuous Oregon Trail attraction, his house gained favorable notice (Idaho Statesman, May 20, 1879) shortly before its completion. It has been a community asset and landmark ever since. When that area's local school (located just west of Pennsylvania and Gekeler Lanes north of present Boise Avenue) caught fire and had to be replaced, Mrs. Bown took over and taught all pupils of School District 6 (that eventually built Garfield School at later Broadway and Boise avenues in 1899) until another frame school could be built.

Finally in 1893, Joseph and Temperance Bown sold their mansion to W. T. Booth in 1893 and moved to a new farm a few miles farther west. J. R. Bright acquired that landmark in 1927, and it remained a residence until it became a Triangle Dairy property. Finally it emerged, appropriately enough, as a landmark public school site serving an area that had shifted from irrigated farming to a residential neighborhood.

(Information provided by Paul Tate)

**(This information has not been edited.)**

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