



IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
REFERENCE SERIES

HARRIET F. NOBLE

Number 1052

August 1994

Harriet F. Noble was born in Columbus City, Louisa County, Iowa in December of 1848 to Maria and Joseph A. Lockett. Her father, a gold prospector, headed for California when she was only two years old. She and her mother traveled through the isthmus to San Francisco to join him in Sawyer's Bar, a mining community in Siskiyou County, California near the Oregon border. On July 4, 1854, her father opened the first saloon and a ten-pin alley in nearby Bestville, and was a founding member of the new Masonic Marion Lodge in 1861. Hattie went to Portland with her grandmother, where she lived with Bishop Thomas F. Scott, the first Episcopal bishop of Portland, and his family so she could attend the prestigious girl's school, St. Helen's Hall. Her parents moved to Idaho City about 1865, after the gold strike, and at age nineteen she joined them to teach in the public schools. Joseph died in 1872, after a prolonged illness that required trips to specialists in New York City and to Michigan to take the mineral waters. The *Idaho World* described his Masonic funeral cortege as the "largest this town has ever seen."

She was elected Engrossment Clerk of the Idaho Territorial Legislature for the 1875 session. Later that year, she married William B. Noble, a successful placer miner in Idaho City, who was twenty-five years her senior. He was born and raised in Hardinsburg, Breckinridge County, Kentucky, and went to Siskiyou County, California in 1848 to prospect gold, and on to Idaho in 1861, where he struck it rich in the Basin. Along with Marion Moore and several others, he formed the Buena Vista Bar Company, and made and lost fortunes in several business ventures. The couple had four children, and William was elected to the school board before he suffered a head injury that left him partially paralyzed with brain damage. He was treated in Blackfoot Asylum for a few months and released in 1889, but never fully recovered.

Hattie assumed control of the family business and became active in the drive for suffrage and in Democratic Party politics. The final results of her state legislative election were printed in the *Idaho World* on November 22, 1898, alongside an obituary for her husband.

She moved to Boise City after her tenure in the legislature and continued to advocate educational measures such as, vocational training in public education, until it was adopted. Her daughter, Gertrude F. Noble, ran for State Superintendent of Public Instruction on the Democratic ticket in 1908 and 1910, but lost both general elections. Harriet Nobel died on August 21, 1930 in Boise where her two daughters, Gertrude and May, were teaching in the public schools and her son, William F., lived. At the time of her death, her son, Harry B., was living in Seattle, Washington.

BIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

U.S. Census, 1850, Columbus City, Louisa County, IA; 87, (Luckett) #94. [National Archives, Washington, DC.]

1860, Liberty, Klamath County CA; 38, (Luckett) #296: 235.

1870, Idaho City, Boise County, ID; 3, (Luckett) #345.

1880, Territory of Idaho, Idaho City, Boise County, ID; 120, #130.

1900, Jefferson St., Boise City, Ada County, ID; Pct. #4, v 1, ed 4, s 4, L65.

1910, 920 Hays St., Boise City, Ada County, ID; Pct. #10, ed 10: 176.

1920, 920 Hays St., Boise City, Ada County, ID; v 1, ed 13, s 11, L1.

“St. Helen’s Hall” in *The Souvenir of Western Women*, ed. Mary Osborn Douhit (Presses of Anderson & Duniway Co., Portland, 1905), 76.

Gold Mining in Siskiyou County, by Gary D. Stumpf (Yreba, CA, Siskiyou County Historical Society, 1979), 89.

History of Siskiyou County, by Harry Laurenz Wells (Oakland, CA, D. J. Stewart & Co., 1881), 64-73, 175.

Saddle Bags in Siskiyou, by Joseph Roy Jones (Yerba, CA, News-Journal Print Shop, 1953), 37, 48, 344.

Application for Marriage License, County of Boise, Territory of ID, September 6, 1875, #652-3; Marriage Certificate, County of Boise, Territory of ID, September 7, 1875, #653 [Idaho Historical Society]

Correspondence Harriet B. Noble to R. Z. Johnson, Attorney, September 30, 1889 [MS 14, Papers of Richard Z. Johnson, Idaho Historical Society]

Journal of the Idaho Territorial House of Representatives, Eighth Session, December 8, 1874, 8.

“Died” (father) July 4, 1872, *Idaho World*; “Married,” September 10, 1875; “Death of a Pioneer,” November 22, “Election,” November 22, “Three Women,” December 6, 1898, reprinted from *Boise Silver Champion*.

“Pioneer Educator Dies,” *Idaho Daily Statesman*, August 21, 1930.