

# **Montie B. (M.B.) Gwinn**

## **Mayor 1894 & 1896**



Montezuma "Montie" B. Gwinn was born in Boone, Iowa on September 16, 1857 to Rev. Robert M. and Martha Gwinn, who passed away when Montie was an infant. His father was the first regular missionary assigned to Idaho and it was said "No man was ever better suited for pioneer missionary work than Mr. Gwinn." He organized the First Methodist Church of Boise, the first to be organized in Idaho.

Montie moved to Boise when he was 14 years old and spent most of his life in Idaho and Oregon, in which states he is widely known as a representative of banking and financial interests, of real estate dealing and as an expert in the sheep industry. His education has been widely acquired in the school of experience.

On May 4th, 1881 Montie married Miss Delia Lake (born in Ohio). It appears that they did not have any children.

In the 1880's Montie B. Gwinn established the first store in Caldwell. It was a highly respected, stable general merchandise business owned by HUMPHREY AND GWINN. They dealt with groceries, dry goods, boots and shoes, hats and caps, and gentlemen's toiletries, etc. They were centrally located on Front Avenue. The business was controlled by Mr. M.B. Gwinn.

In January 1890, the people of Caldwell voted to incorporate both Mayor and City Council seats, and promptly elected Montie B. Gwinn as the first elected Mayor. His reputation was that of an honest, hard-working businessman. M.B. was essential in settling and forming Caldwell through his work toward the setting of the Sebree Ditch, and his visits to Salt Lake to bring in investors. In 1896, his work earned him the title of "The Best Man in Idaho" according to the Caldwell Tribune, and a nomination for Idaho Governor. He worked hard to put Caldwell on the map, and was a well-respected member of the community. M.B. was the first appointed President to the State Board of Commerce, was managing director of the New York Life Insurance Company for Idaho and eastern Oregon, served as Chairman of the City Council, and was Vice President of both the Building and Loan Association, and the Board of Trade, he owned and nationalized the American National Bank in Pendleton, OR. M.B. was selected to be a representative for the Grand Encampment of Idaho when the Sovereign Grand Lodge was convened in Topeka, KS. Subsequently, he ran for and was elected as Caldwell's Mayor in 1894 and again in 1896.

In 1897 Montie received a land patent for the Greenleaf Timber Culture, an 80-acre section of land in Canyon, Idaho.

In 1925 Montie B. Gwinn received an Honorary Doctor of Law Degree from the College of Idaho.