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IDAHO'S STATE MOTTO

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Idaho's state motto, Esto Perpetua ("Let it be perpetual," or "It shall be perpetual"), was chosen shortly after Idaho was admitted to the Union in 1890, and appeared as part of the Idaho state seal designed in 1890 and 1891. The term is attributed to the noted Venetian theologian and mathematician, Pietro Sarpi (14 August 1552-14 January 1623), who applied it in 1623 to the Venetian republic. Esto Perpetua gained wide circulation in its Venetian application (A. J. Weil, Venice [London, 1894], 394; A. D. White, Seven Great Statesman [New York, 1910], 36; J. P. Trevelyan, A Short History of the Italian People [New York, 1920], 383; W. F. King, Classical and Foreign Quotations [London, 1904], 90), and came into use for a variety of other purposes. Adopted as the motto for the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry when that farm organization was constituted in Washington, D. C., December 4, 1867, Esto Perpetua also appears as the closing words (in a suggestion for the United States) in Jefferson Davis' History of the Confederacy (1881); perhaps the motto was derived for Idaho from one or both of these sources.

Esto is the emphatic form of the imperative of the Latin substantive verb esse (to be), as contrasted with the more frequently used ordinary imperative form, es. Combined with perpetua (perpetual), esto enjoins the subject of the motto to be perpetual; the construction is similar to that of the Boy Scout motto, "Be Prepared." The English expressions, "Be perpetual," "Let it be perpetual," or "It shall be perpetual" are equivalent to Esto Perpetua.

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