

# Louis Elg, Mayor of Idaho Falls

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When Mayor E. P. Coltman died in office September 16, 1910, Louis Elg, a longtime City Councilman and President of the City Council, was elected by the Council to serve as Mayor until the city election in April, 1911.

Born in Sweden in 1853 he had become head of family (mother and seven siblings) at age 14 when his father, an iron worker, had frozen to death. Louis worked in a nail factory and learned the blacksmith's trade. In 1874, age 21, he came to the U.S. He spoke no English, but persevered.

He stopped for awhile in Chicago, moved on to Boone Co., Iowa, where he worked in the coal mines. In Omaha, Neb. he worked as a blacksmith and later in a machine shop, drove a grocery wagon, and was a barkeep. In 1879 in Rollins, WY, he joined a work gang building a railroad to Idaho Falls. He stayed with that project until it reached Dillon, MT, but returned to Red Rock where he opened a saloon. From Red Rock he came to Idaho Falls. Still successful in the saloon business, he continued so until 1895 when he abandoned that business to open a drugstore.

In 1887 he had married Charlotte Salstrom, a native of Sweden. They had one son, Edward August. In his drugstore he was the first to use gas for illumination, put in the first telephone, and set up the first soda fountain in town. He also built a large ice house near the railroad.

In the 1911 mayoral race, Bowen Curley won his second term.

Mayor Elg died August 26, 1926.

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