

FRANCIS M. WARRINGTON

Francis M. Warrington was the minister in Bodie when the Methodist Church was built. He was assigned to Bodie from 1880 to 1882.

F. M. Warrington was born in Kentucky in 1850. The 1870 United States Census shows Mr. Warrington working as a farm hand in New Salem, Illinois. He graduated from Northwestern University in liberal arts and from Boston University School of Theology. After joining the Illinois Conference in 1875, he transferred to Minnesota and then to Winnamucca, Nevada in 1879, and Bodie in 1880.

He is often quoted from a letter written in January, 1881, in response to an inquiry from Mrs. Thomas D. Penfield about her son in Bodie, in which he states “I do not wonder that you tremble when you think of his



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surroundings, *a sea of sin, lashed by the tempest of lust and passion.*” He then proceeded to list the events that occurred in Bodie the previous week, which included a shooting and a lynching. Lucinda Penfield from Camden, New York, was inquiring about her only son, twenty-four year old Israel Stoddard Penfield, who travelled in the west during 1879-1882. The full text of the letter as well as a photograph of Stoddard in front of a stage coach can be found in the book. *The Ghost Town of Bodie A California State Park* (Johnson 101).

His father, Thomas Demilt Penfield, was a successful miller and a partner in the Penfield & Stone firm. He was a prominent citizen and active in Democratic politics. Thomas served as justice of the peace, school commissioner, supervisor, and assemblyman. He was active in the Methodist Episcopal Church and for more than 25 years was chairman of the board of trustees.

After his father’s death in 1898, Israel Stoddard Penfield assumed his father’s interest in the firm. Israel was a collector of antique furniture. The “Penfield Chair,” a chair with the ability to adjust the pitch of the back, was a reproduction from his collection. He never married and lived until he was 88 years old (Penfield 116).

In 1887, F. M. Warrington was transferred to Southern California, where he served until 1906. On May 1st, 1890, at the age of forty, he married twenty-five year old Fanny Lebus, his parishioner who had come to Southern California because of poor health. Fanny was born in Kentucky, and graduated from Cincinnati Wesleyan College. They had a son, Vernon Lebus, who died very young. Fanny died from her long illness on March 2nd, 1893. F. M. Warrington died on January 6th, 1931. His obituary stated that he “suffered almost all his adult life from ill health which made very difficult the performance of his duties as a pastor.” His brother, L. P. Warrington, was also a pastor.



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