



William H. H. Dickinson (1840-1910)

One of Missoula's early Post Masters. Missoula's first photographer, a teacher, and businessman.

- **1840-Birth.** October 23, 1840 in Salem Ohio. (William Henry Harrison Dickinson – named after General Harrison)
- **1871-Marriage.** Emma Slack on November 5, 1871 near Corvallis Montana. Emma was the first teacher in Missoula history and their marriage is believed to be the first performed by a Protestant Minister in the area. They had five children.
- **1910-Death.** September 4, 1910 in Missoula from heart failure.
- Dickinson family originally from the England countryside. At an early day, they settled in the New Jersey area. The youngest of seven children.
- **July 30, 1861.** Paid his own way to Kansas and was one of the first to sign up for war during the Rebellion as he loathed slavery and

oppression. He enlisted under Colonel Montgomery and Lieutenant Coppie, one of John Brown's men. He served three years until August 21, 1864.

- **1865.** Employed by the government in Leavenworth Kansas. He made three trips to Montana, the first in the spring of 1865.
- **May 31, 1869.** Began his journey to live in Montana. At Fort Peck the water was so low, the journey ended with some people proceeding on foot while others (Dickinson included) remained until teams could be procured from Fort Benton some 500 miles north. Indians were extremely hostile all around the fort and men exited the fort at the risk of their own lives.
- **September 13, 1869.** William left the fort early morning to hunt for game and was attacked by four Indians on horseback. He killed one, drove the others away, and reached the fort with his face besmeared with blood after he had been shot in the cheek. Upon arriving back at the fort, he found the teams had come for the other passengers and freight. A group of men tried to follow the Indians and upon finding the dead Indian, William took the Indian's scalp, gun, and pony to keep for himself.
- **October 23, 1869.** Arrived in the Bitterroot Valley near Corvallis. He was the first school teacher in the Bitterroot valley.
- **1870.** Opened first photography business in Missoula. He conducted business as the first photographer in all of Western Montana. Miners were especially fond of having photos of themselves with their mining stakes.
- **1872.** Commissioned as a Republican Post Master of Missoula for \$240 per year. By the end of his service his salary had increased to \$2400 per year in 1886.
- **Invested in real estate and mining businesses.** His wealth came when he subdivided 160 acres of land near the city of Missoula for residential development.
- **Affiliations** – (not all inclusive)
 - Republican – strict member since the party's inception
 - Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)
 - Intl Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF)