



Christopher P. Higgins (1830-1889)

Captain in the army and worked on Indian treaty negotiations. He co-founded Missoula in 1862 and erected one of the first lumber mills in the vicinity. He was a bank president and helped build the Higgins block in downtown Missoula.

- **1830-Birth.** March 16, 1830 in Ireland. Parents were Christopher and Mary Higgins.
- **1848.** At age 18, he came to the United States and went immediately west. He enlisted in the army to defend his new found home.
- **1853.** At age 23, he joined Governor Stephens, the famous Indian fighter of the northwest. Under Governor Stephens, C P Higgins assisted in the original survey of the Northern Pacific. In 1855 the treaty was drawn up with the Nez Perce

Indians. This treaty led to the final peace covenant with the Flat Heads and the Pend d'Oreilles. Crossing a swollen river in 1855 on a raft, C P Higgins saved the life of Governor Stevens by jumping into the river, swimming to shore, and securing the raft to a tree. The following year in 1856, the party went to Fort Benton, where they negotiated with the Blackfoot Indians. Their mission completed, the company disbanded at Olympia, Washington.

- **1856.** He was commissioned as a captain in the Army and charged to carry on his work of subduing the Indians. For four years more he served his country, two years of which he was acting as government agent in Walla Walla, Washington.
- **1860.** C. P. Higgins resumed his life as a civilian and purchased Mr. Isaac's interest in the mercantile business of Wooden & Isaacs in Walla Walla, Washington. Loading his share of the merchandise on the backs of 75 pack animals, he went through Hell Gate Canyon and set up in business with a partner, Francis L Worden. The hired clerk was Frank Woody. They established the first settlement in the Missoula area at the Hellgate Trading Post (located on Mullan Road today).
- **1863-Marriage.** Juliet P Grant on March 30, 1863. Juliet was the daughter of Missoula pioneer Richard Grant (Grant Creek area) C P and Julia had nine children
- **1865.** He erected one of the area's first lumber and flouring mills on the river (located about where the Holiday Inn is today).
- **1870.** He built the Higgins-Worden block (Higgins Ave downtown block today).
- **Commissions -** One of Missoula counties original county commissioners, a member of Montana's first Territorial Legislature, an incorporator of the Montana Historical Society, one of the founders and first president of the First National Bank of Missoula, commissioned a city block in downtown Missoula, member of the Masonic fraternity. In politics, he was a Democrat. In church, a more 'modern' Catholic – with a high regard and reverence for the essential ethics of the church, yet tolerant in his judgment of his fellow man, and generously charitable.
- **Passion for raising cattle and horses.** He had large real estate holdings throughout Missoula, Portland, and Seattle. He donated 20 acres for the construction of the University of Montana.
- **University area streets named after the children of C P Higgins:** Francis, Maurice, Arthur, Helen, Hilda, Ronald, and Gerald.
- **1889-Death.** October 14, 1889 at age 59 after a fall between his home and his new bank construction site.

