

MORRIS REECE CHEW SMITH



Located in Grave 8, Lot 5, Block 2

- **Hardware, Insurance, Violin maker, Mayor**
- **Born.** November 5, 1866 in Terre Haute, Indiana.
- **Parents.** William R. Smith and Harriet Chew.
- **Married.** Russie Donley on June 19, 1895.

They had no children. Russie was the daughter of N. B. Donley, one of Missoula's pioneer families. Mr. Donley

was Montana's first known jeweler.

- **Died.** August 14, 1942 on Lolo Creek, Montana. Morris had gone on a fishing trip with his friend, Charles Dimmick. Charles was the County Surveyor and left the area long enough to conduct a road inspection. Upon his return, Charles found Morris on the spot where the old Fort Fizzle was located.



In July 1877 scouting parties from the 7th Infantry at Missoula verified rumors that "hostile Nez Perce" were approaching over the Lolo Trail. Ordered to block the passage of the Nez Perce, about 35 soldiers headed up Lolo Creek where, on July 25, Captain Charles Rawn selected the terrace in front of you for his defensive position. His soldiers, joined by citizen volunteers, constructed a breastwork from earth and logs, and dug shallow rifle pits. Over 200 men joined forces to prevent the Nez Perce from passing. Information provided by the Lolo National Forest.

- **1889.** Morris arrived in Missoula, Montana. He worked as a clerk for the retail hardware store, J. P. Reinhard. He was employed for ten years.
- **1899.** Morris started his own hardware business.
- Morris also devoted time to the insurance business.
- **Hobby.** Morris crafted violins. He was renowned for his excellent workmanship and tone.
- **May 4, 1903.** Elected Missoula's 16th Mayor. He served 46 months. Morris served without salary at his own request.
- **Mayoral achievements.** The 'Morris years' were characterized by social and civic improvement in Missoula. It was during this time period that Paxson, Willard, and Whittier School buildings were built.
- **School Trustee.** Morris worked hard to build proper institutions of education and served three years as School Trustee.
- **1917-1918.** Morris served as Grand High Priest of the Royal Arch Masons of Montana.
- **Church.** Morris served as Deacon and Elder in the Christian Church.



Provided by "Missoula the Way it Was."