



Will Cave (1863-1954)

Missoula resident for more than 80 years; Missoula and Western Montana historian; organizer of first U.S. volunteers in the Spanish American War in 1898; Missoula County's first auditor

- **Born.** Dec. 8, 1863, on the Laurin Ranch near the mouth of Alder Gulch to George Hackleman and Caroline Nicol Hackleman. He was reportedly the second white child born in the Alder Gulch area after the discovery of gold there in May of 1863.
- **Marriages.** 1890 -- Married Beatrice L. Hunt O'Gorman. They had one daughter, Irene, born in May 1891, who died at age 16 in July 1907. Beatrice died in February 1897. Will married Elizabeth Sneed Adams in September 1901. His final marriage was to Lulu Munday Goodrich in April 1908. They remained married until her death in 1939.
- **1870.** George Hackleman left Caroline and 6-year-old Will at her brother's ranch in the Bitterroot Valley. He never saw his wife again; he was reunited with Will 42 years later.
- **1871.** Caroline received a legal separation from George Hackleman and married Alfred Cave, a freighter and teamster from Missouri and a childhood playmate of Samuel Clements.
- **1872.** The Caves moved to Missoula from Cedar Creek for the winter, returning to Cedar Creek the following spring and to Missoula in the fall, where Alfred bought 160 acres near Fort Missoula and what became the family home at 321 E. Front St., what's now a bank parking lot across from the Missoula Public Library.
- **Late 1870s, early 1880s:** Will finished high school in Missoula and a two-year course at the Montana Collegiate Institute in Deer Lodge. Alfred Cave, was elected to the territorial legislature from Missoula County in 1876.
- **1884.** At age 20, Will went to work at the Missoula Mercantile.
- **1885.** January – By act of the Montana territorial legislature, James William Hackleman's name was changed to William Cave.
- **1891.** Will was appointed Missoula County's first auditor by Gov. Joseph Toole. He later served as deputy county clerk for eight years, as well as county assessor, deputy state humane officer and justice of the peace.
- **1897.** Feb. 28 -- Cave's first wife, Beatrice, died. She was buried at St. Mary Cemetery in Missoula.
- August – Cave left Missoula for the Klondike. He returned later in the year, intending to go back after tending to some business with Kansas City investors.
- **1898.** January – Will left Seattle to return to the Yukon. His steamship "Corona" wrecked off Lewis Island on the British Columbia coast, midway between Vancouver and Juneau. No one was injured, but the passengers were shipped back to Seattle.
 - March 30 – Will secured more than 50 signatures for volunteers in a few hours, 22 days before the U.S. joined the Spanish-American War. He has the distinction of being the first volunteer in the U.S. Spanish-American war. He was lieutenant and drillmaster of his troop, which trained in Georgia but was mustered out later that year without deployment overseas.
- **1901.** Oct. 29 – Cave's mother, Caroline, died in Missoula. She was buried in the city cemetery.
- **1907.** July 17 -- Irene A. Cave, Will's daughter with first wife Beatrice, died at age 16.
- **1909.** March 17 – Alfred Cave died in Missoula. He was buried in the city cemetery.

- **1912.** Will found his birth father, whom he hadn't seen since 1871 and thought had long been dead. After leaving the family George Hackelman had changed his name to Harland, which was his own biological father's name. The story of their reunion was published in *The Missoulian* on Dec. 23, 1912. Harland died in Missoula in November 1918 at age 93.
- **1921.** Aug. 7 – Cave's long, second-hand account on the Battle of the Big Hole in 1877 was published in the Sunday Missoulian under the headline "Most Bitter Indian Battle Near Missoula."
- **1922.** Wrote an in-depth, four-part series on Missoula history and place names in Western Montana.
- **1939.** After a long association with the Society of Montana Pioneers, Cave served as president .
- **1943.** At age 80, Will sold the abstract business he owned for many years. He lived at the Elks Club on East Main at the time.
- **1954.** On the night of Feb. 28, Will died at the Veterans Hospital at Fort Harrison, Helena.

Researched by Kim Briggeman-reporter for The Missoulian