

NO  
PHOTO  
AVAILABLE

# HARRY W. THOMPSON

- **22<sup>nd</sup> Missoula County Sheriff.**
- **Born.** Around 1867 in New Brunswick, Canada.
- **Married.** Wife's name is unknown. They had one daughter.
- **Died.** June 1, 1924 of emphysema in Missoula, Montana.
- **1886.** Harry came to Missoula, Montana and began working at the Missoula Mercantile Company.
- **1902.** Elected as the 22<sup>nd</sup> Missoula County Sheriff.
- **1904.** Sheriff Thompson held the infamous hanging of Louis H. Mott. Mott was accused of killing his wife, Leah, on January 4, 1903. Mott was a longtime Missoula laundryman whose business was quite profitable in its early years. Mott became addicted to morphine and whiskey and would 'disappear' from town at times. His absences grew more extended. Finally, during one such extended absence, Mrs. Mott sold the laundry business and all their property. Upon his return, Mr. Mott became enraged. That evening, when the couple sat down to dinner in their apartment, the drugs and whiskey took control. He argued loudly with his wife. Many neighbors witnessed the scene. Mrs. Mott ran down the stairs to get away from him but he followed her. Before she reached the bottom of the staircase, he shot her four times in the back. A fifth bullet hit another female tenant from the apartment building. On her deathbed, Mrs. Mott begged for the care of her baby daughter and made an appeal for mercy on her husband as it was the drugs and alcohol that made him do these things. During the trial, Mott was described in the local papers as 'as weird a joker as was ever sentenced to death.' Deputy Sheriffs noted what a pitiful site it was to watch Mott's withdrawal from the drugs and alcohol. Mott had many hallucinations and begged wildly to be delivered from his state and his awful deed. Upon being sentenced to hang, another Missoula lawyer named Frank Woody stepped in and made an appeal to the Supreme Court, requesting clemency. Governor Joseph Dixon denied all appeals. By this time, Mott was 'dried out' from his addictions. Prior to his execution, he addressed the crowd to say a prayer. He noted that he 'held no malice' towards anyone associated with the imminent taking of his life as he would finally be able to rest in peace. Mott also issued a statement to the local newspaper proclaiming his innocence and sense of honor. Per his request, this article was not published until after his hanging. Sheriff Thompson erected a 15' high temporary stockade for this hanging to keep all gawkers out. One hundred fifty private invitations were sent for this execution. Immediately after the hanging, Sheriff Thompson ordered the stockade torn down and personally burned the rope.
- After serving as Sheriff, Harry returned to work at the Missoula Mercantile Company.
- Politically, Harry was a Republican. Socially, Harry was a prominent member of the Elks Lodge.



Grave 3 – Lot 1 – Block 39

*Harry Thompson was buried in a single grave. It is not known where his wife or daughter were buried.*