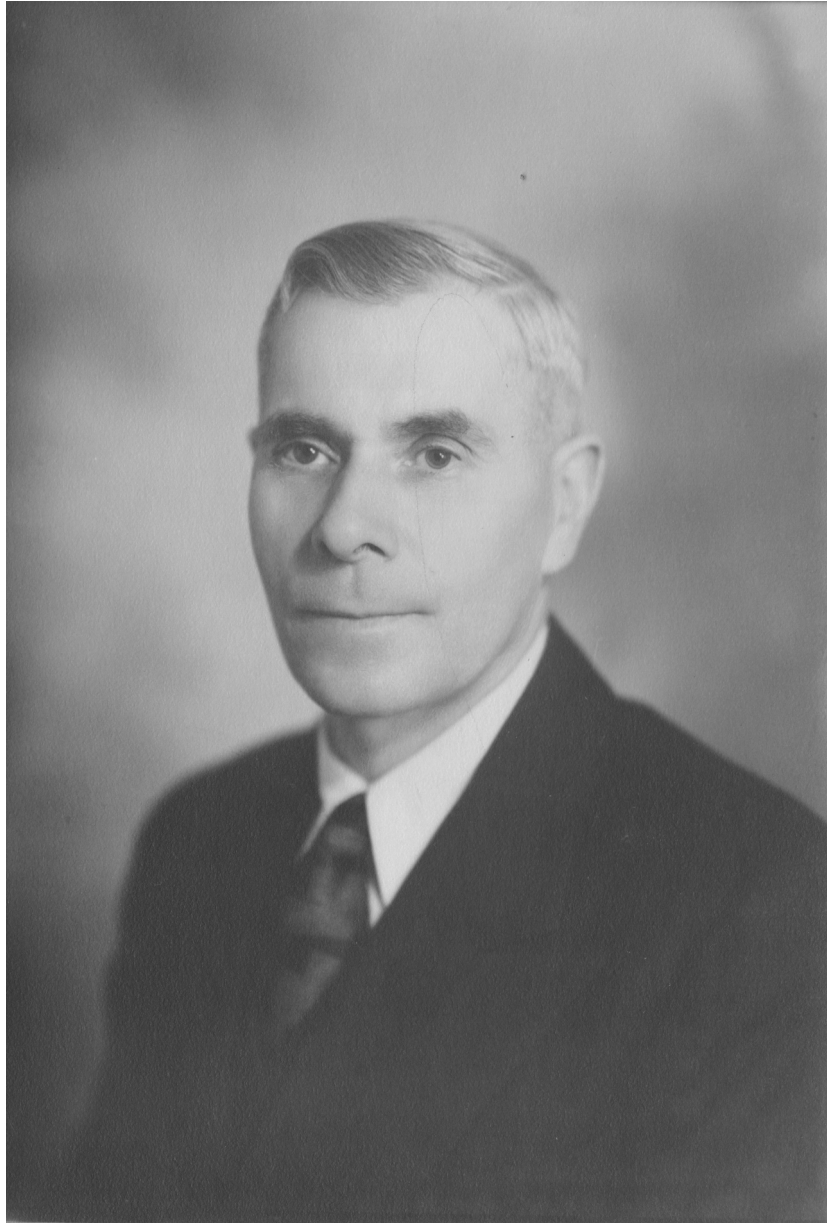


Frank Holloway

A few times I have been asked to write something about Frank Holloway and I am happy to do so.

He was my grandfather. But not really; he was my step grandfather; my mother's father died before I was born and my dad's father died when I was pretty young, so Frank Holloway is the only "grandfather" I really ever had.



In her bible my mother kept obituaries and/or funeral programs of those who were dear to her. I knew she had Grandpa's obit in there so when I went to get it to help with information for this article. I thought it was interesting that I opened

the bible to the EXACT page of his obit and there are a lot of obits in this little bible. It is a travel through time...for sure.

His obituary tells us that he was born in Daventry, England on June 11, 1890, the son of John and Annie Holloway. He died at his home in Townsend on November 21, 1980.

When he was a young boy, his father left the family. They were very poor and as a result, there was no waste in his life!!! Because of having been so poor, when Frank saw a single glove, piece of wire, piece of wood on the street, he picked it up and brought it home. After he died, the family found all sorts of these "prizes" tucked neatly in the corners of the sheds in the yard.

He had a fetish for wood, probably because he was so poor as a child and they couldn't get wood in England. Grandpa and Grandma burned wood in their home. They heated with it and cooked on a wood stove. There was no other heat or cooking source in the house. At that time, people could go to the mill here in Townsend and get wood for free. Frank's yard was packed with wood from the mill. The piles were all neatly stacked according to size. One of his partners who went with him to get wood was Terry Love.

Terry reminded me of his "Frankisms" and unfortunately, I only remember "Linda did you look out the winda", but there were many more.

He had three cars, a Model T; a black 1938 Buick, which he bought new; a 1950s Plymouth. But he walked everywhere, except to get wood and on his Assessor visits.

He was a perfect grandfather. At Christmas time, my younger sister and I would join him and we would walk all around town to look at the Christmas decorations. She and I would stop at their house at noon when we were returning to school. He always had a treat for us; a piece of candy for me and a pickle for her because she liked pickles!! They took us to Helena to the Vigilante Parade one year. AND HE TOOK HIS CAR!!! He drove pretty slowly and all of the cars on the highway were passing us. He wondered if he was backing up. He had a terrific sense of humor!

I won't even attempt to name the local organizations he served. I was surprised when I read in his obituary that he was a member of the Episcopal Church, American Legion and Auxiliary; VFW and Auxiliary, Masonic Lodge, and was an honorary member of the Fire Department, Rotary, Order of Rainbow for Girls and Jaycees. Although these are more organizations than many people are affiliated

with, I would have thought he belonged to more. And he did, but not “officially” I guess.

I found an article from the “Townsend Star” that described him as follows:

“Santa Claus, coffee maker, ticket seller and taker, fireman, very good neighbor. Anyone in Broadwater County would recognize who was being described”. It further states: “Are you sick in the hospital? Frank will probably be in. Is Rainbow, Star, LDS ladies, ANYONE giving a dinner? Frank’s in the kitchen. Are the firemen, chamber, rodeo association, March of Dimes having a function? Frank is selling and taking tickets. Is someone home alone and not too strong? Frank is running errands. Did you see Santa go by? Where’s Frank?”

This paragraph pretty much sums it up. He worked for and with everyone.

In February 1971 the American legion and Auxiliary hosted an event to honor him at a reception at the Legion Club. In their article in the “Townsend Star” about the reception they said, among other things, “For many years Frank has helped virtually every organization in town with whatever project they have under way. He need not belong to the group, or church or association, but when there is work to be done, he’s the first one there and the last one to leave. He’s poured a lake full of coffee, washed enough dishes to reach to the moon and back, sold tickets to everything that has ever happened in Townsend, weighed fish, cleaned lawns, carried wood and brought groceries.”

Mayor Rudy Lundborg presented Frank with a framed copy of a proclamation which made February 14, 1978 “Frank Holloway Day” in Townsend. During the program it was noted that Mr. Holloway recognizes no generation gap, visiting with Head Start children and senior citizens.

In the February 17, 1978 “Your Time”, a supplement to “The Independent Record” and the “Townsend Star” there was a lengthy article entitled: “Frank Holloway Fills His Leisure with Work”. This article is a wealth of information about Frank. It, not only, clarified some parts of his life of which I was uncertain, but it also verified a lot of what I have said.

Some quotes from the article follow:

“I’m no house plant,” Frank Holloway says, laughing. “I like to keep busy”.

“Anybody that’s 87, eats good and sleeps good and gets around like I do is lucky,”. “That’s what keeps a person young – keeping busy.”

With a twinkle in his age-clouded eyes, Holloway explained that some of those activities are because “I like to be around food”.

The same reasoning surfaced to explain why Holloway liked his job as county assessor. For 32 years he traveled the county as the dreaded tax assessor. But he wasn't treated with loathing. Instead he was fed". He was a tall, slender man and he loved to eat! I have wondered if he planned his visits so he would arrive at noon to the places that housed the best cooks in the county and he knew who they were!

"They knew it (tax assessment) was something that had to be done,' he said. 'I used to eat dinner with them - sometimes supper too. It was wonderful'"

But the farmers and ranchers had at least one reason to treat Frank kindly.

"There is hardly a rancher in the valley who hasn't had him help at least one day", said his wife, Hazel.

Starting during World War II, he would do his work in the assessor's office and then go out and work on ranches and he never accepted any pay for the work.

The work was familiar. As a 20-year-old newcomer to North America in 1911, he made his living as a ranch-hand, migrant worker. He said he had no reason to leave England, "I just got it in my head I would come to Canada," where he had two uncles, who lived near Montreal. He came to the United States in 1914.

"Traveling around, he finally ended up near Fort Benton, where he lived until World War I struck and he enlisted in the Army.

While in the Army he suffered from a mustard gas attack and spent many months in a facility recuperating.

"When he was released from duty he returned to Montana to the Lincoln area for a year and then wandered between Canada and Montana for a while. At one time he said "The last day we thrashed it was 10 degrees below zero. They were hauling wheat out on sleds".

"For a time, he followed the wheat harvest on a thrashing crew. In 1922 the trek ended with a trip to Canyon Creek, Montana with a job with the Sieben Livestock Company. He made the acquaintance of a young lady by the name of Hazel Bruce, who cooked for the Sieben Livestock Company.

"The acquaintance led to marriage and they settled in Townsend, where Hazel had grown up.

"He was a trifle worried about this and said 'Jack of All Trades and master of none'. He had to find a job to support his new wife. First, the couple took to managing a restaurant, then he worked at a grocery store, the Cash 'n' Carry. He said 'I didn't know any more about a store than that chair does.

In 1934 he filed for Broadwater County assessor. and won. He remained in this position until he retired after 32 years and then he served as Deputy Assessor.

“He served for 36 years as a volunteer with the fire department. For 25 years, he played Santa Claus for the American Legion. He could be seen on Main Street ringing the bell for donations to the bucket that collected funds to help the needy during Christmas.



“He enjoyed going out on Christmas Eve and visiting homes as Santa to give joy to kids. He said: ‘If I can give joy to a little kid at Christmas time, why it gives me joy, too’”.

In this article he is quoted as having said: “People’s been good to me. The country’s been good to me. I’ve done a little of everything and I’ve enjoyed it all. Life’s been good to me. I’m glad to do what I can to help”.

In March of 1978 he was one of seven Montanans awarded the first the 1978 Jefferson Award for the state.

In the letter to him telling him he had won they offered a brief description of the award:

“Each year, the American Institute for Public Service presents Jefferson Awards (so named after Thomas Jefferson) in several categories, one of which is the

Greatest Public Service Benefiting Local Communities. The Montana Television Network is co-sponsor with the Institute in Montana. The goal is to reach into local communities across the country to reward initiative and leadership at the local level. The thrust of these awards is to identify community people, average citizens, who are performing significant public services, predominately without recognition.”

This award was presented to him by Governor Judge at the State Capitol in Helena on March 27, 1978.

After he died the Townsend Rotary Club established a fund for a scholarship to a graduating senior at the Broadwater High School in his honor. The purpose of the award is to establish a permanent memorial to honor Frank H. Holloway, whose life in this community provided one of the finest examples of the very purpose of Rotary, “Service above Self”.

Also after he died, a park in Townsend was named after him. The park on D Street with the Skate Board facility, soccer field, and sometimes an ice skating pond is Holloway Park.

This article has been difficult to do because there is so much more to say, but not enough room. Hopefully, it will inspire everyone to take some time to be of service to others.