



## Henry "Hank" Butler Beaman (1848-1897)

*Sheriff of Deadwood, South Dakota, friends with Calamity Jane and was represented in the HBO miniseries "Deadwood". He was a landowner and fireman who invented the fire towers much like the one used by the Forest Service today.*

- **1848-Birth.** Henry was born on February 22, 1848 in Morgan Township, Owen County, Indiana to Isaac Beaman and Martha "Patsy" Langdon.
- **Married: February 22, 1879** in Des Moines, Polk County, Iowa to Mary Jane Munger who was the daughter of Simon Peter Munger and Elizabeth Wilkinson. Mary was born May 30, 1856 in Essex County, Ontario, Canada. They had 10 children with 5 surviving to adulthood. (Melvin – 1880, Stella – 1881, Cleaveland – 1883, Lafayette – 1885, David – 1890, Ruth – 1892, Ethel – 1894, Clarence – 1897, Clark – unknown, infant – unknown)
- **1860:** Both parents having passed away, by age 12 he is found living with the family of John and Elizabeth (Beaman) Halton in Washington Township, Clay County, Indiana.
- **1876:** The first known record of Hank in Deadwood, South Dakota Territory, is found in the local newspaper dated August 19, 1876, a few weeks after the death of Wild Bill Hitchcock. However it is likely he went there with thousands of other men when gold was discovered in the Hills in 1875. The newspaper itself wasn't in business until 1876 with many of the early articles written on paper bags which were used for a variety of purposes by members of the community. Many of these did not survive and those that did were extremely difficult to read.
- **Community.** Hank quickly became an esteemed member of the community. He was employed in various occupations; carpenter, fireman, deputy sheriff, landowner. He would earn a reputation for being honest, fearless and hardworking, contributing many hours to labor as well as his talents to the social events of the day.
- **Businessman.** Hank was also known as an astute businessman. He was the owner of several prime lots of real estate, including the lot he and his partner would sell to Seth Bullock and Sol Star. Located on the corner of Sherman and Lee Streets, it was sold for \$800. It would house Bullock and Star's hardware store. These two men were not only Hank's friends, but they would play a huge role in the history of Deadwood both politically and economically. Their lives would eventually become the basis for the popular HBO mini-series, "Deadwood", which was based loosely on the history of Deadwood. Other properties owned by Hank would be sold, or built on and rented out. Many of these were simply known as "Beaman's building". Just as miners contended with claim jumpers, land owners in town contended with lot jumpers. Hank experienced this problem, being both the jumper and the jumpee, having attempted to "inch" his way onto another man's property.
- **Fire Protection.** Building codes were literally unheard of in Deadwood. Lot owners built as close to the next building as possible. Often times the main streets were so loaded with lumber, wagons could not pass through. The demand for lumber was so great; it was often used raw in building. All of these factors created an immediate concern for the citizens of Deadwood - FIRE! The Deadwood Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 was formed. Hank was a member of this group from its inception. He held various positions within the company. These included finding the right type of equipment to be used, revamping the building that would house the equipment, raising funds for various uses by the company as well as building the hooks and ladders. This of course led to the need for water. It was up to Hank to see that all was well. Another of his duties was to inspect fireplace flues. He would institute the construction of brick chimneys as well as inspect those that already existed to insure they were up to code. The code was entirely based on his knowledge of construction. He also instituted the idea of look-out towers, much like those used by the forest service of today. There were many fires in Deadwood that destroyed large portions of the town during the years Hank was there. He would lose 5 houses in one such fire. He also fought fires in the surrounding towns as well. It was in one of these fires that Hank would be injured. It would eventually affect his entire family.

- **1877-**While in Deadwood, Hank was a member of the Knights of Pythais as well as the Knights of the Silver Cross of Cyrus. He was a stout Democrat and was a delegate to the Democratic County Convention in 1877. He would also campaign for the local politicians as well as taking an interest in the politics of Indiana, his home state.
- **1880:** During the time Hank spent in Deadwood, he was elected deputy sheriff. He arrested both men and women for a variety of crimes. He also transported prisoners from Deadwood to other prisons as well as insane asylums. He himself would be arrested on more than one occasion. Most of the crimes he was charged with were of no consequence with charges often being dropped. However, on May 4, 1880, while in a saloon, Hank shot a man. He was charged with ‘assault of a deadly weapon with the intent to kill.’ He was required to post \$3,000 bond, which was provided by his friends, including Seth Bullock. Members of the community wrote letters to the judge in the case stating what a decent man Hank was. His physician testified Hank had been receiving the medication morphine for injuries received while fighting a fire. This in combination with drink had been the primary reason for Hanks' actions, something which Hank would have had no control over and therefore could not be held responsible. Hank was released of all charges, but would immediately resign from his positions with both the police as well as fire departments. He would later be reinstated. Costner, the man Hank shot would eventually recover from his wounds.
- **1882:** Hank left Deadwood and headed for Montana. He and his family resided in the areas of Livingston, Gardiner and Helena before arriving in Missoula in June 1894. Hank is said to have held a variety of positions along the way, including that of stagecoach driver into Yellowstone. Hank died in Missoula in 1897, likely due from the effects of morphine from his back injury. He left his wife pregnant with their youngest son who was born in August of that same year. Mary Jane's family now literally lived hand-to-mouth. An audio recording tells of their living in a Calistoga wagon for a time. A kindly neighbor would eventually allow them to live free of charge in a home he normally rented. The children would go through town collecting cardboard, sticks, etc. to burn for heat and to use for cooking. The older children would do odd jobs to support their mother and younger siblings. They sold newspapers, ran errands, etc. until they eventually found more stable employment.
- **1897-Death:** April 17, 1897 in Missoula, Montana at 49 years old.



Grave 6 - Lot 4 - Block 053

*Information and photo provided by Jane Short, the wife of Henry and Mary's great-grandson.*