



Jim Flansburg (1904-1988)

Clinton logger and rancher who owned and operated the first gas station and grocery store in the Clinton area. A logging accident left 19 year old Jim with a crippled leg. A true rugged pioneer, Jim saw this as an "inconvenience" and persevered on through many successes, failures, and the survival of the Great Depression era.

- **1904-Birth.** On February 8, 1904 in Calgary, Canada Jim Flansburg was born. His mother named him Lelan Lawrence Flansburg but his father called him Jim. Later on when he married Eunice Winifred Mueller, she would sometimes call him James (often preceded by a "now" at those peak moments in a marriage.)
- Jim's father, Olin Mattison Flansburg, was a stone mason and a wanderer. He traveled to where the work was. Olin would follow a job and send for the family. Jim's mother, Alice Elizabeth Clark, would then bundle the herd of small children, hop aboard the train and travel the long responsible trips to rejoin her husband at the next promise of work. Consequently, nine children were born all over the country; from Missouri to Oklahoma Territory, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Canada. The Flansburg family settled in Montana, first around the Bonner Milltown area, then Clinton at Connick Gulch and finally in Dixon on an eighty acre ranch up behind the old school house.
- At the age of eight, Jim started logging with his father. School was hit and miss around Evaro, MT.

"Because he was gypoing he didn't want to waste the little time it would take to go back and get his good 'cant' hook. "This'll do for this one load anyway," he said to himself. He climbed onto the deck and kicked some logs loose. With his good hook he could have caught and guided the logs as they rolled down, but he old one didn't hook right and didn't hold.

Jim ran backwards until he ran out of room to go, then fell onto his back on the far side of the dray. About three thousand feet of logs bounced clear over the top of the dray and landed on top of him. The size logs were in those days, three thousand feet probably amounted to two or three big logs plus the 'little one' on his chest. He was broken and pinned down and fully conscious. ('Tough, Willing, and Able'*, pgs. 2-3)"*

- Jim took to Clinton and started a garage and service station there following his logging accident. It was in Clinton at the town dances that he met the local school teacher fresh from Missouri and teacher's college in Dillon. Jim and Eunice took the train to Deer Lodge MT on July 7, 1928 and were married. They returned home to Clinton; Eunice went back to her boarding house and Jim went back to his garage. They kept their marriage a secret for fear of what Eunice's family would think of her marrying a tough old rawhide like Jim. Eunice like Jim's smile and sense of humor in spite of his bum leg. She liked his spirit of hard work and tenacity.
- When it became obvious that a child was on the way, Eunice had to quit her teaching job and become a full time wife and mother. Women simply were not allowed to teach in that condition.
- The young couple stayed in Clinton, worked hard and started ranching while running the local gas station, garage and driving the school bus. Eunice raised a truck garden, canned and cooked for the men and extra hay crews every summer. It was hard work and long days. When times got tougher on the ranch, Jim started logging to make ends meet. He logged outside of the ranch for about twenty years.
- Jim Flansburg endured several more injuries to his bum leg over the years until eventually it was amputated. This never slowed Jim down. He got more done on a wooden leg than most people could in three lifetimes. Disabled was NEVER in Jim or Eunice's vocabulary.

- Jim and Eunice Flansburg were married fifty-six years ending with Eunice's passing in 1984. Jim followed in 1988. During their life together they had three children: Margery Lois, Rex James, and George Robert. Baby George died at five and one half months old.
- Lois married and had two daughters, Ruth and Laura. They all three live in the Missoula area. Rex never married and still lives on part of the original ranch in Clinton at the head of Flansburg Gulch (formerly Connick Gulch).

Information provided by Flansburg family and in book by Lois Flansburg Haaglund "Tough, Willing and Able – Tales of a Montana Family".