



Ralph Starr (1895-1961)

32nd Mayor of Missoula. A well renowned justice of the Peace, he was re-elected eight times and only left the position upon his election as mayor. Learn about numerous Starr family members all buried together in a family lot.

- **1895-Birth.** Ralph was born on August 8, 1895 in Anaconda, Montana.
- **Marriage.** Ralph married Florence Smith. They had two children.
- **Education.** Ralph attended Central Grade School and graduated



Missoula County recruits pose outside of the courthouse 1918

from Missoula County High School.

- **WWI.** He served in the U.S. Army in World War I. He saw action with the 11th Machine Gun Company in the 11th Infantry Regiment of the 5th Division. Ralph suffered being gassed during the war and received minor wounds.
- **1917.** Ralph rode horseback all the way to Albuquerque, New Mexico. He stopped in Nevada to get a room and was run out of town because he had the same last name as Belle Starr. She was a notorious outlaw, known to run with the Jesse James Gang.



Electric streetcars began operating on May 12, 1910.

- After the war, Ralph was employed with an electrical crew for Missoula Public Service Company. After seven years he was transferred to the street car service and served as motorman for six years until the street car service was abandoned in January 1932. At that time, buses replaced the streetcars and Ralph drove the last operating streetcar into the car barn.
- **1932.** Starr was elected Justice of the Peace in Hellgate Township. He was re-elected 8 times and left the position only after receiving the bid for Mayor. During his service as Justice of the Peace there were many marriages performed in his home on 4th Street.

- **1949.** He was elected as Missoula's 32nd mayor. He served for 62 months. At that time, Missoula changed to a 'commission-manager' form of government.
- Ralph was Grand Marshal of many parades in Missoula and was joined many times by Indian chiefs from Salish Kootenai tribes.
- **1957.** Ralph became a vendor for the state retail liquor in Missoula.
- **1960.** Ralph retired.
- He was an avid fisherman, he was also an accomplished fly fisherman. He traveled to the coast, Rock Creek, Lolo Hot Springs and the Jocko many times, taking his family with him. Ralph also loved to hunt for duck and pheasant.
- Mr. Starr bought the family cabin at Lolo Hot Springs in 1950, it is still in the family and owned by his son Ralph Starr Jr. The Starr sign still hangs over the gate.
- **1961-Death.** Ralph died on March 20, 1961 in Missoula, Montana.

