

Bonnors Ferry Herald
Barton Lee Robinson

Lee Robinson passed away at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, Washington on Oct.21, 2008 from liver cancer.

Lee was born Barton Lee Robinson to Harry Barton and Violet Yockey Robinson at Hawk Springs, Wy on Sept. 17th 1932. He attended the first two grades of school in LaGrange, Wy. Due to the depression, drought, grasshoppers and crop failures, Harry decided to move his family to Idaho. In May 1940, Harry and Violet left Wyoming in a Model A Ford, pulling a four wheeled trailer with all their belongings and 6 of their children, Lee being next to youngest. When they went over the Continental Divide the Model A was not adequate for the load and Violet and the kids had to get out and walk. It took 5 days to get to Sandpoint with the best road via Helena, MT. Harry found 160 acres in Highland Flats near Naples and bought it for \$1000, house, barn and outbuildings included. The family thought they had found heaven. Later that year Lee's married sister and her husband and another brother them.



Lee attended school at Highland Flats School through 7th grade at which time the school was closed and he went 8th grade at Naples and then on to Bonnors Ferry High School where he graduated in 1950. He was an outstanding boxer in high school. After graduation he worked in the woods and sawmill for Jeff McAvoy and then at the Kootenai Valley Creamery.

His high school sweetheart was Donna Lannigan, class of 1951. When she graduated her parents moved to Caldwell, Id. Lee and Donna were already engaged and Lee soon followed. They were married in her parent's home on July 21st, 1951. Lee worked various jobs but they both missed the mountains and trees, put their belongings their 1946 Hudson and returned to Boundary Co. Lee went back to work for Jeff McAvoy till winter shut them out of the woods. In Feb. of 1952 he took a job at Safeway which was where the Larson's store is now. Within a few weeks they asked if he would like to learn to cut meat and he said he would try it and it became his trade for 43 years. There was no boxed beef then. Beef came in full quarters, hogs in halves and the turkeys at Thanksgiving had to be cleaned!

On Lee's 20th birthday in 1952 Lee and Donna welcomed a daughter, LeAnne. They had two more daughters, Sandra in April 1954 and Leslie in Sept. 1958. On Oct. 1st 1958 Lee quit Safeway and went to work for Don Beatty who had purchased the Kootenai Valley Grocery where the Panhandle Cafe is now. Lee managed the store and cut meat. After 2 years Don closed the grocery and moved Dan's Cafe in from next door.

Lee then got a job as meat market manager in Soap Lake, Washington where he moved his family on Nov.1, 1960. The store was called Jack's Bargain Barn and was later bought by John Asker who named it John's Thrift.

Lee again missed Idaho and when his youngest daughter graduated from high school in 1976 he came back to Highland Flats where he had purchased 10 acres of the original property bought in 1940, from his brother. He lived in a tent during one of the wettest summers in Boundary Co. and started building a home for him and Donna. Though not

finished they moved in the 1st of Sept. 1976.

Later that month the M and M grocery store owned by Les Rogers offered Lee the job of meat market manager. Lee took the job and later the store name was changed to Excel Foods. In 1982 Safeway bought it and shortly closed it. Lee did not want to move and leave his home in the woods so he and Donna leased a space at the rear of the Panhandle Cafe and opened Lee's Market on Sept. 13, 1982. Lee did most of the remodel himself even building the walk in freezer-cooler.

In the fall of 1991 Lee became ill and in June of 1992 he was diagnosed with Lupus. He was able to keep working till he sold it to Hans and Vera Fuchs in April 1995. After that he worked a little for Boundary Trading when they first opened and then part time at Coast to Coast Truevalue till Jim Chubb closed it. Lee hunted in his younger years and always liked to creek fish. He did wood working, crossword puzzles and read most anything non-fiction, Lee was instrumental in starting Jaycees in Bonners Ferry in the mid 1950'E He also belonged to Jaycees in Soap Lake. During his daughters school years he was active in PTA, Band Boosters and their Camp Fire activities. He was on the board for the annual Suds and Sun Celebration in Soap Lake and Chairman of the Library board when a new library was built. He was president of the Highland Flats Water Assoc. at the time of his passing.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Donna, daughters LeAnne (Brad) Hunter and Leslie (Ric) Carlson all of Spokane. Sandy (Chuck) Hays of Des Moines WA. 2 grandchildren, Erik(Sarah) White, Kristin(Nathan) Masinter of Spokane, Seven step grandchildren, Emily(Jon) Rappe of St. Louis Park, MN, Tyler(Kimber) Hunter and Hillary Hunter, Matthew Hays, and Joe Carlson all of Spokane, Chris(Arika) Hays of Monroe, WN and Ann(Joe) Smith of Snoqualmie WN. Five great grand children, Adam, Declan, Brady, Lydia and Samuel. Step great-grandchildren, Kyla, Makenna, Dante and Izabela and baby Smith due in March. Brother Wayne Robinson of Bonners Ferry, sister Ginny (Dell) Whetsler of Bakersfield Ca. Many nieces and nephews and special cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents, sisters, Lois Mahler, Harriet Voss and an infant sister, and brothers Gene, Alvin and Pete.

Lee has been cremated and a memorial service will be held in the spring at the United Methodist Church.

The family suggests memorials to Shriners Hospital for Children, 911 West 5th Ave, Spokane, WA 99204.

Family and friends are invited to sign Lee's book at www.bonnersferryfuneralhome.com Arrangement are entrusted to the care of Bonners Ferry Funeral Home.

