



and their four children were Henry, Mary, Francis and Laura, all in the Hamilton vicinity. Their parents are no longer living.

Another Grantsdale factor in Downing lives when the Skalkaho post office was still just a corner in the R.H. Nicol home, H.H. Grant succeeded in petitioning for its change to Grantsdale, so in his lifetime Lewis has known three "home" post offices, Skalkaho, Grantsdale and for most of his years, Hamilton.

There was another Downing family homesteading in the Sawtooth area, Albert H., the head was brother of George S. Downing and his wife a member of the early Darby family. Their name, Baldwin, was given to the one-room school district five or six mile south of Darby and in my girlhood the Downing family moved up to the old homestead of the Baldwins for a year, with their five children, Margaret, Alma, Gertrude, Susan and the youngest, Sam. Later they returned to live in their country home which for years thereafter was the home of Sam and his wife, Marguerite.

And so with 90 years dictating a quieter life for the man who tramped miles back and forth behind drug store counters, Lewis Downing became a resident of Valley View Estates after giving a Missoula Nursing Home a tryout. We have confabs about the boyhood and girlhood times. One instance stands out.

In his teen years, Lewie acquired a bicycle and a Sawtooth neighbor boy, Dolph Cooper likewise owned one. One Sunday morning the two set out for a bicycle trip south to Darby. They wheeled into the yard of the Kerlee ranch just north of Darby and without too much coaxing, stayed to dinner. Dolph Cooper was a relative who in earlier times had lived in our community and he knew the latching was never pulled in at the Kerlees. That was the beginning of a long friendship, for when I moved to Hamilton in 1922, Lewis and Florence Downing became my good friends at once. The friendship has been one of the old Bitter Root pattern. And for writing this, I shall insist that Lewie invite me to his 91st birthday, come August 19, 1978.

My 90th anniversary will be a month or so later, September 22.

born to the young Downing couple and when Lewis decided to retire after a half-century of hard work in his career the son, better known in his home town as "Bill" succeeded Lewis as proprietor and town business man. The Downing Pharmacy has been in its present quarters, the oldtime Hamilton First National Bank, corner Second and Main since that bank ceased to operate 50 years ago. A corner site gives it the Pharmacy a two-way advantage. Yet somehow as a kind of "neighborhood store" the Downing business has retained a "House beside the Road" atmosphere throughout its long life.

Florence Downing lived to see their two children grown, educated and having their own careers, but her death came before her husband's retirement. The daughter Elizabeth became Mrs. Leon Lockridge, wife of a Whitefish physician who died in recent years. The son married and continued to make his home here carrying on a three-generation Downing family line. Elizabeth is a mother of adult children and so Lewis Downing has been called "Grandfather" like others of his generation.

The sister, Ada Downing, married Murray Grant, son of H.H. Grant, founder of Grantsdale,

