

## Charley Shaw - Blacksmith

One of the most important jobs in early Broadwater County was that of the blacksmith. Repairing buggies and wagons, shoeing horses, forging tools and metal parts were absolute necessities – all done by hand.

Charley Shaw was a well-known and well-liked blacksmith in Townsend. Charley was born in 1883 into a blacksmithing family. Richard Shaw (Charley's father) and Owen Gillogly were both blacksmiths. Richard Shaw was one of the blacksmiths at the Galen horse ranch south of Radersburg.

When the Northern Pacific Rail Road created Townsend, Richard and Owen moved to Townsend and established Gillogly and Shaw Blacksmithing at the northeast corner of Broadway and Cedar – where the Reading Leaves Bookstore is now located.

Charley Shaw's mother died when he was 3 years old and he was raised by his uncles and aunts. After 20 years of partnering with Owen Gillogly, Richard Shaw moved to Lombard around 1903. The Gillogly and Shaw blacksmith shop went through a lot of changes becoming Gillogly and McKnight, Gillogly and LF Hirt and then Gillogly and McDonald.

In 1908 Charley Shaw decided to try his hand at blacksmithing and moved to



Lombard to join his father. After 2 years in Lombard, Charley moved back to Townsend to join his uncle Owen and the blacksmith shop once again became Gillogly and Shaw. Shortly after Charley moved back to Townsend, Owen Gillogly retired from blacksmithing and took a job as a custodial engineer

at the Broadwater County Courthouse leaving Charley Shaw to “spread his wings” running the blacksmith shop by himself.

After nearly 30 years at the corner of Broadway and Cedar, Charley Shaw sold the blacksmith shop building to John Doughty who tore it down and built a fine brick saloon at the location. Charley moved his blacksmithing business to a new solid concrete building one block away at the northeast corner of Broadway and Oak.



Charley ran his blacksmith business at the new location for 23 years until 1935 when the new brick Broadwater County Courthouse was built. The county bought his building and demolished it. The Broadwater County Museum has a picture of the new courthouse being constructed and the Charley Shaw blacksmith building is clearly visible on the corner.

After selling his building at Broadway and Oak, Charley and his son-in-law Hugh Broderick built a 4-building complex on Front Street. The new business consisted of a gas station, garage and 2 cottages with a blacksmith shop on the alley.

According to the Broadwater Bygones, at his peak Charley Shaw held the reputation of being the best horse shoer in the state and followed the horse racing meets, shoeing horses on site.

Charley was an active horseman and entered his own thoroughbreds on the race circuit. He encouraged young riders and helped organize the Townsend Saddle Club.



Charley remained active in the community until his death at the age of 90 in 1973. He is still well remembered by many residents of Townsend and Broadwater County.

The information for this article came from the Broadwater Bygones available at the Broadwater County Museum. The photographs of Charley's blacksmith are at the museum and were featured in Linda Huth's "A Walkdown Mainstreet"

presentation. For more information about Charley Shaw visit the Broadwater County Museum and visit the curator Linda Huth.