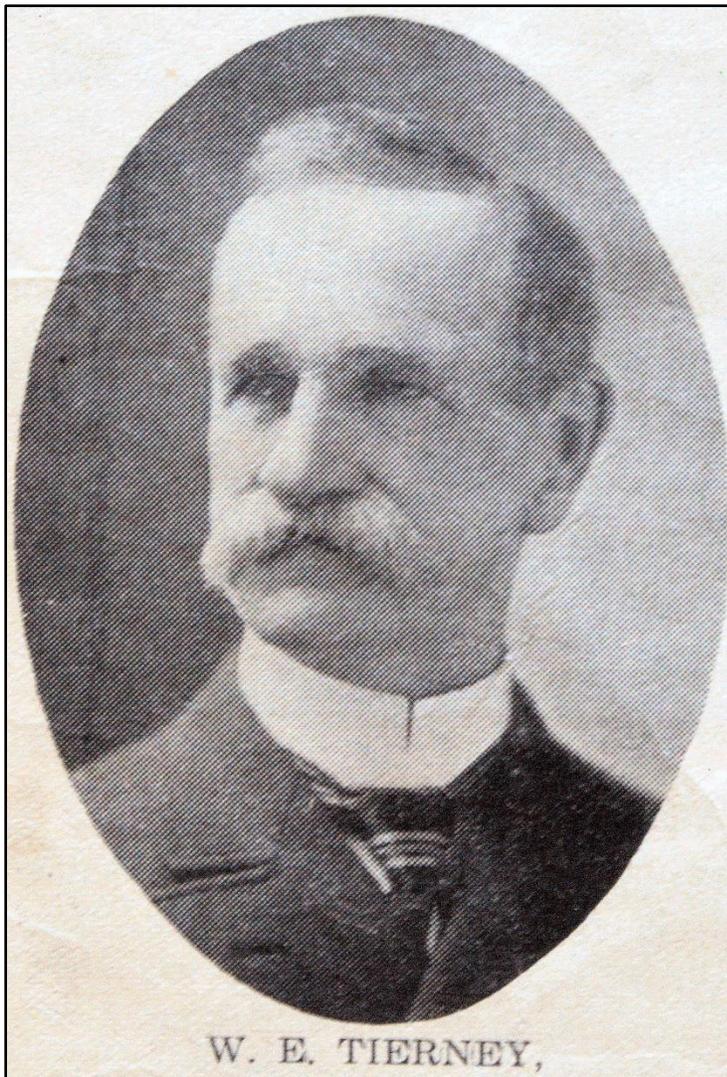


## W.E. Tierney – Broadwater Pioneer and Leader

W.E. Tierney was an early pioneer in what is now Broadwater County and Tierney had a great influence on how Townsend developed. He invested heavily in Broadwater County and brought many of his friends and relatives to Broadwater County.



William Edward Tierney was born into a large family in County Fermanagh, Ireland in 1838. When the potato blight decimated Ireland's food supply and economy, the Tierney family emigrated to America in 1847. They eventually ended up in a mining area of Wisconsin.

The gold discoveries in Montana drew Tierney's attention and he left to seek his fortune in Virginia City and arrived there in 1864. Tierney then followed the new gold discoveries to Confederate Gulch (then part of Meagher County) where he was involved

in mining and merchandising.

Tierney soon realized there was more money to be made supplying miners, than in being a miner. He established stores in several locations including Diamond City, Cave Gulch, Canton and Hassel. In 1870 Tierney and his partner Henry Whaley were listed as grocers in Hassel located on the upper Indian Creek.

By 1880 Tierney had made the town of Canton along the Missouri River his base of operations where he had a store, house, barns and race horses. Tierney made many connections throughout the Missouri Valley and collected many mining claims and ranches on both the Jefferson and Meagher County sides of the river.

When the Northern Pacific Rail Road established the new city of Townsend in 1883, Tierney realized that Townsend would soon eclipse the other towns in the area including Canton. Tierney moved his base of operations to Townsend.

Tierney along with his partners J. R. Marks and Dan McCarthy built the first hotel in Townsend (the Townsend House) where J.R. Marks was the manager for over 20 years.

Across the street on the north side of Broadway, Tierney and his partners built the first main business building – the W. E. Tierney Company with Dan McCarthy as the manager. He built the stone building behind his store as a cold storage building. Both buildings are still in use.

Tierney also invested in Townsend banks. He was one of the original investors in the Bank of Townsend that operated from 1890 to 1898. Then in 1899, W.E. Tierney along with J.G. Blessing and Al Schreiber filed articles of incorporation for The State Bank of Townsend. J.P. Kearns (a relative of W.E. Tierney) was the largest stockholder and was the bank's first cashier.

Tierney was also involved in politics. He was elected to represent Meagher County in the Territorial House of Representatives. He also served terms as a Montana State Representative and a Montana State Senator.

Working with A.E. Spriggs, Peter Meloy and Gordon Watt, Tierney helped create Broadwater County. For many years he served as a Broadwater County Commissioner.

Tierney had a tremendous influence on Townsend and Broadwater County. It's hard to envision either without the guiding hand of W.E. Tierney!

The information in this article came from the Broadwater Bygones and from a presentation created by historian Paul Putz.

