



Arthur W. McGill

May 31, 1913 - March 29, 2009

Arthur W. McGill, age 95, of Wibaux, Montana, formerly of Columbus, Montana, passed away on Monday, March 23, 2009, at the Wibaux County Nursing Home. Visitation will be held from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M., Saturday, March 28, 2009, at the Chapel of the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Beach, North Dakota. A Life Tribute Service will be held at 1:30 P.M., Sunday, March 29, 2009, at the Chapel of the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Beach with Celebrant Sandy Silha officiating. Interment will follow in the Sunnyside Cemetery at Trotters, North Dakota. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Beach is entrusted with arrangements. Art was born on May 31, 1913, in Leola, South Dakota, the son of Elbert Eugene and Nancy Belle (Henry) McGill. Art grew up on the homeplace on Cherry Creek in South Dakota working at home and for the neighbors. He graduated from the eighth grade and shortly thereafter went to work on the U+ horse ranch. At the age of 15, Art and his brother, age 16, rode up to their brother-in-law and sister's homestead in the Badlands north of Medora. They did numerous jobs just trying to make a living. They caught wild horses and sold them to the Army as remounts. They cut and sold posts and poles and worked on neighboring ranches. Art worked a while for the WPA tearing out fences and building trails. He even tried beet harvesting for a few days. Art was married to Edythe Goldsberry on October 11, 1936, in Yakima, Washington, while the couple was there picking apples. They returned to North Dakota for a short time and then moved west again to work in the woods. Art and Edythe moved back to North Dakota in 1943. He

worked on various ranches in the Badlands until 1946 when Art and Edythe bought a ranch near Blue Mountain north of Wibaux, Montana. They sold the ranch in 1966 and moved to Joliet, Montana. They moved several more times around central Montana and Wyoming until retiring and moving back to Joliet. Edythe passed away in 2007, and Arthur moved to the Wibaux County Nursing Home. When asked how he liked being back in Wibaux he answered, "Damned Good!" Arthur was preceded in death by his wife, four brothers, three sisters, one grandchild and one great-grandchild. Arthur is survived by his son, James Arthur McGill and his wife Marlene of Houston, Texas; his daughter, Ardyth Elaine Barbour and her husband Joe of Beach, North Dakota; his son, Alvin Ried McGill and his wife Mary of Joliet, Montana; 13 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great-grandchildren. Arthur Winslow McGill Life Tribute Service March 29, 2009 Chapel of the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home Beach, North Dakota Welcome: Master of Ceremonies Eulogy: Celebrant Arthur Winslow McGill was a man best characterized by the words of his grandson, Mark McGill. Art was, as Mark put it, always a cowboy, outdoorsy and adventuresome. Art spent the greater share of his 95 plus years working and playing in the wide, open spaces and mountains of North Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming. Art never worked in an office and never answered to the clock. Proud of his honesty, Art's word and his handshake were his contract. Art was born at home on the family homestead on Cherry Creek near Leola, South Dakota. He spent the first 15 years of his life growing up and working on the home place, and helping out the neighbors. At age 12, Art heard that a barber in a nearby town was moving back east and selling all of his horse tack. Art rode over to the barber's place and bought the fellow's saddle, bridle, and spurs. The man's initials were SOB. And those initials were carved in the back of the cantle on the saddle. The name of Art's new saddle became "That SOB." Art's formal education was at a country school near his home and ended upon his graduation from the 8th grade. Art always said he never knew for sure if he was valedictorian or salutatorian, but it was way up there. Art was one of two eighth graders that year. After graduation, Art spent

some time branding along the Cheyenne River out of Wall, South Dakota. He then went to work as a ranch hand. At age 15, Art and his brother, Clarence, who was 16, decided to strike out on their own. Riding horse and herding up the horses they had received as part of their wages, Art and Clarence headed north to see their sister and her husband in Medora, North Dakota. The journey to Medora took them two and a half weeks. Upon their arrival, they found that a horse buyer was in Medora buying up remounts for the Army and the New York City police. The horses had to be guaranteed to stand and mount. Art and Clarence made the guarantee for their horses to stand and mount and sold them to the buyer. Art always said that the boys from back east could get on and off but if they tried to move out, it would be another story. Because the horse deal had went so well, Art and Clarence hooked up with some locals, the Goldsberry boys, to catch wild horses in the badlands and sell the horses for remounts. It was during this time that the nation was moving into the depression years, and to survive, Art also cut cedar posts in the badlands to sell, worked as a ranch hand, and he worked for the WPA making trails; anything to earn a buck to live on. In the fall of 1934, Art and another brother rode the freight train to Illinois to pick corn for an uncle. While there they decided to take in the city of Chicago. According to Art, they went to see a movie and while waiting in line for tickets, the police and local underworld figure, John Dillinger, held a shootout. Art stated that it got a little wild that night. In spring of 1935, Art headed back to the badlands of North Dakota. Again he tied up with the Goldsberry boys and their sister, Edythe Elsie Goldsberry. Cutting posts and running wild horses earned Art money to live on. One story Art's son James recalls Art telling about involving the Goldsberry boys, was of a practical joke they pulled on Art. One day Art found his saddle hung at the top of a windmill. The Goldsberry boys knew Art was afraid of heights. Art rode bareback for several days doing his ranch work and feeding cows before he worked up the nerve to climb that windmill and retrieve his saddle. Daughter Ardythe Barbour says her father also hated

water. In the fall of 1936, Art, Edythe and another couple headed to Washington State to pick apples. After the picking season was over, Art and Edythe were married in Yakima, Washington, on October 11, 1936. To celebrate, they drank homemade apple cider. 60 years later as the family treated them to an anniversary celebration at Squaw Gap, North Dakota, Art's request was for a keg of beer. This surprised the family as Art wasn't much of a beer drinker. Edythe requested a fruit salad. Both requests were fulfilled. During the celebration and dancing, everyone enjoyed going outside to have some beer from the keg to refresh themselves. Even Edythe tried the beer, the first she had ever had in her life. A granddaughter, Susan Sarsland, once asked her Grandmother Edythe about meeting Art. Edythe remembered first laying eyes on Art at a dance and told Susan that Art was acting up and Edythe thought he was, as she put it "a dang fool." But then Edythe admitted to Susan that she must have liked that "danged fool," because she married him. The first ten years of their marriage saw Art and Edythe go back and forth between the badlands of North Dakota, where Art cut posts and did ranch work and Edythe taught school, to the woods of Washington and Idaho, with Art working in the woods as a springboard axeman and as a teamster, skidding logs. A comment made about Art's working in the woods was that Art had to leave Idaho because he "couldn't hear his spurs jingle in the woods." When World War II began in 1943, Art and Edythe were back in North Dakota. Art tried to enlist in the Army and then the Coast Guard, but was told by both that he was too old to serve. He and Edythe made mattresses for the government for the war effort. During the winter of 1945, Art worked for the Nolan Ranch near Sentinel Butte, North Dakota, and lived in a dugout in the side of a hill. For the winters work, Art got 6 heifers and room and board. This was the start of Art in the cattle business. That next summer, Art went to a rancher he had previously worked for, looking for a job. The rancher knew of a ranch for sale north of Wibaux, Montana, and took Art over to show it to him. Art bought the ranch and was to take possession of it on March 31, 1947. Art and Edythe settled down for the next 17 years to raise their family and

charolais cattle. Their first child, son James Arthur McGill, was born in Washington; their second child, daughter Ardythe Elaine McGill, was born while they lived in Idaho, but made her appearance in the car as they were on their way to the doctor in Washington. Their third child, son Alvin Ried McGill, came along shortly after they bought the ranch north of Wibaux. Art was always the cowboy. There were always horses around. Art always felt if you couldn't get where you wanted to go by riding horse, it wasn't worth going there. Everyone in the family rode horse from the time they were youngsters and throughout their life if they spent any time around Art. Art would match people up with a horse he thought they could handle. And no horse was ever mistreated when Art was around. Art was not one bit mechanical. When he did have vehicles, Art drove Fords. Art loved to attend auctions and buy up horse tack, wagon parts, and books. He loved to horse trade, and his trading didn't always involve horses. He was an avid reader, westerns being his favorite. He loved his pie and coffee, his chew, and of course, beef.

Granddaughter Tammy McGill recalls her family camping with her grandfather. They were all sitting around the campfire one evening when someone noticed that Art wasn't around. They found him in the camper, eating a pie he had brought from Costco right out of the pan. Art had an active sweet tooth.

Granddaughter Melissa Mabry remembers her grandfather having desserts or ice cream every night before going to bed. When Melissa was in high school, she often stopped in the evenings to share dessert with her grandpa. She recalls that Art was always joking around or giving someone a hard time. There was a wood sign that hung in Edythe and Art's home that exemplified Art. It read, "When I work, I work hard; when I sit, I sit loose; and when I think , I fall asleep." Art loved his naps. Granddaughter Tammy has that sign in her home now. A favorite saying of Art's was "Why stand when you can sit; why sit when you can lay." But no one could question Art's work ethic. He was a hard worker all of his life. Art raised his cattle, had little use for sheep, bought, sold, and traded horses, did a bit of haying, and had some irrigation with ditches. His grandkids, especially, remember the irrigation ditches and grandpa letting

them swim and play in the water. And it isn't just the grandchildren who have special memories of Grandpa Art. A friend of Susan's, Tana Hovde, e-mailed her memories of swimming in the irrigation ditch, with Grandpa Art chuckling over his "bathing beauties." Tana remembers Grandpa Art saying "Come on, girls", as they headed out in the pick-up to visit neighbors, pick wild asparagus, or just be entertained by Grandpa's stories, watching out for the "tall tales" of course. Tana will forever cherish the memory of Grandpa Art's big hugs and his saying to her, "Well, here's my other granddaughter." Granddaughter, Michelle Lopez, describes her grandfather as a plain, simple, straight forward man, bald, with a cowboy hat, Levis, western shirt and boots. A favorite memory for Michelle was over one Christmas holiday. There were about five of the grandkids around that Christmas and each had gotten a sled as a gift. Grandpa Art tied all the sleds together like a train, put the kids on the sleds and pulled them around on the snow with the tractor. His daughter, Ardythe, observed that Art didn't make much of a fuss over children, but somehow they all ended up on his lap or following him around. She also commented that her father didn't make a point to teach you something in particular, he just took you with him when he was doing things and you learned as you did it with him. Art always treated other people well. And Art liked everyone he met. The family can only recall one fellow that Art expressed any dislike for in all his years of living. Granddaughter Susan tells of learning to drive a team of horses from her grandfather. Well...she learned how to start them, but not how to stop them. Art enjoyed playing cards, especially pinochle. Melissa says he always kept score, and had to take a lot of ribbing about his team always winning. Susan's husband, Brian, just smiles when someone dares to say the word "cheat." Art loved old time country, dance music and dancing. Art, Edythe and the family went to many dances in the area. Art would tell his kids stories of riding for miles when it was cold and snowy, just to dance. Ardythe would remind her father of these stories when she wanted to go to dances as a teenager, and her father would say no, the

weather was too bad. He generally ended up getting her there. The music prior to today's service by Fiddlin' Bill Johnson was to honor Art's love of that old time music. Art enjoyed fishing and he and Edythe and the family caught many a fish over the years. Art would pack up the horses and take his family up into the mountains to camp and fish. These trips are special memories for his children and grandchildren. Grandson Mark and his wife Diana remember traveling up to Joliet, Montana, to take Art fishing. They were a bit concerned because Art had recently underwent knee replacement surgery and they weren't sure he was up to going fishing. They arrived a bit earlier than planned and were looking forward to a break from the long drive from their home to Art's, maybe going to the bathroom and lunch. When they pulled up to Art's door, there he was, a fishing pole in one hand, his cane in another, and his bags beside him, watching out the door for them, rarin' to go! And they had a great time! Art was also a big game hunter. Over the years, Art had shot most everything, bear, elk, moose, deer, antelope, except for a big horn sheep. Art's last hunting trip was when he was 88 or 89 years old and he was with Brian. Art and Brian were in Brian's pick-up, Brian driving, when they spotted two bucks. Art missed with his first shot; he got out of the pick-up and shot again and brought down one of the bucks. He turned to Brian and told Brian that he would not have missed the first time if Brian had stopped the pick-up. Brian shook his head; the pick-up was stopped. When they went over to the deer, Art had hit the buck in the back. His comment to Brian was, the back was the best place to hit a deer. Again, Brian could only shake his head. Who's going to argue with a hunter as experienced as Art? When Art wasn't working or playing in the great outdoors, his favorite television show was "Jeopardy". He also might watch "Wheel of Fortune" or the news, and he enjoyed watching baseball, and of course reading or playing cards. When the film "Far and Away" was filmed near Billings, Montana, Art's son Alvin drove a team and wagon in the movie and Art was an outrider. Just another adventure in Art's life as a cowboy. In 1964, Art and Edythe, moved to Joliet, Montana, where Art ran his cattle on a ranch where he worked as a ranch hand. Two

years later, Art decided to retire, which by today's standard meant to downsize. It was hard for Art to give up doing what he loved, being a cowboy. Art moved to a small place in Roberts, Montana. That winter it snowed 6 feet packed on the level. Art said he fed more hay that winter than he had the all of his life. He soon traded that place for one in Wyoming. There in Emblem, Wyoming, Art operated a hunting camp in the Bighorn Mountains and the Greybull drainage. Art, family and friends enjoyed chasing wild horses until the government told them they could not do that anymore. Art later became president of the Wild Horse Association. After selling the place at Emblem, Art signed on at Ray Hunt's Hoodoo Ranch at Mettessee, Wyoming. Art did ranch work in the summer and he and Edythe lived near Cody, Wyoming in the winter. At age 78, Art was packing salt up in the mountains with a pack string when he had a bad horse wreck. Art then decided to really retire. Art said, "when you are 28 miles back in the mountains, crawling around on the ground, hurt, trying to catch your horse, things sometimes don't look so good." A couple moves later, Art and Edythe settled back in Joliet to live. Art then spent time in the nursing home in Columbus, Montana. Art had to be confined to a wheelchair and he missed not having Edythe with him. Edythe visited often and granddaughter Tara McGill vividly recalls Edythe always wanting to wheelchair race the halls with Art. Art usually said no, because as he told family members, he figured Edythe would beat him. After Edythe's death in 2007, Art missed her greatly and he decided he wanted to move back to Wibaux. His family settled him in at the Wibaux County Nursing Home, which Art declared was "Damned Good." One adjustment that was difficult for Art at the nursing homes was his being in a wheelchair. Another was to give up his boots for Velcro shoes. Ardythe noticed him wearing a Ford cap one day. It seemed a bit strange to see her father in a cap, as he always wore cowboy hats. She saw to it he got a new straw hat, and Art wore it every day. One of the other residents commented that with his hat, Art "looked just like a cowboy." He straightened her out with the reply, "I am a cowboy!" And he truly was. Art was one of those fortunate people that did what he loved and loved

what he did. Let us end this eulogy about Art with the following words that seem to describe what Art was about. To have lived well, laughed often, and loved much To have gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of children To have filled a niche and accomplished a task To have left the world better and to have appreciated earth's beauty and not failed to express it To have looked for the best in others and to have given the best of yourself That is achievement. Thank you, Art, for the time and stories you shared with us, the smiles, the laughter, the love; thank you for showing us how to achieve a good life. Let us now listen to a song selected by the family for today, "O The Place Where I Worship" sung by Sharon Whited, accompanied by Tara Skaar. Song: "O The Place Where I Worship" Closing: Celebrant It is an important day when we stop to bear witness to a person's life and times among us, the difference his living and dying made among family, friends and community, and to take time to express our grief, our hope, our wonder and our memories. Thank you for being here for this important time. Arthur Winslow McGill was a unique and beloved man. He will be greatly missed. James, Ardythe, Alvin and all of Art's family, it is our hope that in your grief you find a gratefulness for having had Art as a part of your lives. Marsha Jeffrey Hendrickson wrote about her father and the last few phrases seem appropriate today as we remember Art: "We often went exploring... and I learned to love the land, but the greatest thing I ever learned was how to understand – That the finest gifts are often things we may not always see; when I wasn't with my father, my father was with me." Today we have spent time telling Art's story and sharing memories of his time with us. For 95 years, 9 months, and 23 days, the world was blessed with Arthur Winslow McGill. Art has been a significant presence in the lives of family, friends, and community. Continue to pay tribute to Art and to honor his memory by telling and retelling his story. "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die." Thank you all for being here today. This concludes Arthur Winslow McGill's life tribute service.

Tribute Wall



“ *Arthur W. McGill*

December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM