

He was able to share his love of history with the readers of *Valley Times* by including Lila Hill's Meridian-area history column in the paper. He mentions that her column was one of the most read and enjoyed items in the paper.

## Involvement in History

Dr. Thomason has been involved in numerous historical groups. In the early 1990's he served two (2) years as a volunteer officer of the Friends of the Historical Museum in Boise. He was their first male president. One of the major projects he worked on was an update of biographical sketches with photos of Idaho's First Ladies.

He served for 25 years on the Meridian Historic Preservation Commission from 1991—2006. When he started, Meridian had a population of approximately 10,000 people. He remembers when the first traffic light came into downtown Meridian in 1978.

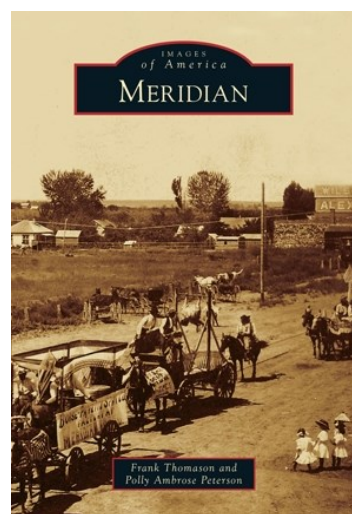
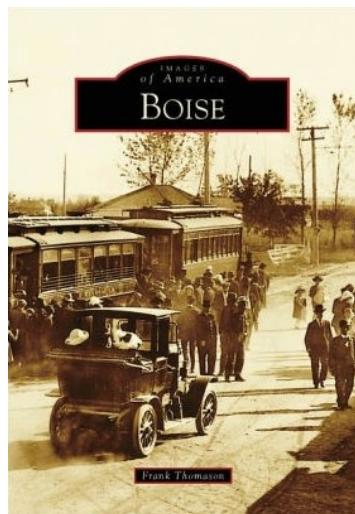
In addition, he served on the Eagle Historic Preservation Commission from 2005—2010.



Photo: Meridian Creamery

## Author

Dr. Thomason has written several books on the history of Boise and Meridian. These books include *Images of America—Boise*, *Postcards of America—Boise*, and *Images of America—Meridian*, the last of which was co-authored with his partner Polly Ambrose Peterson.



Photos: Book Covers

## ADA COUNTY MAKING HISTORY AWARD

The Ada County Making History Award honors people whose activities today are creating our future history. Ada County is pleased to present its Making History Award to Dr. Frank Thomason for his contributions in documenting and preserving Ada County's history for future generations.



## Dr. Frank Thomason

The Ada County Board of County Commissioners is pleased to present its Making History Award to Dr. Frank Thomason for his contributions in preserving Ada County's history for future generations.

## Early Life

Dr. Thomason grew up on a 40 acre farm in between Meridian and Kuna on Lake Hazel Road. Some of his early memories are of attending rural country schools. The first school he attended was the Locust Grove School from first grade through third grade. For fourth and fifth grade he attended another country school—Hillsdale School. When he attended Hillsdale School there was no indoor plumbing and the students had to use an outhouse. For sixth grade he attended the newly built Southside Elementary School on Amity Road, which later became the current Mary McPherson Elementary School. The Southside Elementary School replaced the rural country schools in the southern part of the West Ada School District. This school was approved in the first bond issue for the West Ada School District in December of 1957. Dr. Thomason then attended Junior and Senior High School in town. He remembers Meridian High School only having 710 students when he attended.



Photo: Original Hillsdale School

## College Life

For college Dr. Thomason attended The College of Idaho where he obtained a B.A. in European History in 1970 and while at the College of Idaho he worked at the *Coyote* student newspaper.

After the College of Idaho he attended the University of Utah where he received a M.A. in History. While at the University of Utah he joined their ROTC program and served three (3) months of active duty as a 2nd Lieutenant.

Dr. Thomason then attended John Hopkins University where he received an M.S. and Ph.D. in History. During this time he was a Fulbright Scholar and spent two (2) years in West Berlin, Germany. He thoroughly enjoyed his time there. He was able to teach and also spent some time in East Germany.

## Back to Idaho—Newspaper Man

Following his time as a Fullbright Scholar he returned back to Idaho with his young family. Coming back to Idaho was a challenge as he couldn't find a job because employers thought he was over-qualified with his advanced degrees.

At this point, he started working part-time for the *Valley News*, which was a weekly newspaper.

One of Dr. Thomason's proudest accomplishments is restoring weekly newspapers in western Ada County.



In 1982, he started the *Kuna Melba News* newspaper after 14 years of Kuna not having a newspaper. He resurrected the *Valley Times* newspaper in the late 1990's. In 1996 the Wicks Company purchased the *West Ada Express* in Eagle and the *Valley News* in Meridian and combined the two (2) papers. Dr. Thomason was the editor of the combined paper. However, this newspaper went out of business. A few businesses came to Dr. Thomason and asked him to restart the newspaper. Three (3) businesses invested in *Valley Times*, which Dr. Thomason owned and operated until 2016.



Photos: Mountain States Telegraph Building where the Valley Times newspaper was located.