Petroilia — Hoyle — Smith
Rural Southeast Winnett

Chapter No. 9
Petroleum County, Montana
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SCHOOLS
1. Bratton (Beck)
2. Circle Bar (Ingbo)
3. Petroilia (Offiech, Circle Bar)
4. Pilgrim (Box Elder)
5. Pilgrim (1961) (Box Elder)
6. Pilgrim (Jerret)
7. Pilgrim (Soll Home)

School
Post Office
State Highway
County Road
Trail (1966)
Railroad

PETROLEUM COUNTY

503
Petrolia baseball team (Alvin Ingebo, seated fifth from left)

Atop one of Petrolia's conical buttes

Merten grain in the early 1920s

A good supply of wood. Lela and Les Thompson at the Fisher place

Three young herders and their flock (1914)
Petrolia, Hoyle and Smith

It would appear that, in a beginning era, the present Petrolia area was covered by a huge inland sea. Along the cutbanks of Box Elder and Flatwillow creeks petrified bodies of huge sea turtles can be found. The turtles apparently were stranded there and covered by a heavy layer of silt when the retaining wall of the great sea gave away.

Into this sea flowed two mighty streams which formed a huge delta of gravel, sand, rocks, and clay. Petrolia Bench is a gravel terrace with very thin topsoil in most places. The terrain is hilly and broken with short streams. The surface, where it has not been leveled, is uneven and is marked by humps where sagebrush flourishes and hardpan spots where nothing grows.

In the late 1880s, sheeplemen, then cattlemen and men interested in raising horses began to settle the area. Home ranches were built near creeks where water was available for households, livestock and irrigation of hay meadows. There were no fences; the range was open and for the taking.

With the railroads came immigrant trains, and locators began advertising homesteads in Montana. Locators didn’t know or care what kind of land these poor pilgrims might settle on. Some people were warned that they couldn’t make a living on 160 acres in the country, but they wanted land and didn’t listen. Many were disappointed with their holdings and soon sold out to others with more favorable locations. During wet years, everything looked exceedingly good. Then came the drouth years when crops failed and severe winters killed off stock. Many gave up and left, often letting their land go for taxes. Therefore, many names are recorded as being property owners in the area even though they did not stay very long. Those who were tough enough to stay should be called “survivors.” They deserve great respect!

Some farsighted settlers observed that, with water, the land could be made more productive. Before 1920 Alvin Ingebo and Swain Myrdal actually surveyed a ditch to the Flatwillow Creek upstream from the Ingebo place. In the late 1940s some of the Petrolia Bench residents decided to try to get the state to finance a dam and irrigation system on lower Flatwillow Creek, so they established an irrigation district. A committee of local men went to Helena in April 1949 to discuss the proposed dam with
the State Water Conservation Board. The project was approved but not funded until 1950. The site chosen was near the confluence of Flatwillow Creek and Elk Creek.

In the spring of 1950 the State Water Conservation Board set up an office in Winnett with L. W. Tooley as resident engineer. Haggerty-Messmer of Bozeman was awarded the dam construction contract on June 1, 1950. The company was low bidder with a bid of $252,695. Fifty-year term repayment contracts were signed by the water users.

Forty men were employed to do the earthwork and 16 men were employed for cement work. When the dam was completed in the summer of 1951, it was approximately 900 feet long and 55 feet high with a storage capacity of about 8800 acre feet of water. It covered 435 acres of land. A main canal 5.3 miles long was constructed, as well as two lateral canals — one five miles long, the other two miles long. In later years the main canal was lined with concrete.

The Soil Conservation Service surveyed hundreds of acres of land so that the farmers could level land in order to use the irrigation water. Some land is still (1988) being cleared and leveled. Fortunately federal cost-share funds have been available for much of this work.

Without the irrigation project, the Petrolia Bench-Box Elder area would not be nearly so valuable nor productive.

Post Offices

The first post offices to serve the Petrolia area were Flatwillow (1883); Baldwin, near present-day Melstone (1897); Weede (1901) and Mosby (1904). It was a long trek from the Petrolia Bench to Flatwillow, Weede or Mosby, however. What a boon it was to the community when postal service was moved closer to the community it served!

Smith Post Office, with Samuel Smith as postmaster, was approved on Valentine’s Day in 1911. The post office was located at the Smith farm just below the junction of Box Elder Creek and Flatwillow Creek. The office kept this name although the location was changed several times, and there were different postmasters. Its last location was on the Isaacson place (Sec 14-14-28) with John Isaacson as postmaster. The community was served there until December 15, 1920.

On June 24, 1921, the name became the Petrolia Post Office, and Clara Svejkovsky was the first postmaster. The location was moved about some, starting in the former Chris Afseth homestead house in Sec 19-14-29. A. K. Ingebo was postmaster until the office was closed June 31, 1926.

In about 1919 a townsite named Petrolia was laid out, but it did not develop into a town.

Another post office, known as Hoyle, served the Box Elder Creek area for a very short time. The office was approved July 14, 1916. Mary Hoyle was postmaster until its closure August 31, 1918. A small townsite named Hoyleville developed near the confluence of Box Elder and McDonald creeks. Groceries could be purchased, and Len Hoyle had a filling station and barbershop there.

The homestead rush of the early teens brought many people to the area who used the services of these early post offices.

For a time, Emma Hanson, Pearl’s Ingebo’s mother, was mail carrier for the Winnett-Petrolia Route. John Beck finally underbid her, and soon after that the post office closed. With the advent of automobiles, people went to Winnett for their mail.

In 1987 a rural delivery connected with the Jordan mail route was established. John Phillips is the carrier. The community really appreciates this convenience.

Petrolia gathering — Reverend and Mrs. Aiton on left. Early postmaster, Andrew Ingebo, at far right.
Schools of the Petrolia Community

District #121 was formed from the western part of District #107 February 28, 1914. John W. Beck, S. K. Myrdal, and L. A. Jerue were the first trustees in 1914-1915.

The very first school in the community was held in a small log cabin on the Ingebo homestead. Pearl Hanson was the teacher from May 24, 1914 to August 21, 1914. There were 27 students registered.

Gertrude E. Robinson taught the first Pilgrim School from June 1, 1914 to August 21, 1914. Also teaching were Nels Fradd and Clara Chesley. There were forty children registered in the district when it was formed, so the need for two good school buildings was evident.

Cottonwood logs were sawed at the George Ingebo sawmill to use in building the two schoolhouses — Circle Bar School and Pilgrim School (Jerue). These buildings were so strong and well-built that they later withstood being moved from place to place in the community to be nearer the greater numbers of children.

Martha Freed was the first teacher in the new Circle Bar School in Sec 24-14-28, and Louisa Wilson was the first at the new Pilgrim School in Sec 30-14-28.

Some of the children who attended the early Circle Bar School were as follows: Jack and Rose Beck; Lella and Phyllis Grobe; Leslie and Vernon Thompson; Erma, Wesley, Arnold, Archie and Ona Hansen; Evelyn and Bud Myrdal; Alden and Clara Aasrud; Albert Shafer’s children, Lula and Orval; Fred Shafer’s children, Caroline, Maude, Dorothy, Laura, Albert, John, and Charles; Lillian Isaacson; Thorville Wingard. Some attended for only a short time, as people were always moving on.

Early attendants at the Pilgrim School in the western end of the district were as follows: Hattie, Myra, and Ray Bohn; Clinton, Lloyd, Anna, Wesley, and Russell Hassett; Leda, Bertha, Ernest and Otto Henschel; Florin Baldwin;
Schoolchildren: Wesley Hansen, Robert Nelson, Vern Thompson; Arnold Hansen, Thelma Campbell, Lila Campbell, Willie Campbell, Lella Grobe

The children built bird houses: Bob Nelson, standing with large house; behind him, his sister, Hulda, Rose Beck, and unknown; center, Thoral Wingard; Jack Beck with fancy house. Seated: Vern Thompson, Orval Shafer, Les Thompson

Martha Cornue, teacher, about to leave for school

Tom Toomey; Ruth and Lola Freed; Gracie and Stella Smith, daughters of Zion City Smith; Charlie and Dewey Young.

The Circle Bar School sat in its given location until 1919. Then it was moved to the Petrolia townsite which was laid out on section 19 just east of the section where the school had been built and became known as the Petrolia School. Many of the same students attended there.

As the children of the community grew up, the decision was made to close the school, and from then on school was held only in the Pilgrim School. This school was moved to Solfs' place on Box Elder Creek after Mrs. Solf had tried having school in her home for one year. It sat just below the Solf hill near the county road. In the 1950s Whisonant, Saylor, Trump, Retterer, Solf and Moore children attended. It became known as the Box Elder School, and remained that until its end.

When the Solf children and others on Box Elder were grown and flown, the school was moved back near its original location on Sec 20-14-28. The school remained at that site until it closed and the district consolidated with the Winnett Elementary District #159 in 1966.

In 1966 a bus route was begun with Mr. Hugh Grove as the bus driver. The county pledged to keep the road open for the bus route. This service has been well accepted.

In their time, the schools served as a community center for socials, dinners, school programs, dances, and other meetings. Modern transportation changed this need. In later years the Ranchette Club sponsored dinners in the Box Elder schoolhouse, and everyone in the community attended them.

Clinton Hassett bought the Pilgrim schoolhouse and teacherage, moved them to his place, and made a home for the Henry Braaten family. Anna Solf purchased the Petrolia (Circle Bar) building, and had it moved to the Solf place on Box Elder.

Local teacher, Pearl Hanson Ingebø
Rural Southeast Winnett

Postal service for these families was provided by the post office in Winnett after October 1910. Before that time, they were obliged to journey to Flatwillow, Montana.

The only schools available for the youngsters before 1913 were the Flatwillow (after 1889) and the Winnett schools (after 1906). The Bratten School under Flatwillow District #26, was so named when Mrs. Ward (Stella) Bratten taught a session in her own home located in Sec 32-14-27, from September 1913 to March 1914. Amanda Swift was the teacher in a log cabin nearby on Elk Creek for a summer session in 1915. After 1916 the area became part of the Winnett Elementary District #159 and school was provided in several locations under various names — Bratten School, Beer School, and Elk Creek School.

Amanda Swift reported on the first public schools in the Winnett Times on March 30, 1917. She wrote, "Two school rigs have been bought and drivers hired to bring the children from the south and western parts of the district to Winnett." No doubt some children in this area were affected.

The Beer School petitioned to send their students to Winnett in 1923. Presumably that is the last year school was held in the area.

Clara, their second child, was born in the homestead cabin and is thought to have been delivered with the help of Dr. J. L. Alexander.

In 1921 Anton built a new two-story house which consisted of a kitchen and living room downstairs and three bedrooms upstairs.

At Christmas their home was often the setting for a family slumber party — adults filling all the beds and wall-to-wall children on the floor. The Birminghams, Alvin Ingebos, and the Whites would all congregate there.

Anton farmed and raised turkeys, cattle and sheep. During a short period in the 1920s, he supplemented his income by working at Cat Creek on the Brown lease. Clara and Alden then attended the Brown School and Cat Creek School. He also carried mail for the Petrolia Post Office for a time.

About the time that Clara and Alden started high school, Anton had the family name legally changed to Aasrud. Carl was born in 1927 under that name.

Misfortune slipped through the door for this family in 1928, when Tillie was found to have cancer of the breast. She went to St. Joseph, Missouri, for treatment; but, without the medical science of today, treatment was not successful. She was courageous, however, and in the fall of 1929, rented a house in town and took in several high school boarders so that her own children, Clara and Alden, could attend high school.
Misfortune again struck, and this boarding venture ended abruptly when, in the spring of 1930, Clara became critically ill with rheumatic fever, requiring a long hospitalization and much care at home. Clara finally recovered but found herself graduating from high school in 1934, two years later than her former freshmen classmates.

In the fall of 1934 Clara attended Eastern Montana College for one year. The next year she remained at home to care for her very ill mother and her little eight-year-old brother, Carl. Tillie’s cancer had spread relentlessly, and she passed away at home on October 29, 1935.

Clara then went to the Anderson Beauty School in Billings. She took the State Board examination and acquired a license. However, she returned to Winnott and worked in the Welfare Department at the Petroleum County courthouse under the direction of Ethel S. Walton Abbott on a part-time schedule for two years; she then worked for Elden Freed in the assessor’s office for one year. During this time in Winnott she met, and eventually married, Clyde W. Retterer. They had five children: Jean, Joyce, Julia (Judy), Marilyn and Clyde Jr.

Alden did not finish high school. He continued to live on the ranch with his brother and father until he entered the service in 1941. He served in both Italy and Africa.

In 1943 Anton fell from a haystack and broke his neck. Alden was given an honorable discharge so that he might come back to the ranch where he was desperately needed. In 1959 after Anton had died, Alden wanted to go into construction work, and the Clyde Retterer family ran the ranch until Alden returned in 1960. Alden died of a massive stroke in 1972.

Carl graduated from Winnott High School in 1946. He served in the United States Army for two years, stationed at General Douglas MacArthur’s headquarters in Japan. After his discharge, he attended Billings Business College for two years. He was hired as a clerk in the Director of Records office of Petroleum County in November of 1951. In 1954 he resigned and accepted the position of bookkeeper for a heating contractor in Billings.

Carl married Mona June Gee and they have two children, Paul and Julie Jeanette. He is employed now in the Multnomah Office of County Management in Portland, Oregon. (See also INGEBÖ)

1914. (The Afseth name was often misspelled “Offseth” and this spelling will be found on the chapter heading map.)

ANDERBURG, Norman (Sec 8-14-28) Norman Anderburg homesteaded about two and one-half miles southwest of Hoyle. For unknown reasons, in March of 1921 he committed suicide. Survivors were his wife, a sister and a brother. Harvey Cornue was named administrator of his estate.

ANDERSON, Andrew C. (Sec 18-14-18) “Red” Anderson was born at Arlington, South Dakota. He attended schools there and graduated from Arlington High School. He came to Montana and Winnett in 1912 and homesteaded about five miles east of Winnett near the Harvey Cornue Ranch. His birthplace at Arlington had been a sod house, so when he settled here he built his own home of sod.

He worked as a steam engineer on threshing rigs in the Petrolia area. Old-timers relate that Red arrived at one community gathering with a pet bull snake as a necklace. This may account for the fact that he remained a bachelor!!

He was really a fine, good-hearted man who loved children. He once wrote to Charles Doherty, “I am sure that anyone who has already advanced quite a distance upon the highway of life (even though he be a bachelor) will agree that nothing is as enchanting as a sweet little child.”

Red retired from ranching in the 1930s and made his home in Winnett. He was an auctioneer at several local sales. He died in his sleep March 1, 1951, and was buried in the Winnett Cemetery.

BANNAN, Daniel W. (Sec 8-13-28) Daniel W. Bannan lived in the more arid land about three miles south of Flatwillow Creek. The following news item was taken from the Winnett Times of 8-26-21: “It is interesting that D. W. Bannon has secured a good flow of water in a shallow well in a section of the country south of Flatwillow Creek where water is hard to find and all ranchers have to drive stock to the creek the year around.”

Daniel and his wife, Laura, had a daughter, Mary (1910). (See also BANNAN — Winnett)

BECK, John W. “Jack” (Sec 24-14-28) Mr. and Mrs. John W. Beck bought the Circle Bar Ranch in 1912. An article in the Winnett Times of July 18, 1924, stated that: “About twelve miles east of Winnett lays the Circle Bar Ranch, owned and operated by John Beck and his son, Jack. Though an old-timer in the state, Mr. Beck took possession of the Circle Bar property in recent years.

“Shortly after securing the property, Mr. Beck worked out an irrigation project: using the water from Box Elder Creek and now has his entire ranch under the ditch.

“The Circle Bar property is one of the beautiful places in Petroleum County. Great trees grow in profusion all about the property. Large fields of grain and feed are on every hand. One of the first successful orchards in
Petroleum County is still bearing a tremendous amount of fruit at the Circle Bar. Not satisfied with mere fruit trees, Mr. Beck has met with much success growing grapes of the Concord variety and has an immense vine now heavily laden with grapes about to ripen.

"126 hogs, flocks of geese, turkeys and chickens keep things moving around the place. Several dairy cows for dairy products are kept on the home property while large herds of range stock are feeding in the breaks. A bee apiary furnishes honey for the ranch force. Mrs. Beck has her own flower garden where many beautiful flowers grow to delight the eye and make beautiful the home.

"A garden of tremendous size contains all kinds of vegetables that are doing wonderfully well. Though the ranch is under the ditch, sufficient moisture has fallen this year so that the water has never been turned on.

"The entire Beck family are enthusiastic boosters of Montana, and Petroleum County in particular, and have met with a degree of success that warrants their optimism and enthusiasm."

"John was one of Petroleum County's first commissioners, serving from 1925 through 1930. He and his wife, Faitha, had two children, Jack and Rose. Another Winnett Times article of 1-2-25 said of Jack: "J. W. Beck Jr., son of Commissioner and Mrs. J. W. Beck, of Petrolia, has the distinction of drawing the first map of Petroleum County. The map is well and cleverly drawn, showing the oil structures, pipe lines, irrigation reservoirs, ditches, railroads, wagon roads and all sections numbered.

"Mr. Beck Jr. was a student of mechanical drawing at the Winnett High School two years ago and has continued his studies at home until he now can put his knowledge and skill to good use. A cut of the map has been obtained, and a number printed, from the sale of which Mr. Beck will receive a royalty."

Jack married Juanita Dewing who had come to the community as a teacher of the Petrolia School. Rose married Anthony Schwarz of the Burgeton community. They had two children — Loron and Lavina. Rose and Tony were divorced, and Rose later married Otto Henschel.

John and Faitha moved to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, in 1934, leaving Jack and Juanita in possession of the place. Jack and Nita followed John and Faitha to Idaho in 1935, and Jack became a carpenter, building many very fine houses.

BEER, Dora (Sec 18-14-27) See BEER — Cat Creek.
BEER, Vance (Sec 19,20-14-27) See BEER — Cat Creek.
BENNITT, Frank (Sec 20-14-28) Although Frank Bennet homesteaded in the area, news items indicate that he spent a good deal of his time in Lewistown. (W. T. 9-13-1914) "F. C. Bennett came out from Lewistown Saturday night and found about forty of his friends gathered at his home to surprise him. They spent the evening dancing." (W. T. 8-19-1921) "F. C. Bennett returned again to Lewistown last Monday after a short stay at home."

Upon leaving the area, Frank moved to Roundup where he opened a small jewelry store.

BENNITT, William (Sec 20-14-28) An obituary from the Winnett Times of December 2, 1921 relates some of the history of this gentleman: "The death of William Bennet at the home of his son. F. C. Bennett, southeast of Winnett, occurred Monday evening. He was in good health and the end came as a result of old age.

"Deceased was 81 years of age at the time of death. He was born in Ireland and came to America when 21 years of age. He had lived in this locality for nine years and was well known. Mr. Bennett had a remarkable mentality and, until the last, kept in close touch with historical and current events. During the Civil War, he worked as a gunsmith for the Remington Arms Co., and his entire life has been eventful.

"Undertakers Creel & Opp. Winnett undertakers, prepared the body for burial and interment was made at Lewistown Thursday where funeral services were held. Two sons survive: F. C. of Winnett, Henry E. of San Diego, and a daughter in New York."

BLAZIVICH, Dan (Sec 15-14-27) Courthouse records show Dani's name spelled as in the heading. Newspaper articles and local residents note the spelling as Blazich. Dan was born in the province of Slavonia, Yugoslavia, in 1892, and came to the United States in 1908. He settled in Anaconda, Montana, and lived there for several years before homesteading about five miles southeast of Winnett, Montana.

Dan was successful on his dry-land farm — in 1924 his oats yielded between 40 and 50 bushels to the acre, and his spring wheat 30 bushels an acre.

According to a school census of District #159, Petroleum County, he and wife Amelia were parents of two children — Chris (1929) and Mary (1930).

The family moved to the Bitterroot Valley in 1936. Dan died there in 1962. Survivors named were: son, Chris; daughter, Mrs. William Ottenger of Hamilton; Mrs. Floyd Gerke of Gooding, Idaho; and three grandchildren.

BOHN, Albert J. (Sec 7-14-28) Al Bohn was born October 10, 1879, in Chicago, Illinois. He and Hattie Hagedorn were married September 22, 1902, in Crown Point, Indiana.
Albert Bohn family: Virgie, Myra, Al, Ray, Mother Hattie, and Hattie

Al worked as a metal pattern maker for machinery before he came west in 1912.

An account of their first experiences can be found in the Teigen — Elk Creek history, the area where they were briefly mislocated. They permanently settled in the Petrolia area.

Son Ray and daughters — Myra, "Mike" and Hattie — accompanied them on this grand adventure. Ray was eight years old, Myra five, and Hattie four, when they arrived here. Al and Hattie never shied from hard work, and it was not long before they had fields of grain and a nice modern home which was situated close to, and on the east bank of, McDonald Creek.

The children attended the Pilgrim School. There are many accounts of their performances in school and community programs. Not to be outdone, their parents, Hattie and Al, won first prize for their graceful rendition of the Spanish Waltz at one community dance. They all loved dancing. The Bohns were a happy, hard-working, fun-loving family. They treated the land well, and the land rewarded them with financial success. Al served many terms as trustee of the Petrolia area schools.

Hattie was a very self-disciplined lady, and her daughters respected her judgement. Myra and Hattie both stated that they never smoked in their mother’s presence. Virgie was born in 1921. The older girls loved this cute little addition. In 1947 Hattie and Al purchased the original Hoyle home in Winnett, previously occupied by Al’s brother, Charles, and moved from the ranch to town. Myra and James Poulton took over the operation of the ranch.

Al passed away in September of 1959 and Hattie in July of 1962. Ray married Hulda "Tillie" Wadman; Hattie married Merlin Gershmel; Myra married Jim Poulton; and Virgie married Carl Sandman. All have individual family histories.

BOHN, Charles (Sec 12-14-28) Charles was born August 24, 1885, in Chicago, Illinois. Louise Hagedorn was born March 12, 1873, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Louise and Charles were married April 7, 1907. They, along with brother Al and brother-in-law William Kindt, came to the country and homesteaded in 1912. (The three wives were sisters.) Charles’ location was west and up McDonald Creek about one mile from Al’s location. After getting their homestead in order, they built a good modern (for those days) frame house.

They were an industrious couple as attested by an article in the Winnett Times of September 14, 1923: "Besides having splendid crops of corn and grain and an abundance of vegetables, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bohn, residing east of Winnett, have found time to raise 150 turkeys which will find a ready and good paying market around November 29th. The turkeys will, in all probability, bring from $2.50 to $3.00 each and inasmuch as one hen has taken care of 40, the production of a few more hens would make the turkey-raising industry one of the most profitable in the county.

"Mr. Bohn was fortunate this year in seeding all the land he owned and could rent in his immediate vicinity and, although he received a slight touch of hail, he will thresh a very good crop. The Bohns came here from Chicago twelve years ago and are among those thrifty, progressive and hard-working farmers who have stuck through the lean years and now see the smile of fortune."

In 1943, after thirty-one years of hard work, Charles purchased the original Al Hoyle home in Winnett which had recently been occupied by Fred Welch. Charles remodeled and modernized the home and he and "Aunt Lou," as Louise was affectionately known, moved into town.

Charles died in July of 1945 and "Aunt Lou" a little more than a year later in November of 1946. They had no children of their own so left their worldly goods to Al Bohn’s children.

BOHN, Jerry Jerry Bohn, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Bohn, was born in September of 1950. Jerry received his education at Winnett, graduating from high school in 1968. Paula Sinclair, daughter of Robert Sinclair and Louanne Woodford, was born in Lewistown in December 1950. She attended grade school at the Mosby and Weede schools and graduated from Winnett High School in 1969.

On September 6, 1969, Jerry and Paula were married in Lewistown, Montana. Shortly thereafter, they moved to Havre, Montana, where they both enrolled in college. By spring, however, it was back to Jerry’s dad’s ranch, where Jerry helped with the spring planting. The lure of the land must have taken hold, as that is where they have remained.

Jerry and Paula have four children — Chad (1972), Tasha (1974), Tara (1978), and Cody (1980). All attend Winnett schools. Jerry volunteers a lot of time for the physical education programs of the Winnett schools. Paula has been hired as teacher of third grade for the 1989-1990 school term.
BOHN, Ray (Sec 12-14-28) Ray and Tillie Bohn moved to the former Charles Bohn Ranch in 1945. There were no school buses in those days, so the family spent winters in town so the children could attend school. They moved back to the ranch for summers. They were looking forward to a bountiful wheat crop one year, when a terrible hailstorm hit in the night and completely wiped them out. Undaunted, they gathered the grain as hay, purchased some cattle, and fed the crop to them.

Their best luck came when they purchased the Dell "Shorty" Huotte place in the Brush Creek country. They reaped a crop of alfalfa seed the first year that paid one-half the cost of the place.

They acquired more land here and there over a period of time and lived in the Petrolia area until son, Rex, was married in November 1958. Ray and Tillie moved to Winnett permanently, and Ray commuted between the ranch and home. (See also BOHN — Winnett; and WADMAN — Ashley)

BOHN, Raymond Rex (Sec 12-14-28) Rex Bohn, the son of Ray and Hulda "Tillie" Bohn, was born August 5, 1937. He grew up on the ranch, helping to care for the crops and the cattle. He went to grade and high school in Winnett and graduated in 1955. He played on a winning basketball team that went to divisionals at Havre after winning the district championship. He attended college at Havre for two years, studying ranch management.

JoAnn Rose Johnson, daughter of Joe and Phyllis Rukavina Johnson, was born in Malta July 3, 1937. Her parents moved to Bridger where she attended grade and high school through her junior year. In 1955 they moved to Grassrange where she graduated from high school. After graduation she went to Billings, where she worked as a secretary for the Winter Hardware Company.

Rex and JoAnn "Josie" were married on November 14, 1958, at the Methodist Church in Lewistown. They have one daughter, Kelly Rae, born October 8, 1959. She graduated from Winnett High School in 1978. She was active in basketball, track and the rodeo club. Her high school basketball team went to the state tournament in Miles City in 1974, and they placed fourth. In 1975 the team went to the state tournament in Glendive and they took third place. Kelly attended college in Bozeman for one year and Dawson Community College for two years.

Kelly was a barrel racer, team roper and breakaway roper, winning the Kids’ All Around Saddle in 1975. She took first place in Ladies’ Barrel Racing at the National College Finals in Bozeman and won the Ladies’ All Around Cow Girl Saddle in 1981. She also has done winning team roping with her father.

On November 20, 1982, Kelly and Jeff Gorrell of Beach, North Dakota, were married in Lewistown at the Methodist Church. They have two children — Colt and Clint.

Rex has been active in the Winnett Rodeo Club, serving as president with his wife Josie as secretary. He qualified and participated in the Old-timers’ Rodeo in Reno November of 1988. There, with Jack Shields as header and Rex as heel, the two were entered in the team roping.

Rex served on the Winnett school board when the new school was built and completed in 1974. He has served on the Petrolia Water Users’ Board and is presently on the ASCS and BLM boards in Lewistown. He leases the Damschen place (formerly the Ernest Hansen Ranch) where he raises grain, hay, and cattle; this is in addition to his own land holdings — the former Ray and Charles Bohn Ranch.

Josie was a member of the local Rancherette Club of the Petrolia-Box Elder community, serving as president and secretary. She is presently on the Petroleum County election board (1988).

BOWEN, Harry (Sec 1-14-27) Harry B. Bowen and his wife, Jennie, lived on Harry’s mother’s homestead for ten years. Harry and Jennie played for dances in the area: Harry the violin and Jennie the organ or piano. Two of their children lived there also — Oris Bartlett Bowen and Rhea Jennie Bowen. Later the family moved to Spring Creek near Lewistown, where the rest of their children were born — Lois, Elizabeth, Lloyd Thomas and Erma Jo Bowen.

Harry worked in the U. S. Gypsum plant and later had a mail route. He retired in Lewistown where he passed away in 1976. He had been a farmer for most of his life.

This homestead became the property of O. L. Gershemel and sons. (Ethel Bowen Lelek)

BOWEN, John Dwight and Elizabeth (Sec 1-14-27) J. D. Bowen and wife, Charlotte “Elizabeth” Bowen, came to Moore, Montana in 1910 on an immigrant train with their four children — Ralph Dwight, Harry Bartlett, Elmer LeRoy and Mildred Jeanette Bowen. Ethel was born later (1914) at Moore.

Elizabeth Bowen took up a homestead in 1913 which later became the Gershemel place. According to records in the Winnett courthouse, she must have added to her homestead with a desert claim, making a total of 240 acres in all. The Bowens’ son, Harry, and his family lived on the homestead for ten years.

Mildred attended the Winnett School for about two years. Ethel also lived in Winnett, being about two years old when her folks moved to a ranch on Casino Creek near Lewistown, Montana, in 1916. They lived there until moving to another place on the fairgrounds and later retired in Lewistown. All of the family were tillers of the soil.

Ethel Bowen married Charles Lelek of Lewistown. (Ethel Lelek)

BOWEN, Ralph (Sec 8-14-27) Ralph Bowen and Lydia Guhr were married in Alberta, Minnesota. Soon after, in about 1915, they came to Montana and settled in the area southeast of Winnett beyond the rimrock. Lydia took up a desert claim to add to Ralph’s homestead.

There were two water wells on the Bowen land, and
water from the wells was piped to the huge reservoir atop the rimrock to supplement the Winnett water supply.

The Bowens sold garden produce, milk and eggs in the town of Winnett. Lydia was an excellent seamstress and sewed for different people of the community and town.

Virgil, a son, wrote that he believed his parents, or at least his mother, spent winters elsewhere during the early homestead years, as he was born in Minnesota in 1918. Two other boys were born to the Bowens — Basil (1916) and Roland (1922).

The boys all attended school in Winnett. Basil died in 1935. Virgil graduated from Winnett High School in 1935. He attended college and then enlisted in the Marine Corps, from which he retired as a major in 1966. He married Margaret Boyer of San Francisco, California, in 1949. Two daughters — Sandra and Robyn — and two sons — Craig and Kelly — were born to them. Roland married Carol Nelson.

The Ralph Bowen family moved to Fairfield, Montana, in 1938. In 1943 they moved to Great Falls, Montana. Lydia died in December 1954 and Ralph in May 1955. (See also GARRITSON and GUHRT — Cat Creek)

**BRAATEN, Henry** Mr. and Mrs. Henry Braaten came to this community to work for Clinton Hassett. They worked for Hassett at two different times, leaving at one time to go to Kalispell where some of their grown children lived. Their son, Dale, was asthmatic, and they thought the Kalispell climate would be better for him. In December 1959 they returned to the Hassett place where they lived in the remodeled Box Elder schoolhouse.

The Braatens have six children, several of whom attended Box Elder School and Winnett High School. Their names are: Edgar; Kenneth (who was killed in a highway accident); Duane, who raises hogs near Kalispell; Dale, who became a carpenter; Keith, who is presently a shearer of sheep; and Elaine Braaten Parsons, the wife of a dairy farmer, who now lives in Wisconsin. All the children are married and have children.

Henry and Margaret retired and moved to Kalispell. They help the children with their work when they are able.

**BRATTEN, Alvin** (Sec 31-14-27) Alvin "Shorty" Bratten, son of George and Elizabeth W. Bratten, was born February 5, 1887, at Clay Center, Kansas. He came to the Winnett area in 1911 with his brother Ward.

Rose Merten, daughter of Fred C. Merten, was born August 13, 1887, at Aberdeen, South Dakota, and received her education there. In 1915 she moved to Winnett and went to work in the local Winnett State Bank. For a short while she and her brother, John, lived in a small house in Winnett. When Fred and Emilie (her stepmother) settled on the farm on top of the rimrock, she and John lived with them. Then it was a long walk to and from her work every day. But Rose stated that it was her boss, Hamm Greene, who inspired her to keep on working and making the long daily walk for several years.

According to a letter written by Louisa Wilson to her future husband, George Deethardt, dated January 2, 1920, Shorty and Rose pulled a fast one on their neighbors when they were married. She wrote, "Rose Merten and Shorty Bratten were married at the parsonage Christmas Eve after the entertainment was over at the Aristo. It was right around midnight. They are living in the Morrow house. (The Morrow house was on the north slope of the rimrock south of town.)"

"No one knew much about it — they kept it pretty quiet. She came down to work on Friday and Shorty Gairrett saw her leave Shorty's house up there. When Shorty Gairrett saw Shorty Bratten, he asked him if he was married. Don't know what Shorty told him, but Shorty Gairrett said they were going up to charivari them that night."
Shorty Bratten said, 'All right, but if you come up there and I'm not married, you will have to set up the treats.' Shorty B. bluffed him, but the boys said they were going to charivari them last night."

Shorty and Rose only lived in the Morrow house a short time before they moved to Shorty's homestead about six miles southeast of Winnett. They ranched there through the good and bad years until 1939, when they moved to a ranch at Corvallis. They lived there for five years, then moved to Hamilton where Rose worked for a time as an aide in Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital. Alvin passed away there in November of 1953. Rose passed away in September of 1979.

The Brattens had two children, Orland and Lorraine. Both attended Winnett schools. Lorraine married and had four children — Janice, Denise, Linda and Margaret. Orland married and lives in Hamilton and had two children — Robert and Dwane. Orland still owns property in Winnett. This, besides innumerable friends, gives him an excuse to return often to his childhood "stomping grounds."

He wrote, "When we lived on the homestead, my folks walked to town much of the time, mostly, I believe, as an economic measure and sometimes because the roads were impassable, even with horses. When my sister, Lorraine, and I were in school, the folks bought a small house in town; and Mom and my sis and I would live in town during the week and go to the ranch on weekends."

Alvin "Shorty" and Ward Bratten (circa 1930)

BRATTEN, Vird Ward Vird Ward Bratten was born in Latham, Missouri, on December 8, 1887. He came from a family of four brothers — Jewel, Alvin, Roscoe and Paris; and four sisters — Birdie, Cora, Ora and Jenny. Stella Cheney was born in Nevada, Missouri, in November of 1891. Stella and Ward were married in Fort Scott, Kansas, in 1910.

Ward heard of homesteads in Montana, so he, Stella, Wayne (9 months old) and Ward's brother, Alvin, came to Montana and filed on adjoining homesteads on Elk Creek, about six miles south of Winnett. Ward was disdainful of the "sod busting" in Kansas and thought the big plows wouldn't find a place like this; however, it wasn't long until more homesteaders arrived with walking plows, barbed wire, and other equipment thought necessary to make a living on a 160-acre homestead.

Stella taught in the country schools. Her scholars were neighbors — not too far from the Elk Creek homestead where Brattens lived.

About this time Washington passed an act stating that if one had filed on a 160-acre tract, they were eligible for an additional 160 — if the additional acres joined the original homestead. Ward released his Elk Creek homestead to his brother, Alvin, and went some thirty miles north and filed on a section, 640 acres along Blood Creek. This was rough terrain and one was entitled to more acreage. This land was about six miles from the Musselshell River, the only permanent water near his homestead.

By this time the couple had another baby, Kenneth, on the way. Though the location was thirty miles from a town and a doctor or help, he kept this homestead and proved up on it. He then went back and bought his original homestead from his brother. Stella again taught in the Bratten School in 1921. She and her pupils gave a Halloween party at the Beer home. Fifteen pupils and as many grown-ups made a full house. The program consisted of recitations, music, and stories. The prize awarded for the best ghost story was given to Stella.

Preferring office work to ranch life, Stella accepted a position as bookkeeper for Ryan Grocery Company of Great Falls in 1928, and worked there for several years, later following the same type of work in Los Angeles, California. The boys remained on the ranch with their father.

Ward bought the east end of the Walter Winnett Ranch in the spring of 1929. Then the banks went broke and Ward found it difficult to make ends meet. There was no money for groceries or hired help. Wayne quit high school to help his dad.

With Wayne's help, Ward stayed on the ranch, and in about 1938, times changed for the better; the two of them eventually built up a fine ranch.

Ward died after an operation on a brain tumor in 1946. He had sold his interest in the ranch to Wayne.

Stella returned to live in the town of Winnett in 1948. She died in May of 1972. (See also BRATTEN — Winnett)

BRATTEN, Wayne The following was written by Wayne Bratten in 1979: "My birth certificate states that I was born on a farm near Garland, Kansas, June 24, 1912, son of Ward and Stella Bratten. When I arrived, I was known as the cyclone baby. About three months before I was born, my parents were eating supper in a two-story frame house. A Kansas cyclone came up and after the wind let up, the house was upside down, standing on its roof and leaning against a big oak tree.

'Farmers were just starting to plow up western Kansas, good grassland, to raise wheat. After I was born, and my parents recovered from the shaking up of the house being turned upside down, my father got a job firing one of the
big steam tractors. This did not last very long... My parents brought me here in March 1913, when I was nine months old. I caught whooping cough on the way. I heard Dad say that several times he thought they were going to plant me in the head of a coulee on the homestead. There was no doctor here at that time. It was some home remedies that kept me alive. I attended whatever local school was handy and started high school in Winnett. I quit high school in 1929 to help my dad, who was having financial problems on the ranch. The banks had closed, and money was a scarce item.

"Ruth Welton (born in Kansas) came to Winnett to teach in Winnett High School in 1929. She had just graduated from a good-sized university down in Kansas. Winnett, at that time, looked like a frontier to her. Train fare back was expensive, so she stayed and came to like the west and its people.

"Ruth came from a school-teaching family; her father served as superintendent of various Kansas schools. The five girls in the family became teachers, too. The one brother died of the flu at an Army camp in 1941. Her mother was also a schoolteacher before marriage.

"We were married in 1934 and that started a whole new life for her. She came into a bachelor camp, a new way of life, and different kinds of people. Cooking for a hay crew was a very new experience. She always said that she was glad to have a creek close where she could throw her failures as a cook over the bank.

"1936 was not only dry but we had grasshoppers on top of the drought. We had to sell all the cattle, got $35 a pair for cows and calves, and the buyer lost money on them.

"There was not even enough grass for the horses. So Ruth and I shipped the horses to the Blackfoot Reservation. Ruth got a job teaching in an Indian school on the edge of the reservation. Her salary was $80.00 a month and we could live in a two-room teacherage. We were there two years.

"Dad stayed on the home place, and in 1938 the drought broke and things began to look better. We moved back to Winnett in 1938 and have been here ever since."

Wayne began to purchase the small ranches of those who had given up trying to garner a living from a few acres. In time he was the largest land owner in Petroleum County; and this eventually placed him in very good financial circumstances. The Brattens, in the end, owned all the McDonald Creek land originally owned by Walter J. Winnett as well as many sections of grazing land.

Ruth always found time to help out with community and school affairs. She was totally dedicated to the Republican party, Methodist Church, Eastern Star, Nile, Rebekahs, and Theta Rho Girls. She was often called upon to referee girls' basketball games. For many years she was the conductor of the high school's junior-senior grand march at prom time. She was serving on the school board when the new high school was completed in 1951.

At Christmas time in 1949, the students of the Winnett Elementary School held an election to select the local man that they thought was most like Santa Claus. (Wayne had previously acted as Santa at Christmas programs.) Wayne came out with the most votes, and at an especially planned program Leo Solf, master of ceremonies, presented Wayne as Mr. Santa Claus. Lenora Hassett presented Ruth (who had been elected in an independent poll) as Miss Merry Christmas.

This may have been prophetic. In 1980 the Brattens established a $1500 scholarship for a graduate of 1980, based on need, citizenship, and academic ability. This was only the first of the Brattens' altruistic gifts. (See BRATTEN -- Winnett)

The Brattens built a fine new home in Winnett when Wayne retired from ranch work. Ruth did not get to enjoy it for long. She passed away in November of 1980.

CARRELL, Kenneth W. Kenneth Carrell, son of Annette and Ambrose Carrell, was born November 12, 1948. The Army drafted him in 1967, and during that time he married Ramona Margaret Manz. They had two children -- Charles L. and Petra Annette.

After his Army duty, he worked with his father and also at the Gambles Store in Lewistown for a time. He is presently (1989) working at Clinton Hassetts.

He is the Commander of Sandman Post No. 95 of the American Legion.

CAVIN, William J. (Sec 2-14-27) (W. T. 4-29-21) "W. J. Cavin, one of the early settlers in the Winnett country, and who still retains possession of his farm east of Winnett, returned from Anaconda Tuesday, having spent three years in that city. Mr. Cavin will spend the summer
on his farm." Mr. Cavin owned land about five miles east of Winnett.

CLARK, Allison J. (Sec 30-14-29 and Sec 25-14-28) Mr. Allison J. Clark, a bachelor, appears to have been the first established resident of the Petrolia area. He obtained his land from the United States Government in 1884. At that time he gave Flatwillow as his address, as that was the only post office in the area at that time.

In 1886 he received a homestead patent on 120 acres of land. Since the area was part of Fergus County at that time, his legal work was handled in Lewistown.

He raised race horses, and having come from England, may have brought men and horses with him from there. He constructed a race track about a mile west of the ranch on a flat near a tributary of Flatwillow Creek, thus Race Horse Coulee got its name.

He turned the homestead over to relatives in England. The relatives formed a Dakota Grazing Livestock Corporation to handle the affairs, and the corporation was sued for a small debt Allison owed Handel Brothers.

The place was sold successively to Charles A. Broadwater, to John Rowley, to Nellie Messenger, to Ernest H. Hansen — who sold a half interest to Christ Nelson, to Carl Ida Thompson, and finally to Oscar C. Thompson — who in turn sold a 1/3 interest to John W. Beck.

CLAUSON, Carl (Sec 9-14-28) Carl was born October 6, 1880, in Sweden. He came to the United States as a young man and worked as a carpenter, first in North Dakota and later in Lewistown, Montana. He homesteaded about nine miles southeast of Winnett in the Petrolia area.

Being a very good carpenter, he built many of the homestead houses in the community. He walked to his work and carried his tools from one job to the next. During World War I he left to work in the shipyards.

An interesting note on Carl appeared in the December 3, 1926, issue of the Winnett Times: "Carl left on the train before Thanksgiving enroute to Lewistown. He was carrying a big, black, bulging leather grip which contained a big, black wild goose. He had shot it a few weeks previously, and kept it in cold storage at the Enterprise Meat Market."

In 1940 Carl sold his homestead to Al Bohn and moved to Winnett. He continued to work as a carpenter and had living quarters in the Wide Awake Garage. He died August 12, 1958, and was buried in the Winnett Cemetery. His only known survivor was John Klassen of St. Landby, Kappsta, Sweden.

CONVERSE, Selah L. (Sec 14-14-27) Selah was born March 11, 1887, in Albert Lea, Minnesota. He homesteaded about eight miles southeast of Winnett in 1913. He served his country in World War I. Marie Walker, born August 14, 1897, came with her parents from Lewistown to Winnett in 1917. She had graduated from Fergus County High School and had received some additional teacher training.

In September of 1917, Marie was chosen as teacher of the Circle Bar School in the Petrolia area and served there for two terms ending May 19, 1919. One of the pupils in that school was Myra Bohn.

While teaching there she met and, on May 29, 1920, married Selah Converse, a hard-working local farmer. To earn some needed cash because of his new family status, Selah went to the Judith Basin to work in the harvest fields in August of 1921. Marie stayed with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel C. Walker, during that time.

Marie and Selah had four children while living near Winnett — Donald, Gene, Earl and Alta Mae. Donald, Gene, and Earl attended the Winnett Elementary School. Alta Mae was only two years old when the family, after some good and some not-so-good years, joined with other ranchers in the exodus to Fairfield, Montana, in 1937.

CORBIN, Hezatone (Sec 10-14-27) (W. T. 7-18-24) "Eight years ago H. T. Corbin homesteaded on a quarter section of land about three miles east of Winnett. The land lays up a large draw, in the upper end of which a small spring flows the year around.

"During the eight years of his residence on his homestead he has developed the place until today an inventory shows a splendid orchard containing cherry and crab apple trees, currants, gooseberries and a large patch of everbearing strawberries; a garden in which flourishes a famous Scotch variety of potatoes averaging 14 to the hill, watermelons, cantaloupes, and practically all other kinds of vegetables. Tomato plants are in bloom and will soon be bearing.

"With handling the orchard and the large garden, Mr. Corbin has found time to seed winter wheat, alfalfa hay, sweet corn, popcorn and field corn. His fences are all in perfect condition, his machinery under cover, his

California-style homestead and two children. Les and Vern Thompson, astride the chicken brood coop
premises perfectly clean and orderly, and his house, barn and root cellar a delight to look into.

"Mr. Corbin has developed this nonirrigated quarter section to this point during his eight years of residence on it. The land has proven its productivity and given goodly returns in beauty, pleasure and money for the time and effort expended.

"Mr. Corbin is satisfied and pleased with his dry land quarter-section farm and is a constant booster for the agricultural possibilities of Petroleum County."

Hezatone later moved to Winnett and bought a home on Broadway — north of the railroad tracks. He later sold his home to Mr. and Mrs. Russell Quigg. He moved to Los Angeles to live with his sister. His brother, Frank, lived in the Cat Creek country.

CORNUE, Harvey (Sec 18-14-28) Harvey E. Cornue was born in Hebron, Illinois, on January 18, 1887. He had attended a business college, but due to a recession, there was no job for him in the area at that time. He was not needed on the farm, so he came to Montana to take up a homestead. The property was located about four miles north of the present-day Petrolia Reservoir. A one-room tar paper shack served as his home for a few years.

To help eke out a living, he hauled freight from Lewistown to the Cat Creek oil field with a six- or eight-horse team or sometimes with mules. The trip would take two days, with one layover at the Winnett Ranch and one at the Ayers Ranch west of Grassrange.

Martha Freed came from Ohio to homestead with her brother, Elden Freed. This homestead was about one mile north of the present Petrolia Dam. She was a schoolteacher. Martha and Harvey were married June 2, 1918, and lived in Harvey's homestead cabin.

Harvey loved horses, raised Percherons and Belgians, and broke them to work. Each fall he would ship a train carload of horses to his brother's farm at Hebron, Illinois, and they would have a big sale. All farming was done by horses at that time.

When the horse market gave out due to the influx of tractors, Harvey raised more cattle and wheat. Each fall he and others shipped their cattle by train to be sold. Some of the owners always went along, living in part of the train car, to take care of the animals on the trip and to see that they were properly handled at the stockyards in Chicago.

Later, Harvey worked at the Agriculture Adjustment Act office in Winnett. That office took care of records for President Roosevelt's farm programs which were designed to reduce surpluses.

In 1936 Harvey was elected Petroleum County Commissioner, an office he held for 16 years. He was one of the commissioners who worked very hard to establish the county manager form of government. He was a member of the school board of District #121 for many years.

Martha taught, after she was married, at the Circle Bar School and the Pilgrim School (sometimes known as the Jerue School). During World War II, when teachers were very scarce, she taught English at Winnett High School. She also taught at Upper Flatwillow for a time. She took her turn at being one of the teachers who gave, and also graded, the seventh and eighth grade state examinations.

The Cornues built up a fine ranch from the homestead started in 1912, and they were highly respected in the community. Mrs. Cornue was a master at arranging community programs and parties.

In 1954 the Cornues moved to Winnett. They bought the former Sullivan house from Otto and Myrtle Senst. Mr. Cornue passed away in July of 1969, and Mrs. Cornue and Kathryn bought a home in Lewistown. Mrs. Cornue passed away in December 1972.

The Cornues were parents of four children. The first children (twin boys) died at birth and were buried in the Winnett Cemetery.

Annabel was delivered by her aunt, Dr. Hazel Freed, at Grassrange, Montana, on April 13, 1924. She graduated from Winnett High School in 1942 and from Montana State College at Bozeman. She worked as a medical technologist until she married Robert Durnford in 1948. She and Robert have two children — Joyce Durnford Rashid and James Durnford.

Kathryn also was delivered at Grassrange by her aunt, Dr. Hazel Freed, on March 9, 1926. She attended country schools. When Cornues sold their ranch and moved into Winnett in 1954, Kathryn became a very capable and industrious helper at the Rimrock Dairy. In spite of some physical impairment, she washed bottles, wrestled cases of milk, drove the delivery station wagon door-to-door, and cheerfully delivered the milk. When the dairy went out of business, Kathryn worked for the school district. After moving to Lewistown, she married Fred Ferrell, but now lives alone there.

Among the papers Mrs. Cornue left her family were the following memories with note attached: "I wonder whether anyone except my own girls (Kathryn and Annabel) and Lola and Ruth (nieces) will ever read this. I hope some of the next generation can weave a romance into it and write a book."

Martha and Harvey Cornue
"In 1912 about the only kind of recreation in the homestead country was the neighborhood dance. If someone had a cabin 12 feet by 25 feet, it was large enough to have a dance in. The bed was taken down (there was usually only one room) and put outside as well as other furniture — which wasn't much. The news of the affair was spread by grapevine and they did a good job, too, as all came within a radius of fifteen miles. The young people came by horseback, but young married folks with small children hitched the team to the buggy or the farm wagon and stopped along the way to pick up the neighbors.

It was understood that each lady took a cake or sandwiches for lunch, and the bachelors provided the coffee. The cabin was lighted by kerosene lamps. Early in the evening, the men stood around outside and exchanged local gossip and within the house the women did the same.

When the fiddler arrived, they began to tune up and the boys came inside to claim their partners. People were isolated, so this get-together was really an occasion. We had no cars, electric power, or telephones. Thus everyone entered into this dance wholeheartedly. It was democratic. The girls danced with whomsoever asked them whether sixteen or sixty, saint or sinner. There were no strangers. Some boys wore hobnailed shoes, some chaps, some dress suits, some overalls — dress made no difference. Every girl was a lady, and due respect was paid to her.

"Buffalo Gal, Comin' Through the Rye, and Skip to my Lou were favorite tunes and when the fiddler struck up a square dance tune, the rafters nearly came down. The bashful boys limbered up and came in, too, to swing the girls off their feet amidst happy laughter and friendly banter. Sometimes the couples got all mixed and then that caused even more fun.

"About ten o'clock the children got sleepy, and as they dropped off one by one, the mothers put them on the floor close to the wall of the room or under the chairs; or if the dance was in a schoolhouse they pushed the desks against the walls and put the children to bed on them. They were covered up very carefully with coats. A scene of this kind is described much better in Owen Wister's The Virginian.

"At midnight, lunch was served which was washed down with coffee strong enough to float a horseshoe. The musicians rested for awhile, then were playing again until daylight. There was reason for this long dance session. There were few fences and very few trails, so it was unsafe to go home before daylight. An experience of being lost on the prairie was not one to be sought after."

This is Mrs. Cornue's description of the winter of 1919-1920. "The wheat crop was a complete failure; there was not enough to cut for winter hay. At that time all the homesteaders had a few cattle and horses, which were the only source of income.

A heavy snow fell in October which did not all melt until April. In January there were several feet on the level, so stock could not get even sagebrush to eat. Everyone was out of feed. Stock became poorer and poorer. The ranchers had to go to the railroad in Winnetta to buy hay which would come in on the train at uncertain times.

"Harvey would start with his four-horse team at 5:00 a.m. Sometimes the thermometer stood at 25 degrees below zero. Snow was so deep that he would have to shovel snow for several rods in order to get the wagon through. Then when they arrived in town, the train would be late and they would load; they never got home until almost midnight.

"We wives would be home alone worrying for fear something had happened, then rejoicing when we finally heard the rattling of the wagon up the road. Sometimes he would be gone all day and come home without hay, as there was not enough to go around. That meant that the cattle would be hungrier and would bawl around. Some got so weak that they had to be pulled up by the tail. Hundreds died. The prairies were dotted with dead animals.

"People near creeks cut down trees so the animals could eat the tender brush and buds. In the spring, the losses were so great that many homesteaders loaded their few household goods on a wagon and left, for I do not know where, but I hope it was to better places. Others, like ourselves, would have left as paupers; but all we had was invested here, so we stayed and finally became fairly successful financially. Not all years were bad."

Hauling a huge log for firewood (1919)

No forage anywhere (1919)

DAMSCHEIN, Kenneth (Sec 12-13-29) Kenneth Damschen and his wife, Alberta "Bert," came to the Petrolia area in 1964 with the children — Randy (6).
Warren (4), Keven (3), and Faith (1). They settled on the ranch which previously had belonged to Kenneth’s grandfather, Ernest Hansen.

For the first few years, Ken was a typical rancher of the area. Then after some experimentation, he became engaged in handling leaf-cutter bees. He found that, with their use, he could increase the productivity of his hay meadows seven-fold. Based on his own success, he decided to go into the business of selling and leasing his bees. The bees were leased to several alfalfa seed producers.

A female leaf-cutter bee “trips” the blossom of the alfalfa plant so that seed pods can form. Ordinary honey bees shy away from this tripping action, not liking to be struck on the head. The leaf-cutter is more aggressive and fearless and, consequently, is more valuable in the production of seed. (A complete article on Kenneth’s bee operation can be found in the history files at the Petroleum County Community Library.)

Ken continued the Damschen Pollinators business, selling and leasing bees and producing fine crops of alfalfa seed until his death in 1979. While pursuing one of his favorite pastimes — big game hunting — he died instantly of a heart attack.

Randy, who had graduated from Winnett High School in 1976 and was attending college at Bozeman, came home to help on the ranch.

Bert, Faith, Hope and Cara moved to Lewistown in September of 1979. Randy, Warren and Kevin stayed on the ranch for a time and handled the Pollinators portion of the business. Since then, Ken’s brother, Robert Damschen, manages the property.

Randy and his wife, Laura, have four children — Haden, Jared, Kenyon and Savannah. They live in Colville, Washington, where Randy is a logger.

Warren graduated from Winnett High School in 1977 and married LāRae Arthur. They live in Davenport, Washington, where Warren is a construction contractor. They have three children — Shilo, Shannon and Shawna. (See also ARTHUR — Winnett)

Kevin graduated from Winnett High School in 1979 and attended Big Sky Bible College for one year. In September of 1980 he was severely injured in a motorcycle accident. He is now in a nursing hospital in Lewistown, Montana. Although he cannot communicate, he does respond to attention and seems to enjoy company. He always has a big smile for his mother, who still has the hope that a miracle could happen.

Faith graduated from Lewistown Christian Alliance High School in 1980 and attended college for two years. She and her daughter, Kendra, live in Colville, Washington, where Faith operates a day care center in her home.

Hope graduated from Lewistown Christian Alliance High School in 1983. She worked in California for a time, then attended the College of Great Falls, where she met and married Brian Sukut. Brian graduated from aero-tech school in Cheyenne in December 1988. They live in Missoula and have a daughter, Paige.

Cara graduated from Fergus High School in 1985, did some traveling, and is now a nurse’s aide in St. John’s Lutheran Home of Billings, Montana.

“Bert” is now married to Harold Heath, who works in the gold mines at Zortman, Montana. They currently (1988) live in a cabin (which Bert really enjoys) during the week and return to their Lewistown home on weekends.

DIVINE, Arthur A. Arthur Divine, his wife and two boys, Lyle and Don, lived on Sec 10-14-28 for about ten years. There they had a frame house sided with shingles. Arthur owned the first Fordson tractor in the neighborhood. Mr. Divine, a retired railroad clerk, also delivered fine sermons at the Circle Bar School.

Mrs. Divine was affectionately known as “Auntie” Divine. She helped deliver both of the Grobe boys, William and Pete, when Dr. Alexander of Winnett was late in arriving.

DONELL, Arthur H. Art and Nannie Donnell lived one mile east of Winnett on McDonald Creek. They were the parents of three children — Harvey (1902), Lucille (1903) and Ethel (1907).

Harvey graduated from Winnett High School in 1923, went on to college and became a registered pharmacist. Lucille and Ethel both attended Winnett schools. Lucille later became a director and supervisor for Ellison-White Chautauqua Co. Her first schedule required her to be two months in Montana, two months in Utah, and two months in California. She was considered a top-rate director by the company.

DOYLE, Cornelia A. (Sec 20-14-28) Cornelia Doyle’s homestead was just west of the F. C. Bennett place. Conditions in this particular area were described in the Winnett Times of 11-4-21:

“Pat McNurney and Roy McGowan drove a large herd of cattle belonging to Mrs. Doyle and Mr. McNurney down into Howard Coulee where they will find better feed than in this valley where the grasshoppers took the grass. Cleaning the ground completely in spots, which together with the limited number of acres planted last spring, leaves good pasture very scarce.”

EIKE, Larry M. (Sec 18-14-29) Larry, son of Lyle and Roberta Thorsheim Elke, was born November 14, 1940, in Lewistown, Montana. He grew up in Cat Creek, Mosby and Winnett, where he graduated from high school in 1959. Pretty much on his own from an early age, he worked at Mosby for Bud Shaw, who helped him make it through high school.

Joyce Anne Retterer, second daughter of Clyde and Clara Retterer, was born August 16, 1941, in Summer- ville, Ohio. Her father moved about a good deal on construction jobs, so she lived and attended school in a variety of places. She attended Winnett High School.

Larry married Joyce Retterer on January 29, 1959, in Roundup, Montana. He worked for the Ostler Ranch for one year. Some small part-time jobs kept him busy until he moved to the Thompson Brothers Ranch to work for them.
Three children were born to Larry and Joyce — Kevin Duane (1960), Bert W. (1961), and Lisa Marie (1963). The children grew up on the Thompson Ranch, as their father worked there for fifteen years.

After 1972 the children got on the school bus enroute to Winnett at the Aasrud place, as Larry and Joyce had purchased that ranch after the death of Joyce’s uncle, Alden Aasrud. All three children graduated from Winnett High School. Larry and Joyce continued to operate the ranch together until the summer of 1988, when Joyce decided to move to Livingston to join her sister, Marilyn Elke. Larry is still at the ranch.

Lisa Marie married Barry Forgy on November 14, 1976, and they have a son, Skyler. Bert married Bobbye Wise on Labor Day, 1987. They reside in Melstone, Montana, where Bert works for an oil drilling company. Kevin also lives and works in Melstone. He vows to remain a bachelor.

**FEASTER, John** John Feaster was born in Hillsdale, Illinois, in 1861. He married Mary Jane Bruch of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, in 1893. In 1913 the Feasters came to Montana. John came in a railroad freight car loaded with all of the family’s belongings, so he could care for the livestock. At Sheridan, Wyoming, the engine of the train blew up, killing the engineer and two brakemen.

The Feaster family consisted of John and Mary and their children — Ethel (1896), Hazel (1898), Alice (1900) twins John and William (1902) — all born in Nebraska. They first settled north of the Snowy Mountains. John was postmaster for the tiny post office of Jones. In about 1917 the Feasters acquired property two miles south of Winnett on the hill east of present-day Highway 244.

Mrs. Feaster was a graduate of Doane College, Crete, Nebraska. She taught school in Nebraska as well as in the Winnett community. Among the schools she taught in the area were Kelley, Yellow Water Basin, Elk Creek, Three Buttes School, and Winnett.

Mr. Feaster "was sure not to vote for any Republican!"

Mr. Feaster was an avid voter and never missed an opportunity to cast his ballot. He first became eligible to vote in 1882 and cast his first ballot in 1883. His first presidential ballot was cast for Cleveland in 1884. During his lifetime of voting, he failed to appear at the polls only one time, and that was an off-year election in 1895. He was busy husking corn in Nebraska and couldn’t get to the polling place. He came from Billings to Winnett in November of 1950 at 89 years of age to cast his ballot in the general election. A staunch Democrat, he told the clerks of the election that he brought his magnifying glass along so we wouldn’t make a mistake and vote for a Republican!

The Feasters celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary on June 13, 1943, at the home of their son, John, in Billings.

The Feasters’ oldest daughter, Ethel, married Art Barnes who homesteaded near Yellow Water. (See also BARNES — Flatwillow) Hazel graduated from Winnett High School in 1921. She worked in the post office, for Homer Geis, and for Elmer Eager before marrying Jacob Vance. He was a foreman for Mid Northern Oil Company at Cat Creek. After their marriage they lived in Kevin, Montana. In later years, Jacob worked at Malstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls. The couple have three children — Donald, Della and Alma. Mrs. Vance is still living in Great Falls (1988) at age 90.

Alice Feaster married George Olds in 1919. They lived in Lewistown, Montana. Alice died very suddenly in 1931, leaving seven children — the youngest being only two years old.

William Feaster graduated from Winnett High School in 1922. He married Esther Kolahr in July 1925. For a time he was a tank builder in the Wyoming oil fields. In 1942 he was promoted to farm boss for Continental Oil Company in Ville Platte, Louisiana. He became production manager for the company and traveled in Texas and Louisiana until his retirement. The William Feasters have four children — William, Arlene, John and Cara Lou.

John Feaster stayed and worked in the Winnett community for a number of years. He was a special friend of the Sibberts and often helped them on their ranch. In 1941 he married Mildred Michaelson, who came to Winnett as a teacher. They made their home in Billings, where John was connected with the stockyards. John died in 1963. (See picture SCHULTZ — Telgen)

Mary Feaster died in 1943, John Sr. in 1952.

**FISHER, Andrew** Andrew Fisher was born in Appleton, Wisconsin, in 1871. He married Emma Bernard of Dodgeville, Wisconsin, on April 16, 1896. Following the marriage, he and his wife moved to Sisseton, Roberts County, South Dakota, where they took a homestead on government land. They lived there until 1916 when they came to Montana. Andrew purchased a homestead relinquishment on McDonald Creek about seven miles east of Winnett. They had three sons — Charles, Theodore and Clifford, and one daughter, Myrtle (Myrtle).
Mrs. Fisher passed away in 1930. Charles and Theodore both moved to Fairfield. Clifford moved to Portland, Oregon. Myrtie married Otto Senst of Winnett. (See also SENST — Winnett)

Andrew Fisher passed away at the Winnett home of his daughter in August 1939. He is buried in the Winnett Cemetery beside his wife, Emma.

**FISHER, Clifford** (Sec 5-14-28) (W. T. I-12-34) "An auction sale, that will draw plenty of interest over the county, will be held on Monday, January 22, at the Clifford Fisher ranch, eight miles east of this city on the highway. The goods to be auctioned off include 40 head of cattle, 13 head of horses, farm machinery, and other articles.

"Mr. Fisher, a resident of this section for 20 years, declares he is going to change locations and wishes at this time to dispose of his goods."

**FISHER, Roland** (Sec 30-14-28) Roland Fisher owned a small place on Flatwillow Creek. He had cattle for a time, carrying the Flying W brand. He built a good set of buildings — log house, barn, granary, smokehouse, and sheds. Roland left in the late 1920s.

The place was purchased by Lou Griffith, father of Bruce Griffith of Grassrange, Montana. Griffiths owned the farm for four or five years and then moved to Grassrange. Thompsons later bought the land from the county for taxes and still own it today.

**FLEHARTY, Earl** (Sec 24-14-28) Earl, born in Corning, Iowa, on July 14, 1909, came with his parents to the Minnesota Bench in 1912. He married Mary Botch in 1928, and they moved to the John W. Beck Ranch of the Petrolia Bench in 1936. The Fleharts raised sheep, alfalfa hay, and alfalfa seed. They also milked many dairy cows.

They had four children — Marilyn, Lois May, LuAnn and Alvin James. Marilyn went to the Petrolia School for some of her elementary schooling. When Lois May and LuAnn were ready for school, the family lived in town during the week.
In 1956 Fleharty's sold their share of the ranch to Jack Beck and moved into Winnett. Earl reopened the Rimrock Theater in 1950. He was Winnett school custodian the year of 1958-1959. Mary taught in the Winnett schools from 1950 to 1959. She had previously taught in Petroleum County country schools for 16 years. In 1960 Fleharty's moved to Kalispell, where Earl operated a meat business and worked at carpentry.

Earl passed away in 1970. Mary continued to teach until 1973, then retired. Mary stated, "The Winnett community will always be home to all of us, as we were there so many years, and that is where we raised our kids."

Marilyn graduated from Winnett High School in 1947. "Dimpy," as she was known, married Donald Anderson. They had no children. Lois and LuAnn both graduated from Winnett High School in 1955. Lois married Joe Rose. They have three children — David, Roger and Carla. LuAnn married Harold Sharkey, and they have four children — Ron, Carol, Gail and Rodney. The family moved from Winnett before Jim graduated from high school. He is married, and reportedly, has three children. (See also FLEHARTY — Blakeslee and Winnett)

**FLEURY, Antoine** Mrs. Elizabeth Swan, in the *Heritage Book of the Original Fergus County Area*, related some early history of the Fleury's. Her information reveals that a group of Metis settled in what was to become the Lewistown townsit in the fall of 1879. Among them were Antoine and Alex Fleury and Ernestine Wells, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wells.

The Metis, of strong Catholic faith, soon brought in Father Joseph Damiani, and the first mass was celebrated in the new settlement. At that mass, Alex Fleury was confirmed: also the first wedding was performed — that of Antoine Fleury and Ernestine Wells, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wells.

Mr. Bowes (Ed. probably Bowles) former owner of a trading post was left with a little two or three-year-old daughter, whom he gave up for adoption. Antoine and Ernestine took the child, as they had just recently lost their own first born. Mrs. Swan went on to say:

"They sponsored for the little girl when they had her baptized, named her Virginia, and raised her to be a very good little girl. She, in turn, helped her foster parents till she got married the year of 1902 and went away with her husband. . . . Whilst living near the present N Bar Ranch, they took in a little orphan baby of ten days old. When the mother died, a relative of theirs, Mrs. Fleury, weaned her own child who was less than a year old, so she could nurse the tiny baby; they had no other means of feeding it.

"After her husband died, she again took another boy and raised him. They all respect and regard her as if she was her own mother to this day; and when they happen to come in from other places, they all still go to her. If anybody is going to heaven, she must be one of the chosen with all her charity and good deeds."

Other sources tell that the Fleurs raised at least nine children — Edward, Fred, Sam, Ernest, Gilbert, Wallace, Justine, Eva and another girl whose married name was Mrs. Lester Kelly.

The Fleurs moved to Winnett country in the early 1900s, and school was provided for the children in the W. J. Winnett home. Many members of the family worked for the Winnett family. Ed and Fred took up homesteads of their own, being at the same time top hands at working with horses for Walter Winnett. Ed was a classic and daring rider, and like his brother, Sam, an excellent teamster. Ed died of apoplexy in December of 1921 at only 39 years of age. Another article from the *Heritage Book of the Original Fergus County Area* contained a story about Sam:

"During World War I, thirteen men were drafted from the Winnett Ranch, and Sam Fleury was one of them. Months later he was driving teams behind the lines in France, when a new shipment of horses to pull ammuni-
tion wagons arrived. When Sam saw the 05 (Walter Winnett) brand on the left thigh (it was a team he had broken to harness at the ranch months before), he threw his arms around the neck of one and cried like a baby because he was so homesick. He arrived back home months later, gassed from the war and a broken man."

The Fleury family eventually moved back to Lewistown. Mother Mary Ernestine died there in 1952. Antoine had predeceased her. At that time she was survived by eight children — Fred, Sam and Ernest of Lewistown; Gilbert of Everett, Washington; Wallace of Great Falls, Montana; Justine, who had married Ray Badger; Eva, who had married Heine Elbert; and Mrs. Lester Kelly. Fred never married. He died in Lewistown in February of 1956.

FREED, Amanda (Sec 25-26-14-27) Amanda was the widow of Alex Freed.

FREED, Elden (Sec 24-14-27) See FREED — Winnett

GARL, William F. (Sec 4-14-28) William F. Garl came to this area of the country at about the turn of the century. He was one of the first early settlers on McDonald Creek. His place was about nine miles east of what became the townsite of Winnett. In about 1911, he and B. F. Lepper became business associates, and for a time their property was known as the Lepper-Garl Ranch. (See also LEPPER — Flatwillow)

GERSHMEL, Gary (Sec 1-14-27) After attending Montana State University for two years, where he majored in pre-veterinary medicine, Gary, son of Merlin Gershmel, returned to Winnett. He took over the management of the family ranch, as his father had accepted the position of county manager.

On the ranch he raised hay and grain and built up a herd of registered Charolais cattle. He also had a small herd of Maine-Anjou cattle, including some purebreds from France and Canada. He was very active in cattle breed associations, both on the state and national levels.

He served on several National Charolais Association committees, served for two terms as president of the American Maine-Anjou Association, and for one term as president of the World Maine-Anjou Association. These meetings took him to many points in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Gary married Linda Matovich on May 7, 1966. Linda, the daughter of Phil and Bette (Sult) Matovich, had grown up on a cattle ranch in the Musselshell River country. She graduated from Garfield County High School and attended Eastern Montana College for two years. (See also MATOVICH — Musselshell River)

Gary and Linda have six children — Lani, who married Lynn Olson August 20, 1988, and works for the SCS Office in Lewistown; Gard, Gane, Grant, Lacy and Leila.

In 1972 Gary received the Jaycees' Montana Outstanding Young Farmer award. He put in the first circle sprinkler system in the county. It worked fine until the dry years dried up McDonald Creek. Gary finally was forced to sell out due to drought, the illness and death of his parents, and financial reverses. (See also GERSHMEI — Winnett)

GERSHMEL, Merlin (Sec 1-14-27) In 1931 Merlin married Hattie Bohn, who was born in Chicago, Illinois, on June 30, 1908, and who had come with her parents and family to homestead on McDonald Creek in 1912. Merlin and Hattie's marriage in Lewistown, Montana, was witnessed by Myra Bohn and Harold Gershmel. (See also BOHN)

Merlin and Hattie had two children — Myrna "Mitzi" (1932) and Gary (1936). Merlin worked in Waldrop's store as a butcher from 1932 to 1937. In October of 1937 the family moved to Fairfield, Montana, and Merlin became proprietor of the Weaver Grocery. He built an addition to the back of the building and arranged to buy cream from the local farmers to be shipped to a Great Falls creamery. This venture did not prove to be all that they had hoped, so they returned home to Winnett in June of 1938. Merlin again worked at the Winnett Mercantile Co. In 1943 Merlin and Hattie moved to the family farm, the former Harry Bowen homestead, which his father owned. Merlin also continued to work in town. Merlin was interested in politics and government, and in the election of November 5, 1940, he won a six-year term as county commissioner. This whetted his political appetite, and in 1952 and 1954 he was elected to serve as state representative of Petroleum County in Helena.

With all this experience, he was chosen by the county commissioners in July of 1956 as Petroleum County Manager, a position he held until November of 1970, when a bout with cancer forced him to give up the work he liked so well. He died February 12, 1974.

Hattie remained active on the farm — riding, fencing and driving tractor — even though she was "retired" in the town of Winnett. She loved people, the outdoors and a good game of cards. She passed away suddenly on October 20, 1984, of a heart condition.

Mitzi graduated from Winnett High School in 1950. She married Kenneth L. Davis in 1951 in Spokane.

State Representative Merlin Gershmel, Senator Kenneth Cole, and Merry Turniciliff, Petroleum County Director of Finance, watching Governor Hugo Aronson sign a favored bill.

524
Washington, where they still reside. They have three daughters.

Gary Gershel graduated from Winnett High School in 1954. (See also GERSHMEI—Winnett)

GERSMEHLS, Oscar L. (Sec 1-14-27) Oscar L. Gersmehl was born in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, on January 31, 1875. After attending Spencerian Business College, he changed the spelling of his last name to Gershmel. Caroline Weinhold, born in Adell, Wisconsin, on November 9, 1879, became Oscar’s bride in 1899.

In 1900 Oscar became a government mail clerk on the Milwaukee Road, stationed in Milwaukee. Two sons were born to the couple—Harold (1900) at Adell, and Merlin (1905) at Plymouth, Wisconsin.

In the early 1900s the family homesteaded in the Roundup, Montana, area, living near present-day Lake Mason for a few years before returning to Wisconsin. In 1918 Oscar purchased a farm near Winnett. Here he built up a fine ranch and home, continuing his regular railroad runs between Miles City and Butte.

Mr. Gershmel was a member of the Lutheran Church and the Masonic Lodge. He passed away in January of 1937. Rev. Oliver of the Methodist Church officiated. Mrs. Gershmel passed away November 6, 1940. She was a member of the Eastern Star. Services were held in the Methodist Church with Rev. Walter Leegg of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in charge.

Merlin “Butch” Gershmel attended Winnett schools until his senior year, when he quit to go to work. He worked in the mines at Butte for several winters. He and his brother, Harold, helped their parents on the farm. An article in the Winnett paper of May 9, 1930, told of one of their ventures:

“The Gershmel boys have set an egg record that all are entitled to shoot at. From September 1st to April 10th, they received $1194 for eggs and paid out $450 for feed. The eggs represented a 74 percent lay.”

“The Gershmel Bros. have a modern chicken house built by Wm. Hayes Smith and take good care of their hens. During the winter months, the men arise early in the morning and place lighted lamps in the chicken house. Gershmels have recently received 1000 baby chicks and plan on another profitable year of chicken raising and egg selling.”

Harold married Edith Donisthorpe of the Lewistown area and moved to Palmer, Alaska, in 1936. They had four children. Merlin married Hattie Bohn in 1931. (See also GERSHMEHLS and BOHN—Petrolia; and GERSHMEHLS—Winnett)

GORSUCH, Perry (Sec 32-14-29) Perry Gorsuch homesteaded about seven miles south of Winnett. He was married to Elizabeth “Lizzie” White, sister of Henry White, a neighboring homesteader.

Lizzie served as Winnett postmaster for 8½ years from August 25, 1917, until February 4, 1926. The school census of 1914 noted a dependent, Margaret Alexander (1905).

The family moved from here to Oilmont, Montana, where Lizzie again became involved in postal work.

GRANTIER, Larry While Larry and Marlene were still living on the Fraser Ranch on Flatwillow Creek, they became the owners of the Conoco bulk plant in Winnett. In 1977 they sold the business to Richard “Bud” Raben and moved to Three Forks.

They returned to this area in 1979, and with some partners, bought the Wayne Bratten Ranch. The ranch was later sold to John Greytak, with Grantiers retaining some acreage about one mile east of town. They have their home and buildings at that location. They also retained a pasture which borders the town of Winnett on the south and East.

All four of their children graduated from Winnett High School: Dave, in 1973; Larry Gene, in 1974; Deborah “Debbie,” in 1977; and Lori, in 1980.

Larry Gene spent one year at home after graduation, then served in the Navy for four years. He is married and goes to college in Bozeman. Debbi married Hank Olson, a rancher of Grassrange. They have three children—Laramie J. “L. J.” Tiffany, and Brittaney. Lori attended Miles City College for one year after high school. She married Rex Murnion. They have two children, Barney and Kristin. (See also GRANTIER—Winnett)

GREENE, Hammond (Sec 21-14-27) (See GREENE—Winnett) Mr. Greene’s land was leased to Pete Tuss.

GROBE, Wesley Henry (Sec 26-14-28) Wesley Henry Grobe, son of the Rev. William and Magdalena Grobe, was born May 16, 1886, at Silver Creek, Iowa. He grew to manhood there and later moved to Dresden, North Dakota. Leota Helen Smith was born October 10, 1888 in Benton County, Iowa.

Wesley and Leota were married in the home of Leota’s parents of La Porte City, Iowa. Wesley’s father, the Rev. William H. Grobe performed the ceremony. Wesley and Leota’s first child, Lella, was born in Dresden, North Dakota, April 6, 1912.

Although warned by experts that a 160-acre

Wesley Grobe Sr.

Leota Grobe
homestead, or even the 320 acres offered by the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, would not support a family. Wesley and Leota filed on a homestead in 1914 in what is now the Petrolia area.

When Wesley filed for his homestead, he gave his post office address as Roundup, Montana. Their second child, Phyllis, was born August 18, 1914 in Roundup.

When William Howard was born February 10, 1916, the family home address was given as Smith. William was born at Smith, as was Raymond Wesley "Pete" (1918).

There was plenty of rain in 1915 and 1916, and the Grobes enjoyed good crops. The 1917 rainfall was scanty and was even less in 1918. Bone-dry 1919 yielded only dust.

In 1920 Wesley, in an effort to make ends meet, took up a position as clerk in the Pullin Grocery Store of Winnett. The family moved into Winnett and lived in a tiny shack near the railroad. (W. T. 4-15-21) "W. H. Grobe has resigned his position as clerk at the Pullin Grocery Store, and the vacancy has been filled by P. E. Woodard." (W. T. 9-2-21) "The latest business enterprise to open in the city is the Winnett Grocery. doing business in the building formerly occupied by the Wyoming Rooming House on Main Street. William Grobe and Ed Loveland are the new proprietors. The building has been thoroughly renovated, and fixtures installed for the operation of the new institution."

In about 1924 the Grobes returned to Iowa, where Wesley was engaged in both the restaurant and the store business. Wesley Henry died in August of 1980.

In 1978 Lella. Pete and Pete's wife, Carolyn, visited the old homestead. They also visited two former schoolmates of the former Circle Bar School — Les and Vern Thompson.

Lella was killed in a car accident in 1980. Nephews William said of her: "Lella was an inspirational person in many ways. I want my grandchildren to know what a beautiful person she was, therefore I am trying to preserve memories of her and other relatives."

In 1981 William Howard Grobe Jr., grandson of Wesley Henry, also visited the Thompsons. Bill states: "We got a real cordial welcome and a lot of help (history) from Les."

William lives in Ten Sleep, Wyoming.

GROSBOLL, Harmon Harmon Grosboll from Atterberry, Illinois, arrived in Petroleum County in the early 1920s. He brought one son, Stanley, with him on his westward journey. He married Mrs. Ella Wiggins, widow of Volney Wiggins.

Mrs. Ella Wiggins had homesteaded east of her son, William, in the northern Kelley country. She was a local midwife. In the early years, when Winnett was still in its youth, Mrs. Wiggins operated Rimrock Hospital, which was located on 7th Avenue East in the Rimrock Addition to the town of Winnett. Many news items of the Winnett Times refer to baby births at the Rimrock Hospital. Mrs. Wiggins also cared for other patients of Dr. Alexander in her hospital.

Grosboll moved the building which had been the Rimrock Hospital to their country home on the south side of Flatwillow Creek in the Petrolia area. It was remodeled into a fine and comfortable home. Harmon was an eloquent public speaker, and was often asked to be master of ceremonies for programs in Winnett.

During the school year of 1929-1930, Stanley boarded with the Anton Aasrud family in Winnett and attended Winnett Elementary School. Sometime in the 1930s or very early 1940s Harmon returned to his former home in the East.

In 1941 Ella bought a home in Winnett, but in May of 1943 sold it and moved to Roseville, California, near the homes of her two sons, Max and Eddy Wiggins. Later she was admitted to the Masonic Home in Helena, Montana, where she passed away in September of 1951. She was buried in the Masonic Cemetery at Helena.

HALVERSON, Anton (Sec 18-14-29) Anton's home area in Sweden was known as the Aasrud Farm. After immigrating to the Petrolia area, marrying and having two children, Anton legally changed the family name to Aasrud.

HANSEN, Ernest Heinrich (Sec 12-13-29) Ernest H. Hansen was born in Ockholm, Germany, on May 19, 1877. He lived and worked on the family farm until he was about 16 years old. He had four brothers — Pete, Emil, Herman and Edward; and one sister, Alma Hansen (Wiggins).

Since Ernest didn't wish to serve, as was mandated, in the German army, he decided to go to America. He left Germany in 1894 with $75 in American money. He got on the train at New York bound for a German community in Iowa. He worked there for two years.

On January 2, 1889, he and Emil Nisson came to Montana by train to Custer Junction. From there they came to Flatwillow by mail stage. They stayed that night at Flatwillow. The next day Ernest and Emil walked about seven miles down the creek to B. F. Lepper's place. They worked for Lepper as ranch hands, grubbing sagebrush from the hay meadow.

In the spring of 1899 Ernest returned to Iowa for several months. There he received his citizenship papers. He worked on the railroad for a time but did not make out too well on $1.50 per 10-hour day, so he returned to the Lepper Ranch where he worked for another one and one-half years.

In 1902 Ernest became acquainted with a Swede by the name of Christ Nelson. Together they bought the Circle Bar Ranch. They acquired a band of sheep from Mr. Lepper to run on shares. They didn't do too well financially, so Ernest sold out to Nelson.

During this time, Ernest had filed on a homestead on the Box Elder-Flatwillow bottom near the junction of the two creeks, to raise cattle. This venture, too, was beset with trials. He sold his cattle when Mr. Winnett sold his in 1907. He then went to work for Mr. Winnett, where he met Una McAllister, a sister of Mrs. Johnny Woods. Una
Arnold worked on the Fort Peck Dam in 1936. He continued to work in construction until 1942 when he went into the armed services as a Marine. After the war, in 1946, Arnold, Joe Pitman and Jim Durnom built the cold storage and meat processing plant in Winnett. In 1947 Arnold went back into construction work. He married Dorothy Goodman in Prosser, Washington, and now lives in Roundup, Montana.

Erma married Floyd Damschen of Becket, Montana, in 1952. They moved to Lewistown, where three children were born — Floyd E. (1933), Robert R. (1937) and Kenneth M. (1938).

Ona left the area after graduating from Winnett High School in 1936. She married Merle E. Boorman, and they have two children — Jeri M. Boorman Randall (1944) and Betty Boorman Haylett (1947). Ona now lives in Spokane, Washington.

Archie left Winnett and became a carpenter on the railroad. He continued in that work until his retirement. He lives in Roundup.

Ernest's grandson, Kenneth Damschen, became the manager of the Ernest Hansen Ranch in 1964. (See also DAMSCHEN)


HANSON, Emma (Sec 19-14-29) Emma Thordarsan was born in Milwaukee in 1860. In 1875, along with her family, she moved to Chicago, Illinois, and lived there until she was united in marriage to Hannes T. Hanson. They moved to Pembina County, North Dakota, where two daughters, Esther and Florence Pearl, were born. Mr. Hanson died in 1910. In 1913 Mrs. Hanson, accompanied by Esther and Florence, moved to Montana and homesteaded at Petrolia.

Esther married Swain Myrdal, and Florence Pearl married Alvin C. Ingebo. Emma served as rural mail carrier between Winnett and Petrolia for a time. She later moved into the town of Winnett. (See HANSON — Winnett)

HANSON, William (Sec 12-14-28) William Hanson was a single man related to the Isaacsons. He had a place on the south side of Box Elder Creek in Section 12. When the creek flooded, his place was, no doubt, in jeopardy. He came in homestead days and left soon after proving up. His land is owned today by the Thompsons.

HASSETT, Charles (Sec 19-14-28) Charles and Sarah Hassett moved from Garnell to their homestead in Petrolia in 1912. Three children accompanied them — Clinton (1907), Lloyd (1908) and Anna (1909). Born here were Russell (1911), Wesley (1912), Archie (b. 1913, died 1916 and buried at Winnett) and Helen (1914).

Clinton remembers that at age seven or eight he was driving a four-horse team and plowing sod. The family lived in a one-room house with no floor at the time. Soon after they came to the homestead, a high wind came up that moved that house about twenty feet; it narrowly missed landing on a well which was being dug. No one
was hurt, everyone managing to move with the house! After that, the house was moved to a more sheltered spot near a hill.

In those days, the family didn’t have machinery to put up hay, so the only accumulation of feed was the straw stacks. This helped most years but was not enough in 1919, when a hard winter killed off lots of cattle and horses. The next year’s spring was very wet, and Clinton helped J. W. Brumett of Kelley with lambing. He says, “Those ewes were pretty heavy for a 13-year-old boy to lift into the wagon when they had to bring them into the shed.”

The weather turned dry again, so the family moved to Forestgrove, Montana, for a couple of years. In 1924 they moved to Oregon where Mr. Hassett was killed in a logging accident. The next spring Clinton and Lloyd returned to Winnett.

In 1926 Clinton broke a leg and was hospitalized for seven weeks. He finally was able to drive a plow team for his brother that summer doing summer fallowing. He had a hard time farming for a while, but eked out a living by trapping coyotes, beaver and skunks.

HASSETT, Clinton (Sec 33-14-28) In 1930 Clinton moved to the place he now owns. He homesteaded 320 acres of rough land for pasture. He had built a one-room log cabin on the present place and was living in it in 1934 when Cecil Miller came to work for him. That year they burned the spines off cactus so the sheep could eat them; it made good feed.

Inez Anderson Eld and Clinton were married in 1943, and Inez, her daughter Lenora, and Clinton lived in a little shack which eventually became the chicken coop. Inez herded sheep while Clinton farmed. Inez also taught at the Pilgrim School for one year and at the Petrolia School for one year. She served as the school clerk for many years. Together they built up a fine farm with a nice house which has been recently remodeled.

A few years ago Clinton tried to cross the creek while the creek was flooding. His vehicle was swept off the bridge, and Clinton almost drowned. He was rescued by young Russell Pierce, and the Kiehls helped to resuscitate him.

The Hassets regularly employ two men and furnish them a house and garden. Cecil and Lois Miller worked there until Cecil’s retirement. Henry and Margaret Braaten and family also lived and worked there for several years. Presently, Kenneth Carrell is employed. Clinton has been a community builder and valuable citizen of Petroleum County.

He helped to get the Petrolia Reservoir started and has served many times on the Petrolia Water Users’ Board.

Clinton enjoys writing poetry. In 1988 he was chosen by a panel of judges as poet of the year for his poem “Colors of the Season.” He was invited to Anaheim, California, for a three-day poets’ convention but declined the invitation. He was presented with a nice plaque.

Colors of the Season
Jack Frost has been real busy
Yes, busy as a bee,
Yet he has painted all the bushes
and nearly all the trees.

There are shades of red and yellow
And other colors too.
And if you look real closely
There are some of every hue.

These colors are the proof
That fall is here to stay
And the colder days of winter
Are surely on the way.

The leaves will soon be falling
To lay upon the ground.

To protect the roots from cold
And for mice to scurry ’round.

The colors of the seasons,
Are all in God’s great plan.
First, bright flowers of springtime
To brighten up the land.

Next, while busy as a beaver,
As we do our work each day.
We can see the pretty colors
Of leaves along our way.

And when those leaves have fallen
And the trees are bleak and gray.
We will have the white of winter
‘Til spring gets here to stay.

HASSETT, Lloyd Lloyd Hassett and Clinton Hassett were brothers. An article taken from the Winnett Times of 4-29-1926 states: "Miss Margaret Long and Mr. Lloyd Hassett were married in Lewistown, Montana, on Wednesday, April 7th. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hassett have grown up in the Winnett community and are receiving felicitations from their many friends here. They will make their home on a farm in Petroleum County."

HENRY, Clyde (Sec 26-14-28) Clyde was a homesteader. He served in World War I. Thompsons acquired his land by tax deed. They later sold the land to Kenneth Welter.

HENSCHEL, Fred (Sec 35-14-27) Frederick Henschel was born October 20, 1878, in Poland, but was of German descent. Julianna Moltzan was born February 11, 1894, in Poland, also of German descent. They were married in Chicago, Illinois, in 1912. Frederick had been married previously to Pauline Moltzan, but she had died, leaving Fred with three children — Bertha, Otto and Freida.

Henschels homesteaded eight miles southeast of Winnett near Elk Creek in 1914. Three children were born to Fred and Julianna — Leda, Ernest and Edna.

Bertha graduated from Winnett High School in 1926. She moved to Chicago where she worked in the plastic industry, becoming vice-president of the Chicago Die and Mold Plastic Corp. She also served as chairman of the Peterson Foundation. When Bertha Henschel Matthews Lippone retired due to ill health, she moved to Billings, Montana, where she now resides.

Otto married Rose Beck Schwarz and moved to California. He was killed in a car-pedestrian accident.

Freida married Alex Fox in Billings, Montana, in 1930. They farmed at St. Xavier, Montana, and Park City, Montana, until moving back to Billings where they have farmed since 1945. They raised sugar beets, corn, grain and cattle. Freida and Alex had three daughters, Pauline Fox Steinmetz lives in Park City, Montana. Beverly Fox Owens lives in Billings. Arlene Fox Bailey died in 1986 in Kalispell.
Leda and Ernest both graduated from Winnett High School in 1934, and Edna, in 1937. Ernest married Frances Sharkey of Flatwillow in 1937. They moved to Fairfield in 1938 and operated a 320-acre irrigated farm, consisting of a Grade A dairy, beef cattle, hay and grain. They had one son, Ernest “Bob.” Ernest Sr. died in August 1970. Leda married William Barchet. She died at 49 years of age.

Edna married Clayton Beck, who came to Winnett as a CCC enrollee. They owned and operated Beck's Heating and Supplies of Findlay, Ohio. Edna also worked 15 years for the Findlay schools as order clerk. Edna and Clayton had two children, Anita and Stephen.

Edna wrote some of her memories: "Prior to 1925, I remember my parents having a truck or touring car besides a horse and buggy or wagon to get around. My father hand made a sled that could seat six comfortably. In 1928 they bought their first new Chevy car, taking their first trip to Edmonton, Canada, in it.

"The first home we had was destroyed by fire in 1926. Later we moved a house from Winnett, adding three bedrooms to that. We had to haul all of our water, for drinking as well as washing, from a well on the Rae place (which I still own) and from the Clinton Hassett farm. Our livestock were watered by a well and also at Flatwillow Creek. We raised lots of sheep, selling both lambs and wool.

"We milked from 15-20 head of cows, selling cream and butter. Weather permitting, this was usually taken to the Lewistown Creamery. We always had hogs and all kinds of horses. My parents were noted for their early produce, such as onions, radishes and carrots which were iced down in barrels and taken to stores in Lewistown, Roundup, and Winnett.

"We always had turkeys and geese, which were butchered at Thanksgiving time, and these were taken to Lewistown to two stores. Clinton Hassett usually got in on that task. By 1940 my parents owned 2000 acres of land, besides leasing and renting other land. This land consisted of grazing and farm land.

"We all took our turn at herding sheep on account of the coyotes. Yes, how well I remember the grasshoppers in the 1930s and also the Mormon crickets! In the spring and winter my two brothers used to hunt and trap coyotes and their pups. I believe they got 50 cents for each pup and sold pelts for $2.00.

"The winter of 1935-36 was terrible. We only lived eight miles from town, but the weather was so bad I did not see my parents for six weeks, while I was attending school and staying in the dormitory.

"At that time our family attended Lutheran Church services in the little white Winnett schoolhouse. A minister, Reverend Meyer, came from Lewistown. Services were once a month, weather permitting. Sometimes there would be only a family or two, with the collection plate only having a dollar or so in it.

"The Petrolla and Box Elder communities had summer picnics on the creeks beneath the cottonwood trees, with games and contests for all. Threshing time was something, with different neighbors helping out. Later on, we bought the first combine in the county from Elmer Eager.

"When my sister, Leda, and brother, Ernie, and I were in school, we would drive from home every day to school. Sometimes we were boarded out and later on we 'batched.' The last three years I was at the dormitory."
Mr. Henschel died May 12, 1941, and was buried in the Lewistown City Cemetery. Mrs. Henschel married Arthur Post in Chicago in 1943. Arthur died in 1955. She passed away on January 5, 1979, at 85 years and was buried in Lewistown City Cemetery.

Otto Henschel died in 1940 and was buried in Englewood Cemetery, Los Angeles, California. Ernest died in August of 1970 and was buried in Memory Gardens, Sun River, Montana.

Much of this history was supplied by Beverly Owens, granddaughter of the Otto Henschels. She also added some of her own memories: “We three girls have a lot of memories of visiting Grandma and Grandpa Henschel. One memory is of the dresser drawer that held LOTS of rattles from the rattlesnakes they had killed. We still have a healthy respect for all snakes!”

“We remember the white horse, Dolly, and the summer I spent helping Aunt Leda tend the sheep – all the beautiful wild flowers, especially the buttercups. We also have fond memories of Mr. Albert Shuster, the gentleman who worked for Grandma and Grandpa for years. He always had a kind word and time to talk to us. “We had the pleasure of getting acquainted with one of Mom’s teachers, Mrs. Alvin Ingebo, when she moved to Billings. Freida has a lot of fun memories of her school days – the miles they had to walk to school, sometimes getting there late because she and Otto would take time to check the trap lines.”

The Henschels were highly respected by the local citizenry. This little incident was overheard in the post office in about 1937. Otto Moore, the sheriff, and local tease, knowing that Henschels had just purchased a new car, asked Juliana, “Well, how do you and Fred get along with that new car?” Without batting an eye Juliana quickly answered him, “Oh, yust fine! Fred, he drives, and I step mit the gas on!”

HOYLE, Alfred (Sec 9-14-28) Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Hoyle and their two sons, Les and Len, arrived in the Petrolia area in 1912 or 1913. Al and Les both homesteaded near the confluence of McDonald and Box Elder creeks. Al and his wife, Mary, owned and operated a small store there. On July 14, 1916, the post office of Hoyle was established. Mary Hoyle was the postmaster and served until the post office closed August 31, 1918.

Al also served as barber for the community and made scheduled trips to Winnett, where he barbered in the Log Cabin Saloon. Sometime before 1921 the Al Hoyle moved to Winnett.

In 1931 Al took over the jitney mail route which had formerly been run by son Len and moved back to the Hoyle Ranch. He had rented his filling station in Winnett to Kenneth Cole. In 1934 he returned to Winnett. (See also HOYLE — Winnett)

HOYLE, Len (Sec 3-14-28) In November of 1929, Len, who had been a barber in Winnett, decided to return to the Hoyle Ranch in Petrolia. A news item in the Winnett Times of November 1929 stated: “Mr. Hoyle plans to develop his ranch east of Winnett. He will raise rabbits and turkeys, milk wild cows, plant a garden and do his darndest to act like a farmer. He has moved his residence to his ranch at the mouth of McDonald Creek and is now comfortably domiciled therein.”

“Len is taking to farming like a duck to water. Milking wild cows and cleaning out the stable reminds him of the days when he scrubbed decks on board battleships during the World War, when he served in Uncle Sam’s Navy. Len says the only thing he has to guard against when shaving a customer is that he doesn’t forget and think he has a wild cow in the chair.” After one and one-half years of being a farmer, he moved back to Winnett. (See also HOYLE — Winnett)

HURST, Charles (Sec 30-14-28) Mr. Hurst was a prominent rancher in the Flatwillow district of Petrolia for a number of years. He had large holdings there in partnership with his brother Fred.

Old-timers recall that Charles had only one arm and that he was known locally as “Wingy.” He was also known as a most honorable and industrious citizen. He died in November of 1924 and was survived by his wife, Eleanor Alexander Hurst, and two brothers, Fred and Robert, both of Stanford, Montana.

In 1925 Mrs. Eleanor Hurst moved into Winnett, planning to make a permanent residence there. With her attitude in business organization, she was made Petroleum County’s deputy clerk and recorder from 1925 to 1927.

HURST, Fred (Sec 29-14-28) Fred Hurst homesteaded in the Petrolia area on a section adjacent to his brother Charles. He later moved to Stanford, Montana, where he and his brother, Robert, were in partnership on a ranch.

INGEBO, Andrew K. (Sec 24-14-28) Andrew K. Ingebo was born in Norway on April 1, 1852, and immigrated to America in the early 1900s. He settled for a time in Iowa. Caroline Elverum was born on November 20, 1853, in Union Mills, Wisconsin. She moved to Iowa and there met and married Andrew. Eight children were born — Oliver I., Carl, Julia, Oliver II., George, Alvin, Annie and Mabel.

The homestead fever hit them, and in 1911 they all decided to head west (all, that is, except Oliver I., who had died in infancy, and Carl, who was operating a hardware store in Veblen, South Dakota).

They selected a spot in Montana and built a home on what later was to become the site of the Petrolia Post Office. Andrew eventually became the postmaster and served continuously until the office was closed in 1926. Andrew was very independent and of a somewhat cantankerous nature. When the children were all grown and in their own homes, Caroline often went to live with different members of her family. Andrew continued to live on his homestead until it was sold to his son-in-law, Anton Aarsrud. He moved to Winnett and lived in a small building behind his son Alvin’s house. He died March 31, 1937.
Caroline passed away in the home of Julia. Both were buried in the Lewistown City Cemetery.

Oliver was a photographer and took many fine community pictures, some of which will be found in this book. He was not in the country very long, as he died in 1912.

Julia, "Fillie," was old enough to file on her own parcel of land south of her father's homestead. She fell in love with Anton Halverson. Andrew K., though, like so many doting fathers, did not think Anton was good enough for her and refused to consent to their marriage. In 1913 Andrew returned to Norway for a visit. The two young folks took advantage of his absence and were married. When Andrew returned, there was nothing he could do but storm! (See also AASRUD)

George homesteaded in Sec 24-14-27. (See also INGEB, George) Alvin C. homesteaded in Sec 24-14-27. He married Pearl Hanson, daughter of Emma Hanson, in a beautiful outdoor ceremony at Petrolia. Alma Hansen (Wiggins) sang and played her harp. Ingebos moved to Winnett in 1919 (See also INGEB — Winnett).

Annie homesteaded on Box Elder Creek (Sec 12-14-28). She married Jack Birmingham, and they had one daughter, Jean, and a boy, Peter. They built a home in Winnett but lived there only a short time. The house was moved to the Sandaker place in the Petrolia area after Birmingham moved to Missouri.

Mabel worked in Winnett at the Woods Drug Store. She met George White, a clerk in Rasmussen's store. They were married December 7, 1920, and built a home in Winnett. During the oil boom, in the early 1920s, George went to work for an oil company. The Whites moved to Lewistown in about 1924. They had two sons, John and James.

INGEB, George M. (Sec 24-14-27) George, son of A. K. Ingebo, homesteaded the land which later became known as the William Welter place. George liked to operate with big machinery. He owned a threshing machine powered by a steam engine.

With this same engine, he plowed for many of his neighbors with a ten-bottom moldboard plow. It would have taken many years of horse and man-killing work to tear up all the land with horse-drawn equipment.

He also ran a sawmill with this engine. He sawed the lumber for the Circle Bar and Pilgrim schools from cottonwood logs. He also sawed pine lumber.

George married Marie Vrchota Jelinek in 1920. Marie was a widow with two children — George "Jinks" and Margaret "Peg," both in their early teens at the time of Marie's marriage. (See also JELINEK — Flatwillow and Petrolia)

George and Marie became the parents of a son, Alvin P., on March 17, 1922. Alvin earned a master's degree in education and served six years in the Navy during World War II. He married Frances A. Young, and the couple had nine children — Denise, Valerie, Marlene, Daryl, Kenneth, Yvonne, George, Michael and Jennifer.


ISAACSON, John (Sec 14-14-28) John and Mary Isaacson had two children, William Leonard and Lillian. They came to the Petrolia Bench during the homestead days of 1913. John was postmaster of the Smith Post Office for several years.

Isaacsons farmed and had 100-bushel-per-acre oats one year. That had to be a wet year! The family fell on hard times in 1919 and left. Thompsons acquired their land for taxes.

William Len Isaacson married Mildred Atwood and lived in Winnett where they raised their family — Doris (Ostler), Louise (Bacon), Viola (Calvin) and William L. Jr. Lillian married Howard Gorman, and they had two children — Laverne "Buster" and Gordon "Snooky." Later Lillian married Carl Howry of Winnett. (See also GORMAN — Cat Creek; HOWRY and ISAACSON — Winnett)

JACKSON, J. N. (W.T. 2-16-23) "John Nevie Jackson, born at Fort Griffin, Texas, on the 22nd of December, in the year 1877, departed this life on the 9th of February in the year of 1923 at his home near Petrolia, Fergus County, Montana.

"He leaves to mourn his death, his mother, Mrs. C. A. Jackson; two sisters, Mrs. Anna Jackson, residing near
Petrolia, and Mrs. Grace Harding, residing at Winnett; and a brother, Harry Jackson, residing at Petrolia.

"Deceased was 45 years of age at the time of his demise and unmarried. He had been in poor health for some years. The funeral services were conducted at the Leader Hotel in Winnett with Rev. T. T. Fike officiating. The family deeply appreciated the loving kindness and sympathy of all friends and neighbors at this time of deep sorrow."

JACOBI, Ignatz Ignatz was a single man who homesteaded on land just east of the Box Elder bridge on the south side of the road. He lived there many years. He died in Palmyra, Missouri, on April 19, 1930, while with a cousin Ernest Gebhart.

JELINEK, George "Jinks" and Margaret "Peg" Peg and "Jinks" Jelinek came to the Petrolia community from the Yellow Water area when their mother, Marie Jelinek, married George M. Ingebo in 1920.

Both Peg and Jinks attended the Petrolia School and both graduated from Winnett High School — Peg in 1928 and Jinks in 1929.

For extra school money, Peg worked on the farm in the summer and cleaned the Aristo Theater during the school year. A Winnett Times news item of March 30, 1928, made note of Peg's entertaining ability: "Margaret Jelinek was adjudged the winner of the vaudeville contest at the Aristo Saturday night. Miss Jelinek delivered two humorous readings. The verdict was rendered by the clapping of the audience."

Jinks was an enterprising young man, even as a 13-year-old. An ad in the Winnett Times of 12-16-1921 read: "Lost — A FINE MINK HIDE. Finder please return to George Jelinek, as soon as possible, as he wants it before Christmas."

Peg graduated from St. Patrick's School of Nursing as a registered nurse in 1931. She worked as a registered nurse in many places and retired in 1970 in Oregon. Peg wrote in 1985, "Needless to say I am still a night person. After twenty years of working nights, I am an owl! The last ten to thirteen years have been good to me. I feel very much that I have earned my place in the sun."

Throughout the years, Jinks has enjoyed writing and has contributed many articles of local history to the Winnett Times. Jinks was interested and participated in this history project, even until a week before his death. His last Christmas letter, written by his family, says: "George John Jelinek — May 17, 1908 to December 7, 1988. Philosopher, Humorist, Husband, Father, and Friend. This will be 'The Scribe's' last Christmas letter. He died the evening of December 7th after a normal active day.

"George expressed his cautioned optimism of the possibilities for another year, for a return to the place which stores all the memories of his youth, Winnett. We, his family, will return as surrogates to live his one last dream.

"These last few years at Oak Crest, living and associating with loving, caring people and working for the future, were of great importance to Dad. The Oak Crest 'family' has been wonderful support to Mom and the family. Their caring and compassion have greatly eased our loss.

"Several years back, Dad specified what we should do when this time came: 'Have a service (if they wish to) and get-together at a good eating place to be conducted by son, Howard, or Ken Scally, or both. No sadness. I have had a wonderful life. I have been blessed with ability to work, play, and have had the love of a wonderful woman, my wife Madge, and the love and understanding of four wonderful super children.'

"We have tried to be true to his wishes." (Jinks' family) Some of the Winnett community attest they heard a message from heaven on December 25, 1988:

"Hark, the herald angels cheer!
Jinks sparkles up our atmosphere!"

(See also JELINEK — Flatwillow)

JENSEN, Chris (W. T. 1-28-1917) "Most of us have heard of the famous Mexican 'arena' and the notorious bullfighters, but few of us know that there is among us a man who does not have to take off his hat to any of the famed gladiators of old. Mr. Chris Jensen, living about six miles east of Winnett, needs no introduction to our readers, but permission must be asked to substitute a large black wolf for the bull.

"One day a couple weeks ago, while casually walking across the Thompson place, the attention of Chris was drawn to two black wolves attacking a calf owned by Chris and his brother. Chris frightened the wolves away; returning the next day to the scene, he saw the wolves again and started in pursuit.

"One of the animals disappeared quickly while the other took refuge in an old barn on the place. Chris soon closed the barn doors, making a prisoner of Mr. Wolf. He then secured a large club and joined Mr. Wolf in the barn.

"Chris led with the club and the fight was on. After sparring for two full rounds, Chris pulled his coat off, deter-
mined to make a clean victory of it. For half an hour the fight was even. Chris clubbing the wolf, the self snapping and endeavoring to eat his blonde adversary alive. Finally Chris dealt the wolf a fatal blow on the head, and his right hand was raised.

"The Jensen boys have the hide of the big wolf stretched before their fireplace and should you happen to stop at their cabin one of these evenings, you could undoubtedly induce Chris to relate his thrilling experience in a very interesting manner."

(W. T. 8-19-1921) "Chris Jensen, who resided on McDonald prior to his services in Siberia, is home from an extended visit with his parents in Denmark."

JENSEN, William (Sec 35-14-29) A child, Ellis, was born in 1908.

JERUE, Edward J. (Sec 33-14-27) Edward Jerue was an early property owner. (W. T. 10-14-1914) "Mr. and Mrs. E. D. Jerue will leave for Benton Harbor, Michigan, in a few days to spend the winter."

Another Jerue family made their home in the area.

The 1914 school census records reveal that Louis A. and Iva A. Jerue had two children — Edward D. (1904) and Lewis H. (1906). These children were not listed on the 1919 census.

A school was built to accommodate the homesteaders' children. It was known as the Jerue School for some years, later renamed the Pilgrim School.

JOHNSON, Charles (Sec 6-14-28) Charles Johnson was an elderly man who lived on what was known as the Underdal farm, six miles east of Winnett on McDonald Creek.

His tragic death in one of the last winters on record for this part of the country was described by Louisa Wilson. She was writing to her future husband, George Deethardt, under the date of November 23, 1919.

"One day Charles Johnson was over to Albert Bohn's and said that the next day he was going to town. That was November 7. I think. The next week, Wednesday, Mr. Bohn was going by Johnson's place and saw a horse hitched to a wagon by one trace, and another horse in the pasture with a harness on.

"He went to the house to see what was the matter and found no one. On examination, he found Charles' dead body under the snow about halfway between the house and barn. All that was visible were his feet. From examination, they found that he must have been hitching up the team, and they started to run, knocking him down, and pulling the wagon over him.

"His skull was fractured, and his body badly bruised, but from the condition of the snow, they decided he must have struggled quite a lot. There was a calf tied in the stable, starved to death, and so were all the chickens and pigs, and from the gaunt conditions of the horses, they decided that he had been dead since that day, over a week before, when he told Mr. Bohn that he was going to town."

NOTE: Thanks to Inez Ruth Fahrman, Louisa's daughter, the library has a file of Louisa's letters that tell of other problems of that devastating winter.

JOHNSON, Richard When Mr. and Mrs. Richard Johnson of Glasgow arrived as new employees on the Petrolia Angus Ranch, someone inquired about the size of their family. Said Mrs. Johnson, "Oh, we have no children, but we have two dogs and two cats." (W. T. 10-7-1971)

JOHNSTON, Ralph (Sec 7-14-27) Ralph Johnston was a neighbor of Ralph Bowen. Mr. Johnston signed as a witness for the final proof of Ralph Bowen's additional homestead on April 8, 1921.

KESSLER, John B. (W. T. 11-4-1921) "Mr. John B. Kessler expects to leave this week on a business trip to Chicago. Mr. Kessler and family are making their home at the Kistner Ranch house for the winter."

KIEHL, Charles J. (See KIEHL — Winnett)

KIEHL, Walter Jack Jack Kiehl is the son of Charlie Kiehl and Mirth Winnett Kiehl. In 1950 Charlie and Mirth bought the present Kiehl place from Clinton Hassett. Jack lived in a little tar paper shack on the newly acquired land until the bunkhouse at Cat Creek was acquired. This rather historic and well-used building was remodeled into a nice three-bedroom home with bath, hall and living room and the large kitchen and dining room. This became Jack's home when he and Janet Ann Weingart were married September 6, 1958, in Lewistown at the Methodist Church.

Janet's parents were Rita and Alex Weingart who lived in the Dovetail area. (See also WEINGART — Dovetail)

Jack and Janet, with their boys Dwane and Orren, have run the ranch since their marriage. They raise cattle, sheep, and Morgan horses. The horses are primarily for their own use, but they occasionally will sell one. They raise hay on irrigated land.

Jack has served on the Federal Land Bank Board and on the Petrolia Water Users' Board. He served in the Marine Corps during the Korean War.

Dwane Kiehl graduated from Winnett High School in 1985. He married Patti Bevis on August 10th, 1986. Patti graduated from high school in 1986. They both attended Billings Vo-Tech Center. Dwane took a course in diesel mechanics. Patti graduated from a course in bookkeeping. Patti is the daughter of Burton K. Bevis and Judy Ziesmer Bevis. (See also BEVIS — Cat Creek and Winnett)

Patti and Dwane have two children — Cassie and Preston.

Orren Kiehl was born November 11, 1967. He attended high school in Winnett and graduated in 1986. On July 30, 1988, he was married to Laura Kuhry in the Methodist Church in Grassrange, Montana. Laura is the daughter of Anthony and Betty Manuel Kuhry. Laura was born at Lemoore Air Base in California, June 23, 1969. She graduated from Grassrange High School in 1987 and attended college in Missoula for one year, majoring in pharmacy. Laura and Orren live in a house on the Hassett..."
place, just west of the home ranch. (See also BEVIS and KIEHL — Winnett)

KINDT, William F. (Sec 21-14-27) W. F. Kindt began his lifetime career of bookkeeping at the age of 15 when he was employed by a railroad company in Chicago. After starting employment, he attended night school and became a traveling auditor, being transferred to various eastern locations.

On April 12, 1912, he was married to Florence Hagedorn at Crown Point, Indiana. She attended teacher’s training in Indiana and later switched to nurse’s training where she completed two years training.

Their honeymoon was cut short, as on April 14, 1912, Louise and Charlie Bohn, Al Bohn and son, Ray, and W. F. Kindt came west. Florence Kindt and Al Bohn’s wife, Hattie, and daughters, Hattie and Myra, joined the others in May 1912. Hattie Bohn, Louise Bohn and Florence Kindt were sisters and Al and Charlie Bohn were brothers, so the venture was a family affair.

The group was mislocated, and until the land locator gave each couple their proper place, they lived in a makeshift shelter made of railroad-car doors and tarpaulin near the Sibberts’ place on Elk Creek. (See also BOHN — Teigen)

As with all homesteaders, times were difficult. The one crop which never failed, however, was babies; and seven children were born to the Kindts. One baby died in infancy. The other six were William F. Jr. (1913), Roy A. (1914), Helen M. (1918), Irene M. (1920), Fern M. (1923) and Raymond H. (1925).

Florence never cared for the homestead life, not because of the hardships for her, but felt that her children were being deprived of the essentials of life. When asked why she never had a fever thermometer in the house (particularly after having had two years nurse’s training) she replied that she brought one from Chicago, but stopped using it when a child was ill as “there was no doctor when we first came here, no way to get to him if there would have been, and no money to pay him. So one day I threw it as far across the prairie as I could and did the best I could in caring for illnesses.” (Fern Kindt)

When Bill Kindt became Petroleum County’s first treasurer, the family moved to Winnett.

KISTNER (W. T. 11-4-1921) “Mrs. Max Hagen, who has been visiting her sister, Mrs. Kistner, for the past six weeks, returned recently to her home in Chicago.”

(W. T. 12-30-1921) “Manager Kistner of the Black Hawk (oil company) had a crew of men engaged the first of the week in dragging a road to a company well southeast of Winnett. This was necessary in order to permit the big trucks to operate.”

KNAPP, Perry (Sec 8-14-27) Elizabeth Myers, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Myers, and Perry Knapp, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Knapp, both of Lewistown, were married in Winnett at the Methodist parsonage February 20, 1943.

They worked and lived in Hobson until coming to Winnett in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Perry worked for the State Water Conservation Board on the Petrolia Dam project. Knapps purchased the former F. C. Merten home on top of the rimrock. While living there, a son Toby was born.

In 1952 Knapps sold the ranch to C. J. Knutson. (W. T. 7-10-52) “Mr. and Mrs. Perry Knapp and son left for Hamilton. Perry is employed there by the State Water Conservation Board.” Knapps later settled in Helena until Perry’s retirement.

Beth and Perry had two sons, Toby and Charles. Toby is married and has one son. Charles is married, lives in Billings, and has a son and a daughter. Beth and Perry currently live in Billings with Charles (1989).
KNUTSON, Charles I. (Sec 8-14-27) C. I. Knutson related: "I was born November 7, 1915, at home in Hiddenwood TWP, Ward County, North Dakota. I grew up and went to country school and then to high school in Makoti, North Dakota. I walked to school much of the time and used a horse and sled in the winter.

"I spent 1936-37 in a CCC camp in Priest Lake, Idaho, building roads, fighting fires, cutting firewood and driving truck. I spent 1938 in Wyoming and South Dakota, punching cows on cow and calf operations.

"I was drafted in 1941 and went to Fort Snelling at St. Paul, Minnesota. I enlisted in the Air Force and went to Sheppard Field in Wichita Falls, Texas, and was assigned to a B24 bomber group. Then I went to gunnery school in Las Vegas, Nevada. I flew to Hawaii in the fall of 1942, where I was on submarine patrol. Later it was on to the South Pacific and Guadalcanal where the action was. I was discharged in 1943 with malaria and asthma.

"In 1944 I came to Billings and went to work for R. B. Fraser. He had just acquired the Lepper Ranch and was in the process of moving up on Flatwillow Creek near Winnett. With five other cowboys, I trailed horses from Pryor Creek to that ranch in the fall and then stayed around Winnett.

"I married Lucille Merten in 1947 and went to Oregon for a honeymoon, but ended up staying there a year. We moved back to Winnett and worked on several ranches and on the county road crew. Then I bought the farm where Fred Merten homesteaded from Perry Knapp, and lived there until we purchased the Elliott Trump home in Winnett.

"I went to work at the courthouse as custodian and became county brand inspector. In 1963 I became the deputy sheriff and in 1970 became sheriff, a position I held until my retirement in 1975."

"Lucille told her part of the story: "I. Lucille (daughter of John and Velma Merten), was born in Winnett in 1928, in the house that was my home for 19 years. Since the first born was a girl, it was hoped I would be a boy and the name Charles was picked for me. (I didn't find this out until after I had married a Charles.)"

"Being a girl didn't stop me from getting to do boy things with my dad. I remember getting to carry a lunch box and go out on the job when he worked for the State Highway. The highways were still gravel at this time and there was not too much traffic. My job was to throw the big rocks off the roadway.

"When my dad had the Broadway Garage, I made several trips with him in the tanker truck to Laurel, Montana, from where he hauled the fuel for the garage. Sometimes it took a couple of days for the trip.

"My dad was very interested in railroading and got me a couple of rides on the engine of the local train while they were switching cars of grain and oil. Frank Bastian was in charge of the oil loading rack then.

"Much time was spent at my folks' farm south of town during the seeding and harvest time. Then the whole family moved out there, when it was time for the threshing crew to come. Bill Youderian had the threshing machine, horses and wagons.

"For playmates in town, I had Bobby Nelson on the left and Ruthie Stormwind across the alley. In later years, Betty Bennett and Barbara Kauth went on the camping trips to South Fork with us. Dad would haul Mother and four to six kids plus the tents, groceries, etc. needed for one or two weeks of camping and fishing.

"In 1937 I, along with Mary Lou Bastian, Virgie Senst, Mabel Redd, and Betty Youderian, joined the Jr. Auxiliary girls here. The group was first under the leadership of Grace Waldrop and then Mother, Velma Merten. At 18, I graduated to senior membership in Legion Auxiliary and am still a member, having served as president two times. I graduated from Winnett High School in 1947."

"Red and "Mert" raised two sons — Russell "Rusty" and Charles "Chuck." Rusty graduated from Winnett High School in 1967. (See KNUTSON — Winnett) Chuck graduated in 1972. After high school Chuck worked on several ranches. He also worked with Kenny Welser in gold mining at Ennis. In Livingston and Bozeman, he worked at a Ford dealership.

LONING, John (Sec 9-14-29) According to the Winnett Times, on May 23, 1930, John Loning "went to Lewistown and closed a deal for eight purebred heifers which he will bring to his Jitney ranch. Mr. Loning plans to make this little herd the start of a large herd of purebred animals."

Mrs. Loning was the school dormitory cook in 1932.

MCBRIDE, John (Sec 15-14-28) John, his wife and daughter, Montana, homesteaded but left after the hard year of 1919.

McCONOCHIE, Hazel (Sec 24-14-27) Hazel Duvall came to the Lewistown, Montana, area with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Duvall in 1909. She taught school in Lewistown until June of 1913 when she was married to Stewart McConochie.

Stewart, the son of Robert Nesbit and Annie McConochie, was born February 29, 1880. He and Hazel acquired land in Hazel's name about three miles west of the present Petrolia Dam and south of Elk Creek.

Stewart served as deputy county attorney for this area in May 1914 and 1915 and as county attorney from January of 1917 to December 31, 1920. In December of 1934 he was elected District Judge of the Tenth Judicial District, a position he held until retiring in May of 1955. Stewart died in July of 1955.

The McConochies had two girls — Jean and Marilyn. The family made their home in Lewistown.

MERTEN, Fred C. (Sec 8-14-27) Lucille Merten Knutson wrote about her grandparents: "Fred C. Merten, son of Friedlich Christian Merten and Wilhemina Zimmerman Merten, was born in Lomira, Wisconsin, on February 13, 1859.

"He had been previously married to Theresa Ludtke, who was the mother of Rose and John. Theresa died soon..."
after John was born and Fred's sister took care of the children. In 1895 Fred married Emille Hetzler, the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Henry Hetzler of LaGrange, Missouri.

"Fred was a grain dealer and they lived in both Sisseton and Holmquist. South Dakota. It was in this business that he lost a leg. After loading grain railroad cars, he started them moving. In jumping from one car to the other, he slipped, fell, and his leg was crushed.

"He also had a general merchandise store in Holmquist, and there are still remnants of this on his original place — such as business papers from 1904 and shipping crates with the invoices and tags to Winnett from South Dakota. I have a package of needles with his store advertisement on it.

"While Fred was in Montana building a house for son John, he filed on his own homestead saying, 'Since you kids are going to Montana, I'm going too.' He got this homestead which is located east of town, near the rimrocks, from a relinquishment in 1912. The place had been homesteaded by Hazel McConochie, wife of former Judge Stewart McConochie. Fred added more land to it and at one time had 680 acres. Emille acquired 40 acres when they moved here in March of 1915.

"They farmed and had milk cows, chickens, and very productive gardens. An ad in the Winnett Times of 5-27-21 stated: 'Wanted — buyer for 40 quarts of milk to be delivered daily.' Grandma was a very conservative person, so much of the time she walked to town carrying cream and fresh eggs to customers.

"They were caretakers of the well and pipeline that supplied water to the city reservoir. In return for this service, the City Light Company, who were also in charge of city water, wired the Merten house and chicken house for electricity.

"I remember Grandma playing the organ for entertainment after Sunday dinners. In the 1940s they donated their organ to the Methodist Church.

"Grandpa spent many hours and days making baskets from willows. He supplied Brattens and our home with laundry baskets and a baby basket for Janet.

"Emille died in 1942 and was buried in Lewistown. Grandpa's daughter, Rose Bratten, came and helped get ready for the big auction sale in 1942. The place was sold to Charles Bohn, and Grandpa Fred went to live with the Alvin "Shorty" Brattens at Corvallis. He passed away June 28, 1944, and was buried in Lewistown.

MERTEN, John (Sec 19-14-27) See MERTEN - Winnett

MILLER, Cecil Cecil Miller grew up in the Kelley community, attended the Kelley and Sheldon schools, and worked on several ranches. He also worked with his father, Roy, in Winnett when Roy had charge of the city water supply. Cecil did a lot of digging and repairing of old water lines.

He married Donna Marshall in Winnett. They had three children — Blanche, Ruth and Betty. Cecil worked for Clinton Hassett for a time, then went to Stanford, Montana, for about three years. He and Donna divorced.

Cecil married Lois Wilson at Stanford. They returned to Winnett to work for Clinton Hassett. Their three children — Clinton, Alvin and Bonnie — attended the Box Elder and Winnett schools.

In 1982 Cecil and Lois bought the Ernest Bump house and moved to Winnett, although Cecil continued to work part time for Clinton. Lois passed away September 9, 1985. Cecil retired in 1984 after working for Clinton Hassett for 50 years.

On July 17, 1988, Cecil died in a Billings hospital after suffering a heart attack at home. Services were held in the old Winnett School gymnasium, and burial was in the Winnett Cemetery. (See MILLER — Kelley and Winnett)
MOORE, Arthur (Sec 32-14-28) See MOORE — Winnett

MORFORD, Ruben A. (Sec 24-14-27) (W. T. 4-1-21) "Ruben A. Morford, who spent the winter in Lewistown, returned to his farm east of Winnett the forepart of the week and will remain here for the summer."

MORROW, G. W. and Webb (W. T. 10-7-14; reprinted 11-4-21) "Webb Morrow, son of G. W. Morrow, general townsite agent for the Milwaukee, arrived Saturday with his household goods and established residence on his homestead, which joins the townsite on the south. He went to Lewistown yesterday after his family."

MURRAY, Arthur (Sec 32-14-28) Les Thompson remembered that Arthur, a homesteader, at one time owned a racing Model T Ford. Les challenged him to a race using the Thompson Model T.

MYRDAL, Swain K. (Sec 18-14-29) The Myrdal home was known as "The Bungalow," a place that became the community center after Myrdals moved away. Box socials, dances, and picnics were held there. It was on land now owned by Danshens.

Mrs. Swain "Esther" Myrdal was a daughter of Emma Hanson and a sister of Pearl Ingebo. Two of the Myrdal children were Evelyn and Bud. They attended the Circle Bar School.

NELSON, Carl (Sec 28-14-29) In 1914 Carl and Mae Nelson and their two children — Robert and Hulda — drove out from Minnesota in a Model T Ford. They were accompanied by Ed Loveland, Bob's half brother, and Grandmother Chubb. Their wagons, horses, household gear, etc. came to Melstone on an immigrant train.

They drove out to the homestead location north of Weede, took a look at the land, and Mae Nelson said, "No way will I live on such a place!" So they drove up Flatwillo Creek to Sam Smith's place.

Carl sold his Weede homestead land to a man by the name of Steiner. With the money he bought Sam Smith's place on Sec 28-14-29. It consisted of three miles of Flatwillo Creek bottom land.

Bob and his sister, Hulda, attended the Circle Bar School for a year or two, and the Thompson boys and the Nelson children became fast friends.

The family couldn't make a living on this land, so Nelsons bought the store at Weede from Rex Norman.

and Mrs. Nelson became the postmaster. When the store burned down in 1917, the Nelsens decided to leave.

After the fire, a man was sent out from Washington, D. C. to check the post office safe. He found that Mae had ten cents over what she should have, so they issued her a ten-cent check, which is still a keepsake of their family.

Bob and his wife, Irene, presently (in 1988) live in Roundup, Montana. Bob remembers hearing Alma Hansen (Wiggins) sing when she first came to live with her brother, Ernest, on the ranch.

NEWcombe, William H. (Sec 6-13-28) Mr. and Mrs. Newcombe had four children — Fred W. (1896) and John E. (1898) Grace (1902), Irene (1909). (W. T. 8-19-21) "Mrs. W. H. Newcombe and daughter, Irene, returned last week from a four-months visit with the former's son and sister in Canada. Their many friends welcome them home.”

(W. T. 10-28-21) "Miss Grace Newcombe, of the Winnett High School, spent the weekend with her parents at Hill Crest Ranch. She was accompanied by Grace Wilson of Winnett. The Hill Crest Ranch was about eight miles southeast of Winnett.”

Grace Newcombe graduated from Winnett High School with the class of 1923. She married E. B. Crane in August 1923. Grace was on the staff of the Winnett Times for three years, where she served as secretary, bookkeeper, proofreader and local editor. When she resigned in 1930, the Times complimented her by writing, "... we wish the young lady the very best of good fortune and recommend her as the most capable person who ever drew a Times check."

After leaving Winnett, she worked as a medical stenographer and nurse.

OGG, Albert (Sec 22-14-28) Albert Ogg lived on Race Horse Coulee, now part of the Welter land. Albert is thought to have been a real estate dealer. (See also OGG — Winnett)

PARSONS, James (Sec 1-14-28) James Parsons settled just east of the Gormans. He was "Turkey Red" Smith's father-in-law. This land is now part of the Larry Eike place.

PARSONS, John (W.T. 7-31-1925) "John Parsons, a farmer residing 13 miles from town, was bitten by a rattlesnake on Tuesday afternoon.

"Mr. Parsons was shocking his wheat with a fork, and as he raised one of the bundles from the ground, the rattler struck him in the shin. He had no warning, he stated, and did not see the snake until after he felt it.

"When asked what he did then, Mr. Parsons said, 'I killed him with the fork. He started away, but I guess I was a little angry, and soon brought him to a stop with the fork.'"

"Mr. Parsons then took his pocket knife and cut the wound open in good shape, and hurried to the house and saddled a horse. Then he applied a tourniquet just above the knee, to shut the poisoned blood from the upper part of the leg as much as possible, and made his way to a
nearby place where there was a car that brought him to
town with haste.

"Dr. Alexander treated the wound, though the lower
limb was badly swollen. Mr. Parsons spent a restful night
and was able to return home today.

"His presence of mind in opening the wound and apply-
ing the tourniquet and then hurrying to the doctor, no
doubt saved his life."

PATTERSON, James James and his wife, Annie,
were married February 2, 1926, in Nebraska. In the early
1940s the family, including Hubert, Norman, Marjorie
and Sylvia, came and farmed on the Freed place in the
Petrolia area.

Hubert graduated from Winnett High School in 1945
and entered the Army that same year.

Marjorie graduated from Winnett High School in 1947,
attended Rocky Mountain College and taught in Wibaux.
She married Charles Woods and they had four children —
Betty, Bruce, and twins James and John. Marjorie and her
four children were drowned in the icy waters of the
Yellowstone River on Thanksgiving Day in 1957, after her
car went out of control on icy roads. A passenger on the
train saw the car submerged in the river and notified
authorities.

Sylvia graduated from Winnett High School in 1951.
She attended Billings Business College one year, then
married and had five children — Barbara, Rodney,
Deanna, Roger and Lynda Stoddard.

The James Patterson family later moved to Billings. Mrs.
Patterson worked in the dietary department of Saint Vin-
cent Hospital from 1955 to 1980. She died January 16,
1984.

PETAJA, Gordon Gordon Petaja grew up in the Devils
Basin country. He married Elden Freed's daughter, Ruth,
in 1938 and lived on the old Freed place. (See also FREED
— Winnett) In later years Ruth and Gordon built a new
home of concrete blocks.

Their children were Richard, Sharon and Candace. All
graduated from Winnett High School and attended
college.

Their ranch was known as the Petrolia Angus Ranch.
They raised purebred Angus cattle and built a sale barn
where they held several yearly sales, with the Rancher-
ettes serving a lunch for them each time. Many ranchers
bought bulls from them. It is thought to have been a very
successful operation.

After the children were gone, Ruth and Gordon were
divorced. Ruth is now living in Mesa, Arizona, and
Gordon remarried and lives in Lewistown.

PETRAUSCH, Dr. William (Sec 30-14-27) Bill
homesteaded about six miles south of Winnett, neighbor-
ing with the John Mertens. The Polk directory of 1918
listed William Petrausch as owning 280 acres with per-
sonal property worth $1365.

Bill served as a soldier from this area in World War I.
After being discharged he worked for a time for the
Frantz Oil Co. in Cat Creek. Being a chiropractic doctor,
She enjoyed shopping and playing cards and was always very stylish in her choice of clothes and jewelry. A local resident said of Mike: "Mike was a fine and helpful person. She could change a flat tire faster than most men."

Myra died in July of 1988 after a long battle with cancer. Bill, Jim’s son, married Patty Sandaker, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tillman Sandaker. (See also SANDAKER — Winnett) Jim’s brother, Charles, was also a Petroleum County resident for a number of years. (See also POULTON — Winnett)

REYNOLDS, Glenda Glenda worked for several different ranchers in Petroleum County, among them Dorothy Bartlett, Kenneth Damschen, Terry Sandman and Les Thompson.

She had two children: Vesper, who graduated from Winnett High School in 1981; and James, who graduated in 1986. Glenda left the area in 1985 and Jim lived with Ken and Rosemary Welter the school year of 1985-1986.

RYDER, Frank Frank Ryder, his wife and daughter moved to Flatwillow Creek just east of the Smith place, on Sec 29-14-29. He built a frame house on the hillside above the creek on the east side.

The daughter married George Singley, a water well driller. They live in Lewistown and have two sons. Frank sold the place to Ray Bohn, and the family moved to Lewistown.

SAYLOR, Clarence Roy Clarence Roy "Shorty" Saylor was born November 28, 1912. Agnes Benson was born August 4, 1920. They were married on June 9, 1940. Clarence had been a barber in Winnett until after his marriage. He then bought a small cattle ranch and farm near the confluence of Box Elder Creek and McDonald Creek. This was in the community of Hoyle, but the Hoyle Post Office had been closed for many years.

Clarence and Agnes have two sons, Allen and Roger. They attended the Box Elder School for eight years, and both graduated from Winnett High School — Allen in 1960 and Roger in 1964.

Allen and Roger spent many hours on horseback. One time, however, Allen and his horse had an accident which resulted in a severe injury to Allen’s neck and caused him to be placed in a body cast. While in the hospital he became exposed to the chicken pox. Imagine the torture endured when this gentle lad broke out with chicken pox inside that cast!! And Allen still wore a smile!!

The Saylor’s leased the Shorty Thorsen place for a year or two before moving to the Garnell community in Fergus County. (See also SAYLOR — Winnett)

SENST, Otto (Sec 30-14-28) See SENST — Winnett

SHAFER, Albert and Fred (Sec 11-14-28) Albert Shaffer and his wife and two children, Orville and Lulu, came to homestead in about 1913. They built a two-room house on the west side of the section. They lived there for about three years before they gave up and returned to Marshalltown, Iowa.
The homestead was then occupied by his brother, Fred Shafer. Fred’s wife, Laura, and their children — Maude (1905), Dorothy (1907), Albert (1909), Laura (1911), John (1913), and Charles. This was quite a houseful for two rooms. But, as they say, “if there is room in the heart, there is room in the home.” The children, with the exception of Charles, went to the Circle Bar School.

They farmed the 320-acre place with a four-horse team and a two-bottom plow, disc and a seeder.

The family gave up in the 1920s and moved to another part of Montana. Two girls, Maude and Laura, live at Harlown and Lewistown, respectively. Laura is married to Service Finkbeiner. Her first marriage to Walter Jenkins gave her a son, Bill Jenkins, who runs the Engines, Etc. Shop in Lewistown.

The Shafer land was purchased by Thompson Brothers for taxes in the 1940s. The house, with modification and additions, is the house in which Les Thompsons now live.

**SHUSTER, Albert** (Sec 22-15-25) Albert was born June 4, 1884, at Miller, South Dakota. He moved to Montana in 1913, and from Fergus County to Winnett in 1932. He farmed in the Brush Creek and Petrolia area. He married late in life, but was later divorced. There was one son, Richard.

He worked for the Fred Henschel family for many years and died in July of 1958. Survivors were a half brother, Fred Archer, and a half sister, Mrs. Henry Caryl.

**SKINNER, David** David and Nancy Skinner moved to the Kenneth Welter Ranch (formerly Beck Ranch) in December of 1987. Son Stuart attends Winnett High School; daughter Rachel attends Winnett Junior High.

**SKOGLEY, Duane C.** Duane and Diane Skogley worked for Rex Bohn from June of 1980 until April of 1988. They then went to work for Thomas and Margaret Cummings on the former Pat Sinclair (originally Bennett) Ranch and reside there as of 1989.

**SMITH, Sam** (Sec 28-14-29) Mr. and Mrs. Sam Smith settled on a homestead on the Flatwillow bottom land on a ranch that reached for three miles up and down the creek bottom. This was just below the present Damschen buildings. It is now part of the Damschen (formerly Ernest Hansen) place. Sam was probably there as early as 1896, and he served as the postmaster of the Smith Post Office. He was also a deputy sheriff for Fergus County.

Mrs. Smith had three sons by a former marriage — Billy, Fisher and Jimmie Calder. They were known to make life miserable for their stepfather.

In the fall of 1898, the Calder boys killed a sheepherder on the bench just west of the confluence of Box Elder and Flatwillow creeks. They tried to get rid of the body by burning it on the banks of the Musselshell River but were unable to destroy all of it. They also stole a band of sheep which they were driving toward Forsyth. Sam Smith led the posse that finally caught up with them.

Billy Calder was the first person to be legally hanged in Fergus County. Fisher and Jimmie served time in the State

Prison at Deer Lodge. The sheep were eventually returned to their owner.

Mr. Smith was also an inventor. Les Thompson remembers that he invented a hay loader and applied for a patent. Before the patent was granted, the International Harvester Company got hold of the invention and apparently pre-empted Mr. Smith on the patent. At any rate, they very soon came out with the loaders, and Sam got no credit. Mrs. Smith was a very fine person and at times served as a midwife.

Smiths sold their place to Carl Nelson and left the community. Mrs. Smith went back to Fergus Falls, Minnesota, where she later died. Sam Smith went to Indiana and died there. He had driven back to Indiana in the 1914 Model T Ford in which the Nelson family had traveled when coming to Montana in 1914.

**SMITH, William** (Sec 20-14-28) William Smith was known as a homesteader who proved up and left. He had two daughters, Gracie and Stella.

**SOLF, Joseph** (Sec 4-14-28) Anna Kleiman Solf contributed the following: “My folks, William and Elizabeth Kleiman, came from Kansas to Moore in 1901. Of my family, I was the seventh child but the first one born in Montana.

“We lived in the foothills of the Snowy Mountains until 1915 when our family moved to what was then Dawson County. It is now Garfield County.

“I received my education in the country school at Moore and in Dawson County. I went to high school in Winnett and graduated in 1922. I taught school in Petroleum and Garfield counties for seven years.

“Joseph Solf was born April 10, 1886, in Neustadt, Germany, not far from the Hartz Mountains. (The City of Neustadt was founded in the early 1880s when Jerome Solf built a dam and mill to grind grain for the neighborhood.) At 18, Joe was drafted into the army and served two years. Shortly afterward he came with his uncle to America and worked in Lake Andes, South Dakota. In 1911 he took up a homestead of 200 acres ten miles east of Winnett.

“Joseph Solf and I were married April 10, 1928, in the Catholic Church. We lived on his and his uncle’s farm and raised our family for thirty-six years.”
"We then moved to Winnett, trading houses with our son Leo. Joseph died in 1969 after seeing all of our children grow up and eight married. He was 83 years old.

"Our three oldest children graduated from Winnett High School in 1950. Mary Rose married Norman Wangseng on October 14, 1950. They moved to Watford City, North Dakota, and raised their family there. Norman worked for Texaco for 34 years and retired in 1984.

"Charles joined the Navy in June of 1950, just 20 days before the start of the Korean War. He crossed the Pacific four times. He graduated from Montana State College in Bozeman in 1959. He married Nancy Dawson of Roundup November 11, 1961. He works at Bremerton shipyards as an electrician.

"Leo ran for county commissioner and was elected in 1960. He married Darlene Jerke January 21, 1961, and bought the Winnett house I now live in. He now lives on the Solf home place.

"Joan graduated in 1952 and joined the Air Force for three years. She graduated from Montana State College in Bozeman in 1959 as a home economics teacher. She married Charles Allen (Ali) Sampson, and they live at Ronan, Montana.

"Alice graduated in 1954, went one and one-half years to Eastern Montana College in Billings, and taught at the Matovich School near Mosby. She later worked for Frontier Airlines in Denver. She married Ralph Schwartz, a machinist, in 1960.

"William (Bill) graduated in 1956 and now farms on the home ranch. He married Willa Raundal in November of 1958. He is now a county commissioner.

"Joseph Jr. became a machinist after graduating in 1959. He married Elaine Smith October 23, 1972, and they live at St. Clair Shores, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit.

"Lurene graduated in 1961 and took a one-year course as a beauty operator. She married Ronald Olson in 1962, and they own the Olson Store in Winnett. (See also OLSON — Winnett)

"Clara graduated in 1964 and worked for Blue Shield in Helena. She married Thomas Siroky of Roy, Montana, October 17, 1964. She is the second cook for the hot lunch at the Roy School.

"Frank, our youngest of ten, graduated in 1965. He went to Bozeman for two years studying to be a veterinarian. He joined the fire fighters and smokejumpers in the summers. He joined the Navy in 1967 during the Vietnam War and crossed the Pacific four times. Later he went to college in Washington and finished in Portland, Oregon. He then went to medical school in Kansas City and became a doctor in 1980. He married Debra Byers in Pontiac, Michigan, May 22, 1982, and is now an anesthetist in Aberdeen, South Dakota.

"My husband and I attended all the graduations and weddings until his death at 83 on July 15, 1969, and I attended the last four. We were married 41 years.

"We watched the country grow and improve each decade. All our children have nice homes, and most have celebrated twenty-fifth anniversaries. All the grandchildren have finished high school so far — three generations and twenty-one from Winnett High School.

"I am now 86 years old (1989), and I have had a long and interesting life. I am grateful for all my friends, family and blessings that have been mine throughout the years."

**SOLF, Leo** Leo Solf was born August 28, 1932 at his parents' ranch home. Lela B. Thompson assisted in the birth. He graduated from Winnett High School in 1950 and went to work on his father's ranch.

Darlene Jerke was one of a set of twins born to Mr. and Mrs. Edward Jerke on March 9, 1936, in Gackle, North Dakota. Darlene graduated from Shepherd High School in 1954 and then worked in the First National Bank of Billings for seven years.

Leo was deferred from service in the Army because his brother, Charlie, and sister, Joan, were both serving. Darlene met Leo at a Flatwillow dance. She attended the dance with some Grassrange girls with whom she shared lodging in Billings.

Leo and Darlene were married January 21, 1961. They lived for three years in the house at 108 South Teigen

Solf family: Back — William, Joan, Alice, Leo, Mary Rose; Front — Clara, Joseph, Lurene, Mother Anna, Frank, Father Joe, and Charles
Avenue in Winnett. Then they traded houses. Mrs. Solf moved into Winnett, and Leo and Darlene moved to the ranch.

For 18 years, Leo leased land from his Uncle Joe Kleiman at Square Butte. It was difficult having to move machinery back and forth. Darlene is a fine gardener and freezes or cans her garden produce.

Besides being very busy with farming and ranching, Leo serves on the Fergus Electric Cooperative Board and is very active in many farm organizations. He has served as a member of the Box Elder school board and the Winnett school board.

Leo and Darlene have two children — Daniel Lee and Deanna Lynn. Daniel married Kim Wisecup and they have a daughter, Heather. Dan works for the street department in Billings. Deanna attends Eastern Montana College in Billings.

All of Leo's land is in the Petrolia Irrigation Project. Their ranch home has been remodeled, modernized and is very comfortable. Leo has also put up a new shop building, which greatly helps in farming operations.

**SOLF, William** Bill was born to Anna and Joseph Solf on August 22, 1938, in Winnett. Nurse Kathryn Rigg was the attending midwife. Bill attended his first three grades of school in Winnett. In the fourth grade, he went to the Solf School, which is now the bunkhouse on his ranch.

He finished his elementary education at the Box Elder School and graduated from Winnett High School in 1956. After graduation he worked on a drilling rig locally and at Chinook, where Jack Barisich was the driller. Then he worked on road construction in South Dakota with Roy Myers. Later, he came home and helped Hugh Brindley with dam construction work.

On November 29, 1958, he was married to Willa M. Raundal. She, the daughter of Orene and Robert Raundal, was born March 29, 1940, in the old Roundup Hospital. Willa entered first grade in Winnett in 1946. Daisy Shaw (Dutton) was her teacher. She graduated from Winnett High School in 1958. (See also RAUNDAL — Flatwillow)

Willa remembers a field trip to a creamery in Lewistown when she was in grade school. The children were given popsicles, which were then brand new on the market and "Oh, how good they tasted!"

Willa and Bill raised three children — Margie, Ronny and Barbara. All three graduated from Winnett High School. Margie is married and teaches in a Jordan, Montana, school. Ronnie graduated from Helena Vo-Tech as a machinist. He and Lisa Sluggen were married in the summer of 1989. They live in Winnett.

Barbara graduated from Western Montana College in Dillon with a degree in sports medicine. She is now teaching math and is the girls' assistant basketball coach at Winifred High School.

In 1972-73 Bill and Willa built a lovely new home on the hill above the original ranch home. Besides their farm and ranch work, Bill and Willa have served on many boards and committees in their community. At present (1989) Bill is a Petroleum County Commissioner.

**STOCKTON, William Murray** (Sec. 20-14-27) Patience S. Hillius submitted her family story: "In 1911 five single girls, in their middle twenties, came to Montana from Minneapolis to take up homesteads. Why they selected Petroleum County, which at that time was a part of Fergus County, I wish I knew. My mother once jokingly remarked that they came to Montana to marry cowboys. As it turned out, one of the group did marry a cowboy."

"The five girls were Daisy Moorel (who married the cowboy), Bessie Black, Delia Halversen, Cora Halversen, and Julia Erickson, my mother. They came via the Chicago, Milwaukee Railroad to Musselshell, Montana, then by stage to Flatwillow, where they stayed at the hotel run by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Millsap.

"Fern Millsap Whitten stated that it was at her parents' hotel in Flatwillow that Julia Erickson and William Stockton (my parents) and Daisy Morel and Clyde Luke, a cowboy for W. J. Winnett, met. Delia Halversen later married Charlie Marshall, an attorney in Lewistown; Cora Halversen married Mike Halloran, an insurance salesman from Butte, and Bessie Black married A. L. Rasmussen, a grocer in Winnett. Of these five girls, only my mother had children.

"In order to prove up on their homesteads, the girls had to find work and earn some money. Mother found work in Lewistown in a telephone office, as she had had previous switchboard experience in Minneapolis.

"The trips she had to make between Winnett and Lewistown were made by horse-drawn stage. The stage stopped overnight, halfway, at Ben Moulton's just east of Grassrange. After a one-room tar paper shack had been built on her homestead four miles southeast of Winnett, my grandmother, Sarah Erickson, came out from Minneapolis to live with her."

"Mother was born in Gilmonton, Wisconsin, in 1882. Her parents, Andrew and Sarah Erickson, came to this country from Norway about 1865 or 1866 via sailing ship to Canada and covered wagon to Wisconsin. Mother went to school in South Dakota and spent her teen years in Minneapolis. I don't believe she went to school for more..."
than eight years, which perhaps was the reason she wanted her children to have an education.

"In 1913 my father and mother were married in Townsend, Montana. My father was a surveyor, but had come north to Montana from Texas on a cattle drive. He was born in 1871 in Dime Box, Texas, where he grew up, married, and fathered five children. When his wife died, he left his small children in the care of his four sisters and sisters-in-law and went to South America as a surveyor on dam construction. At the time of his marriage to my mother, he was working for the Chicago, Milwaukee Railroad in charge of surveying the line into Grassrange.

"After my parents moved to the homestead, my father tried raising wheat; but those were drought years, so he also did locating and cabin building for homesteaders, and various other surveying jobs in the area. In 1915 they moved from the tar paper homestead shack into the clapboard house he built for his growing family. From this marriage there were four children — Patience, Mary, Ruth and Bill. I was five years old, the oldest child, when my father died of pneumonia in 1920.

"Our homestead neighbors, those within sight of our house, were the Bill Kindts to the east, the Reverend Beers to the northwest and the Reynolds to the north. Within a five-mile radius the Mikitches were over the hill from the Kindts to the east; and the Ralph Bowens, where mother always went to help out during the harvesting and threshing, were to the north and east. We kids always looked forward to threshing time, for there was such a lot of good food, and we had a chance to play with the Bowen boys, Basil, Virgil and Rolly.

"Pat McNurney, an Irish bachelor, was just around the hill to the south on the wagon road to the Elk Creek country, where lived the D. W. Bannons, the Joe Parks, the Fred Henschels, the August Karstedts, the Joe Rines, and a Mr. Lawrence. Also as near neighbors to the southwest on the way to the Ward Brattens and the Bratten country school, were Emma Biehl and Nick Langhausen. Although this seems to be quite a few neighbors within a comparatively small area, I don’t remember any large social gatherings.

"After the death of my father, I don’t know how my mother managed to support four children on the homestead. There are so many questions I wish I had asked. I know that for a couple years, she had help from a young fellow named Henry Hout. She had a few horses, some milk cows, some chickens, turkeys, and geese. She baked bread and made butter and cottage cheese which she sold in Winnett — with weekly trips to town in the one-horse buggy.

"She also had a garden dependent on the rains of a semi-arid country. There was a cellar underneath the house, where the root vegetables were stored in dry sand; and the canning was done in a wash boiler on a coal and wood stove — in the summer a kerosene stove was used. But she couldn’t have done all this without the help of my grandmother. At that time there was no aid to dependent children, but there was help in the form of a widow’s pension. Mother made application for this help; but a neighbor complained that she didn’t deserve it, so to my knowledge she never received it.

"The winter of 1921-1922 someone from Winnett anonymously sent her a ton of coal. She said she never did find out who sent it. But, oh, how desperately she needed and appreciated it. Relatives sent boxes of old clothing which she and Mrs. R. D. Bowen made over for us. I didn’t have a ‘store bought’ coat until I was in the eighth grade — I’ll never forget it!

"Mother remained on the homestead until 1923. when the kerosene stove exploded and the house burned. Within a period of less than three years her husband died, her mother died, and her house burned. She had to make some very urgent and weighty decisions. Her two married brothers in Minneapolis, who had no children, wanted to adopt the four of us; but mother didn’t want to give us away.

"So in the fall of 1923, the Stocktons moved to the very small town of Winnett, Montana, along with a small herd of cows, a small flock of chickens, and an Airedale dog named Towser. And the homestead reverted back to the government.

"Though I was only eight years old when we left the homestead, I have many sentimental recollections of those few years when most of my world was sky and prairie. We were lucky in that a road to town from the Elk Creek country passed almost through our dooryard, and we could usually expect a visit with those going to or coming from town. My Norwegian mother and grandmother always had the coffee pot on, for a visit from anyone was a special occasion.

"After sixty years my most vivid memories of those days are: picking red and black potato bugs off potato plants and putting them in cans of kerosene; herding the turkeys on the prairie to keep the coyotes away; chasing geese out of the straw stacks, where they would pull the straws out one by one and finally topple the stack; ‘water dogs’ in the spring in the coulee; geese laying their eggs in the pond where the water seemed to magnify them to twice their normal size; touching a snake when you
reached into a hen's nest to gather the eggs; jumping into a silo storage bin in freshly threshed wheat and chewing the fresh grain into a large ball of glutinous gum."

Patience continues with more memories: "Walking over the hills to school with the neighbor kids; getting chicken mites in my hair from leaning my head into a cow's flank while milking, because someone hadn't closed the door to the chicken house; five years old and all by myself, crying on a windswept knoll in bitter cold and snow, trying to decide whether to go back home or go on to school; riding a stoneboat hanging onto a wooden barrel on the way to the spring to get water; on a hot day playing in an abandoned root cellar and smelling the cool, pungent odors of moist sand; riding the loaded wagons to the town elevator; crying over the blackened skeleton of a doll buggy after the fire; the companionship of going to a one-room country school, and at lunch trading my cake and sandwiches for boiled beans heated on a pot belly stove. They weren't 'the good old days,' but they have pleasant memories.

"Our first house in town was a three-room tar paper south of town, across the creek, in a cluster of other tar paper shacks and small houses. Our little area was linked to town by a narrow footbridge that always washed out during a spring flood. We had no electricity or running water, but I think someone in the area had a well where we pumped our drinking water. We often wished we could afford a gasoline mantle lamp that gave off much more light than a kerosene wick, but we never were able to afford that luxury.

"Our neighbors were the Ward Brattons (who came to town just for the winter so Kenny and Wayne could attend school), the Alonzo Enoses, the Wells, the Smiths, the R. L. Stewarts, and Mrs. Ella Wiggins.

"In order to support her brood, mother sold milk and cream to neighbors, washed dishes in restaurants (where bringing home the leftover food was part of her salary), changed beds and cleaned rooms in hotels, ironed clothes in a laundry, candle and packed eggs in a creamery, and worked the switchboard at the small telephone office of the Burt sisters whenever they needed a relief. I don't know what wages she received. Must have been small, for there never seemed to be enough for any extras.

"When I was nine or ten, I can remember going with her to a large, cold, drafty, warehouse-type building. It must have been in November, because she and several others were plucking turkeys and packing them into barrels to be shipped to Butte for the holidays. Your hands got so cold you could hardly bend your fingers to grasp the feathers.

"We lived across the creek for about four years; but when we became the only residents. Mother felt it was time to move. She felt, I think, that we were on the 'wrong side of the tracks.' In 1927 we moved 'uptown.' Mother bought a four-room house, with electricity, from Blanche Greene. I believe she paid $400 for it. $10 a month. Our neighbors were the Cottons (the father was the blacksmith; Everett was the jeweler), the Art Barneses, the Sam Coxes, and the Fred Storys.

"Mother gambled on going into business for herself when she bought 'on time' an electric, aluminum tub, Maytag, wringer-type washing machine, and took in washing. With rainfall scarce and water five cents a pail (delivered by Ole Rigg's water truck), her profit was small. However, with that income and occasional odd jobs about town, she put her two older children through Winnett High School. She was even able to buy a second-hand piano, so we could take music lessons from Hallie Tripp.
"I can't remember ever being hungry or cold. Mother always had a cow or two and some chickens, so we had plenty of milk and eggs. But oranges and bananas were fruits only for Christmas, and hamburger was Sunday fare. One fall we were given a quarter of an elk which mother canned. What delicious gravy that made for mashed potatoes on cold winter days. We heated and cooked with coal and wood stoves and many a child's wagon load of coal we gathered and hauled from the railroad tracks where it had been spilled in unloading.

"In 1935 Mother moved to a small ranch near Grassrange, where she grazed her few milk cows and sold bottled milk to the townspeople. She also helped to supplement her income by raising some beef cattle. But those years were drought years too. Here the two younger children, Ruth and Bill, finished school.

"I can't ever remember thinking that high school was the end of our education. Mother must have subliminally conditioned our thinking that college was just a natural continuation. There weren't any formal discussions and I never stopped to think how it could be managed financially. If I had. I'm sure I would have seen how improbable it was. But I went on, worked for my room and board and $10 a month; and with whatever money Mother could scrape together, I received my 'higher education.' Mother remarked that there were times when she didn't have money enough for a postage stamp. President Garfield remarked that 'poverty was uncomfortable,' which I consider an extremely insensitive understatement.

"My sister Ruth died in 1936 of a brain tumor, shortly after graduation from high school. Even though she was blind part of her senior year, she graduated with honors. My brother Bill went on to college. World War II, and art school, and now lives in Grassrange, where he is a sheep rancher and artist. My sister Mary graduated from high school with a scholarship, went on to college, and now lives in El Cajon, California. She is a retiree of the El Cajon Valley School District.

"I went to Intermountain Union College in Helena, then transferred and graduated from the University of Montana in Missoula in 1937. I taught school for a few years before marrying a career Navy man and traveling these United States from border to border and coast to coast. My husband, Arnold Hillius, was also born and raised in the very small town of Winnett, Montana, and we now live in a much larger small town — Hamilton, Montana. (See also HILLIUS — Winnett)

"My mother died in 1975 at the age of 93. She had never been seriously ill or in a hospital until she broke her hip at the age of 85. All of her children had been born at home. She worked so hard all her life and her responsibilities were so many, she didn't have time to be sick. Too, her Christian Science faith of mind over matter gave her the strength to do what she had to do.

"I have often wondered how she was able to give her children that necessary feeling of security when we were so terribly poor. In her later years, when I asked her how she ever made it, she said there were many times when she wondered if she could.

"She was a completely unselfish, courageous woman and always a lady. A pioneer in many ways. Her life reminds me of Robert Frost's lines of poetry from 'The Road Not Taken':

'The roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by.
And that has made all the difference.'

THOMPSON, Carl (Sec 25,35-14-28) Carl Thompson, a lawyer and an uncle of Les and Vern Thompson, owned land but became indebted and lost his property to R. B. Fraser.

THOMPSON, Leslie (Sec 13-14-28) Leslie "Les," son of Oscar and Lela Thompson, spent most of his childhood and adult life on the ranch which his father purchased in 1908. He also worked for the county several years building roads.

Les described some of his activity: "I broke my ribs while grading in ledge rock territory. The doctor put me in a cast from my arm pits to my hipbones. It got to itching so bad, and there was no way to scratch. So I got my ramrod for cleaning rifle barrels, put a roll of cloth through the ring, and pushed it down inside the cast. What a wonderful invention!

'I quit the road work and stayed home until Uncle Sam called me to go fight for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I was in the service here for three months, then sent to England for two years. We built and completed the first American bomber base in England — Andrews Field, which was moved to Washington D. C. after the war.

Les Thompson in World War II in Germany
"I left for the service on Friday the 13th, and about four years later I got home on Saturday the 13th. I live on Section 13."

Margaret Phipps came to Winnett in the fall of 1960 as the seventh and eighth grade teacher and the instructor of music, art, and physical education.

She became involved in a home talent play, and one of the actors was Les Thompson. That was the start of something big! Cupid shot a straight arrow, and Les and Margaret were married August 14, 1965. While on their honeymoon, they ran into a charivari while visiting Mary Fleharty in Columbia Falls. Margaret continued to teach until 1967, when she retired to be with Leslie on the ranch. Les and Margaret belong to and participate in many, many organizations in Winnett and in their community.

In 1976 their ranch was incorporated and named the Petrolia Bench Ranch, Inc. Michael D. Phipps, Ellen Carrell Phipps and their children — Michael II, Rene and Cole — moved to the ranch where Mike became the manager. In November 1983 Mike died of an apparent heart attack.

Son-in-law Charles Sims, wife Barbara Joyce Phipps Sims, and daughters Shelley, Crystal and Carmen and son Jimmy had moved to the ranch as helpers in September 1983. When Mike Phipps passed away, Charles was abruptly pushed into the position of manager.

Each of the family members work on the ranch. Occasionally, Patrick Shawn, an older son, helps, Charles' two daughters, Margo and Lara, also have lived here and helped with the work.

Les is president of the Petrolia Bench Ranch, Inc., and Margaret is bookkeeper and treasurer.

When refinishing some old furniture, the Thompsons found, in an old sewing machine, a receipt for its purchase in 1906. It cost $26.00. The machine is still owned by the Thompsons and is in working condition.

Les is the oldest continuous resident of this county. He came here in 1908 at ten months of age and has lived here since — 81 years of residence. He has seen many people come and go. He helped Ray Bohn move many families to Fairfield under the Resettlement Act. Margaret, as compiler of the Petrolia-Box Elder history, has "picked" his brain during the history project. (See also PHIPPS — Winnett)

**THOMPSON, Oscar C.** Oscar C. Thompson was born November 18, 1879, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and received a fine education there. In 1900, after graduation, he decided to go west. He bought a covered wagon, a four-horse team and a saddle horse. With two friends accompanying him, he took off in the spring of the year.

He kept a diary of his journey, and as he was an entertainer, he told of playing and singing for the Queen of Romania. He worked as he went along and finally found himself in Lewistown, Montana.

Lela Temple Beck, daughter of Amos and Mary Beck, was born in Bozeman April 5, 1887. Her family moved to Lewistown in the late 1800s. It was there that she met Oscar Thompson. They were married May 10, 1906.

Oscar and Lela first lived in a small cabin on Spring Creek just below the site of the gypsum plant at Heath, Montana. Leslie was born there July 26, 1907.
In his travels as a freighter, Oscar must have heard about the Circle Bar Ranch below Winnett on Flatwillow Creek. At any rate, that is where he brought his bride and young son in June of 1908.

He got a start in raising sheep from B. F. Lepper, running them on shares, and made a living from them and the rich blue joint hay that grew on the creek bottom in those days. There were also some alfalfa fields which had been started by a former occupant. Even in the hard days of 1919, the Thomsons had hay enough for their own stock and some to sell to others who were desperate for feed for their stock. When the Cat Creek oil boom occurred, the Thomsons furnished hay for the teams of many of those working there.

One time, in about 1910 or 1911, Oscar, using a four-horse team, went to Winnett for ranch supplies. Returning home, the heavily loaded wagon was crossing McDonald Creek when the bridge collapsed. Oscar was not seriously injured, but one horse was killed (a terrible loss in those days) and the supplies were dumped into the Creek. Oscar secured help from some neighbors, Chris Afseth and Pat McNurney.

Luckily, a photographer, Oliver Ingebo, was close by and took the accompanying outstanding picture. Thomsons had a battery-operated phone. The line extended to the Becks and back.

Two more sons had been born to the Thomsons — Vernon Arthur and Elmer Conrad. Vernon was born January 30, 1910. (See also THOMPSON, Vernon) Elmer Conrad was born in the homestead house on Petrolia Bench on the present home place. Mrs. John Beck helped in his birth. Elmer was never very well and passed away in 1921 at about six years of age. He is buried in the Winnett Cemetery, as is his father, Oscar C. Thompson.

Oscar died of appendicitis in 1928. He had gone to Winnett to Dr. Alexander, who sent him on to St. Joseph’s Hospital in Lewistown. An operation was performed, but it was too late; the appendix had burst, and Oscar passed away. This left Les, at age 21, as man of the house.

Mrs. Thompson, Leslie and Vernon continued to operate the ranch. As land was left by other homesteaders or came up for tax sales, the Thomsons acquired more land to make up the present ranch. Lela Thompson passed away in May of 1953, leaving Les and Vern as their own hommakers and housekeepers.

THOMPSON, Vernon A. (Sec 13-14-28) Lela Thompson knew all the symptoms. A baby was about to be born! Who could help them? There was only one other lady in the valley in 1910 — Mrs. Sam Smith. Mrs. Smith was happy to help deliver Vernon Arthur to the Thomsons in their little two-room log house on the Circle Bar Ranch. The day was January 30, 1910.

Vern finished the eighth grade from Petrolia School. He preferred working on the farm to attending high school. He was an expert at contriving convenience items and

Mrs. Abner Norris, Mr. Norris, Oscar Thompson, Lela Thompson holding Elmer, Vern Thompson, Les Thompson, and Floren Baldwin, nephew of Abner Norris

Chris Afseth on bridge, Pat McNurney in creek. Oscar Thompson resting after the accident. Notice willow tripod for coffee.

Vern Thompson and his lambing wagon
was an absolute necessity on the ranch during the years that Les was away working or serving in the Army.

Vern is a master at using a wood lathe. In the community there are many honey-dippers, tooth pick holders, candle holders, gavels and other fine pieces which he has made from 60-year-old cedar posts. He also fashioned a beautiful cross from a piece of a pine board which George Ingebo sawed many years ago.

When the Rimrock Dairy moved to the Clarence Saylor Ranch, Les and Vern used their welding expertise to construct a modern four-stall elevated milking parlor.

Vern, as well as his brother Les, holds a record in Petroleum County. Vern is the oldest living native resident. Others were born before him and are still alive, but they no longer reside here. Vern has spent his entire life here. Vern is vice-president of Petrolia Bench Ranch, Inc., and resides with Les and Margaret.

TIMM, Harry (Sec 22-14-27) Harry and Elda were married September 11, 1916, at Joliet, Illinois. They came to Winnett soon after and homesteaded about 5½ miles southeast of the town.

The Timms were active community helpers and were involved in the Masonic and Eastern Star work. When they left for Missoula, Montana, in July of 1927, Elda was an officer of Rimrock Chapter #82 O. E. S.

Although Harry left to work as a carpenter on a new State building (and then continued to follow the carpenter trade), he kept his finger in the soil here. As late as July of 1950, he and his son-in-law were returning to till his land. Harry died in 1972.

The Timms were parents of three children — Shirley, John and Ruth. Shirley went to live in Missoula in 1927 and attended Missoula schools, graduating from the high school there in 1937 and from the University of Montana in 1941. She returned to Petroleum County in the fall of 1942 to teach commercial subjects and girls' physical education in Winnett High School.

She received her master's degree from Stanford University and trained at Walter Reed Army Hospital in physical therapy. She served in the South Pacific as a captain in the Army Medical Corps. She married Jack Haberman in 1959. They had no children. She died February 2, 1976. Her sister, Ruth Blomgren of Missoula, her mother, and her brother, John, of Lebanon, Oregon, survived her. Elda, the mother, died in 1976.

TOOMEY, Thomas (Sec 29-14-28) Thomas Toomey homesteaded on Flatwillow Creek in 1909. He was married and had a son, Tom Jr. The family left in 1918.

Tom Jr. became a fine saddle maker and shoe repair man in Lewistown, Montana. He sold boots, belts, buckles and other tack and western wear. Tom made many of the saddles which were given as rodeo prizes locally. His store is still operating in Lewistown, although Tom has passed away.

TRUMP, Elliott (See TRUMP — Winnett)

TUBBS, E. L. (Sec 11-14-27) (W. T. 4-8-21) "E. L. Tubbs, who spent the winter with his daughter at Lewistown, has returned to his farm east of Winnett, where he will spend the summer."

(W. T. 10-14-21) "E. L. Tubbs left Friday for Utica, Montana, to make his home with his son at that place."

(W. T. 2-16-23) "The death of a well-known early settler of the Winnett country occurred February 8, when E. L. Tubbs passed away at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Florence Tubbs, at Bozeman, Montana. Death resulted from heart trouble.

"Deceased was born at Elmira, New York, October 17, 1852, and was 70 years of age at the time of his death. He homesteaded east of Winnett several years ago and conducted farming operations on his holdings. During the last few years, however, he has made his home with relatives in Michigan. He visited in Winnett a short time this fall, just prior to leaving for Bozeman.

"The body was brought to this city for burial Wednesday and short funeral services were held at the cemetery Wednesday by Rev. T. T. Fike.

"Among the relatives who were able to be present were: Mrs. Florence Tubbs, and two sons — Arthur Tubbs, of Utica, Montana, and Harry Tubbs, of Tacoma, Washington."

TUSS, Peter Peter was born in Bibrir, Croatia, in 1856 and came to the United States in 1897. He, like many of the other Bibrir Croatians, was a stonemason and he quickly found work in Lewistown, Montana. He quarried the stone and directed the construction of the Power Mercantile Co. building, the Masonic Temple, the stone Methodist Church, and the first unit of the St. Joseph's Hospital, as well as many other stone buildings in Lewistown.

In 1912 Peter retired from the contracting business and purchased a farm in Petroleum County seven miles south of Winnett, where the family lived for about ten years. In 1922 he moved into Lewistown and, after his wife's death in 1935, lived with his son, Joe Tuss in south Lewistown.

Peter and his wife Katherine had the following children: Daisy (Morklin), Joseph (1903), Katherine (1905) and Donna (1907). Daisy homesteaded in Sec 20-1-4-27. Peter died in St. Joseph's hospital on March 18, 1940.

TUSS, Peter Francis Peter Francis Tuss was a nephew of the Peter Tuss in the previous story. He homesteaded near the mouth of the Musselshell before moving to the area south of Winnett. (See also TUSS — Musselshell River: MIKICH — Telgen)

WELTER, Kenneth (Sec 24-14-28) The following was contributed by Rosemary Welter: "Kenneth Welter and Rosemary Shields were married in March of 1963. Rosemary, Kenny and Linda (Rosemary’s daughter) then lived on a ranch in the Petrolia area. The ranch was located on the old Fleharty (formerly Beck) place on Flatwillow Creek about four miles below Petrolia Dam. This place was Ken’s, and it adjoined his folks’ main place to the south. He was busy as he and his dad had lots of irrigated hay land, dryland farming, and sheep to take care of.

"For the next two years, I was ‘just a ranch wife’—raising gardens, cooking for hired men, taking care of my family — all those things that go with living on a farm-ranch. When I tried to raise bum lambs, I decided that, if I was going to help with the finances, I’d better do something I knew something about, so I went back to school teaching."

"The next two and one-half years were spent at the Cat Creek School. It was 18 miles from home. I drove most of the time, although sometimes I had to stay in the teacherage because of the weather. Linda went with me the first year, and I put her in kindergarten. When she started first grade, she was able to ride the school bus, so she went to Winnett to school. In January 1968 I resigned my teaching position, and in February we had a baby boy we named Kenneth “Todd” Welter."

"The fall of 1968 found me back in Winnett teaching school. I took both of the children with me — Linda was in third grade, and Todd had a baby-sitter."

"About this time Ken bought the Gusher Bar, and his sister Bonny and brother Nick operated it. He also built a pellet plant at the ranch, so he was busy hauling pellets to feedlots in Roundup, Melstone, and Park City. By the time he was two, Todd thought it was great fun to go with Dad in the big truck."

"Then Nick got married and moved to Billings, and Bonny married Chuck Allen. They didn’t want to have a family life centered around the bar, so now Ken’s responsibility included the bar also. He hauled pellets during the day and worked in the bar at night. His mom took shifts in the bar as well. I was certainly glad when we sold it to Terry Sandman. Our home life certainly had suffered, and everyone was working too hard."

"When I started teaching school again, I had to go to summer school to get my BA degree; otherwise my two-year certificate would be obsolete and I wouldn’t be able to renew it. So, for seven summers, the children and I went to Billings for summer school. Some years we only went half the summer, but most of the time it was all summer."

"I took Margie Sinclair with me for two summers to care for the children. We came home on the weekends to try to catch up on things at home and the garden. The year Linda graduated from the eighth grade (1974), I graduated from college. What a happy day that was!"

"By this time Ken was involved in a feedlot in Roundup, Montana, and some gold property in Virginia City. The feedlot didn’t turn out too well, but he was busy with mining in both Virginia City and Ennis for quite a few years. He still has a love for mining gold. I guess when someone gets ‘gold fever,’ they never get over it!"

"Linda’s high school years were busy. She was in sports, which involved lots of traveling to ball games and track meets. Winnett had a good girl’s basketball team then, so we were involved in two state basketball tournaments. Todd and I put on lots of miles going to everything. It was always was rather a relief when the season finally ended! Linda graduated in 1978, and I had a two-year rest before Todd was old enough to play. Then there were another six years of ball games!"

"In 1981 Ken’s dad died. Bill had been ill for several years with emphysema. What a wonderful old gentlemen he was. He and Ken worked side-by-side for many years. He so enjoyed this modern way of farming and spent many, many hours on his tractor or swather. He was extremely missed by his family."

"During the winter of 1982-83, I took a year’s leave of absence and went back to school in Billings. Todd was a freshman by this time — it was a hard year for all of us. My dad was very ill most of that time — it just was difficult."

"The next year found me back at the Winnett School as librarian and Chapter I teacher. It certainly was different than having a regular classroom, but it was a new challenge."

"Todd’s high school years went very fast, as he was involved in everything. Besides the sports program, he loved music; so we were not only consumed with football, basketball, and track, but also band and choir. They were busy years and most interesting. During Todd’s senior year, Jim Reynolds lived with us, so we were doubly busy, it seemed. Todd graduated in 1986. (See also WELTER — Winnett)"

WELTER, William N. William N. “Bill” Welter, son of Nickolas and Rachel Welter, was born in 1905 at Lewistown, Montana. His folks homesteaded in the Welter area, where they ran the Welter Post Office from 1915-1926. Bill grew up and was educated in the Welter schools. (See also WELTER — Blakeslee) Viola Sinclair, daughter of Robert and Della Sinclair, was born in 1913 at Lewistown. She attended the Long School through the grades, then attended Winnett High School, Roy High School, and then graduated from Fergus High School. She continued to live with her family until 1932, when she met and married William “Bill” Welter. (See also SINCLAIR — Dovetail) Bill and Viola moved to the Petrolia Bench area, where they bought the George Ingebo place and raised sheep, cattle, hogs, wheat and alfalfa.

Bill won a certificate of merit award for good farming practices. He was a school trustee for eleven years and also a member of the Petroleum County Water Board and the Soil Conservation Board.
Bill and Viola had three children: Nickoles (1933) served in the Marines in Korea, died in a car accident in 1984, and is buried in the Veterans Cemetery at Laurel, Montana (See also WELTER — Winnett); Kenneth (1935) took over the management of the ranch when his father's health failed (See also WELTER, Kenneth); and Bonny (1941) (See ALLEN, Charles — Winnett)

Bill and Viola lived on the ranch until Bill died in 1981. Viola continued to live on the ranch until 1985 when she moved to Winnett. Bill is buried in the Lewistown City Cemetery. (Submitted by Viola Welter)

WHITE, Henry (Sec 29-14-27) Henry homesteaded about four and one-half miles south of Winnett. (W. T. 4-27-28) "Word was received here Wednesday evening to the effect that Henry White was instantly killed near Oilmone by an explosion of nitroglycerin. Details have not yet been received.

"Mr. White was one of the pioneer homesteaders in Petroleum County, coming here in 1911 and filing. He returned in 1912 and continued his residence until making final proof. Many friends in this community will be shocked to hear of his untimely death.

"It is presumed that the accident occurred while in connection with his work in the oil fields. He is a brother to Mrs. Perry Gorsuch, formerly postmaster at Winnett. Friends here think that the remains will be shipped to his father's home in Madrid, Iowa, for burial."

A later report revealed that Henry was a tool dresser for the Hard Rock Oil Company's well, and was killed when 80 quarts of nitroglycerin exploded. Two men were killed — White and Charles Doowittie. Search for the two men after the explosion disclosed only a few fragments of flesh scattered over the ground. The truck containing the nitro was completely demolished.

YOUDERIAN, Bernard L. (W. T. 11-8-29) "B. L. Youderian has rented the F. C. Bennett Ranch on Flatwillow (Sec 20-14-28). Mr. Bennett bought a house in town and brought it to the ranch for the Youderian family to reside in. The Bennett family will continue to live in their home, although Mr. Youderian will have charge of the ranch."