Musselshell River
Missouri River

Chapter No. 8
Petroleum County, Montana
Vol. 1

SCHOOLS
1. Ahearn
2. Fort Musselshell (Rukavina)
3. Garrett
4. New Rukavina
5. Weingart Home

Lewis and Clark Camp
Kerchival City
Musselshell City
Camp Reese
Ft. Sheridan

(Map continued on next page)
Swimming horses across the Missouri River at Rocky Point

Rocky Point saloon in 1885

Treacherous ice jam — 1979 (a typical spring hazard along the river)

The old UL Ranch headquarters located on the north side of the Missouri River from the mouth of the Musselshell where the Missouri makes a sharp bend

Keith homestead at the mouth of Lodgepole
Early Missouri River Settlements

The rivers provided the highways for the early development of Montana, and the Missouri River was the mightiest river of all. This put what was to become the northern boundary of Petroleum County on the "main road!" Though Petroleum County is only three townships (or 18 miles) wide at its northern border, the Missouri River, with the UL bend and its other twists and turns, gives Petroleum County about twice that many miles of river shore.

In its eastward flow, the Missouri River makes a bend to the south to meet the Musselshell River. Then it turns sharply to the north leaving a thin peninsula of land, perhaps six miles long bounded on each side by the Missouri River, and with the mouth of the Musselshell River opposite its southern most tip. This bend is known as the UL Bend. Riverboat captains sometimes allowed their passengers to disembark and walk across the narrow, grassy, two-mile-wide peninsula of land while the steamboat made the thirteen-mile river trip around the bend.

Lewis and Clark camped near the mouth of the Musselshell River on May 20, 1805. Lewis wrote in his diary: (original spelling maintained) "We halted at the entrance of the river on the point formed by it's junction with the Missouri determining to spend the day, making the necessary observations and send out some hunters to explore the country. The Muscle Shell river falls into the Missouri 2270 miles above it's mouth, and is 110 yards in width, it affords much more water than streams of it's width generally do below, it's current is by no means rapid, and from appearances it might be navigated with canoes a considerable distance... it's banks abrupt and about 12 feet high yet never appear to overflow; the waters of this river is of a greenish yellow cast, much more transparent than the Missouri... the Missouri opposite to this point is deep, gentle in it's current, and 222 yards in width.

"The hunters returned this evening and informed us that the country continued much the same in appearance as that we saw where we were or broken, and that about five miles above the mouth of shell river a handsome river of about fifty yards in width discharged itself into the shell river on the Star. or upper side; this stream we called Sah-ca-ger-we-ah or bird woman's River, after our interpreter the Snake woman."

Little did anyone realize the controversy which would be sparked a century and a half later because of this journal entry. Indians, trappers, hunters and explorers all referred to the same little river as Crooked Creek, and the earliest maps of the Montana Territory show it as such. In the late 1970s, however, an overzealous Easterner was at least partially effective in changing the name of the creek to the Lewis and Clark Expedition's name. Many local Montanans view the name change with disdain.

Ralph Miracle (former head of the Montana
Stockgrowers Association, as an amateur historian, did extensive research on the early Missouri River trading posts just above the Musselshell River. He states, in an article published by the Yellowstone Corral of the Westerners in 1975, that the first buildings attempted above Fort Union (the fort at the juncture of the Missouri and the Yellowstone Rivers) were at the mouth of the Musselshell River. They were built by a party of trappers led by Major Andrew Henry. Mr. Miracle says the party "built four rough log huts connected by a palisade where they spent the winter of 1822 . . . among the 21 men in this party were famous mountain men Jedediah Smith, Jim Bridger and Daniel Potts. Their destination was the beaver-plenty streams far up at the sources of the river."

Explorers and trappers navigated the Missouri River during the next 40 years and short-lived trading forts and posts sprouted here and there along the way. In 1855 a treaty was signed with the Blackfeet Indians — The Lame Bull's Treaty — creating a legal Blackfeet domain extending from the Rocky Mountains east to the mouth of the Milk River and from the Canadian border south to Three Forks and the Musselshell River. This included, of course, all of present-day Petroleum County.

If gold had not been discovered in western Montana in the early 1860s, this treaty might well have remained in effect longer than it did, and any large-scale development of freighting or travel along the Missouri would probably have been slowed. The combination of the discovery of gold and the end of the Civil War quickly led to "gold rush" proportions, however. Steamboat travel was new, the first steamboat having reached Fort Benton in 1860, but by 1865 thirty to forty boats per season were unloading their goods at Fort Benton. Passengers and freight were transferred to stagecoaches and wagons to travel a laborious 130 miles via Prickly Pear Canyon to Helena. Enterprising businessmen began looking for a shorter, easier route from the river to the gold camps, and for a route which could be used for more months during the year than the Fort Benton route could be used. Low water often delayed steamboat passage beyond the mouth of the Musselshell.

In the spring of 1865 William Berkin (See also BERKIN — Flatwillow, who had been freighting for the American Fur Company from Fort Benton to Virginia City, led a party of eleven men seeking a better road from Virginia City to the Missouri River. He traveled a route from Boulder, White Sulphur Springs, Martinsdale, along the Musselshell and then to the east end of the Snowy Mountains, down Flatwillow Creek and to the mouth of the Musselshell. He was harassed by Indians both coming and going, and his plans for a freight road withered and died.

The next year, 1866, the Rocky Mountain Wagon Road Company attempted to establish a town called Kerchival City at the mouth of the Musselshell River. (The territorial legislature even named the town as the county seat of Dawson County only to have all of their actions rescinded when the legislative session was voided!) The anticipated freighting business did not materialize and Kerchival City did not survive. It is said it was washed away by the river.

According to the research of Lieutenant James H. Bradley, another attempt was made to build a settlement at the mouth of the Musselshell River in 1868. This time the project was undertaken by the Montana Hide and Fur Company of Helena. A party under the direction of James Brewer plotted a town on the south bank of the Missouri River and also built a warehouse. The town was known as Musselshell City. (Note old spelling of Musselshell.)

According to Lt. Bradley, "Colonel George Clendennin, his brother Richard, and James McGinnis . . . arrived at Musselshell soon after the Montana Hide and Fur Company and . . . before the following winter there were eight buildings lined up along the riverbank and approximately 50 people residing in the area. Besides the residents, the Gros Ventre and Crow Indians traded quite frequently at the post. This all resulted in considerable activity in the new settlement."

Because of frequent skirmishes with the Indians, troops from Camp Cooke were sent down from their camp at the mouth of the Judith River to keep peace at Musselshell. In 1868 the troops set up Camp Reeve a short distance from the town. (Note the use of the word 'camp.' Camp very often signified a military installation while the word 'fort' often meant trading post.) After a skirmish with the Indians in which two soldiers were killed, the troops withdrew to Camp Cooke because of a shortage of supplies for the winter.

During the winter of 1868-69 the Sioux kept the settlement in a virtual state of siege.

New hopes for the inhabitants of Musselshell City arrived with the spring, however. The government directed a survey for a military road from Fort Ellis, near Bozeman, to the mouth of the Musselshell River, where a one-mile-square military reservation was proposed. Captain Clift was in charge of the survey. Unfortunately the war department did not officially sanction the idea of the military reservation, and again the town was without protection.

Meanwhile Indian activity increased. Several woodhawks (men who supplied steamboats with fuel) were killed, a white woman was shot and scalped but lived to tell the tale, and several others were killed while attacking an Indian ambush. It was here, or perhaps at one of the woodyards, that the legend of "Liver Eatin'" Johnson was born. (See BROWN — Ashley)

In the summer of 1870 the Montana Fur Company closed its business, and slowly the other traders, with the exception of Clendennin, did likewise. Colonel Clendeninn stayed on, consolidated the vacated buildings to improve his trading post and renamed the settlement Fort Sheridan. Indian harassment continued, however, and business was limited largely to trade with the Indians. When the Diamond R Transportation Company established the town of Carroll in 1874 on Hutton Bottom
about three miles upriver from what was to become the Petroleum County line. All hopes of a freighting and trade center at the mouth of the Musselshell River vanished. Colonel Clendenin moved his buildings and stock of goods to the new location. Though Carroll was outside the bounds of Petroleum County, it is of interest to note that the fate of Carroll and nearby Wilder and Little Belt Mountain City was similar to that of Kerchival City, Musselshell City and Fort Sheridan. The river gradually consumed them all.

**Pony Express**

Another note of historic interest to Petroleum County during this era was the oh-so-brief Pony Express route from Fort Abercrombie (near present Fargo, North Dakota) to Helena which crossed the Missouri River near the site of Fort Hawley. According to Ralph Miracle, Fort Hawley was built by the Northwest Fur Company about twenty miles above the mouth of the Musselshell River. "Over the years," says Mr. Miracle, "this site showed the vagaries of the Missouri River. Fort Hawley was built on a point on the north bank of the river. In time it was cut off and made an island and finally became attached to the south bank and ended up across the river."

The post office department awarded a contract for the Northern Overland Mail Route to Major Charles A. Ruffee and Carlisle Doble on April 11, 1867. The original route crossed North Dakota, entered Montana near Ft. Buford, followed the Missouri River to Fort Peck (a trading post near the mouth of the Milk River), continued along the Milk River until it made an arc south to Fort Benton and followed the Prickly Pear Canyon road to Helena. After a series of problems with Indians (and urging by the backers of Kerchival City who hoped to benefit their enterprise), the route was changed from Fort Peck onward and, instead of the northerly Milk River route, it stayed on the north side of the Missouri until it crossed the river at Ft. Hawley. It then continued across the Judith Basin to Ft. Howie (not far from today's Martinsdale), to White Sulphur Springs, across the mountains through Diamond City and into Helena.

Old records indicate service over this route was begun about the first of October 1867. Indians, severe weather, and inadequate supplies all contributed to the collapse of the venture in the spring of 1868.

**Telegraph Line**

After Ft. Maginnis was established in 1880, a telegraph line was built connecting the fort, via Ft. Galpin on the Milk River, with Ft. Buford. It crossed the Missouri River near the same Ft. Hawley crossing the pony express had used, though the trading post itself had been abandoned by 1869. "Telegraph Ridge" and "Telegraph Creek" can still occasionally be found on modern-day maps as landmarks of the brief years this line existed. (Ft. Maginnis was closed in 1890.) A rural school in the 1920s also carried the name Telegraph Ridge School.
Vigilantes at the Mouth of the Musselshell

More fiction than fact has been written about vigilante justice on eastern Montana’s cattle ranges. There are several things of which one can be reasonably sure, however. “Stuart’s Stranglers” (as the vigilante stockmen became known) did hang some renegade horse thieves near the mouth of the Musselshell River in July 1884.

Rustling was common and cattlemen had become exasperated knowing the law did not have the capability or the resources to control the thievery. The Missouri and Musselshell breaks provided ideal refuge for the rustlers. Here they could alter cattle or horse brands, and then proceed across the Missouri into Canada where the booty was sold.

Several incidents took place near the mouth of the Musselshell. Billy Downes had a trading post of sorts located at a woodyard near the mouth of the river. Granville Stuart, in his book Pioneering in Montana, says Downes had a place “ostensibly to trap wolves, but in reality to sell whiskey to the Indians.” In early July 1884 a committee of vigilantes found about 50 stolen horses in a corral just up the river from Downes’ place. The horses were recovered and, according to Oscar Mueller, Lewistown historian who did considerable research on the subject, four men were killed in a gunfight and one man, “California Jack” (an escaped criminal with a $10,000 reward offered for his capture), was hanged.

Later the same day, several but not all, of the vigilante party proceeded down the river to Downes’ fort where they reportedly hung Billy Downes and another man, both of whom were accused of dealing in stolen horses.

Similar vigilante incidents occurred during the month of July both up the river near Rocky Point and down the river at Bates Point. In all, probably 15 men died. Many cheered the vigilante action, others condemned it; but Oscar Mueller observed, “From then on, the Stock Inspectors took over the job of enforcing the laws, and peace descended upon the range in Central Montana.” (“The Central Montana Vigilante Raids of 1884,” by Oscar O. Mueller, Montana Magazine of History, Volume 1 — January 1951)

Post Offices along the Missouri

A post office was established at Carroll in 1874, and it operated intermittently until 1882. Wilder’s post office, a short distance upriver, was established in 1886 and operated until 1939. Though these post offices were outside of present-day Petroleum County, they served the residents along the entire stretch of the Missouri River to the mouth of the Musselshell.

It may be of some interest to note that Fergus County, at the time it was created in 1885, did not reach as far north as the Missouri River. Chouteau County included both sides of the river until 1869 when Fergus County purchased the strip of Chouteau County south of the river for $2500. The area at the mouth of the Musselshell River has also been part of several counties. In 1864 when Montana became a territory, it was within the western border of Big Horn County. The northern half of Big Horn County became Dawson County in 1869, placing the area in the immediate vicinity of the mouth of the Musselshell in Dawson County. It was finally acquired by Fergus County and became a part of Petroleum County in 1925.

For less than two years (June 22, 1898 to October 31, 1899), a post office operated below the mouth of Alkali Creek on the east side of the Musselshell River. The post office was named Vincent, and Walter V. Looke was the postmaster. Even Dennis Lutz in his fine book titled Montana Post Offices and Postmasters had difficulty determining the actual site of this post office. Official records only list it as being in Dawson County.

Albert Adams, before his death in 1988, was interviewed by the Petroleum County history group, and he recalled that his parents received mail at Vincent when they first came to the Musselshell River. In this taped interview he states the post office was located just below the mouth of Alkali Creek (Sec. 30-19-30).

In 1901 a post office named Kismet was established east of the mouth of the Musselshell River, almost opposite the site of abandoned Fort Musselshell. The mail came from the newly opened Jordan (1899) Post Office. Kismet consisted of a post office, store, warehouse, and a ferry which crossed the Missouri. The first postmaster was Heath Eaton. The area flooded in about 1908, the postmaster drowned, and the buildings were washed away (See also TOWN). According to John Town, the post office of Kismet was moved across the Missouri to the UL Ranch and operated for several years with ranchers taking turns carrying the mail from the Leedy Post Office.

The Leedy Post Office opened in 1903 and served river patrons until 1938. It was located on the north side of the Missouri River downstream from the Musselshell River.
Walt Fletcher's store, saloon and post office at Fort Musselshell, 1913

Nichol (1906-1907), Legg (1917-1936) and Ceekay (1932-1937) were other north bank post offices which served patrons on both sides of the river. The post office map at the front of this book will show their locations.

On June 18, 1913, a post office was officially designated at Fort Musselshell near the site of the earlier fort. The settlement consisted of a ferry and store-saloon. Mollie Fletcher was named postmaster. The post office closed in 1915 but reopened in 1917 and operated until 1922. At that time, John Town moved the post office three miles north and changed the name to Bervie. Bervie was the name of a town in Ontario, Canada, where Mr. Town's mother had spent her childhood. The post office operated until 1932 with John Town as postmaster.

Schools

School District #124 was created February 28, 1914, and a school was opened in Sec. 32-20-30. Some of the children attending the school were: Dundom, Tripp, Rukavina, Messier, Milesnick, Vlastelic, Matovich and Gauthier.

The schoolhouse burned during the winter of 1918. The following fall, school was held in an old bunkhouse on the Rukavina place. School at this site was discontinued in the early 1930s.

Several home schools operated in the district — one briefly at the Tony Weingart home in 1933, and one in the Alex Weingart home from 1938-1941.

District #204 was created in 1924 from the northern portion of District #124 and parts of District #101 in Fergus County. It encompassed an area along the Missouri River from Wilder to the eastern edge of the newly formed Petroleum County. The district operated as a joint district for about ten years. Though school was held under various names and at various locations, there are no records to indicate two schools operated at the same time. The school simply moved to the locations most convenient for the students. Baucke, Gairrett, Athearn and McGinnis children were some of the children listed on the school census for 1924.

Amanda Swift wrote of the school in December 1925: "The school in J/D #204 east of Wilder, which has just been built, houses a dozen children who were many miles from any school."

Roads — Ferries — Bridges

During the late 1920s there were a number of proposals for a north-south road linking central Montana with the "hi-line." Various communities vied for the route. Winnett, of course, was among the competitors. In 1930 a graded road was completed from Winnett north to the Missouri River. A bridge was constructed across Crooked Creek, and the community had visions of a main thoroughfare going through Winnett to Malta.

Donations were solicited from Winnett businessmen for the purchase of a new cable for the ferry across the Missouri near the mouth of the Musselshell, and on August 16, 1930, a huge picnic, rodeo and bowery dance was held to celebrate the opening of the road and ferry. The Hon. Tom Stout and Teddy Blue Abbott spoke on the early history of Fort Musselshell. According to the Winnett Times, 500 carloads of people attended!

Plans were made to have a filling station on the south side of the Missouri River, and Phillips County began work on a road north of the river to Malta. The distance from Winnett to the ferry was 55 miles, from the ferry to Malta 75 miles.

Ferries operated at various times (both before and after 1930) across the Missouri River at Kismet, Leedy, Fort Musselshell and Rock Creek (Wildor- Carroll-Rocky Point area). It was common practice, however, to swim the river on horseback or to cross it on the ice in the winter. Numerous tales of such crossings are to be found in the text of this chapter.

For a number of years it was hoped a bridge would be built across the Missouri near the mouth of the Musselshell. Hopes dimmed after Fort Peck flooded the area since the channel became much wider. It was not until the Fred Robinson Bridge (upriver some 50 miles) was completed in 1961 that year-round traffic could cross from central Montana to the hi-line.

Fort Musselshell ferry about 1915 with Martin Matovich, Ed Henneman, Jack Richardson, John Castor, Roland Matthews and Dell Bunn aboard

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Fort Peck Dam

In the 1930s Fort Peck Dam was constructed across the Missouri River near the site of the old trading post of Fort Peck almost 100 miles down the Missouri River from the mouth of the Musselshell. The dam materialized as a result of a massive New Deal work project.

The idea of a dam across the Missouri River had been considered long before the 1930s, but it had been thought to be too expensive by other administrations. Roosevelt saw it as an opportunity to employ thousands of people and benefit thousands more who lived along the flood-plagued river all the way to New Orleans. As early as 1927, Army engineers had begun surveys and soil tests to determine the feasibility of the project.

In October 1933 a Winnett Times headline announced "$25,000,000 is Fort Peck Allotment." The money was allocated by the Public Works Administration for the first phase of construction. The work was to be directed by the Army Corps of Engineers. It was estimated at that time that 6500 men would be employed and that the dam would cost approximately $60,000,000.

Fort Peck Dam was completed in 1939 at a total cost of over $100,000,000. It is the largest earth-fill dam in the world, containing 125,600,000 cubic yards of earth. It is over 250 feet high, four miles long and creates a lake 135 miles long with more than 1500 miles of shoreline.

All of the grand statistics of the project meant little to the handful of landowners along the Missouri and Musselshell rivers who were forced to give up their homes and their livelihood to the waters of the reservoir. (Many references will be found in the following pages concerning the Corps of Engineers and their takeover of the land.) These people were hearty souls who had survived the rigors of weather, isolation and economic disasters. It was their home. Many left with heavy hearts and more than a touch of bitterness.

The entire region adjacent to the flooded lands had become a part of the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge.

Musselshell River Settlements

The 1880s brought an end to the great buffalo herds, the last of which roamed Montana between the Missouri and the Yellowstone. Buffalo were replaced by cattle. This added an entirely new dimension to eastern Montana and the Musselshell River area. Prior to this time, white inhabitants had been limited to transient trappers, hide hunters and explorers. This "big open" to the east of the Musselshell River, however, became the range for a number of large cattle outfits in the 1880s — among them the 79, the Hat X, the LU Bar, the N Bar and the CK. To the west of the river the DHS (with headquarters near Ft. Maginnis), Kohrs and Bielenburg, Robert Coburn, Henry Sieben, N. J. Dovenspeck, N. W. McCauley, C. D. Duncan, Stuart-Anderson, W. C. and G. P. Burnett. F. E. Lawrence, Adolph Baro and Amos Synder were among the first to use the open range.

Many of the people who settled along the Musselshell either came in with, or worked for, the early cattle outfits. Their family stories are sprinkled with references to these ranch names.

An 1897 Montana map does not show a post office east of the Musselshell River between the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers. The settlements were all along the rivers and, later, along the railroad. (Jordon's post office opened in 1899, Cohagen in 1905, Ingomar in 1910, Brusett in 1916.)

The earliest post office on the Musselshell River in eastern Montana was the town of Musselshell at Musselshell Crossing. 30 miles down the river from present day Roundup. (Not to be confused with Fort Musselshell or Musselshell City at the mouth of the Musselshell River.) It was established in 1883, the same year Grassrange and Flatwillow received post office designations. These three settlements were all stops on the Junction City-Fort Maginnis stage route.

Mosby

It was not until 1897 that another post office opened on the Musselshell River, and it still was not within what would become Petroleum County. This new post office was Baldwin (1897). Postal records indicate its first postmaster was Edward Baldwin. Very soon after it opened, however, it moved into the home of William and Mary Mosby (Township 9-Range 30) not far from what was to become the town of Melstone. (Melstone's post office did not open until the coming of the railroad in 1908.)

When the Mosbys moved down the river, the post office moved with them. In 1904 the family moved to the present Mosby location on the east side of the Musselshell River at what was known as Half-Breed Cross-
when his wife, Pearl, was officially appointed postmaster, a position she held until her death. Her son became postmaster in 1953 and served until 1976. At that time the post office became a CPO (Community Post Office) of Winnett. Kenneth Boulden is presently (1988) the CIC (Clerk in Charge).

The Mosbys operated a ferry at Half-Breed Crossing until about 1918 when a wooden bridge was built. The western approach to the bridge was washed out in 1922, causing a source of contention between the local residents and the Fergus County Commissioners who were responsible for its repair. In November 1924 the Winnett Times reiterated some of the problems. "Many Garfield County farmers are marketing their products in Winnett. To do this they have to ford the Musselshell River near Mosby. The Fergus County approach on the bridge has been out for nearly three years and will very likely remain out until Petroleum County commences functioning and replaces the approach. Hauling from Garfield County to Winnett makes a decidedly long trip by team... When it is taken into consideration that Mosby is 25 miles east of Winnett, one can fully realize the difficulties of farming in Garfield County — difficulties that have been added to by the neglect of the Fergus County Commissioners to replace the approach to the bridge."

Residents of eastern Petroleum County and Garfield County were, at that time, vitally interested in the proposed Great Northern railroad's Winnett-New Rockford cutoff. They were sadly disappointed when the rail line did not materialize.

In May 1925 the county commissioners from Garfield County and the newly formed Petroleum County held a planning session with a joint picnic at the Mosby bridge to consider plans for repairing the bridge. It was advertised as a gala affair. The Winnett Times reported "... the picnic is more of an old-time get-together meeting. You are to bring your own eats. There will be nothing for sale and nothing to buy. The fishing, swimming, and all other pleasures are free. A rare opportunity for the old to grow young, and the young to grow foolish!"

The bridge was made serviceable again and served until July 1933. In the early 1930s the State highway began improvement of a route from Lewistown to Jordan and Glendive. During 1931-1932 a contract was let to grade and gravel the road from Box Elder crossing to the Musselshell. The contractor agreed to hire local men and teams for as much of the work as possible. He hired 40 four-horse teams and offered to feed both horses and men for $1.00 per day.

On October 17, 1932, a contract for $47,481 was let for the construction of a steel bridge to replace the old wooden structure. The bridge was completed and a grand opening held on July 15, 1933. There were speakers, a baseball game, a rodeo, a boxing match and a free dance using the entire length of the bridge as a dance floor. Over 3000 people attended and 500 couples were said to have danced on the bridge. This bridge served for forty years until a new concrete-steel bridge was constructed a short way upstream in 1973.

In April 1946 the Winnett Times reported an oil strike on the East Dome. "The deep sand producing area of the Cat Creek field was extended 4½ miles to the southeast... when Hanlon-Gov't. No. 1 on the field's hitherto unproductive east dome came in bailing nine barrels hourly of high gravity oil." The East dome which is only a few miles east of Mosby is not to be confused with the Mosby dome which is closer to Cat Creek. (See map of oil domes in Cat Creek section.) A Jet Fuel Refinery was built in 1952 by William M. Hanlon and York Oil Company. It was organized as a facility for marketing high gravity crude oil from the Cat Creek East Dome Field. The products refined were gasoline, jet fuel, JP-4, stove fuel, diesel and heavy fuel oil. The refinery operated until 1973.
Schools

According to Dawson County school records, the school district in which Mosby was located was created in 1904 as a part of Dawson County. The district reached from the Missouri River south to the Rosebud County line. The individuals signing the petition for the school district were C. K. Nordahl, W. H. Mosby, J. B. Huff and John Hill. The first trustees were W. C. Niles, John Hill and W. H. Mosby with Maude D. Niles as clerk. Twelve children were listed in the 1904 census. Emily Henderson was believed to be the first teacher.

The first school was built by John Hill Sr. and the Mosbys. It burned in March 1928 and the old Mosby pool hall was used for school for the balance of the year. A new school was built northeast of the original location about ½ mile. It was later moved farther north to accommodate more families. In 1967 a trailer house was purchased for use as a school. Alma Rowton taught this school until it closed in 1975.

Some of the other schools which operated east of the river in the Mosby area during the 1920s were the Twin Butte School, the Canyon Creek School and the Youderian School. Later, in the 1950s, these rural schools operated — Williamson School, McDaniel School, Whoop-up School and Brown School.

POST CARD

Dear Mr. C. W. Weede,

I am sorry to hear that your wife is ill. I pray God to send you comfort in your time of need.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

Postmarked Weede, delivered to Weede

Weede — Parkinson

Weede was located near the point at which Flatwillow Creek flows into the Musselshell River. It is a location mentioned by old-timers and historians as being a favorite Indian campground. According to legend, Pike Landusky established a trading post in the area before moving on up Flatwillow Creek to his post at the mouth of Pike Creek. (See also LANDUSKY — Flatwillow)

When a post office was approved for Weede in 1901, there were only two other post offices (Flatwillow 1883 and Edgewater 1900) in what was to become Petroleum County. Sarge W. Weede was named the first postmaster. Though the post office did not serve a large number of patrons, it served an extremely large geographic area including Ashley, Cat Creek Basin, Petrolia, and across the river east nearly to Jordan. The mail route came from the town of Musselshell, and the route was extended down the river when the Ross Post Office opened in 1906.

The Polk Directory for 1904-05 lists Weede as a "a country post office 90 miles southeast of Lewistown; 75 miles north of Junction, the shipping point on the Northern Pacific Railroad; and 120 miles northeast of Billings, the banking point. Lizzie Park, postmaster." Among the property owners listed were A. J. Boyle, homesteader; John Dyer, laborer; George W. Gates, barber; John Hill, stockman; W. H. Mosby, saloon; K. E. Park, cattle; John O'Sea, cattle; Edward Parkinson, surveyor; S. D. Parkinson, rancher; H. E. Pollard, mail carrier; Angelo Wattersen, rancher; S. W. Weede, rancher.

The Weede post office operated from 1901 to 1911. In 1911 it became known as the Parkinson post office and was moved several miles north with Fred Martin as postmaster. In 1914 it again became known as Weede and Mrs. W. Boyle was named postmaster.

Schools

Weede School District #107 was created on February 28, 1913, from District #26. It was a large district which was later divided into several smaller districts. The first trustees were S. D. Parkinson, C. L. Findley and R. A. White. The clerk was Angelo Watterson, and the first teacher was Florence Parkinson. The land for the school was acquired from George Gates in Sec 22-14-30. A second school location was also acquired in Sec 33-14-30.

Further up the river (in the southeast corner of the county which never had a post office) school district #164 was formed in 1916. The first trustees were W. C. Weston, B. J. Smith and J. E. Hensley. Hannah Raa was the first teacher in what was known as the Weston School. She taught for 57 days and was paid $65 per month. Another school also operated in the district — the Whitaker School. For a very short time District #164 also provided a home school in the Minor home. (See also Kelley chapter)

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Ross Community

A little north of the midpoint along Petroleum County’s portion of the Musselshell River (just below the mouth of Blood Creek) a post office was established on the east side of the river in 1904. It operated under the name of Sagebrush with Thomas Gilfeather as postmaster. The first designation was rescinded in 1906 and the post office was officially recognized as Ross. The Gilfeathers ran the post office until it closed in 1935.

There is a wonderful story about the first school at Ross. It needs to be retold even if time has colored some of the details. It is said that 12-year-old Knute Nordahl rode 75 miles to the town of Giltedge to attend a school board meeting and request a school for the children in the Ross area. The school board members knew the people across the Musselshell River were in a different county and outside of their jurisdiction, but they were so impressed with Knute’s ride and his request that they agreed to provide a teacher and pay her wages! (Records indicate Knute would have been 12 years old in 1908.) A small log cabin was built on what was known as the Usher place and the Carl Nordahl. Adams and Gilfeather children attended their first school under Miss Jessie Belcher.

A couple of years later, after the death of the three older Gilfeather children from diphtheria, a small log schoolhouse was built more centrally located for the other children in the community. It was on the west side of the river on the Tuohy place. The school only operated about a year at this location. In about 1911 a 12-horse team was used to move the building down and across the river to the Piper place. It was used as a temporary school while a new frame schoolhouse was being built.

After the new building was complete, the old building was used for a teacherage. The new school was sometimes called the Ripley School. It burned in 1927. The fire started in the entryway and the teacher, Ruth Viell Stanton, broke a window with her hands and helped each frightened child out of the window. She carried scars on her hands all of her life from the cuts she received from the broken glass. School was held in the Piper house after the fire. In 1941 the residents of the area built the Ross Community Hall at the Piper site. It was completed in August 1941.

In about 1930 a school opened down the river for the Long, Coon, Roberts and Keith children. It was known as the Shannon School. The little log school operated until 1937. Later it was moved downriver to the Matovich Ranch to be used as a school.

The present Ross schoolhouse (Sec 4-16-30) was built in 1930. The Nordahls and Dow Bowen got the logs up in the hills and built the building. School was held there until 1947, but it was closed from 1947 to 1958. During that time, school was held at several locations, depending upon the children to be served. It was held at the Bob Gibsons from 1950 to 1956 and at the Richard Knapps in 1957-58. In 1958 the Ross schoolhouse was remodeled and the school opened again. It has been in operation to date (1988).

Mecaha Overview

The name Mecaha was chosen by J. J. Capron, the U. S. Land Commissioner, residing on Lodgepole Creek on the east side of the Musselshell River. Mecaha means ‘raccoon’ in the language of one of the Southern (Highland) Indian tribes. This was an appropriate name, as there were many people by the name of Coon living in the area.

The Mecaha Post Office was opened in 1915, near the mouth of Lodgepole Creek (T18N R30E). Although it has been recorded that Tina Busic was the first postmaster, this has been disputed. Long-time residents. Albert Adams and Marcus Matovich, agreed that the first postmaster was a man named Otto T. Green.

Green had the post office and a store in his home until the fall of 1922 or the spring of 1923. At that time his
home burned down and Tina Busic took over the post office in her home.

W. G. Roberts was postmaster until 1938, when Ina Marks took it over. Ina ran the post office until it closed in 1941. The site of the Mecaha Post Office is the present day Marcus Matovich Ranch.

When the Mecaha Post Office closed in 1941, mail was delivered twice a week from Mosby to all residents living along the stage road on the east side of the Musselshell.

Some of the mail carriers over the years were Lark and Charles Sandidge, Knute Nordahl, Gus Newell, Sever Wangness, George Mock, Gid Busic, Joe Bagwell, Adolph Ziesmer, Easton Rowton, Harry Nordahl, Roland Matthews, Roy Gibson, and Larry Petersen. Roy Gibson carried the mail about 20 years. He quit in July 1968, and Larry Petersen has had the mail route ever since.

At one time alfalfa seed was a major source of income for ranchers living along the Musselshell in the Ross and Mecaha areas.

In 1925 an estimated 35 tons of seed was hauled into Winnett. Elephant wagon and truck loads entered Winnett on November 5, 1925, and the rest of the caravan was on the road between Mecaha and Winnett. Each fall the seed growers along the river organized a caravan to haul seed to the shipping point. By 1928 all the seed growers owned trucks and were able to transport seed by truck rather than wagons. Previously it had taken two or three days to make the trip by wagon. Transportation by truck took only about four hours. Many Garfield County ranchers sold seed in Winnett due to the good market and good roads.

Most of the early day settlers in the Mecaha area obtained their year’s supply of groceries at Roy, Montana. People would travel to Roy on the 79 Trail, as it was a better road than the stage road on the east side of the river. The stage road ran from a point three miles east of Mosby north to Ross and Mecaha.

When the stage road was improved in the 1920s, more people began to go to Winnett for supplies.

In 1926 there was a movement in western Garfield County to annex the district containing Mosby, Ross, and the Mecaha Post Offices to Petroleum County. This district included some of the most productive lands in Garfield County along the Musselshell River and Lodgepole Creek.

However, annexation was not possible. By law, the retained portion of the county had to have an assessed valuation of $8,000,000. The annexed portion had to have a valuation of $4,000,000. The total assessed value of all of Garfield County at that time was only $5,000,000. Thus, the movement to annex part of Garfield County to Petroleum county was ended.

**Schools in the Mecaha Area**

In August 1917 a petition requested a school district on the western edge (T18 R30) of Dawson County (now Garfield) on the Musselshell River, extending east across the river to Sec. 3-18-29. As a result, Joint School District #189 J-1 was formed.

The first Mecaha School was built in this district in 1918 near the mouth of Lodgepole Creek on the east side of the river. Families with children in school were: Thomas, Adams, Davis, Atwood,Lotspeich, Riley, Olmstead, Fuller, Dumond, Smith (Songer), Coon and Marks. About 1921 this schoolhouse burned and school was discontinued.

In 1919 the joint district was dissolved and the area east of the river became Garfield District #25. The portion west of the river became Fergus County District #189. The area was enlarged to include the east half of T18 R28 and a portion of the north half of T17 R28-29.

Two schools, the 79 and the Atwood-Horseshoe Bend, operated in this new district in the early 1920s. The 79 School in Sec. 17-18-29 had formerly been in District #169 (Dovetails). It served the Killham-Kirkendall-Kastner families and was sometimes called by the name of one of those people (See picture KILLHAM — Dovetail).

The Atwood-Horseshoe Bend School was on Drag Creek in Sec. 11-18-29. Students included those from the Marks, Atwood, Thomas, Neiter and Olmstead families (See picture ATWOOD).

Some teachers in District #189 were: Ruth Irish, Florence Rosean, Anna Roberts, Mattie Cox, Hazel Talbot, Gladys Foster, Mary Koon, Lucille Neiter and Zell Conolly.

In 1926 the Atwood schoolhouse was moved, placed on the bench below the 79 hill, and renamed the Mecaha School or Nordquist School. Its location was Sec. 24-18-29. Teachers included: Cora Nordahl, Philip Black, Esther Sherlie (Adams), Eulalie Winter, Mary B. Sterrett, Alice Halvorson, Helen Friedrich, Irene Marks and Regina Larson. This Mecaha School closed in 1941.

The first Lone Star School was built on the east side of the Musselshell River near Lodgepole Creek in the fall of 1922. School was held there intermittently. In 1946 the schoolhouse was dismantled and rebuilt on the west side. This school was also referred to as Marks or Mecaha School. Eulalie Winter was the teacher. Some students were: Tiny Brindley; Albert, Dorothy and Jack Marks; Nevin Gibson. The school closed in the spring of 1949.
Cemeteries

Not many places in Petroleum County are as isolated as the Musselsheil River breaks area. Schools, roads, churches all presented special problems to the people who lived there. Even dying, funerals and cemeteries presented unique problems. It is not surprising there are more “home” or local cemeteries along the Musselshell River than in any other part of Petroleum County. It was simply a matter of practicality.

Research done by Lucile McVey in April 1980 verified the existence of at least four cemeteries near the river. (Copies of Ms. McVey’s records are available at the Petroleum County courthouse and the Winnett Public Library.)

The largest of the cemeteries is the Coon Cemetery on Lodgepole Creek. The first burial at this site was either the baby daughter of Caleb and Bessie Olmstead or the Mann twins who died at birth. The first marked grave is that of Pricella O. Coon, who died in 1919. There are between 20 and 30 graves at the site — some marked, some unmarked. The most recent burial is that of Albert Adams who died in 1988. His parents were both buried in the Coon Cemetery.

The Nordahl Cemetery has nine marked and eight unmarked graves: the Gilfeather and Mosby cemeteries, even fewer.

The graves of two soldiers who were buried at old Fort Musselshell were moved by the Winnett American Legion when it became apparent the area was going to be flooded by the waters of Fort Peck.

ADAMS, Albert Albert Adams, son of Dennis and Violet Adams, was born in 1902 at Lewistown. He lived with his parents on the Musselshell River near Mecaha. He attended school at Lewistown, boarding in Lewistown during the school years. After he had finished school, he returned to his parents’ homestead to farm and ranch.

In 1936 he married Esther J. Scherlie of Harlem, Montana. They resided at Babb, Montana, where Esther was teaching school. In about 1938 they moved back to the Musselshell River and leased the Gus Nordquist place. They moved to Winnett in 1945. Albert ran the Petroleum County road patrol for several years and worked for Rogge Brothers Ranch. He also worked many years for Kenneth Cole in his filling station. Albert enjoyed trapping and teaching kids how to trap and how to take care of the pelts.

Albert and Esther had three sons. Duane Albert (1938) now lives in Washington, D. C. Denis L. (1940) is in the Naval Reserve and is a C. P. A. in Billings, where he lives (1989). (He audited the Petroleum County books one year.) Elton J. (1943) is a highly rated arthritis doctor and lives in Great Falls.

After Albert and Esther moved to Winnett, Esther taught English in Winnett High School. She was an outstanding teacher who kept going back to school to keep up with new ideas and procedures. She taught at Winnett until her own boys were ready to go into high school, then she taught eight years at Grassrange High School, as she thought her boys might do better with other teachers. After Elton graduated, she returned to Winnett to teach until she retired in 1974. In 1968 she not only taught four English classes, but was also the principal and guidance counselor.

Esther Adams was an exciting English teacher. She taught in the Winnett High School for many years. She would accept only the best from her students and willingly gave her time to help any student, in or out of school hours. Many of her students did not appreciate her as a teacher until they “grew up” enough to realize what a wonderful influence she had been in their lives.

Esther’s health failed soon after her retirement, and she is now in a nursing home in Lewistown. Albert moved to Lewistown to be near her. He died in 1988 and is buried in the Coon Cemetery near the mouth of Lodgepole Creek.

ADAMS, Dennis Ezra (T18N R30E Garfield County) Dennis E. “Ezra” Adams was born in 1866 at Judson, Missouri, in an 18’ by 20’ log house. Violet Ellen Coon was born in 1873 and married Dennis in 1891. They moved to Montana in 1892 and ranched in the Rosebud River area until the government bought their ranch for the Cheyenne Reservation. In 1898 they moved to the Musselshell River country, about twelve miles south of the mouth on the east side of the river, and took up a homestead.

They got their mail first at a post office named Sanford on Big Dry Creek, now in present day Garfield County; Kismet was the second post office; Vincent the third; Valentine the fourth; Mosby the fifth; Ross the sixth; and Mecaha the last. By the time they sold the ranch, Mosby was the only post office still running.

Albert Adams family: Albert, Denis, Elton, Duane, Esther

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Tex came up the trail with the Turkey Track cattle herds in 1860s and 1870s and then worked with the RL’s Ryan Brothers. They ranged on the upper Musselshell and Yellowstone Rivers and both the Big and Little Porcupine Creeks. He worked for several years for the RL, then went north of the Missouri River, working for the Circle C (Coburn Cattle Co.); the Long X, owned by the Reynolds Cattle Co; the Circle Diamond (Bloom Cattle Co.) run by John Survant; and the UL Cattle Co., owned by Bill Flower. These cattle outfits all pooled together and called themselves “The Bear Paw Pool.”

Tex often told of the hard winter of 1886 and 1887, which ended with a very heavy cattle loss. A little bunch of about thirty head of steers wintered in a short coulee coming from the north into lower Lodgepole Creek, later called Barker Coulee. The cattle hadn’t bunched up and had wintered in real good shape. He also said that 1906 and 1907 was almost as tough, if not tougher, than 1886 and 1887.

Tex told that while working for the RL, he was piloting the wagons. One morning, he stopped the wagons and galloped down the ridge a couple of miles to find a place to camp on the Big Porcupine Creek for noon and ran across a bear. Those days, there was a bounty on bear because of their killing cattle. Tex roped the bear. When the bear hit the end of the rope, the horse bucked Tex off and the bear got the rope off. Tex went back to the wagons. He said there were three wagons — the mess wagon, the bed wagon and a wood wagon — and in addition the horse wrangler and the boss. He got five cussins’ for being gone so long, but then they all loped back and got the bear.

He told of working for the Bear Paw Pool rid’in the lower country in the Larb Hills. On Sun Prairie and in the UL country, two old timers lived on the Missouri River. Joe Legg and Andy Peck were repin’ for themselves, ridin’ with the Bear Paw Pool. Each one had one horse apecie. The “Pool” cowboys wondered how their horses stood the work. The “Pool” cowboys all had ten horses apeice and changed horses mornin’, noon, and night.

Tex later went to wolfin’, Stockmen, as well as the state and government, were paying big bounty money for grey wolves, which were awful bad on stock. On one wolfin’ job for a rancher near Malta, Tex was asked to go into the Missouri breaks, north of Rocky Point country, to trap wolves. Later in the winter, the rancher got to thinking that Tex was butchering beef on him and selling it to the Indians on the reservation which was not too far from there. Well, the rancher got a stock inspector to investigate the situation. When the inspector got to Tex’s camp, Tex invited him in for dinner.

After dinner, the inspector told him of his errand. Tex said, “Yes, we’ll ride down the river about two miles to an air hole. Can ye dive? That’s where the hides are. I only kill what I need for myself and the cats. Anyhow, I kill the wolves that kill his steers, so I don’t think he is out very much and shouldn’t begrudge me some beef.”
Just an Old Cowhand
(Dedicated to the memory of Tex Alford)

He cared not for show, this gray old man,
With hair unkempt, and whiskers long,
A pipe which smelled, and boots well worn
For he was "just an old cowhand."

Yes "just an old cowhand," and yet
A heart of gold, a helpin' hand,
A wisdom learned, not gained from books,
And a patience few will ever get.

Did someone say, "Just an old cowhand?"
Ask his dog, his horse, and those he met.
On ranges he rode in days long past,
From Canada's borders to the Rio Grande.

They'll tell you of many kind deeds done,
A life he'd saved at the risk of his own,
A task he'd finished for one who was sick,
And his last crust shared with a needy one.

"Just an old cowhand?" Well, maybe,
But when his tally's checked on the Other Side,
From the "Big Book" held in the Angel's hand,
God grant that ours as good will be.
(From Campfires and Cowchips, by Floyd Hardin)

ALLAN, Walter (Sec 25-17-29) Walter W. Allan was born in 1867 in Iowa. Cenia B. Moore was born in 1876 at Kirksville, Missouri. Walter and Cenia were married in 1892.

The couple moved to Montana from North Dakota in the fall of 1892 and spent the winter at Fort Maginnis. They homesteaded near Grassrange in 1897 and then moved to a ranch on the east side of the Musselshell River in 1908.

They had three children: Hellan, born in 1900 at Grassrange, married John Winter and had one daughter.

Tex Alford. "The Old Trail Boss" at the Joe Legg Ranch, spring 1919

The inspector went back to the ranch. The rancher asked him what he found out at Tex's camp. He told the rancher, "You just as well forget it. For what the wolves kill and what Tex and his cats eat, it's not very much." The inspector said that Tex lived in a small shack and had one saddle horse and two of the biggest cats that he's ever seen. He called one "Corbett," and one "Fitzsimmons," after two prize fighters that he was very fond of.

Tex also ran the Rocky Point Saloon and later ran the Fort Musselshell Saloon and Ferry.

He was overtaken by ill health and suffered greatly from asthma. His last four years were spent in Winnett.

(W.T. 7-4-40) "'Early-day Cow Hand Is Taken By Grim Reaper on Thursday.' The life of one of the most colorful characters in Central Montana came to an end July 4th, 1939, when Thomas F. 'Tex' Alford, 79, died at his Winnett home after four years of failing health.

Tex was one of the few early day trail drivers remaining. He had trailed large herds of longhorn cattle from the plains of Texas to the Montana ranges until the time of his death. Tex could sit by the hour and fondly relate, with keen memory, the thrilling stories of the adventures and hardships of the early day cattlemen headed north from the South."
Hazel, then later married John Hill; James T. (Ted), born in 1903 near Grassrange, served in the Army in World War II and worked as a livestock buyer around the county but never married. He died in 1959 and was buried in the Winnett Cemetery with military honors. George Allan married La Veda Gibson and had two children.

Walter and Cenia lived on the homestead they bought from Amund K. Raundal when they moved to the river country. They celebrated their 52nd wedding anniversary there in 1944, then retired and moved to Winnett. Mr. Allan succumbed to a heart attack in 1946. Mrs. Allan suffered a second stroke when informed of her husband's death. They were the oldest residents of Petroleum County. They are buried in the Winnett Cemetery.

Following is a story they told their granddaughter, Hazel Gibson: When they moved to the river and moved into the Ole Nordahl house, they found there was a certain place in the floor that made queer noises. Mrs. Allan scrubbed the floor, etc., but that didn't help. One morning she had her husband take up that portion of the floor. They found a bloody pair of overalls and a pair of left overshoes there. Grandmother (Mrs. Allan) wouldn't stay there any more, so they sold the place to Tuohy and purchased their home ranch from Mr. Raundal.

ATHEARN, James Franklin

James Franklin Atearn was born June 12, 1856, in Sawyers Mills, Maine. On July 4, 1876, he married Amy Wade, also of Sawyers Mills. In 1877 they moved to Fargo, North Dakota, residing there and in other Dakota sections until 1909. He and his family came to Montana in 1909 and settled near Wilder in the Missouri Breaks where, for over a quarter of a century, he carried on a successful stock-raising operation in partnership with his son, John F. Atearn.

James F. Atearn was the author of numerous letters of homely philosophy of life at his Missouri Breaks home and ranch. He wrote "Letters to the Editor" that appeared in several Montana newspapers. He signed these letters as "Ol Man Atearn" and listed his address as "Cataranges Castle, Missouri River Jungles." These letters were widely read and chuckled over. In one letter he described his place as being "the farthest north and west as possible to still be in Petroleum County."

The Atearns had three children — John F. Atearn, F. D. Atearn, and Mrs. T. B. Torson. (Lewistown Democrat News — obituary)

ATHEARN, John F.

John F. Atearn was born at Grafton, North Dakota, on December 13, 1887, and was schooled there. He was a son of James and Amy Atearn. He married Ruth Green and the family moved to Wilder in 1909. He drove the stage from Zortman to Harlem for several years, then enlisted in World War I. He returned from World War I and ranched on the Missouri River with his father until 1935. They moved to Lewistown, Montana, where he served as deputy sheriff of Fergus County for two years. John and Ruth had four sons — Max Marcotte, Jack, Murray and Earl G., D. Atearn, and Mrs. T. B. Torson. (Lewistown Democrat News — obituary)

ATWOOD, Wesley G. (Garfield County) Wesley G. Atwood, born in 1866, married Catherine Coon (1870), daughter of William Coon Sr. They homesteaded in 1913 in the Ross area on the east side of the Musselshell. They had five children.

James Atwood married Alma Messier. They lived on the lower Musselshell until about 1936 when they moved to Idaho. James died in 1965. Odessa married George Fox. (See also FOX — Musselshell River and Winnett) Mildred married Len Isaacson (See also ISAACSON — Winnett) Bertha married Willard Markland, and after his death, married Bill Johnke at Fairfield (See also MARKLAND — Flatwillow) Alice married Henry Sims. (See also SIMS, Henry)

Atwood School. Back Row (L to R): George Marks, Pete Marks, Preston Thomas (wearing hat), Mildred Atwood, Eva Neiter, Lottie Olmstead, Elizabeth Marks; Front Row: Goldie Thomas (looking down) and Ina Marks

BAGWELL, Joe B. (Sec 1-18-29) Joseph B. Bagwell was born in 1887 at Weaversdorf, North Carolina. He came to Montana in 1907, worked first for the Hudekoper Ranch near Melville, and later on, the N Bar Ranch.

He homesteaded near the old Mecahta Post Office, and in 1916 and 1917 was the mail carrier from Mosby to Mecahta.

Joe generally made two trips a week from Mosby to Mecahta, the round trip totaling 76 miles and the job paid $1400 a year. He used two horses and a light rig, but
when the going was tough he carried just the first class mail and traveled on a saddle horse.

One day Joe started out from Mosby with the mail; the temperature was in the 40s and Joe was in his shirt sleeves. After a bit, he saw a small cloud developing in the northwest sky, and in a matter of minutes the temperature dropped to below zero. Joe nearly froze to death in that storm before he got to shelter. He got by with frosted cheeks and hands.

In that same storm, two school ma'ams in Garfield County froze to death because they had no matches with which to build a fire.

Bagwell also carried mail for seven years from Mecaha to Berville.

The rising water of Fort Peck reservoir moved Joe out of his homestead area in 1938, and he established himself at Mosby. In later years, he retired and moved to Winnett and sold his holdings at Mosby.

Bagwell served with the Army in France during World War I, as a private in Co. E 18th Infantry.

Joe never married. He had two sisters that also lived in the area — Mrs. W. G. (Carrie Ann) Roberts and Mrs. Gid (Tina L.) Busic.

Joe died in 1967. He is buried in the soldiers' plot in the Lewistown City Cemetery.

BAILEY, Charles Charles married Leona Harvey from the Melstone country. In December 1934 they moved to the Homestead lease at Cat Creek where Charles was employed. The couple had two sons, Robert and Harvey, who both met with tragic drowning deaths. Robert, who was born in 1925, was considered a top hand with a horse and did lots of riding. not only on the Bailey place, but also for neighbors. In 1943 when he was eighteen years old, he and Carl Brindley were trying to round up a yearling bull near the Casey Fall place. He jumped his horse into a deep hole in the river while attempting to turn the bull. His horse went down and came back up without the rider. After an all night search, neighbors found the body the next morning. Robert was buried in the Musselshell cemetery.

The next year the younger Bailey boy, Harvey, who was 16, went swimming after a day of threshing with Medric and Sonny Duncom and Raymond Ihde. He went down in a deep hole in the Musselshell River and the other boys were unable to rescue him.

In 1944, Charles was transferred to Lance Creek, Wyoming, where he continued to work for Continental Oil Company until his retirement.

BAILEY, Robert E. (Garfield County) Robert Bailey first came to Montana to work on a ranch at Lavina in 1902, then ranched for himself at the mouth of Cottonwood Creek on the Musselshell River. He was a good hand with livestock and horses and was pictured in the Winnett Times still driving cattle at 83 years old. (See also SULT)

In 1938 he tried to retire and live with his daughter in California, but he did not find it to his liking. He came back to Winnett, where he lived until he was 92 years old. At that time he moved to Thermopolis, Wyoming, to live with his son.

He and his wife had two daughters — Ana Sales and Gertrude Skidmore, both of Riverside, California; and one son, Charles, of Thermopolis (See also BAILEY, Charles).

Robert Bailey died in 1956.

BARISICH, Joe (Sec 17-19-30) Joe L. Barisich, son of Anton and Mary Barisich, was born in 1884 in Yugoslavia. He received his schooling there. He came to the United States in 1900. He was a miner, and from 1904 to 1908 he worked in the Kendall Mine near Lewistown, Montana. In 1908 he moved to the former Long S Cattle Ranch near the mouth of the Musselshell River.

Mary M. Loncaric, daughter of Paul and Maria Loncaric, was born in 1888 at Selce, Yugoslavia. She received her schooling there. She came to the Lewistown area in 1922.

Joseph and Mary were married in Lewistown in 1923. They had three children — Mary J. (1924), Tony P. (1925) and Jack L. (1929).

Joe and Mary always spoke Croatian at home, so the kids learned English when they went to school. Tony had to take the first grade over because the teacher said he couldn't speak English well enough. (Tony claimed he failed because the teacher couldn't speak Croatian!)

When Jack misbehaved in the early years of his schooling, one of his teachers would take down his bib overalls and whip him in front of the class. He got several whippings before his mother sewed the bibs to his shirt so the teacher couldn't take them down in front of the kids again.

These kids were the last to attend the old Fort Musselshell School, a well-known log pioneer schoolhouse that was also used for public dances for many years. Mr. Barisich was a member of the school board in that district.

The Barisich family lived on the river until 1938 when the government bought their land to flood with the Fort Peck Dam. They moved to Winnett in 1939, and the kids finished their education there.

Joe Barisich family: Dad, Jack, Mom, Mary, Tony
Tony Barisich graduated from Winnett High School and has worked on ranches around Winnett for many years. He never married and still lives in the house his parents bought when they moved to Winnett. Mary Barisich married Victor McKinnire. They lived at Grassrange and later in Billings. Mary died in 1985. Jack Barisich graduated from Winnett High School and married Marylee Sims. They live in Winnett. (See also BARISICH — Winnett)

Joe Barisich died in 1962 and Mary died in 1973. They are both buried at Calvary Cemetery in Lewistown. (Jack Barisich)

The following two items are of family historic interest: "Joseph Barisich was always called "Joe Bush." Many of the people around didn’t know his real name. He had a small country store on his ranch, which he stocked with groceries from Lewistown. He also kept quite a few hives of bees. He collected the honey (the very best from sweet clover and alfalfa blossoms) and sold it in five gallon cans, at $6.00 per can to all ranchers in that part of the country." (Ben Garthofner)

(W. T. 11-1-45) "Mrs. Barisich was awarded U. S. Citizenship papers by Judge Stewart McConochie last Friday. Mrs. Velma Merten, Clerk of Court, and Mrs. Barisich drove into Lewistown for the occasion."

BARKDOLL, Ruben A. (Garfield County) Ruben A. Barkdoll, son of J. H. and Minerva Barkdoll, was born in 1875 near Montra, Ohio. Emma J. Dial was born in 1885 at Eldorado Springs, Missouri, where she attended the local schools. Ruben and Emma were married in 1910 at Nevada, Missouri. In 1913 they came west to Montana. Their first stop was in the Moore, Montana, area, where Ruben worked for a time for Ed Withrow, his sister’s husband. In about 1915 the Barkdolls moved to a homestead five or six miles north of Mosby in Garfield County.

Ruben and Emma had three children — Floyd (1906), Robert (1908) and Ruby (1913). The children went to the Twin Buttes School and to other schools in the area.

Ruben died in 1929 and Emma stayed on at the homestead with the children. She continued the operation until about 1940, when her health began to fail. She moved into Winnett and lived there until her death in 1943. She and Ruben are both buried at the Winnett Cemetery.

Floyd Barkdoll ranched on the Musselshell on a place he bought from Pearl Dunham and James Weaver (Sec 9-15-30). In 1954 he sold his place to E. E. Sult and bought a bar in Winnett. He operated Floyd’s Bar until his death in 1958. He was killed in a car wreck, along with Herbert J. Killham, on November 6, 1958, when his pickup side-swiped a larger truck and careened off the road. The accident occurred just inside the Judith Basin County line.

JoAnn Dunham Ostermiller had remembrances of Floyd: ‘Floyd Barkdoll was, to me, a very special person. I think it was mostly because he had such a way with animals. We used to have a grey-striped tomcat that Floyd named Mr. Tibethy. This feline and the man knew each other quite well, but there were limits. Floyd would tease Mr. Tibethy only so long, where upon the cat would attack him, which is what he wanted; then Barkdoll would leave him alone. All animals loved him, even the chickens.’

Robert Barkdoll made his home on the homestead until 1948, when he moved to Roundup and married Mrs. Virginia Murphy. They later moved to Miles City and were living there when he died of a heart attack in 1953. He is buried at the Winnett Cemetery.

Ruby tells her own story: ‘I, Ruby Barkdoll Matovich, was born to Emma Jane and Ruben Abner Barkdoll near El Dorado Springs, Missouri. I had two brothers, Floyd and Robert.

The spring of 1914 we came to Montana due to my mother’s poor health. We landed at Moore, Montana. My uncle, Ed Withrow, had a ranch in the foothills of the Snowy Mountains. We stayed there for a time. I’m not sure how long. My dad worked for my uncle and Bert Francis. My two brothers went to Mount View School.

We left there in the spring of 1915 or 1916. I only know we moved and landed about five or six miles north of Mosby. The first time I saw the house on the homestead, there were no windows or doors, just walls. I asked Dad, ‘How do you get in?’ He grabbed me up and gave me a swing as if to throw me over the top (much to the delight of my two brothers, but not mine). We raised a garden if it rained. Dad worked for other people when he could. Sometimes he got meat and vegetables for his wages, or whatever they had to pay him with. If he got money, he got clothes and paid the taxes. Sometimes he would work for a neighbor, and that neighbor would come and help him in repayment.

Ruby Barkdoll
"My brothers went to school at Twin Buttes School. No one now seems to know where Twin Buttes School was. Their teacher was Mrs. Eline Warner.

"The next thing I remember was starting to school in the old Ralph Barney house. I well remember my first year in school. My first teacher was Mattie Cox from Virginia, with my next teacher being Mrs. Martha Griebel.

"It was a terrible winter. We lived about a mile and a half from school, and Floyd and I walked. There were some neighbors with two boys who rode six miles to the school. One very nice day in the fall, I went to school in a dress, a light jacket, and canvas strap sandals. During the day, a storm front came through, dropping the temperature about 40 degrees, bringing freezing rain and snow. The teacher wrapped me in a blanket, borrowed the neighbor boys' horses, and sent me home horseback with Floyd. The older boys walked to our place, then rode their horses on home.

"That was in 1919, the beginning of a very hard winter: livestock died all over the hills. That year my dad worked for a man by the name of Bill Bennett. He let my dad ride one of his horses home on weekends. After two months' work, he gave Dad a large hind quarter of beef.

"The next year my dad and Mr. Peters (a neighbor) built a schoolhouse half-way between them. Mrs. Griebel taught us that year.

"My fourth year of school was at Twin Buttes. I stayed with Charlie Longs, who lived just east of the Twin Buttes. My teacher was Bernice Turner from McTuggin, Montana. The mail came from Sumatra, then by team and wagon, sled, or pack horse to the McTuggin Post Office (Garfield County).

"My next teacher was Lelea Green at the Mosby School. The next two years were at Mosby, with teachers Anna Kleiman, Mrs. WARNER, and finally, Mrs. Sheets my eighth grade year.

"I started to high school at Winnett in 1928 but didn't have the money to finish the year. I worked at a hotel for my room and board. I went home in February, and before school started the next year, I lost my dad. I stayed with Mom on the ranch and took care of what little stock we had. The following years were hard ones.

"I married Marcus Matovich in 1936." (See also MATOVICH, Marcus)

BARNETT, Austin Austin Barnett was born and raised in the Valentine country. His high school education was interrupted by a term in the service during World War II. He returned from service and graduated from Winnett High in 1947.

He married, and he and his wife, Carol, went to work for John Hedman. They had four children — Ronnie, Wanda, Lester and Lonnie. They moved to the Hedman place on the river (the former Ed Healy place), and their children went to the Ross School.

The following article appeared in the Winnett Times on November 21, 1958: "Girl Wades Icy River Three Times Same Evening! When eight-year-old Wanda Barnett and ten-year-old Ronald Barnett started home from school on Monday evening, their saddle horses refused to ford the river at the crossing between Knapps and Gilfeathers. At last Wanda got off her pony, led him across the river, tied him to a tree, then waded back to her brother and led the horse across. In the process the girl stumbled on a rock in the icy water and was further chilled in the water that already extended over her overshoes.

"By the time the riders had traveled about a mile and reached the Gilfeathers home, Ronald was cold from the cold evening, and Wanda was very, very cold and ice crustind. Wanda stayed overnight at Gilfeathers while Ronald accompanied his father home. Austin Barnett had mounted his horse and gone in search of the youngsters who were overdue at home."

The next week the Times reported, "Wanda and Ronald Barnett have changed their route to school since the river wading incident that cold, cold evening. Instead of fording the river horseback three times going to school, a total of six crossings per school day, they cross only once in a cable bucket near their home, get their ponies that are kept in a corral on the east side of the river, and continue through the Kleiman river place and on to the Knapp farm where the Ross School is currently located. This is a less worriesome plan."

The next spring, however, this "less worriesome plan" proved to be almost disastrous. The children had crossed the river in the trolley to their horses. While there the ice started breaking up. Family and friends came to warn them. They had a difficult time telling the children into getting back on the trolley — safely to their homeside of the river. The children did not realize the danger of the floating ice. They barely missed the ice jam that took the trolley out and stranded the horses and five cows. Austin and Bill Roberts had to go around by Mosby to get the livestock. They were able to get the horses, but the cows couldn't be freed. Later Austin and Harry Bevis dynamited the jam to turn the water loose because it was five feet deep in the meadow.

BART, Wilmer R. (Sec 8-16-30) Wilmer R. Bart was born in 1860 at Bloomington, Iowa. After coming to Montana, he made his home in Garfield County, later homesteading in present-day Petroleum County near the Dow Bowen Ranch on the Musselshell River.

Mr. Bart was well known for his fine gardens he produced on a plot near his log cabin. He had devised his own irrigation system, pumping water using a Model T Ford for the power plant.

He was hitching a ride on a train one time, when he fell off. One leg fell across the track, and the train ran over it. After that he had a peg leg.

He only made trips to town when he needed supplies, which was infrequently. He never married. He died at 84 years of age in 1943.

BARTHELOW, Roy Roy and Marie Barthelow are listed as parents in the Weede School census. Their children are listed as follows: David (1907), Walter (1909),

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and twins, John and Joan (1913).

**BENSON, Arthur** (Sec 2-12-30) Arthur Benson, son of John and Oline Benson, took over the home place when his father died. In 1940 he married Dorothy Blakeley at Townsend, Montana. They had six children: John (1941); Ronald Charles, who drowned in the river; William (1944); Charles Ronald (1951), who died of leukemia in 1954; Karen (1953); and Ardell (1956), born after her father's death.

A 1952 Winnett Times news item reported: "Arthur Benson reports roads are still snow blocked in his area, and that it was necessary for him to drive 130 miles to bring his children and Mrs. Benson to the Box Elder School. The Benson Ranch is located approximately 35 miles south and east of Mosby, by road. Across country, by horseback, it is 15 miles to the Box Elder School. With the roads still blocked by snow, the trip to school involves going by way of Melstone, a trip of about 130 miles. Mrs. Benson and children live in a house near the school on the Clarence Saylor Ranch through the week, going home over the weekends. (Mrs. Clarence Saylor is a sister of Arthur Benson.)"

Mr. and Mrs. Benson thought it was quite a joke that a recent issue of the Times stated that county roads were all opened to traffic by the snowplows."

(W. T. 5-10-56) "Arthur Benson, 39, rancher in the southeastern section of Petroleum County, was killed instantly while struck by lightning about 2:30 p.m. Tuesday afternoon.

"A horse being ridden by Benson, as well as a horse being ridden by his son, John, 15, were also killed. Although John apparently suffered only slight shock.

"Two other men, Elliott Trump and Bob Shellhammer, riding with the Bensons, were badly shaken and dazed when the bolt struck, knocking their horses to the ground.

"The four men were riding in the rugged breaks country of the Musselshell River area to locate section corners and lines to establish new fencing when a storm came up suddenly, bringing rain and lightning.

"The death took place about three miles west of the Benson Ranch home in extreme southeastern Petroleum County. Because of the rugged terrain, it was not until 7:30 in the evening when the body was brought out."

**BENSON, John A.** (Sec 2-12-30) John A. Benson, son of Arthur and Dorothy Benson, is now (1988) in charge of the Benson Ranch on the Musselshell River. He married Betty Daniels, daughter of Bill and Nadine Daniels. They have two children — Kari Annette (1963) and Joy Rennae (1966). (Agnes Benson Saylor)

**BENSON, John O.** (Sec 2-12-30) John Benson and Oline Stenberg came from different areas in Norway to Big Timber, Montana. They met in Big Timber and were married. Later they moved to Melstone, and in the spring of 1912, they moved to a homestead on the Musselshell River, twenty-five miles north of Melstone, in Petroleum County.

Mrs. Benson and the children moved into Melstone every fall for the school term where the children all went through high school.


**BOSTON, Lorne Franklin** (Sec 4-13-30) In December of 1925, Lorne Franklin Boston, native of Halifax, Nova Scotia, made application with Clerk of Court, Mrs. Riggs, for final citizenship papers, K. E. Park and Dr. J. L. Alexander were witnesses. This was the first petition for naturalization filed in Petroleum County.

Lorne came as a homesteader and settled near Weede, where he bought some railroad land to increase his holdings. He raised vegetables for the oil camp and eventually moved there to work.

After Lorne Boston lost his holdings to the Federal Land Bank, John and Hellan Hill bought the property. In 1925 the Ripley brothers gathered his stock for him and shipped them out. Eventually Boston moved to Lewistown, where he spent the rest of his life. (See also BOSTON — Cat Creek)

**BOULDEN, Francis W.** (Sec 10-14-30) Francis Willard Boulden, son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Boulden, was born in 1889 in Montfort, Wisconsin. Pearl Iva Allen, daughter of George and Martha Allen, was born in 1886 at Montfort, Wisconsin. In 1910 Francis and Pearl were married at Baraboo, Wisconsin.

Francis, Pearl, son Allen and daughter Faye homesteaded twelve miles north of Mosby in 1917. Another son, Kenneth, was born in 1919 while they were still on the homestead. In the spring of 1923 they moved upriver to the George Gates place, and Faye and Allen attended the Weede School, with Leta Bowers, teacher.

The following year (1924) they took over the Mosby Store and Post Office from George Gates. Daughter
Evelyn was born that year with the able assistance of midwife, Emma Barkdoll. The Bouldens added a filling station to the store, and Pearl was named postmaster in 1929. The children attended the Mosby School and Winnett High School. In 1928, while Pearl was clerk of the school district, the school burned, destroying everything. The district had no money for the purchase of new texts, and that caused quite a dilemma.

Francis Boulden was a bookkeeper by trade, and he went to western Montana looking for work in 1929. The family did not join him but stayed at Mosby where Pearl ran the business and post office until her death in 1952.

In 1948 the boys had built a new home for the family, and the neighbors gave them a big housewarming. The following year they erected a new station. Upon the death of Pearl, Allen became postmaster, a position he held until he retired in 1976. Kenneth then took it over until it became a community post office, at which time he bid it in on contract and still operates it.

Allen served in the Army from 1943 to 1945, then came back to Mosby. He never married.

Faye married John Killian and they had three children — John L. (1940), Faye A. (1943), and Marilyn (1944). When she retired, she moved back to Mosby. (See also KILLIAN — Winnett)

In 1943 Kenneth went to the west coast, where he worked in the shipyards for the duration of the war. He was one of a team of five riveters to win the title of "World Champion Riveters Crew." of the Oregon Ship Builders Corporation. After the war he returned to Mosby. Kenneth never married.

Evelyn also worked in the shipyards during the war. She married Ray James, and they had three children — La Marr (1946), Mike (1948) and Laurie (1951).

BOUTIELLIER, Charles (Sec 34-13-30) Charles Boutiellier, known as "Frenchy," was a trapper. He lived on the east side of the Musselshell, but owned land on both sides of the river. He is remembered for the dugout he built to live in, using cedar poles and branches for the roof. The dugout is still there after all these years, because the cedar he used is still growing!

Frenchy bought the original Horace McGiboney homestead. He later sold to John Benson and moved to Melstone, Montana.

BOWEN, Dean (Sec 5-15-30) Dean Bowen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Bowen of St. Charles, Illinois, was born in 1903. He came to Montana with his grandmother, Mrs. Mary Bowen Sheets, who had raised him and his brothers, Dow and Albert, after their mother died.

Dean moved to the Lower Musselshell area and lived on the Bill Stroup homestead across the river from his brother, Dow Bowen.

A news correspondent wrote in the Winnett Times: "Dean Bowen is driving a custom built roadster, which he designed and built from his old coupe. As yet, no muffler has been fitted, so neighbors who hear a motor that reminds them of a churn, know that Dean is within hearing distance and will soon be in sight. The headlights are substituted by a side light and a flashlight, which is useful at gates. In order to utilize full benefits of the sunshine and fresh air, no top is cluttering up the overhead of Dean's model."

"As Mr. Bowen is very practical-minded, chains rather than an umbrella are chosen for rainy days. The small fry insist that the windshield frame is devoid of glass, but ye correspondent overlooked that item and is prone to believe that the glass is so meticulously clean that it can't be easily seen. The upholstery is not exactly of the eye-catching variety, however, may at some future time be renovated to harmonize with whatever color the body paint shall be. (Ye correspondent recommends yellow.)"

"The proof of the pudding lies in the eating," and in the case of an automobile, lies in the performance. Anyone who has ever traveled — whether afoot, horseback or via car in lowest gear — the so-called 'road' along the breaks on the Petroleum side of the river between the two Bowen ranches, will agree that route is a severe test for any car — and Dean's new model has successfully scaled all the hills, slopes, and turns without difficulty."

Dean left the river in 1959 and moved to Arlee, Montana, where he stayed for a couple of years. He married Helen Kirnak in Arlee. They moved to Beaverton, Oregon. They had no children.

Dean died in 1982 and is buried in Beaverton, Oregon.

BOWEN, Willis Dow (Sec 4-16-30) The following memories were contributed by Irene Bowen Rosetta. "My mother, Katherine Kleiman, moved to Montana from Atwood, Kansas, in 1901, at the age of eight. She and her family traveled by covered wagon, taking five weeks for the trip and settling in the Judith Basin, near Garnell."

"Later her mother filed on a desert homestead in Garfield County, north of Mosby, where the Kleimans lived from then on. My mother was next to the oldest of eleven children. She graduated from Moore High School (not too many were getting that much education on those days) and taught school for several years — in fact, until she had four children of her own. She was my first grade teacher when I started school at the age of five. We were living near Benzien on Lodgepole Creek that year; she had previously taught at the Canyon School, nearer where we lived.

"My father, Willis Dow Bowen, grew up in Hammond, Indiana, and came to Montana as a young man. He had been raised by his grandmother and his Aunt Dorothy Bowen, as his mother had died when he was three weeks old. When they came west to take up homesteads, and for Aunt Dorothy to teach school, he came, too. He first worked on a ranch near Grassrange and later homesteaded in Garfield County, near the Kleimans. My mother had also homesteaded in the area. They were married in 1916 in Lewistown, and during the following nineteen years, eleven children were born — my oldest sister, Dorothy, in 1918, and my youngest sister, Audrey, in 1935.
'When I was ready for the fourth grade (It must have been in 1927), we moved from the homestead, which was up in the hills, to the Musselshell River where the Brownings presently live — a move of about ten miles. My father wasn't able to raise hay for the cattle at the homestead as there was no water available. Our house, after we moved down to the river, was in Garfield County, but part of our land was in Petroleum County.

'We first lived in a small, one-room log building which was already on the place; this later became 'the bunkhouse,' after my father built a larger log house, which was added onto a couple times. However, it was always crowded with our large family. The boys (and hired man, when we had one) always slept in the bunkhouse.

'My father had grown up in cities or towns in Indiana and Illinois, so he learned the ranching business while working as a ranch hand near Grassrange. It was all new to him, but he learned quickly and became a good horseback rider, roper, machine repairer, etc. He always called himself a 'rancher,' as we raised Hereford cattle for sale, but there was lots of farming involved, too. We raised alfalfa for both hay and seed.

'There was always a huge garden, and we had quite a few milk cows. They grazed out on the open range, except during the winter months, and it was the job of the older kids to ride after them every afternoon. Rounding up thirteen cows was sometimes quite a chore as they could wander over a wide area. They all had names, but I can remember only Blackie and Molly.

'After moving to the Musselshell, we rode horseback 5½ miles to the Ross School, which was about midway between our house and Gilfeathers'. There were four of us in school then — Dorothy, Eline, Don and myself (Irene). The other children attending school there were Gilfeathers, Nordahls, Gibsons and Ripleys. We had summer school, six months out of the year, for several years. When I was ready for the seventh grade, the present Ross School was built, which was about one and one half miles from our house. Incidentally, it is still being used, but has been upgraded with carpeting and an indoor toilet. The small teacherage has been replaced by a good-sized trailer house and the old teacherage is being used for storage.

'Most of the time when I went to the Ross School, the teacher took turns boarding with different families. Dances are no longer held in the schoolhouse — the carpeting took care of that — also, a hall was built farther down the river, which became the social center of the community. There are way fewer families down there now, however, so I'm not sure how much it is used anymore. I started high school in Winnett in the fall of 1932.

'I almost forgot to mention that our schoolhouse burned to the ground in the spring of 1927 — the year we moved to the Musselshell. It was raining and cold that morning, and Dorothy, Eline and I all wore the new coats that our mother had just made for us. Also, Clarence Nordahl had just gotten a new saddle and used it that day for the first time. Because it was raining, he put it in the entryway of the schoolhouse, where everyone had their coats, instead of in the shed.

'The teacher (Ruth Viall, who was only 18 years old herself and teaching her first school) had built a fire in the stove. As I remember it, the piece of wood wouldn't quite fit, so she took it out of the stove and put it in the entryway. When it was time for the morning recess, she opened the door for us to go outdoors and the flames just shot in. I can still visualize it. This was the only door to the outside, and in her panic, she took her bare hands, broke the windows and got us all out of the building. Remembering that she had some money in her desk, she then went back in; she had just gotten back out when the roof caved in. Then, she fainted! We all rode back home in the rain without any coats, and Clarence without his new saddle. I still remember the coats — Dorothy's was black, mine was plaid, and Eline's was red.

'For the rest of that school year, we used the shed, which the men fixed up. They rebuilt desks, using the burned wrought iron from the old ones. The next couple years, we had school in a log building on the Piper place nearby. In fact, that is the location of the present community hall.

'My mother made all of our clothing, either from old things or from material from Montgomery Wards or Sears, and, of course everything was handed down to the next in line. It was always exciting getting a package in the mail. Living forty-two miles from the nearest town (Winnett), only the essential trips were made and they were usually by my dad. Mosby was our post office and was run by Mrs. Boulden. Her daughter, Faye, and sons, Allen and Kenneth, still run the Mosby Post Office.

'Dorothy, Don and I all graduated from Winnett High School. Eline was in her junior year there at the time of her death. Jean went for one or two years; at that time the county stopped paying transportation money, so she and the rest of my brothers and sisters all went to Jordan High School. We lived closer to Winnett (42 miles); but Jordan was the county seat of Garfield County, and it was about 75 miles from where we lived.

'Mother and Dad lived on the Nave place, near Cat Creek, from about 1950 to 1959. They then moved to another ranch on the Milk River, near Hinsdale. My sister, Donna, and her family have lived on this place since our dad's death in the fall of 1964. Also, my uncle Dean Bowen (my dad's half-brother) lived on the old Bill Stroup place on the Petroleum County side of the Musselshell River. I can't remember when he started living there, but he also left in 1959 and moved to a small ranch near Arlee, Montana, and later to Portland, Oregon, where he lived until his death in 1982.

'My mother died at Hinsdale in 1979. She spent most of her time with Audrey and Donna, and some with Laura. I think she felt closer to the younger members of
the family—also, they all had young children, and she felt more needed with them. I always thought it must have been very hard for her, though, to suddenly give up her home. She really wasn't in good enough health to live by herself (or so we all thought).

"Now to get to the statistical report on the Bowens, which I find rather uninteresting: Dorothy (1918) lives in Los Gatos, California; Irene (1919) lives in Helena, Montana; Eline (1921) died in 1935 while attending Winnett High School; Don (1922) lives in San Carlos, California; Jean (1925) lives in Portland, Oregon; Russell (1927) lives in Seattle, Washington; Esther (1929) lives in Goleta, California; Donna (1931) lives near Hinsdale, Montana; Lowell "Buddy" (1932) died in 1956 while serving in the Army in Korea; Laura (1933) lives at Woodburn, Oregon; Audrey (1935) lives in Billings, Montana.

"Dow died in 1964, Katherine died in 1979."

When Katherine died in 1979, the following "Tribute to Mom" was printed as part of her obituary in the Winnett Times:

"There are so many wonderful things to remember about our mother! When I think of her, I see her sitting in the kitchen, peeling potatoes or apples—the thinnest peelings you could find anywhere—a reflection of the hard times she's lived through, where nothing was wasted.

"I remember her giving the kitchen and front porch one last mopping, while the rest of us waited in the car for her for a rare trip to town when I was young. (No one would ever come while we were gone and find the floors needed cleaning!)

"It is Christmas Eve. The rest of the family is anxiously waiting in the living room for her so we can begin the carols, recite the "re-runs" of our school program pieces, and open the presents. Mom is finishing dishes, making another batch of fudge, divinity, or panache for us to devour.

"I remember how she never liked to wear her glasses at home, but how she always went to her dresser and put them on the last thing before we'd leave to go anywhere.

"I can still hear her at mealtime when I was young. As she went out to call my dad to dinner, 'Dow-woo-hoo,' she would call over several times, until he'd hear and answer.

"I recall the homemade ice cream she used to make and then, how we'd help our dad freeze it. No matter what picnic we went to, I can remember the pride I felt when I'd hear people making sure they got 'Bowen's' ice cream. It really was the best.

"Mom's hair was growing thin as she grew older, and in my memory, she had thought 'it would all be gone soon,' for the past thirty years. But it always looked so nice when it was curled.

"Buying a dress for Mom wasn't easy. She wanted a dress without a belt, that fastened up the front, and it had to have a pocket. Also, it must be washable.

"Her obvious delight at viewing grandchild number thirty-eight through the nursery window was almost unbelievable. You'd think she'd be getting used to that, and she acted like it was her first!

"Mom believed in hard work and expected it in others. Sleeping in late wasn't in her schedule, and I remember so well how she liked to get the rest of us up. If it was five minutes after six, she would call, 'You kids, get up, it's going on seven o'clock.' In fact, as I grew up, I can almost always remember her being up. She was up when I woke up in the morning, and still up when I went to bed. She would be sitting up late in the kitchen, mending socks, or making braided rugs—taking advantage of the quiet of the late hours when everyone else was in bed and she wouldn't be interrupted.

"Her passing was peaceful, and I think, welcome. Her overworked heart had been greatly enlarged and she had been surviving on digitals for many years. She was over 86 years old; she deserved a rest. But, how we miss her!"

**BOWERS, James W.** (Sec 5-16-30) James W. Bowers, son of James H. and Emma Bowers, was born in 1882 at Finksburg, Maryland. With an urge to go west, in 1899 he journeyed to Muscatine, Iowa, where he worked for ten years. Early in 1911 he came to Montana, locating and proving up on a homestead in the Bull Mountains.

In 1915 he married Leta Aikens at Melstone, Montana. In the fall of 1916 the family moved to a ranch near Weede, where Flatwillow Creek joins the Musselshell. For a time, the Bowers carried the mail from Melstone to Mosby and ranched along the west side of the Musselshell.

In 1925 they moved to Cat Creek, where they ran a store and carried the mail from Cat Creek to Winnett. They also raised livestock until 1938, when they moved to Winnett. (See also BOWERS—Cat Creek and Winnett)

**BRINDLEY, William M.** William M. "Bill" Brindley, son of Carl and Tiny (Matovich) Brindley, was born in 1957. He attended school at Winnett and graduated from Winnett High School in 1975. He attended Western Montana College and later Montana State University.

In 1978 Bill returned to work full time on the family ranch owned by his grandparents, Marcus and Ruby Matovich. As he was growing up, he spent most of his weekends, holidays and summers on the ranch, so it was really his second home.

Sarah Lee Shaw, daughter of Lee and Gunda Shaw, was born in 1960. She attended school at Winnett, where she graduated from Winnett High School in 1978. She went to Montana State University, and in 1980 went to work for the USDA Soil Conservation Service for four and one-half years.

Bill and Sarah were married in 1982. This was a case of marrying "the girl next door," as Shaws and Brindleys lived across the alley from each other for seven years.

In 1984 Bill and Sarah moved to the Matovich Land and Livestock Ranch, since Marcus and Ruby were retiring and moving to Lewistown.
Bill and Sarah have two sons — Miles Cameron (1985) and Evan Michael (1988). (Sarah Brindley)

BRINDLEY, William S. (Sec 17-15-30) William “Bill” S. Brindley was born in 1888 in Washington County, Iowa. Margaret S. Reichenback was born in 1889 in Perry County, Pennsylvania. She received her schooling there and taught school in the area for a time before moving, in 1912, to Fall River County, where she homesteaded and taught school.

William Brindley and Margaret Reichenback were married in 1922 and remained in Fall River County until 1943, when they moved to the John O’Dea Ranch on the Musselshell River.

In 1941 my father, Bill Brindley, and Harold and Violet Wilson purchased the John O’Dea property on Cat Creek, at its confluence with the Musselshell River. Harold died of injuries received in a truck accident near the Cat Creek Camp in the spring of 1942. During the ensuing year, my parents sold their property in the Oelrichs (South Dakota)-Chadron (Nebraska) community and we moved to the O’Dea Ranch.

In 1945 Bill Brindley, Joe Murphy, Daryl Spencer and Axel Livingston formed the Poor Boy Oil Co. and drilled a wildcat on the O’Dea Ranch. They tapped an oil pool above the Morrison formation on New Year’s Day, 1946. Being more gamblers than functional oil men, they left the last 60 feet of the hole uncased; the well was plagued with cave-ins and other technical problems and was finally abandoned. In a three and one-half month history, Poor Boy No. 1 produced 32,000 barrels of crude and a like amount of discord and disillusion.

“Old Man” Brindley sold his ranch, lock, stock, and oil well, to a group headed by R. C. Tarrant, and retired to Mulino, Oregon, where he died in September 1948. He left in Montana a geological formation, the “Brindley Sand”; and in South Dakota, a geographical feature, “Brindley Creek.”

Bill and Margaret had three sons: Henry, who served in the South Pacific during World War II, died in 1984; Hugh, who married Mary Ostler, lives in Winnett (See also BRINDLEY, Hugh — Winnett); Carl, who married Tiny Matovich, lives in Lewistown, Montana (See also BRINDLEY, Carl — Winnett).

After Bill died in 1948, Margaret lived with her sons, Henry in Oregon, and Hugh and Carl at Winnett, for some years before she moved to Lewistown to make her home in Valle Vista Manor until her death in 1966. Bill and Margaret are both buried in the family plot at Chadron, Nebraska. (Hugh Brindley)

BROWN, Harry (Sec 17-15-30) Harry and Roberta Brown were homesteaders in 1916. They had two children listed in the 1916 school census for District # 107 — Samuel (1913) and Ruth (1916). They sold to Robinson.

BROWN, James James Brown’s obituary (W. T. 1-15-26) gives this scant information. “James Brown, familiarly known as ‘Side-Hill Brown,’ had resided in this section for the past thirty years, spending his time in the Weede country and along the Musselshell River, herding sheep. He had no known relatives and was without funds at the time of his demise. Nothing whatever could be learned of his past. The county buried the remains. He earned his nickname because he lived in a dugout in the side of a hill when he was not working. He died at the home of John Badger.”

BUMP, Ernest (Sec 4-16-30) Ernest Bump, son of Nels and Etta Bump, was born in 1883 at Townsend, Montana. He came to the Lower Musselshell in 1931 to help his brother, Guy, who had a homestead there. He bought the Duff place, near Guy, and engaged in ranching.

Clara Brock, daughter of Calvin and Lee Anna Brock, was born in 1895 at Mount Vernon, Missouri. She and her family moved west to Idaho in 1900. Clara married Bill Hamilton in 1914. They moved to Rock Creek, Montana, in 1923. They had four daughters — Maryanna (1920), Betty Jo (1923), Shirley (1924) and Lucille (1925). Bill died of a ruptured appendix in 1926.

Clara had met Ernest Bump at Townsend and, at his suggestion, she came to Petroleum County alone and signed up for a homestead about six miles west of the Musselshell River. (Hers was one of the last homesteads to be taken before the homestead activity stopped.) After signing up for the homestead, Clara went back to Townsend where her daughters were attending school. In 1932 she and her daughters started for the homestead and got initiated into the wonders of rain and the famous “Tin Can” hill gumbo.

Clara and Ernest were married in 1933. They lived at Clara’s homestead since it was closer to school for the girls. Clara helped with the riding to keep the cattle from straying too far, because there were no fences to keep the cattle contained. She would also ride back and forth to the river and help with the haying. Bumps also rode to the river to get their mail at the Knute Nordahl place, on the Meca route. All the farmwork was done with horses as Bumps never owned a tractor. The first automobile Ernest had was a new International pickup that he and his brother, Guy, bought in 1937 for $700.

In 1935 a daughter, Faye, was born to them at Jordan.
Since it was winter, they had a wild and warrorsome ride home, thanks to the icy river hills.

In 1939 Clara moved with her girls to Winnett, so they could go to high school. She made her home a boarding house for teachers and kids as there was no longer a school dormitory. She was March of Dimes chairman for the county for fifteen years, served as justice of the peace for six years, distributed Rawleigh products, and took in washing and ironing.

Ernest Bump died in 1971. Clara continued to live in Winnett until 1981. When her health forced her to go to Lewistown, Montana, to stay with her daughter, Shirley Ballance. She is now 94 years young (1989) and is living at Central Montana Nursing Home in Lewistown. (Clara Bump, Shirley Ballance and Maryanna Davis)

BUMP, Guy (Sec 4-16-30) Guy Bump, son of Nels and Etta Bump, was born in 1878 at Diamond City, Montana. He attended the Canton Valley School in Broadwater County. Irene Wells, daughter of Albert and Davidella Wells, was born in 1884 in Canton, Montana. Guy and Irene were married at Helena in 1911. They came to the Lower Musselshell after their marriage.

Irene taught school for several years in the area and then served as clerk of the school district. She was a musician and helped out at various functions.

Guy was a native Montanan who delighted in telling unsuspecting listeners that he was a "Missourian" (he lived for some of his younger years near the Missouri River in the Townsend, Montana area).

Guy and Mrs. Bump saw this area change in many respects. Most of the dirt-roofed log homes were replaced with less primitive structures. Draft horses were largely replaced with tractors, automobiles and trucks. Battery radio newscasts and entertainment programs greatly lessened the isolation of rural listeners. Although they lived in town at the time, Mr. and Mrs. Bump were very interested in the electrification of the area in 1954. They also shared their old neighbors' desire for a telephone exchange.

Guy and Irene lived at their homestead until they moved to Winnett in 1948. They did not have any children. Guy died in 1959, and Irene died in 1963.

BUNCH, John and Joseph (Sec 24-14-29) John and Joseph Bunch were both homesteaders in section 24. Joseph Bunch is listed as the guardian of Lester Blackman (1902). Lester went to school at Weede for several years.

BURGESS, Chester (Sec 8-13-30) Chester and Anna Burgess bought the Sarah Smith homestead from George Lane. They had three children — Mary (1908), Leo C. (1911) and Lester (1913). They are listed in the Weede School census for the years of 1915-16-17. Burgess sold to Harold Robinson.

BUSIC, Gid (Sec 1-17-29) Gid Busic, son of Dan J. and Drucie Busic, was born in 1884 at Independence, Missouri. In 1903 he enlisted in Company H of the 21st Infantry of the United States Army. He received an honorable discharge after three years of service, part of which was in the Philippine Islands where he took part in a number of engagements.

Tina Bagwell, daughter of Winfield and Gincy Bagwell, was born in 1889 in Weaversford, North Carolina. Mr. and Mrs. Winfield Bagwell and children moved to Galax, Virginia, where Tina was reared and attended school.

Gid and Tina were married in 1908 in Bristol, Virginia. In 1913 they moved to Montana and homesteaded near the site of what later became Mecaha, on the Musselshell River. They carried the mail from Mosby to Mecaha for several years and Tina had the Mecaha Post Office in their home. In the early 1920s they bought the Herb Mosby Ranch near Mosby and lived there until 1936 when Gid died.

A clipping from the Winnett Times in 1927 states: "When the west approach of Mosby Bridge was endangered by high water, the ranchers and farmers on this side of the river gathered, and under the direction of Gid Busic reinforced the approach with rocks and sandbags to keep the river from sweeping it out. They did the work without orders and without pay."

After Gid's death, Tina sold the ranch and moved to Winnett. She was the matron at the school dormitory for several years. In 1941 she was stricken with tick fever early in May but was one of the few who recovered. She moved to Billings in 1941 and ran a restaurant for some time, then moved to Lewistown. Tina died in 1972.

BUTLER In May of 1917, Mr. and Mrs. Butler, homesteaders from east of the river, made the trip to Winnett to get supplies and groceries. When they accompanied by Mr. Mitchell, got back to the river it was in flood. Since it was evening, they spent the night at the John O'Dea home. The following morning Mr. O'Dea and Mr. Mitchell tried to discourage the Butlers, who were determined to cross the river and continue home. When they had the team hitched and the wagon ready, Mr. Mitchell said, "Don't try it. You'll drown for sure."

Mrs. Butler replied, "Well, if I'm going to drown, I'd better tell you goodbye."

With that they entered the river. The current swept the wagon and horses away while their friends watched, unable to help. Mr. Butler reached the shore, but the horses, Mrs. Butler and supplies were lost.

Down river, the Adams family were crossing a herd of horses when they saw a body floating in the current. They got a boat, went out, snagged the body and pulled it to shore. They recognized Mrs. Butler, and Albert rode up river to get her husband. When they returned to the body, they buried her on the east side of the river where she was recovered. (Marcus Matovich)

CAMPBELL, George Grant (Sec 26-14-29) George Grant Campbell was born in North Ogden, Utah, in 1859. In 1879 he married Mary Denning. They homesteaded on the river and lived there until his death in 1926. At the time of his death, his sister, Mrs. Wells, of Cat Creek, was the only relative that could be located. Services were
held in the Methodist Church in Winnett, with Rev. Fike officiating.

CAMPBELL, William K. (Sec 36-14-29) William and Ruby Campbell are listed as the parents of Thelma (1909), Willie (1910) and Eliza (1912) in the 1917 school census of District #107.

CARTWRIGHT, Charles (Sec 6-13-30) Charles and Julia Cartwright homesteaded in the Weede area. In 1913 they had the following children listed in the school census for Weede: Charley (1893), Ada (1895), Ezra (1897), Teddy (1901), Olive and Margaret (both in 1904).

Charles worked in the Cat Creek oil fields for awhile. They moved to Kevin, Montana, to continue the oil work. They lost the place to taxes.

In the 1940s a son, Bill, came back to this area, and in reminiscing, told of his father making “moon” out of barley meal. He said that the only thing he remembered was that the milk cow got into the mash that had been dumped in a coulee. She got drunk and sick, and dried up, leaving them without milk for the house or for her calf. He said the incident very nearly caused a death in the family when his mother found out!

CHRISTENOT, George (Sec 32-14-30) George and Ella Christenot homesteaded near Weede prior to 1913. They stayed on the homestead until George went to work in the oil fields in 1924. They moved to the Charles camp and enrolled their children in the Cat Creek School. The 1924 school census for District #198 lists them as follows: Mildred Annette (1910), Martha Blanche (1912), Charley George (1913), Harley Ray (1915), Helen Wanda (1916), Albert Ray (1918), John Darrel (1920), Fred (1921) and Kenneth (1924).

They sold their homestead hay ranch to S. D. Parkinson in 1925 and moved to Cut Bank, Montana. Some members of the family still live there.

CLAUSEN, Alvin E. (Sec 5-12-30) Alvin E. Clausen lived in Forest City, Iowa. It is unknown why he decided to buy land in Petroleum County, but whenever there was a sale of tax land, he would have a representative bid for him. In one such instance, J. W. Brumett picked up 2300 acres for him. He never lived on the land or stocked it, but always leased it out to others. Upon his death, the land passed to Bethel College and Seminary.

When First Continental Corp. was buying land in the area for farming, the president of Bethel College and Seminary, a personal friend of John Greytak, tried to interest John in their holding. After checking the land out, John reported back that the Clausen land was not suitable for cultivation.

CLAVITTER, Rudy Rudy Clavitter drowned in the Musselshell River. (For complete story — see the Fred Fox story)

COLLIER There were several Colliers that came to the area about the turn of the century and settled on the river in the Rosebud, Musselshell, and Petroleum County areas. Listed in Petroleum County are: Benjamin F. (Sec 29-12-31); Elmer S. and Fern (Sec 9-12-30); Frank and Katherine (Sec 29-12-31); John (Sec 14-12-30); and Leo (Sec 24-12-30). An item in the Times tells us that Mrs. Elmer Collier was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. I. J. Joyce, homesteaders in the same area. All of this land, with the exception of two small parcels sold to James Maxwell, are presently in the Collier Trust.

According to the Winnett Times, in August of 1930 “Glen Collier was drowned in the Missouri River while a crew of men looked on, unable to help him. Glen came to the river riding a bronc and visited with the road crew for awhile. As he left, he told them he would give them an exhibition of fording the stream. About 100 yards from the far shore, he entered the main channel of the river and his horse began drifting downstream. He attempted to rein it in, causing the horse to roll over, throwing Glen into the river with his heavy chaps on. He attempted to swim but was unable to do so and sank, coming up once before finally disappearing. The horse turned about, returned to shore, and left.

“The road crew was unable to reach Glen before he disappeared. Immediate action was taken to drag the river, but the body was not recovered until several days later. It was caught in a snag near the spot he disappeared.

“The young man had been reared on the river and was an excellent horseman. He had forded the river countless times, and the knowledge he must have had was contrary to the action he took. His evident attempt at showmanship cost him his life.”

COON, Albert Royal (Garfield County) A. R. "Royal" Coon came to the Musselshell River in about 1907 and filed a claim at the mouth of Lodgepole Creek.

His son, Ed, filed a claim about six miles above the mouth of the Musselshell. In 1914 he sold his claim to Everett Thompson and moved to Benzie, Montana. He later moved back to live at his dad’s place.

Royal and his wife had six daughters and one son, Ed. Ada married Bill Olmstead. Ossie Mae married Lloyd Olmstead. Bessie married Kale Olmstead. The three Olmstead boys came from farther east in Garfield County. Ivy married Glen Faulkerson. Pearl married Frank Mann and later married L. M. Blaine. Violet married Eric Forsberg. (See also FAULKERSON) (Marcus Matovich)

COON, Ivy Ivy Coon was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Coon. She was born in 1871 at Monticello, Illinois.

“ Aunt Ivy,” as she was known by her friends and relatives came to the Musselshell Valley from Missouri in 1910 and homesteaded on the east side of the river between Ross and Mecaha. She took her brother William Coon’s three children into her home to raise. They were Harley, Melvin and Opal.

Ivy never married. She stayed on her homestead until 1942, when she and the children moved to Lewistown. In
about 1959 she moved from Lewistown to Billings to live with another niece. Mrs. Inez Adams Peterson. Inez took care of her for five years until her death in 1964.

COON, Sheldon E. (Sec 36-18-29) The Sheldon E. Coon and Ezra Adams families came to the Rosebud Country in Montana in 1896. They came to the Musselshell River near Mecaha in 1896, but went on to the Gillette and Lewistown area, where there was mining going on. In 1901 they came back to the Musselshell and picked out land on the east side of the river. Adams chose the area that now is the headquarters of the Matovich Ranch, and Coons set up just south of them, across from the mouth of Dovetall Creek.

Sheldon "Sheck" Coon filed a pre-emption claim for the land he wanted. When the government survey was done, it was found that the Coon place was in section 36, which was supposed to be a school section. However, since Coons had their buildings up and the land fenced, the government allowed them to stay there. They filed a homestead claim as soon as possible.

Sheck raised horses and farmed there. He also raised lots of watermelons (the good old-fashioned kind). He used to tell of the "good" and the "bad" of living on the river. He told how it was in flood years (when they couldn't cross the river from three to six weeks), and he also told how it was when no water ran in the river for a year.

Sheldon married Elsie Olmstead in 1916. Elsie was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Olmstead of the Brusset area in Garfield County.

They had seven children. The first girl, Edith, lived only two days. May (1918) married James Coslet and lives in Oakdale, CA. Lee (1920) married Marjorie Sandaker, and they live in Glendive. They have two sons, Larry and Terry, and two daughters, Linda and Judy. Lee was a veteran of World War II. He died in 1988 and is buried in Glendive, MT. Clarence (1922) lives in Grays River, WA. Vance (1926) lives in Boulder. Twin girls, Helen and Hazel, were born in 1929. Helen married Scotty McAdam and lives in Casper, WY. Hazel married Jack Bayers and lives in Billings.

The children attended grade schools on the river and then went on to high school in Winnett.


COON, William T. Sr. (Sec 1,2-18-29) William Thomas Coon Sr. was born in 1823 at Circleville, Ohio. He was a veteran of the Civil War and spent 13 months in the Confederate Prison at Tyler, Texas. He had spent all his life on the frontiers of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri, and came with his wife, Pricella, to Montana in 1911, at 89 years of age.

When Mr. Coon filed on his homestead, there was considerable surprise that a man of his age would have the courage to take up new land. He cut the logs and built their house himself.

Mr. and Mrs. Coon had eight children — Harvey, Elmer, Albert Royal, William Jr. (1864), Catherine (1870), Ivy (1871), Violet (1873) and Sheldon (1874).

No further information was available for Harvey (perhaps named Harley).

Elmer married Janey Walters in 1894 in Beardstown, Missouri. She died in 1901. He and his son, Marlon H., came to the Musselshell area in 1914. He moved to Bozeman, Montana, and was living with his son when he died in 1946.

Albert Royal has a separate account written about him, as do Ivy and Sheldon.

William Jr. came to the Musselshell in 1914 with his three children. Harley, Melvin and Opal. His wife had died before they came to Montana. His sister, Ivy, raised the children.

Catherine married Wesley Atwood. (See also ATWOOD) Violet married Ezra Adams (See also ADAMS, Ezra)

Mrs. Coon died in 1919. Mr. Coon died in 1923 just 21 days before his 100th birthday.

All of the Coon lands now belong to the Matovich Ranch. (Clarence and Harley Coon and Marcus Matovich)

DAVIS, Guy Arthur Guy Davis was born in Vernal, Utah, in 1891. He married Nessie Cleator in 1924 in Buhl, Idaho. They had one son, James, born in 1925. Guy had three children by a previous marriage — Reah Rose, Gerald Glenn and Raymond Orrin. In 1929 Nessie began having trouble with her legs. The problem was diagnosed as a pinched motor nerve. By the end of the year, she was in a wheelchair, where she was to spend the next 36 years.

Guy, Nessie and Jim came to the area in April of 1943 and leased the Ed Healy place on the river. They quickly became friends of the neighbors, and it soon became a practice to stop at the Davis home for a snack, meal, visit, cuppa (coffee), card game, or all of the preceding. Nessie did all her own work, as well as beautiful fancy work. They gave large community parties and the place was always busy. They later bought the Brug place, located on a back road to town, about six miles from the river.

How did a person in a wheelchair cope — no near
neighbors, no telephone, and very unimproved roads? Nessie coped and she did it with a smile. Guy’s saddle horse fell with him on some ice, twisting and breaking Guy’s leg. Guy managed to hold onto the frightened horse while he crawled all the way home, leading the horse. He got into the house, and he and Nessie managed to straighten the leg and apply splints. Jim, who was helping a neighbor fence, came home in the afternoon, borrowed Bumps’ pickup, and took Guy to the doctor in Lewistown, Montana. X-rays revealed that both bones were broken, but the splint applied at home had held them straight.

Guy passed away in 1950, and Nessie lived with her son Jim and his family until she passed away in 1965.

Jim Davis married Maryanna (Hamilton) Meserve in 1950. They lived mainly on the ranch until 1965, when they moved to Winnett and started "Davis Trucking." (See also MESERVE — Cat Creek; DAVIS — Winnett.)

DOBSON, Adam McIntyre Adam Dobson was born in 1866 in Richmond, Cache County, Utah. His wife, Aurilla Etta (Hatch), was born in 1873 in Smithfield, Cache County, Utah. They were married in 1888.

Adam and Aurilla operated a hotel in Burlington, Wyoming, until it burned in 1905. They moved to Montana and lived near Moore before coming to the Musselshell River in 1910.

The Dobsons had 15 children (several of whom died shortly after birth) — Henry (1890-1970), Annie Belle (1892-1895), Marion Lee (1894-1951), Nanella (Jones) (1896), Aurilla Etta (1898-1898), Jeremiah (1899-1917), Alva Alexander (1901-1901), Clyde (1902-1902), Adam LeGrande (1904-1964), Thelma "Peggy" (Duncan and Czyeski) (1906), Charles Robert (1908-1930), Earle (1910-1911), Norris "Pete" (1912), Edna Arva (1915-1970), and Wilma Eldine (Moss) (1918).

In 1917 Henry and Marion Lee filed on homesteads (Sec 32-16-30) on the Musselshell River about four miles below the mouth of Cat Creek. Oran married Grace Miller, a schoolteacher who had homesteaded in the Cat Creek Basin (See also MILLER — Cat Creek). Marion Lee served in World War I. He acquired more river-bottom land (Sec 5-15-30) in 1922. This was the area which became known as Dobsons Flat.

Adam and Etta lived on the river property of their sons, and their younger children went to school in a log cabin a short distance from the house. It is said they paid the salary of the first teachers and also provided the building. Two of the early teachers were Nels Fradd and Selma Curtis.

When the Dobsons’ baby, Earle, died in 1911, they buried him on a hilltop near the homestead. Another son, Jerry, was killed in a horse accident in 1917 and was buried in the Shay Cemetery.

Adam died in 1919, leaving Etta with small children — one barely a year old. She married L. C. “Shorty” Thorsen in 1921 and the couple made their home in Cat Creek, where Shorty worked and the school-age children attended school. Etta and Shorty were divorced in 1929 and Etta took the younger children (Edna, Wilma and Norris) to Michigan and on to Independence, Missouri. A son, Charles Robert, died in Independence in 1930.

Norris “Pete” married Esther Arleta Dell in Missouri. In December 1934 they came to Montana to make their home. They operated an implement business in Malta for many years. In 1973 Pete and Arleta bought Lorenz Thorsen’s (Pete’s stepfather’s) ranch property and moved to Petroleum County.

The Pete Dobsons had four children — Lee Reynolds (1932-1963), Arleta Anne (1937), Janet Elaine (1942) and Daniel Joseph (1947).

DOCTOVICH, Louis (Sec 10-19-29) Louis Doctovich was born in Brlog, Austria. He came to the United States with John Milesnick, of the same place. They worked in Colorado and in Alaska before coming to homestead on the Musselshell River in 1913. They set up a partnership deal, then dissolved the partnership in 1925.

Louis sold to the Corps of Engineers and moved to Billings, Montana. He never married. He died in Billings at the age of 95. (Marcus Matovich)

DRINKARD, Melvin Melvin "Bones" Drinkard was born in Alabama in 1867. In 1902 he came to Montana to work as a cowboy. Bones was well known throughout the cattle country as a good hand. He received his nickname in his early days in the country. He was hospitalized for pneumonia in Miles City and was very sick. He was 6 feet 3 inches tall and had lost a great deal of weight during his illness. When he returned to his cowboying job, his friends remarked that he was all bones. The nickname stuck from then on.

Bones died in a Billings hospital on February 7, 1949, at the age of 81. He had cancer of the throat. His only known survivor was a half-sister in Texas.

DUFFNER, Albert B. (Sec 17-16-30) (W. T. 4-13-28) "Albert B. Duffner of Piper, Montana, arrived here with a carload of emigrant goods, including four head of cattle and 12 hogs. Mr. Duffner has leased the Ed Healy Ranch on the river, 35 miles northeast of Winnett. The means of getting the hogs to the ranch puzzled Mr. Duffner, until he hit upon the idea of driving them with the cattle. The 25-mile trip was made in 24 hours of actual road travel, and the hogs came out at the finish in as good a condition as the cattle. Mr. Duffner states that he experienced no difficulty in taking the herd through, and that at night the hogs remained close to the camp, making no effort to stray away.

"Mr. Duffner’s family will join him on the ranch this summer. Petroleum County folks join the Times in extending a cordial welcome to the new family."

The Duffners had a large family — Paul (1914), Homer (1916), Ralph (1918), Nora (1920), Esther (1922), Lawrence (1924), Raymond (1925), Robert (1927), Vereen (1929) and Edgar (1931).

(W. T. 1-9-31) "Court case — In civil case of Healy vs. Duffner. Ed Healy sued Duffner for rent and cancellation
of lease. Healy had given Duffner a five-year lease on his Musselshell River ranch. Healy was to have 1/3 of the crop of hay and seed for the first three years and ½ for the last two years of the lease. Healy also sold Duffner hay, which Duffner declared was not as represented. Duffner wanted the hay payments credited to the rentals.

"The jury brought in a split verdict, awarding Healy $175.00 rentals and permitting Duffner to hold the ranch until the expiration of the lease. Justice Wilson followed the lead of the jury and assessed each of the parties 50 per cent of the costs." (See also DUFFNER — Winnett)

**DUNCAN, C. K. (Sec 29-16-30)** C. Kenny Duncan lived on the Musselshell River a few miles north of Cat Creek. He was married to Thelma Dobson. The couple had two children — Arnott and Dolly. (W. T. 8-16-29) "Mr. and Mrs. S. S. Duncan from McMinnville, Oregon are here to visit their son, C. K. Duncan, on the Musselshell River. They are former residents. Mr. Duncan is superintendent of schools for Yamhill County, Oregon, and his wife is deputy superintendent."

**DUNDON, Harry** (Sec 5-15-30) JoAnn Dundon Ostermiller contributed the following article. "Pearl Beal was born in Pierre, South Dakota, in 1911. The Beal family eventually settled near Roy, Montana. Pearl met and married Harry Dundon on July 5, 1929, in Lewistown. They lived and worked around Roy and Winnett, raising and riding horses with Harry's stepfather, Sam Sherman, and several of his brothers and step-brothers. Sometime around 1935-36, we moved to the Brown (Ed. Charles) Lease six miles east of Cat Creek, where Dad worked for Continental Oil. We kids went to a little school close by, up a pretty steep hill and across a big coulee. In the wintertime, Dad would hook his saddle horse up to a toboggan-type sled and pull us to school, all four on one sled. His saddle horse was a racy little blue roan, and Dad said, 'Aw, it's good for him.'

"In August of 1942 Daddy went with a man, Harold Wilson, who was moving onto the John O'Dea place, just below where we lived. The new neighbor had a friend driving his truck to move their belongings, and Daddy was helping. They were on the way back with a load, and when they started down into Cat Creek, the truck lost its brakes. The driver told Daddy and Mr. Wilson that they had better jump out, which they unwisely did. The owner of the load was killed instantly, and Daddy was injured so badly that he died in the Roundup (Montana) Hospital early in September. The driver stayed with the truck and only got a broken finger.

"Mother had to move off the oil company's property after Daddy was gone, so with his insurance money, she went downriver and bought the Willette place. Mama tried to keep the school going, but we kids were the only ones going there, and we tormented the teacher so much that she quit. Then we had to go to Cat Creek for school. Mama rented a house from Continental Oil and we kind of roughed it (batching), except when Isabelle Fail came up and cleaned house a little and cooked us something to eat. We were kind of mean to her, too. Donna and Grover went down to California and lived with Grandma and Grandpa Sherman and went to school for a year. We all moved to Winnett then and lived in a little house across the street from the Dunlaps. We batched most of the time. There was a nice lady who lived close by that everybody called 'Ma Green' (Ed. 'Ma Weaver'?!) and she looked out for us some. Mother spent most of her time down on the Musselshell at our little ranch.

"Donna and Grover both quit school, and Grover helped Mama at the place for a while till wanderlust took over and he left. Donna got married. Micky (Medric) and I stayed at the dormitory in Winnett. Amelia Kelley was the matron then. She married Harry Barnett while she had the dorm. Later, Mrs. Ambrose Carrell did the cooking. She made the best baking powder biscuits!

"Mother decided to stop ranching, so she turned the place over to Floyd Barkdoll, a good neighbor who had a place just upriver from us. He later bought the place. Mom moved to Winnett and worked for Lil Wadman in the restaurant. She took over the Mint Cafe, and we kids would go down to the cafe and help her during rush hour. After school we'd go back and help. Mama used to make 'maple sticks' on a certain day, and word got out what day it was. People would come and eat them warm, freshly iced with maple-flavored frosting. They ate them as fast as she fired them. She seldom had any left for us when we came after school, except when she remembered and saved some back. Aw, but they were delicious! Mama quit the cafe then. It burned down, but I don't remember if that was why she quit or not. Anyway, she moved to Lewistown where she met and married Mike Barnes in 1950.


"I remember one time back in about 1946 when we lived on the Willette place. We had a big black gelding called Jack. Jack was a young bronc, and Mama decided to break him to work. She teamed him up with our tame long over-worked mare, so hopefully she could show him how it was done. Mama then hitched the team up to a large stoneboat, and all of us kids piled on so there'd be a load to pull. Mama said, 'Get up' and slapped the mare with the reins. Things were going along about as well as one could expect, until the load proved a little too heavy for the chain and it broke.

"Jack, being a green horse, must have figured the best thing to do was to get as far away as fast and as quickly as he could. So he took off. The mare didn't have any choice but to go, too. Well, Mama hung on to those reins for about forty feet, on her belly, and then let go. The team ran out the gate, down toward the river, and parted company around a tree. When we finally got them rounded up, all they had left of their harness was the collars. Mama decided that Jack was too tough for her, so she let
Floyd Barkdoll work him. Floyd was a 'tuff ole knot'; he didn't have any trouble with Jack.'

There were four children in the family: Grover (1930) went into the Navy and later to California; Donna (1931) lives in California; Medric (1932) lives in Tulsa. Oklahoma; JoAnn (1933) married Duane Ostermiller and lives in Billings, where they own a housemoving business. They have four daughters — Leah, Sallie, Kathy and Mary.

DUNDOM, William I. Edna Dundom Kizer wrote this family account in the Central Montana Heritage Book of Original Fergus County. "My father, William I. Dundom, was born February 15, 1870. The family were ranchers in Washington State. In 1884 they traded the ranch for 275 head of horses and in covered wagon and trailing the herd of horses, started for Montana Territory.

"The drive was slow, and many of the horses were lost, but after traveling for five months, they at last found land to their liking, and they settled near what was later to become Hanover, Montana.

"My mother, Pearl Cora Davis, was born February 27, 1888, at Vernon, Missouri. She and Dad were married in Lewistown, Montana, September 22, 1904, and they lived for a short time at the Dundom Ranch. In 1905 they moved to the Musselshell River country and lived on several farms until they filed on the Dad Hickman homestead on the east side of the river. Mother filed on land adjoining the Hickman place.

"Our post offices were Ross, Mecaha, and Fort Musselshell, Montana. We lived there from 1905 to 1917. There were seven children in our family. They are as follows: Pearl Edna Dundom Kizer, Grassrange, Montana; Harry W. Dundom, deceased; Nora Dundom Smith, deceased; Dorothy Dundom Thompson, Susanville, California; Lucille Dundom Ray, Susanville, California; James Dundom, Boise, Idaho; and Ellen Dundom Gardner, Trout Creek, Montana.

"In 1912 I attended part of my first year of school in Moore, Montana, and the remainder of the term at Mecaha School. We attended both the upper and lower Musselshell schools in the years that followed. We would drive to school with a buggy or sled, or we would ride horseback. I also attended schools at Roy, Giltedge, and Lewistown.

"My father died in March 1914, and Mother passed away at Grassrange in November 1968."

DUNWALD, Harry (Sec 4-16-30) Harry Dunwald left Roundup, Montana in 1944 and went to the Guy Bump place on the Musselshell. He ran cattle and also helped Ernest Bump with the work on his place.

In 1946 he married Helen S. Cercle (Ed. Cercle?) of Roundup. Their children were Henry Lee and Linda Sue.

He was highly esteemed by the residents of the community as an industrious and honest young man.

In 1951 his wife sued for divorce and got custody of the children. Harry sold his ranch to W. G. Roberts and left the community.

DUTTON, Bruce Allen Jr. Bruce A. Dutton, son of Bruce and Margaret Dutton, was born in 1916 in the Melstone, Montana, area. Bruce raised sheep on Little Breed Creek, near H. C. Shaw's first homestead.

Daisy Shaw, daughter of Henry and Mary Shaw of the Mosby area, was born in 1927.

Bruce and Daisy were married in 1948 and lived on Bruce's place until 1969, when a large prairie fire consumed the grazing land. They purchased and moved to the John O'Dea place on the west side of the Musselshell River that same year. Their son, David, remained on the original place when Bruce, Daisy and Glenda, their daughter, moved to the O'Dea place. Glenda attended junior high and high school in Winnett.

David Bruce (1949) married Nancy Wiley (who taught school in Winnett for several years) in 1974. They have one son, Dean David, who attends school at Sand Springs. Glenda Rae (1957) attended Eastern Montana College and took teaching credits. She married Marcus Wiggins in 1979. They have two children, lerry Lee and Erin Rene. Glenda is now teaching at Ryegate, and the girls are attending school there.

Bruce and Daisy continue to ranch and raise hay at the place on the Musselshell.

ELLIOTT, Walter (Sec 20-12-31) Walter Elliott, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Elliott, was born in 1876 in Toronto, Canada. In 1885 his family moved to the Melville area, where Walter was a blacksmith. He married Eva Mae Weston at Garnell, Montana, in 1901. Eva Mae, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Weston, was born in 1883 at Fort Knox, Kansas. Walter and Eva moved to the Weede area in 1906.

They had three children — Alice (1902), Thelma (1904) and Walter Glen. The children were educated in the Melstone schools, and Melstone, Montana, was also the business center for the family.

Alice Elliott married Clarence Songer, and Thelma married Alvin Songer.

Vera B. Songer Phillippe writes: "When my grandparents, Eva Mae and Walter Elliott, lived on the homestead, they lost a baby girl, six months old. I remember my grandmother telling about the baby having convulsions and dying in her arms. My grandfather built a tiny casket and my grandmother dressed their baby for the last time. The two little girls, Alice and Thelma, stayed at the house, and watched their parents carry the tiny casket across the field and over the hill."

EVANS, Richard (Sec 7-8-17-29) Dick Evans and Myrtle came in with a string of horses and took over the Miles' relinquishment at the mouth of Blood Creek. The Evans had at least five children — Floyd, Lloyd, Laura, Lela and Florence. Florence was married to Loren Hines and they lived in Cat Creek for a time.

Mrs. Myrtle Evans and Bessie Barden Thorsen were sisters. Their maiden name was Massengale.

Myrtle died while living on the Musselshell River. Dick sold the property to the government in 1936.
FAIL, Lewis A. (Sec 5-15-30) Lewis Alvin Fail, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Fail, was born in 1878 in Illinois. He received his education in Iowa and Illinois. Lena Munson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nels Munson, was born in 1877 at LaCrosse, Wisconsin.

Lewis and Lena were married in 1909. They came to Montana in 1913. When Lewis first came to Montana, he worked for George Ayers (father of Roy E. Ayers, a former governor of Montana), whose ranch was west of Grassrange. He filed for a homestead on Chippewa Creek and moved his family there when he got their house built.

Lewis Fail was known as "Uncle Jim" by members of the family in Wisconsin and Illinois. In Montana he was known as "Casey," a name he got in 1916 while operating a threshing outfit in the Grassrange country. One day he was driving one of the huge old-time tractors, pulling a thresher. Coming down a steep grade something went wrong with the clutch on the tractor. At the bottom of the grade was a farm house, at the turn of the road.

Fail doubted that he could get the outfit stopped in time and told the two men who were riding on the tractor with him to jump. Fail stuck to the machine and somehow got the outfit stopped, with the front of the engine only inches from the house. Occupants of the home fled in terror when they saw the monster bearing down on the house. Because of this incident, Fail was dubbed "Casey," and the railroader's moniker stuck with him all his life.

In 1921 Lewis was persuaded to go to work at the Cat Creek oil field. After working a few months there for the 56 Oil Company, he moved the family to Cat Creek. (See also FAIL — Cat Creek)

In 1928 the Fails bought the Alexander Dixon Ranch on the Musselshell River. Lewis and Lena had three children — Isabelle (1911), David (1917) and Alvin (1920). Isabelle started school at Chippewa and transferred to the Cat Creek School. The boys, David and Alvin, went to the Cat Creek School, then graduated from Winnett High School. Lena Fail died in 1941, and Casey died in 1965. They are buried in the Winnett Cemetery.

David Fail served in the Army in World War II. He and his brother, Alvin, ranched in partnership on the Fail Ranch. They lived there until 1972, when they sold the ranch to Jack Hanson. They had built their cattle herd to 550 cows before they sold the ranch. David married Dorothy Burr Fredrickson in 1974, and they lived in Missoula. David died in 1977.

Alvin Fail stayed on the ranch until 1972, when the ranch was sold, then moved to Phoenix, Arizona. Alvin married but had no children. (See also FAIL — Cat Creek)

Isabelle Fail married Robert Schaeffer in 1952. (See also SCHAEFFER — Cat Creek)

FAULKERSON, Glen At first Glen Faulkerson lived at the mouth of the Musselshell, near Rukavinas. Then he filed a 320 acre homestead claim on a large flat above the Musselshell River. This flat, now called the Faulkerson Flat, is thought to have been caused by a pre-glacial slide in the rough Missouri-Musselshell breaks that left a 2000 acre flat and also caused the UL Bend in the Missouri River.

Glen Faulkerson married Ivy Coon, daughter of A. R. Coon. (Marcus Matovich)

FAUVER, Phillip H. (Sec 34-13-30) Phillip Fauver homesteaded and later sold to J. A. Bunting. This land is now part of the Benson Ranch.

Jay (1908), Leon (1909) and Ethen (1910) are listed as the children of Phillip and Kate Fauver, in the census of District #164. The last listing for them was the 1920 census for this district.

FLETCHER, Walter Walt Fletcher is said to have come to Montana with a Long S trail herd in the early 1900s. According to an article written by John Town for
the Winnett Times on July 16, 1964, Walter Fletcher and his family visited the John Town family in the early summer of 1912, looking for a site to start a ferry. Mr. Fletcher liked the looks of the old Fort Musselshell site, and so he set up a ferry and store-saloon. The first summer Walter used a little cable ferry which the Towns had built for their own use. Mr. Fletcher did freighting as well.

Mollie Fletcher became postmaster for the newly established Fort Musselshell Post Office in June 1913. Walter died in January 1914. Mollie ran the place for a time. (The post office was closed from August 1915 until November 1917.) She married Jose Flores and they moved across the river into Dawson County. They moved to Colorado in 1921.

FOX, Ed (Sec 2-17-29) Ed Fox. "Wolfer," came to the Lower Musselshell River area from the Great Falls and Belt, Montana, areas. While trapping wolves, he would stop at a place on the mouth of Dovetail Creek. He filed a pre-emption claim there in 1902. He moved his family there in 1911. His family consisted of his wife, Ada, his sons, George and Fred, his daughter, Alta, and granddaughter, Alice Martin.

Alta married Berry Roberts; Fred married Leora Edwards; George married Odessa Atwood. Alice married Bert Wells.

Bears roamed the area, killing cattle and sheep. One day Ed trailed a bear up a coulee with the intention of killing it. After several miles, he realized he was in a "dead end" coulee, and the banks were too steep for him to climb in a hurry. He high-tailed it out of there before the bear could get him.

Ed was buried in 42 degree-bottom-zero weather on a pinnacle overlooking Dovetail Creek, where he had asked to be buried. Ed was a very large and heavy man. It took four saddle horses pulling a homemade sled to haul the body up the hill.

When Ed died in 1918, John Winters and Martin Wongsness went up the hill to dig his grave. John said to Martin, "Martin, I hope when I die, it will be just as tough and miserable to dig my grave." Martin looked at him and said, "Ve! You! If you promise to use it, ve could just move over and dig another one now!!" (Marcus Matovich)

Ada Patterson Fox, born in 1854, died in 1939 and is buried at Winnett.

FOX, Fred (Sec 35-18-29) Fred Fox, the son of Ed and Ada Fox, was born in 1892 at Belt, Montana. He came to the Lower Musselshell area with his family in 1911. When he was a young fellow, he and Rudy Clavitter built a raft to cross the Musselshell to get their mail. They would land at Sheldon Coon's, then walk upriver to the Ross Post Office. This particular time, they got their sack of mail, walked back, and pushed the raft back into the water. They had floated about a mile when they hit a large cottonwood tree that had just caved into the river. This tipped the raft, dumping the boys.

Fred was unable to swim, but Rudy was an excellent swimmer. Rudy managed to get Fred up on the tree, and he got the mail sack from the raft, which was still stuck in the tree, and gave it to Fred. Rudy then started for shore, only to sink out of sight. The body was never recovered. Fred yelled and hollered until Walt Allan came and rescued him, just before the tree broke loose and floated away. (Marcus Matovich)

Fred married Leora Edwards in 1918. They lived on the homestead until about 1926, when they moved to Winnett. Fred died of the flu in 1928 and is buried in the Winnett Cemetery.

FOX, George E. (Sec 17,20-18-29) George Fox, son of Edward and Ada Fox, was born in 1890 at Belt, Montana. In 1911 he moved with his family to the Lower Musselshell. Both he and his family took up homesteads at the mouth of Dovetail Creek (Sec 2-17-29).

Odessa Atwood, daughter of Wesley J. and Catherine Coon Atwood, was born in 1891 at Milan, Missouri. In the spring of 1911 she moved with her family to the Lower Musselshell, where they took up homesteads at the mouth of Drag Creek (Sec 2-18-29).

George and Odessa were married in 1929 at White Sulphur Springs. After their marriage, they moved into Winnett.

Odessa told her family of an incident on the homestead: "I rode horseback to visit and stay overnight with my sister. The next day my nephew, who was not very old, rode double with me back home. On the way, I said to him, 'So, you had a birthday last week.' He answered, 'Nope, Ma didn't have any baking powders!' Just goes to show you how important 'baking powders' were to a homesteader." (See also FOX — Winnett)

(Alice Fox Sandaker)

GAIRRETT, John (Sec 19-21-29) and GAIRRETT, Newton (Sec 12-21-28) John Henry Gairrett was born in 1888 in Holt County, Missouri. Julia Adelphia Smith was born in 1897 at Craig, Missouri. John and Julia were married in 1914. They had four sons — John I. (1915), Kenneth E. (1917), Paul L. (1923) and Dale O. (1926).

Dale and his wife, Katherine Hanson Gairrett, (See also HANSON — Dovetail) submitted the following article. "The John and Newton Gairrett families came to Montana in 1913. They spent about a year working on different ranches, then built a boat and floated down the Missouri River and homesteaded in northern Petroleum County. To the north in the background were the Larb hills, and further down was the mouth of Beauchamp Creek.

'To make ends meet, they took horses and wagons into Canada at harvest time. The wives cooked and the men worked in the fields. They remember many of the people they met or saw.

'Ray Henneman was considered a drifter, as he would come and go at different places. Abe Bittlein was a horse thief who tried to steal their horses more than once. Jake Parker tried to shoot Newt and almost shot Wayne. Newt's son. They had gone to Roy, Montana, for groceries. Jake Parker was killed by Alkali Ike."
"The boys remember some men coming to their place in fancy suits and big cars. They ran the car off into the river and left. The Canadian Mounties came looking for them but didn’t find them. The boys realized later that these guys were gangsters."

"There was a school at CeeKay and one farther down. Some of the teachers the boys remember were Ray Holzy, Miss Sweeney, Abbott, Ray Carey, Parker, Miss Fessenden, and J. Fullmer.

"Walking to school one time, the boys didn’t know they were being trailed by a mountain lion. Some of the neighbor men heard the cat squall, went to investigate and found that it had trailed the boys almost to the school. The boys shoes were homemade and they had wrapped their feet in gunny sacks to keep them from freezing.

"John and Newt took the team and went to town for groceries — 100 pounds of sugar, dried fruit, lard, coffee, 50 pounds of salt, beans, macaroni, and other basics for survival. It usually took about four days each way to make a trip, due to weather and distance. John and Newt started home with their goods and their most precious cargo, a jug of whiskey. They had a little drink. They weren’t worried about getting lost as the teams would go home.

"Many miles later and more drinks down the road, the boys were merry to say the least. They didn’t notice that the tailgate on the wagon had come down and they were losing some of the grub. Some coyotes noticed they were dropping off grub and followed the wagon, eating the things that fell off. When they arrived home they saw what had happened and crawled off the wagon in fits of laughter. One of the boys asked Uncle Newt how it could have happened. He said that the coyotes must have done it.

"Fred Machler was a regular around our place, so when he didn’t come around for a few days, the boys were sent to see if something was wrong with him. They found him very sick and asked him what was wrong. He told them that the coyote ate his cows, so he ate the coyote.

"In 1924 John bought a Model T Ford and drove it back from Missouri. He came through Hardin and Pryor (Montana), and had to ford creeks everywhere. This car was going to solve a lot of transportation problems, but it also led to some interesting episodes. The mighty Missouri was the biggest means of travel. In the winter it was a highway, fewer miles and easier going, but there were the drawbacks, such as the air holes in the ice. John, with his ingenuity, tied big long poles onto the car so that if it broke through the ice, they wouldn’t lose the car. He and a neighbor went to town for groceries. When they came home, the car did break through the ice and they lost all the groceries and got themselves very wet.

"Homesteading wasn’t all fun and glory. Our folks lost lives, livestock, their homes, and a lot of good friends. They moved to Billings in 1936, then on to Clark, Wyoming, in 1938."

GARTHOFNER, Ben
Ben Garthofner is a well-known western author and artist who now lives in Phoenix, Arizona. The following was submitted by him.

"My father and mother, James and Alice Garthofner, moved from 24 miles northwest of Chinook, Montana, to the Missouri River, 65 miles south of Malta and settled on a river bottom on the south side of the river (downriver from the UL Bend) in the spring of 1911, when I was six years old. It was a free country at that time, sort of a last frontier. There were no roads up and down the river valley or in and out, either. We gouged out the old buffalo trails and made a road out of the valley so we could get out with a team and wagon. Some lived in log houses with dirt roofs and some with dirt floors. There were not many living in that country then. We lived mostly off the land on wild meat, river fish and a garden.

"We lived there (on the north side) from January 1911 until the ice went out of the river in April, then moved everything to our location on the south side in a rowboat. It took two or three years to clear the river bottom of sagebrush and rose bushes. My father plowed sixty-five acres and planted it to alfalfa and slowly developed a herd of cattle. The range was free then. I helped my father around the ranch and took a man’s place from the time I was nine years old. I worked on real roundups, helped trail many herds of cattle, and helped swim many across the wide Missouri River. I operated three ranches for myself in Montana at different times. We didn’t have any active law there. I was over forty years old before I ever had a hunting or fishing license.

"I first went to the Leedy School to a Mrs. Harris, working for my board and bed at the H. B. Varney Ranch and walking two miles each way to school. I got three and a half months schooling that year. I worked on the Tripp Ranch on the Missouri, for bed and board and go to school at the Tripp School for three to three and one half months each year.

"I ran away from home when I was 14 years old to go to school, as my father kept me on the ranch so much to help him. When I ran away, I got a job working for Bill Howard of Old Musselshell Crossing, a little town on that river. I worked for $2.00 per day, driving four horses on a fresno, building roads. That winter I worked for my board and bed at Bob Conley’s ranch and walked three miles each way to school. After the terrible flu epidemic my school closed, for so many teachers had died. I finished school around April, working at Bill Howard’s livery barn in Musselshell for my board and bed. That year I got my longest term of school, four months of schooling that year, just starting into the sixth grade in April, when my father came and took me home. I never went to school again.

"My brother Donald was born in Malta August 11, 1911. My brother Stanley Vernon was born at the Gallinger Ranch February 27, 1914. My sister, Lucile Lavina, was born on another ranch March 7, 1916.

"I knew a lot of people along the Missouri River and the
Musselshell River. The summer of 1919 was very dry, followed by a hard, cold winter. In the spring of 1920 I rode up the Musselshell Valley. There was never a time that I couldn’t see dead cattle or horses around me. That winter broke many ranchers. When I ran away from home in the fall of 1919, I passed through Ingomar on the Milwaukee Railroad, which amounted to just a wide place in the road, yet it, at the time, was known as the sheep capital of the country, for it sheared more sheep each spring than any other place on earth. They were drilling for oil, then north of town with an old type ‘spudding’ drill because the rotary drill had not come into use then. They did strike oil there. At the same time they drilled at Mosby and struck oil there, too.

'Bud Secrest was ranch foreman on the old UL Ranch in the big bend of the Missouri River. That old ranch amounted to seven river bottoms. Bud was a great man to play pranks on people but nothing to do any harm. He had nothing but friends everywhere. The Town family ranched just across the river from the UL. Richard Town and his wife had two boys, John and Bill, and two girls, whose names I have forgotten. In winter Richard sent his wife and children to Malta so the children could attend school. He owned a small brick home in Malta.

'One time Richard came across the river ice with his old Model T Ford, with the brass rim on the radiator. He had beef, potatoes, eggs and other foods from the ranch to take to his family in town. He drained the water out of the radiator and took everything that would freeze into the house and stayed all night with Secrest and his wife. During the evening Bud asked Richard if he would bring him back a gallon of whiskey. Richard, a little Englishman who hated booze and tobacco, refused. All the begging by Bud did no good. Next morning they filled the radiator with hot water, started it, put the food back into it, and Richard left. The evening before, after everyone had gone to bed, Bud got up and took all the eggs out of Richard’s crate and replaced them with small potatoes. Richard got stuck in a snowdrift and had to come back to have Bud pull him out with a team. Bud said, ‘Now, Richard, will you bring me back a gallon of whiskey?’ Richard replied, in his English accent, ‘Well, I might bring ye back a quart.’

'In the winter of 1915, Jim Kipp gave a dance. Bud hooked four horses to a bobsled and took everyone from the UL to the dance. Toward morning Bud’s boy, a four year old, became ill. Bud wanted to take the boy and go home, but his wife refused. There had been a drifter come to the UL early in the winter. Like many grub-line riders, he helped feed cattle and did other work around the ranch and stayed on. He was at the dance. Bud took the child and started for the door to go home when his wife yelled, ‘Stop him.’ This drifter reached up on the log wall, took down a 30-30 rifle, and shot Bud through the heart. The man’s name was O’Reilly. It was hard to believe, but O’Reilly was only given two years in the Deer Lodge penitentiary. Shortly after he was released, he was killed in a car accident west of Malta.

'I remember some of the hills along the Musselshell River were covered with scrub cedar, growing thick as sagebrush. One of the families I knew was the Nordahl family. They were nice people. I stopped overnight for the first time the spring of 1920. One of the boys, Eddy, became a good friend of mine. He learned to play a violin in that old bunkhouse on the ranch and once played on a radio station in Minneapolis and St. Paul for a year or two. But he got lonesome for the smell of sagebrush, quit, and came back to Montana.

'I knew the Songer brothers and their mother. Mrs. Smith. Alvin and Clarence were good cowboys and bronc riders. There was a celebration and a little rodeo put on at the mouth of Lodgepole Creek on the Musselshell every 4th of July for a number of years. Mrs. Smith always brought several freezers of homemade ice cream, and it was so good! Alvin always rode a bronc and we boys rode cows and steers.

'Berry Roberts ranched on the Musselshell, as well as an old-timer named Bill Coulee. At one time Bill had an electric orchestra in his house. He must have had an electrical plant to furnish the power.

'In about 1917 there was a large family named Nordum living near the UL Bend. They had a daughter named Ruby, who was 16 at the time. She was an attractive young lady and had her admirers, including George Parker and August ‘Alkal Ike’ Shellito. Ike called on Miss Ruby quite often. He worked hard, trying to make a good ranch of his homesteaded river bottom. One day, George Parker and his half brother, Hansen, rode down to Ike’s ranch and ordered him to leave the country, giving him until the next day at noon to be gone. The next day when they rode up to Ike’s place, Ike was ready for Parker. Parker said he could see Ike had not left and shot at Ike with his single action Colt six-shooter, but missed. Ike shot Parker with his 30-30 rifle right through the lower spine, but he was not sent to prison. He married Ruby and they had one daughter. Ike later lost his mind and was sent to Warm Springs, Montana.

'One of the well-known men of the country between Jordan and the Musselshell was Ross Ricks. They called him 'Bones' because he was tall and skinny. He had the misfortune of being born tongue-tied. When he talked, a person had to pay close attention to follow what he was talking about. When he worked for the 79 Ranch, he was badly hurt, so they sent him to Rochester, Minnesota.

'Bones was a person who loved to tell big, windy stories to strangers. He told his nurse he owned the 79 Ranch and several thousand head of cattle, which was true of the 79 at that time. Before it was time for him to return to Montana, he and the nurse had become quite close and even talked of marriage. So Bones had to tell her he was not going to marry himself. He told her he only owned a couple saddle horses, a riding outfit, and a bedroll, and that he worked for $40.00 a month. Even so, she later came to Montana. They were married, got a small ranch, and raised at least one son.
"One time Bones was traveling down the dirt road east of Sand Springs when he ran out of gas for his Model T Ford. He walked about three miles to the gas station. The attendant had never seen Bones before. Bones walked in and said, 'Runned out ob das down wode, need tan.' The young man looked at Bones and said, 'Mister, I can't tell what you want.' Bones replied, 'Das, Das, Das. Dod danc, tant you unternt pain endish?' He never seemed to mind that people laughed when he was talking.

"For several years after we settled on the Missouri River, we made one trip to Malta for supplies. It was necessary to take our wagon apart and cross it in the rowboat, as well as swimming the team. It took a day and a half to make the trip to Malta. There my father bought lumber for a wagon box and put the supplies in it. When he got back to the river, everything had to be crossed in the rowboat. Sugar cost $6.00 per hundred and flour 54.00. Levis cost $1.50 a pair, and a fine box of apples cost 85 cents. We raised our own pork and cured it. By raising a big garden and canning most of it, we had our vegetables and other food.

"That old Missouri River Valley is now under water from Fort Peck to Rocky Point. That lake spoiled a lot of great ranches with owners who were free and very happy. The only good it ever did was to furnish power. The Musselshell Valley is a fine ranch country where they irrigate the fields and raise livestock.'

MY DREAMS
In all my dreams it always seems
I'm living in the past
With good old friends I used to know,
I'm back there, home at last.

And everything about my dreams
Is so real in every way,
I'm young again, so are my friends
We're not this old and grey.

Sometimes I ride those long, dim trails
I knew once long ago,
I'm on a real cow-horse again
Just swinging high and low.

Smell of sagebrush fills the air,
Cattle scattered far and wide.
Larks a singing all they can,
My love for this I'll never hide.

Those old log homes of cottonwood
Were homes to everyone.
They shut out howling blizzards,
The rain and boiling sun.

I never dream of city life
That's where I live these days.

I'll never learn to like it
I'll never like its ways.

I hope when my time comes
To top that last divide,
It'll be just like my dreams
With old friends by my side.

I'll ride a horse I've rode before
On trails I won't forget
And always be with those good folks,
The best a man has ever met.

(Ben Garthofner — 1971)

GATES, George (Sec 21-14-30) The late 1890s found two young men coming to the Musselshell River as cowboys. Their names were George Gates and Ed Parkinson. They liked what they saw and stayed in the area until they became old enough to claim a homestead. George married his buddy Ed's sister, Delora (Rolla) Parkinson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Silas Parkinson. After a few years on the homestead, they moved to Mosby and operated a store for several years.

Their children, listed in the school census for District #107 were: Louise (1903), Mary (1903), Margaret (1911), Jean (1914), and a son, Delno S. (1917).

Delora died in 1918, and George moved his family to the Flathead. Delno S. came back to the Lewistown, Montana area as Doctor D. S. Gates, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. He was well-known throughout the area and often attended the local stockgrower meetings.

GAUTHIER, Henry The following was contributed by Agnes Gauthier Schaff. "Henry Gauthier, the only surviving son of Louis Gauthier and Leocadie Fortier, was born on June 29, 1894, in Weedon, Quebec, Canada. There were also nine daughters in the family. His family moved around quite a bit, and it was while they were living in Regina, Montana, as a young man, that he met his future wife, Evelyn Ledoux. Evelyn, a daughter of James Ledoux and Georgiana Frazier, was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, on May 7, 1894. Her family moved around quite a bit, too, before coming to Regina. In about 1916 Evelyn, her parents, and a younger adopted sister moved to some land along the mouth of the Musselshell River. Evelyn and her father each homesteaded land.

"On October 1, 1917, Henry Gauthier, my father, and Evelyn Ledoux, my mother, were married in Regina. They lived there a short time. My father then bought my grandfather's share of the homestead land on the Musselshell, moving there. My grandparents, the James Ledouxes, moved to Frenchtown, Montana. It was there my grandmother passed away on May 24, 1929. My grandfather lived there a few years longer and then returned to live with us.

"To this union ten children were born — Louis (1919) at Mecaha, Agnes (1921) at Frenchtown, Alice (1922) at Mecaha, James (1925) at Mecaha, Lawrence (1926) at
Mecaha, Frederick (1928) at Mecaha, William (1929) at Malta, Richard and Rita (1931) at Mecaha, and Raymond (1936) at Lewistown.

"Raymond died at birth and is buried in Lewistown, Montana. The remainder of the family grew up on this ranch at the mouth of the Musselshell River.

"Our post office was Mecaha, about 10 miles up the river. We received our mail twice a week. I’m sure more than one means of transportation was used. Horses and wagon or horseback were the most common, but no doubt a car or such may have been used, as motor vehicles came into use during our lifetime there. I remember we had to cross the river and go two or three miles to where the mail carrier left the mail.

"Our county seat was Jordan, Montana, as we lived in Garfield County, but my father very seldom went there, probably just to do the necessary business. He usually went to Winnett to shop for groceries, etc., but needless to say, it wasn’t very often. We were 58 miles from Winnett; and not having a car until 1929, my father went shopping with horses and wagon, as I remember, only once a year. The trip took approximately five days. The roads were just steep, winding, dirt roads coming out of the river bottom, so were impassable a good deal of the time. For medical care, we went to Lewistown, Montana.

"My older brother, Louis, and I attended the Fort Musselshell School. It was about two and a half miles from our home, across the Musselshell River. He went there for two years and I one year. We usually rode horseback to school. But when the river was high, we would cross in a rowboat and then walk the remaining distance to school.

"A school was opened on our side of the river when I started the second grade, as there were enough children of school age by then. It was called the Anderson School, probably because school was held in the bunkhouse on the Ed Anderson Ranch while the new school was being built. This school was ¾ of a mile from home, on land donated by our neighbor, Carl Ralkvam. A portion of the schoolyard was on our land. The school was built by fathers of children attending this new school. My older brother, Louis, obtained his high school education by correspondence. When I finished eighth grade, I stayed out a year, waiting for my sister, Alice and I attended Sacred Heart High School in Miles City, Montana, boarding at the Ursuline Convent for two years.

"The sale of the portion of our land which would be under the back-up water of the Fort Peck Dam was finalized in 1936. In the summer of 1938 my parents bought a ranch between Columbus and Absarokee (Montana), and we moved just before school started that fall.

"Sadness befell our family the next spring. Our little sister, Rita, was struck and killed by a bread delivery truck while walking home from school in May 1939. She was almost seven years old at the time. She is buried in Columbus.

"My grandfather Ledoux moved to our new home with us. He died April 24, 1945, at the age of 89. He, too, is buried in Columbus. My brother, James, is also deceased, passing away April 11, 1961. He is buried in the Rosebud Cemetery near Absarokee.

"My parents lived on this ranch until the fall of 1955, when they retired and moved to Laurel, Montana. They had a very good life, in spite of the many hardships of their younger years. They enjoyed traveling, but above all they enjoyed their large family. At the time of their deaths, there were seven surviving children, 32 grandchildren, and 45 great grandchildren. They celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary October 1, 1967, and their sixtieth anniversary ten years later. Our father passed away at the age of 90, March 23, 1985, in Billings, Montana. Mother passed away May 17, 1986, in Laurel, at the age of 92. Both are buried in the Laurel Cemetery.

"My brothers, sister, and I all live in the Laurel, Columbus, and Absarokee area, with the exception of Lawrence. He joined the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in 1950 and is presently living in Raymondville, Texas."

**GIBSON, Fred** Although Fred Gibson never made a permanent home in Petroleum County, he, and men like him, had a definite influence on the settling of the area. He spent his entire life in the West when white-man history was being made.

Fred, the only son of Henry and Merry Gibson, was born in Marshalltown, Iowa, in 1879. He was orphaned at the age of fourteen, and it was at that time that he started cowboying as his only line of work.

In 1908 he came to Montana, landing in Miles City. His first job was with the N Bar working for Tom Cruse. He later worked for the H Cross mostly as rep with the 79 wagon.

In 1916 he married Myrna Garfield and settled in Garfield County 26 miles north of Sand Springs, Montana. He served as Sheriff of Garfield County from 1928 until 1935. Fred and Myrna had two sons, Robert and Richard. Fred died in 1949. The following poem by Badger Clark depicts his sentiments:

"When my old soul hunts range and rest,
Beyond the last divide.
Just plant me in some stretch of West
That sunny lane and wide.
Let cattle rub my tombstone down
And coyotes mourn their kin.
Let hawses paw and tramp the mawn’
But don’t you fence it in!"

Myrna married Walter (Bill) Haynie and moved to Winnett in 1961. (See also GARFIELD and HAYNIE—Winnett)

James Richard Gibson (Dick) was born in 1918 at the ranch at Benzien, north of Sand Springs. He received his education in Garfield County. Dick acquired some earth-moving equipment and started building dams. He stayed
transport. Roy retired from the mail route in 1967 and moved to Miles City, where he lived until his death in 1974.

Pearl Gibson married Knute Nordahl in 1923 and spent the rest of her life on the river. (See also NORDAHL) Veda Gibson married George Allan. They lived in Great Falls. She passed away in 1981. Velma Gibson spent her life on the river. She made her home with Pearl and Knute from 1935 on. Darrell and Charles left the area to work and live elsewhere. James passed away at home in 1920. Guy Gibson worked for the Montana State Highway Department from 1947 until retirement in 1981. He served in the Army in World War II. He married Barbara Jesseen and had three children — Don, Bill and Wanda. They lived at Miles City, where he died in 1986.

GILFEATHER, Thomas J. (Sec 13-17-29) Thomas Gilfeather came to Helena, Montana, in the 1890s as a railroad engineer from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He met and married Cora Sandidge in 1896. Cora, daughter of Charlotte (Dixon) and Larkin Sandidge, was born June 10, 1879, near Helena, Montana. Both her parents had come to Montana as children during the Last Chance Gold Rush of the 1860s.

Thomas and Cora came to a pioneer log home about 25 miles north of Mosby in 1902. They helped organize a school for the Carl Nordahl, Adams, and their own children. After three of the four Gilfeather children died of diphtheria, the school was moved to a more central location. Mr. Gilfeather started the Sagebrush Post Office and it ran from 1904 to 1905, then in 1906 the Ross Post Office was established in the Gilfeather home. It was named for a friend of Tom's, and Gilfeathers ran it until 1935.

Patrick Gilfeather recalls, "The houses were log with sod roofs over hewed logs and rough lumber. Furnishings were limited. However, Mother had a piano that was later lost in a schoolhouse fire. It was mainly cattle country, with hay being developed on the bottoms, and some small grain and corn. My father raised watermelon and cantaloupe and hauled them to Lewistown to trade for winter provisions."

"My father was justice of peace and we had a few neighborhood squabbles tried in the bunkhouse."

"We shipped cattle by trailing them 100 miles to the railroad. It was a ten-day trip and I got to make my first trip at the age of thirteen. I was the lowly horse wrangler. I graduated to a herd driver and had the privilege of trailing with Fred Gibson, who had trailed from Texas."

"Mother claimed that she fed more horse thieves than any other woman in the world. Lodgepole Creek, Calf Creek, and Blood Creek all emptied into the Musselshell near our place. When the thieves were running from the law, they would come down one of these creeks, hit the river, then go north into Canada. Our place was about the only place they could get a meal. Al Morgan, of Fergus County, was the most frequent sheriff in pursuit and he made many stops at our place."
"Mother was clerk of the school district for many years. People used to come to her at the Ross Post Office to have her help them with their mail orders from catalogues. People expecting mail or packages would come to our place and stay, sometimes a week, waiting for whatever they were expecting."

Thomas and Cora had eight children. Three died from diphtheria. The others were: Charles (1901), Patrick (1911), Thomas (1912), Clarence (1916), and Robert (1921).

Thomas died in 1931 and Cora continued to live on the river until 1940, when she moved to Helena to care for her mother, Charlotte Tuohy. She later sold the home place and moved to Great Falls, Montana, where she died in 1955. (See also TUOHY)

Charles Gilfeather took over operation of the family ranch. He married Jacqueline Melton in 1939. They had two sons, Thom G. (1940) and Jack (1942). Jack was killed in a gun accident in 1954. Jacqueline wrote the Lower Musselshell news for many years. She had a very picturesque way of wording her items. Charles was a long-time member of the Montana Stockgrowers and an organizing member of the Williams Coulee Grazing District. Charles died in 1962.

Patrick Gilfeather married Margaret Raitt in 1937. They had three sons — Gordon Grant, Frank and Glen. Pat became an attorney and lived mostly in Great Falls. He died in 1988. Thomas Gilfeather never married. He lived in Great Falls. Clarence Gilfeather married Viola Corrigan and had three children — Randall, Robert and Teresa Lee. He was a land appraiser and lived in Portland, Oregon. He passed away in 1976. Robert Gilfeather married Darlene Stefanatz. They did not have children. He spent many years in Saudi Arabia, retiring to Dillon where he had the Metlen Hotel. He died in 1986.

GREEN, James (Sec 19-16-30) Jim Green, son of Mr. and Mrs. James P. Green, was born in the Indian Territory of Oklahoma in 1899. He came to Petroleum County in 1916 and filed on a homestead.

Jim worked as a ranch hand along the Musselshell River and spent some time working construction. The following item was taken from the Winnett Times, 1950: "Shorty Saylor and Jim Green took first money in the wild cow milking contest during the Labor Day Rodeo at Musselshell. Prize was a fine nylon rope and $23.75 cash.

"Saylor was the roper and Jim did the milking. Jim had filled the bottle and was about to head for the judges with it, when a bunch of cows ran over him and upset the bottle. He went back to milking and filled the bottle a second time, only to be knocked to the ground again, spilling part of the milk. With Saylor about to play out on his end of the cow, Green again pulled more milk from the wildly protesting cow. He made it back to the judges in third place, but was awarded first because he had the most milk." (See also GREEN — Winnett)

GREEN, O. T. and O. M. Otto and his brother Oran (O. M.) homesteaded near the Musselshell River. O. T. was the first postmaster of the Mecaha Post Office. (See also GREEN — Flatwillow)

GREEN, Wallace Paige Wallace Paige Green was born in 1901 in Indian Territory, Oklahoma. Margaret Underwood was born in 1903. They were married in 1923 in Ohio and came to Montana in 1924. They lived east of Cat Creek on the Musselshell River near James and Cora Weaver, who were Margaret's legal guardians. The older children attended school in Cat Creek until their parents moved to Winnett in 1934. (See also GREEN — Winnett)

GRIEBEL, William F. (Foreword by June Griebel Woodall) "My dad, William F. Griebel, was born in 1889 at DeWitt, Iowa. He left home when he was twenty-one. He planned to see some of the country so he worked wherever he could. He was working in Hardwick, Minnesota, where he met my mother, who was teaching school there. When her school was out in the spring of 1911, she planned to go to Moore, Montana, where her folks had bought a farm. Dad decided to go along, so they went by train and arrived at Moore in June of 1911.

"Mother had a job teaching school for the year of 1911–12. She and Dad planned to marry as soon as her school was out, but her father got sick and died. Since it the custom to go into mourning for a full year after a death, she taught school again the next year.

"In March 1913 Dad and Mother were married and settled down on a farm Dad had rented about fifty miles east of Lewistown. Dad and Grandmother filed on their homesteads in late summer of 1913."

William and Martha Griebel had four children — Nadine (1914), June (1916), Bill Jr. (1920) and Jack (1922).

The following are excerpts from memories written by William F. Griebel: "I had a chance to go to Garfield County to help Dow Bowen build a homestead cabin for him and his aunt, Miss Dorothy Bowen. We built these out of native sawed lumber just as it came from the sawmill. It was sure wet and heavy. Mr. Bowen had a six-horse team, and I had a four-horse team. We had good bedrolls and a grab box. but because Mr. Bowen had not planned on so
much time in the mud, we ran out of food before we arrived at Winnett. It was 28 miles from Grassrange to the Winnett Ranch. There was no town at this time, but Mr. Winnett had a small supply store of groceries, etc.

"We left Grassrange and it took us seven days to go to Winnett. We would only pull a short distance and then have to unload the lumber, put all the horses on one wagon, pull the wagon out of the mud, carry the lumber to the wagon, and start out again for a short distance, only to begin the process over. The wet, sticky gumbo would go clear to the hub of the wagon. I would make a rough guess that we carried this lumber about seven miles. Sure was a terrible thing. We would carry the lumber about 100 to 150 feet each time we were stuck.

"We finally arrived at Winnett. It was only a post office, as I said before. We renewed our grub box supplies, including coffee, bacon, lard, bread, and several other things too numerous to mention. Our bread would freeze at night, so we had hot cakes for breakfast. It cost us one dollar per horse for hay, but we had our own oats for horse feed. We got up long before daylight, went over, and fed our horses.

"We emptied our grain sacks, so I told Bowen to hold the sacks and I proceeded to pull the heads off of twelve or fourteen chickens that were roosting on the partitions and mangers. So we started out again. We stopped at the McDonald Creek bridge, about a mile east of Winnett, and we skinned the chickens, as we had no way to scald them. We were now set pretty good for meat.

"We finally arrived at Mosby Post Office — just a river ranch home. Herbert Mosby was the owner. We made it about two miles past this place and into the river breaks, they called it, and decided to camp for the night. We used to fill our large coffee pot when we started out in the morning and put it in the grub wagon, but this day it had upset. We didn't know it until we made camp and I was so thirsty that I was spitting cotton.

"We saw a camp fire a long way off, so we started out to find it, thinking they would have water. We went up one hill and down the other and finally got to it. We found four men dry camped who had no water but said a couple men were out looking for water, so we waited. Before long they came in and threw their empty buckets down in disgust, so Bowen and I went back to camp. We had some time finding it but finally made it. We had one can of tomatoes, so I opened it and drank half of it and ate some of the tomatoes.

"I didn't sleep much on account of the thirst I had, but next morning we started out again. We had only gone two miles when we came upon a young Austrian, Walter Legidowicz. He was camping and had dug out a spring; the water in it was as clear as crystal and cold. I took a small drink and ghee, did I get sick! I was sick in bed in the tent for two days. We then started out again and arrived at Dow's homestead, about ten miles from the spring. We did not have a thing to haul water in, outside of a bucket, so we couldn't go ten miles to the spring for only one bucket of water. We found an open water hole and I used to go over and dip up enough water for our coffee. The water being boiled is all that saved us. Finally, a bunch of range cattle found this water hole. They would walk into the water hole and eventually had it almost dry. I would have to dip the water out of the hoofprints for our coffee, let it settle, drain the water off, and then make our coffee. We could still feel the sand between our teeth. We had strained the water but still got the sand.

"We unloaded our lumber and started to build cabins. We made good time, but we worked from daylight to dark, stopping only to cook our supper before dark and then continue to work as long as we could see. We were almost done (had been working about two weeks) and had run out of everything but a little flour. Bowen went down to Mr. Niles' place — he was an old-timer there and a very nice gentleman. He let Bowen have some lard and coffee. We did not have any baking powder so we had to almost burn our pancakes to get them done. They would be as hard as hardtack.

"We finally ran out of building material and started for home. Before we left, Mr. Niles came by on horseback and had a nice visit with us. He offered to locate mother-in-law, Mrs. Weigart, and me on a half section homestead for fifty dollars each, which was not too good a thing for me. He had been told I would have a good oat crop, so he said, 'You can bring me two big loads. I'll pay you seventy-five cents per hundred and seventy-five cents to freight them in here.'

"I took him up on it, and when Ithreshed my oats. I got my brother-in-law to come over, and we took him two big loads, $190.00 worth of oats. After paying $100.00 for the homestead locations, I had $90.00 cash to take home. Mother-in-law had been notified that they were going to foreclose on her farm, so she had no place to go. She had been given one year grace to stay on the farm. She and I went to the land office and filed on our half section homesteads in August 1913.

"When we arrived on the homestead, we found they had a resurvey and it had made some changes in our homestead lines. The party who had filed on the east half section had built a dugout on this west half-section so we moved into it and stacked up our lumber to be used at a later date. There were dirt floors in the dugout and we had to keep the floor dampened down on account of dust being stirred up. I began to cut logs for our new cabin, and finally had enough cut; but winter was setting in.

"I managed to get the logs laid up for the cabin; of course, I had to notch all the corners. We put up a good big log in the center for a ridge log and then put a log halfway up on each side, also for support of the roof. Then we cut nice straight-grained logs, cut them the right length, split them, and laid them with the flat side down. Of course, we had to knock all the slivers off, lay them side by side, and split short, wedge-shaped pieces and put them in the cracks between the roofing and split logs. We would then go to the creek, where we could get real
gumbo, mix it like plaster, and plaster it over the roofing. Eighteen or twenty inches of dirt was piled on top of this.

"Next, we had to split pieces and nail into the logs on the sides of the cabin. If we did not have cement to fill up the cracks, we would use gumbo to close the cracks. Our cabin was fourteen by twenty-eight feet, with two windows and one door made out of plain boards. We sure had a nice cool house in summer, warm in winter. We never did have a heater while living on the homestead, but I bought my wife a nice copper-clad four-hole cook stove. All we ever burned in it was wood and our cabin was always nice and cozy, even in the coldest weather. It had a rough floor in it, and some of the knots had fallen out, but I had not had the time to put tin over them.

"We had a neighbor from Kansas who chewed tobacco. Our floor still had knot holes in it and he would make a spit shot at one, splattering all around it. It would sure make my wife mad. I hurried and put tin on all the knot holes. Then he would lift one of the stove lids to spit, and it would splatter, sputter, and bounce all over the stove. My wife was furious.

"That fall I planted my winter wheat and worked at building fence for homesteaders. That spring I put in fifteen acres of spring wheat. I got the winter wheat harvested; but before I could harvest the spring wheat, there was a prairie fire, started by live coals that fell out of the ash pan of the thresher when the threshing crew was moving to another field. Most of the fields around there had been fenced up for three or four years, with the grass standing about eight or ten inches tall.

"It really went: a stiff wind was blowing and the fire took on something terrible. The thresher was about one quarter mile west of the house and when the fire went past our house, there was a roll of fire about four feet high. There was nothing for about three hundred feet around our house that would burn. Therefore, we escaped the fire. The fire seemed to burn off the grass, roll over it, and go on. I had my binder setting on the prairie and the roll of fire rolled up on it and burned all the woodwork off of it.

"I had my plow at the potato patch (about one quarter mile from the house) so got on the back of one of the horses and made a run for the plow. When I got back, the fire had gone by, into the coulee, and had cut me off from getting to my spring wheat, which I had stacked. The fire got to it; by nightfall you would never think there had ever been any wheat there. It burned and blew it away.

"We had no water well, so I put a barrel on a platform surrounded by a couple of small logs, about six inches in diameter and six feet long, hitched a team of horses to this, and traveled about two miles to get the water to drink and cook with. Every time I turned around, the barrel was empty. My neighbor had a small amount of water, but could only get a pailful every three or four hours, so we could not get any water there.

"When there was snow on the ground, we would melt snow for drinking and cooking. We were in the winter of 1914-15. I dug a nice root cellar or cave, as they sometimes were called, to store our vegetables and other garden produce, and any other freezeable things. My brother-in-law and I started to dig a well. We got down about 25 feet, but we could only get about a bucket per day. We had to go down and dip it up; the water was not very good, as it was seeping out of shale and soapstone.

"My wife asked me to cut some green willows with forked sticks. The sap was just coming up in them. She wanted me to see if I could witch water. I asked her if she had lost her mind and she said, 'No, I have heard of some people doing it, and it wouldn't hurt to try.' So I cut several green willow forked sticks and threw them in the wagon.

"After we got home, I cut myself a nice willow fork and started where we had begun to dig the well. As I cut back and forth across the coulee from the well we dug, every time I got to the cabin, the willow would turn down. I tried to keep it from turning down and would twist the bark off the willow. I went down the coulee about fifteen rods to a wash in the coulee, and the willow turned for me. I thought maybe it was the willow, so I got another willow, tried the same thing over, and had my wife watch the proceedings. I got the same results as I did in the first place.

"I then took my pick and shovel, dug in this wash, and was down about six feet (about fourteen feet from the top of the coulee). It was sundown now, and my wife came to tell me supper was ready. I left my pick and shovel in the hole. The dirt was pretty sticky. I had to stand on my shovel handle to get out. I went down to the wash the next morning, and the water was over the top of my pick and shovel handle. I fished my pick and shovel out and got my brother-in-law to help me dig a well up on the coulee bottom proper.

"We dug down eighteen feet and when I was down at this depth, I found a nice, flat bottom that looked like rock, but it was full of veins. These were about one inch in diameter and gave the impression of a map. I used my pick to dig and rake this formation. I struck my pick into the center of the well and the water gushed up about twelve inches. I was sure surprised! It came to a height of four feet right away, and we never could bail it dry. We did not have a pump so we put up a pulley and a bucket on each end of the rope. When one bucket went down, the other came up. It was the nicest water — real soft, just like rain water. My wife was jubilant over the water-witching episode.

"When people began to find out about me witching our water well, they came from all around to see us and see if it was true. They asked me all about it, but all I could do was to tell them that I did not believe in it myself. I showed them just how I did it and asked them to try it, but none of them was able to get the results that I did. So they asked me if I would try to witch a well for them. I, again, did not like to do this, as I couldn't make myself believe it. They offered to pay, but I told them, 'Absolutely not!'"
"But finally, I agreed to witch some wells for some of the people. When I told them where I got the draw, they would ask me if I would dig the well for them. I made arrangements to dig for so much per foot. I felt I was trapped, but I had good fortune in getting water. I made pretty good money, and out of fifteen wells. I got an adequate supply of water in thirteen wells. Even though I got water in the other two, it was not enough to supply a family.

"In the spring of 1915, I plowed up fifteen acres of prairie sod, and every third furrow I dropped seed corn. After I had finished plowing, I disked the ground. On July 4th we could just see the corn in the rows across the field. We had a lot of corn, and although we had it fenced, the range cattle and antelope would still get in and eat it. The antelope used to get into our garden and eat our carrots right out of the ground. They would eat down as far as they could, and then paw the earth away from the carrot and eat down some more.

"I had a good 30-30 rifle, but was never able to get any of them. We had a game warden by the name of Green, and he would sit on one of the highest knobs in the vicinity with a pair of real high-powered field glasses. If he saw someone shoot anything like an antelope, he would go and search the person’s premises. If he found antelope meat, it meant arrest and a $500.00 fine.

"So some people bought high-powered glasses. When they saw him sitting on a high spot, they would conceal themselves and take a shot at him, not to hit him, but to let him know they knew he was there and make him move. The antelope used to bunch up for winter and move about forty miles south, but when about one hundred fifty antelope came down at night and cleaned out our garden, it wasn’t funny.

"As near as I can remember, World War I started July 28th, 1914, and Herbert Hoover was the food administrator. My wife bought a sack of white flour and found out she had to buy a pound of substitute for every pound of white flour. All the substitute they had was rice flour and barley flour. Rice flour was 25 cents per pound and the barley flour was much cheaper, but it was no good for making bread. It did make good hotcakes. Anyway, it cost her ten dollars to get the fifty pound sack of flour. I don’t think it did much good to have to buy so much substitute, as most of it was thrown away because no one could eat it. My wife used to mix the rice flour with the white flour to make bread, and it wasn’t any too good.

"The weather gradually kept getting colder and finally we had a snowstorm. So my wife and I made out a list for our grist mill and figured enough to run us at least six months. It would cost us a little over $150. Our list would include a case of coffee, a couple cases of milk, about sixty pounds of lard and flour, which was accompanied by substitutes. Near spring, everyone would run out of supplies. I had plenty and would share with them, thinking spring would soon open up, as we were snowed in. No one could get out. Finally we got to the low point.

"I had a small amount in a checking account in a bank in Melstone, Montana. So when the stage, which carried mail from Melstone to Mecaha, could find room, he would bring our order. The merchant would fill in the blank check. Sometimes it would be ten days or two weeks before the mailman could find room, and weather conditions were good enough to bring the order. He would leave it at Mosby and we could go to Mosby, get it, and bring it home by horseback.

"One thing that helped was that some of the cattlemen would kill a beef and come by horseback. Whether we had the money or not, they would leave a front quarter or hind quarter of beef. Front quarter was four cents and the hind quarter was eight cents a pound. If the person did not have the money, they would leave the bill; one could pay the bill when they acquired the funds. Everyone was honest. We used to hang our meat on the north side of the house or cabin. It would freeze solid, and we would have to saw off what we wanted. We had 35-30 degree below-zero weather. Snow was too deep to pull a sled or wagon. This meat was put out in December so everyone would have meat for Christmas.

"No one will ever know what it is to be snowed in for five or six months — forty miles from the railroad or doctors. We didn’t notice or think so much about it until later, when we were away from the homestead. As soon as the snow melted and the mud dried off, I made a trip to Melstone, Montana. I had to borrow money to buy feed, seed, and buy groceries for a grubstake to run until fall. The banks did not demand any security, only to pay when we made final proof on the homestead. I went to Sand Springs to buy seed oats to seed our fifteen acres and for horse feed. It cost me five cents per pound. I seeded our fifteen acres.

"I had no more than finished seeding when the directors came to see me to inquire if I would build a new schoolhouse with a board floor, five windows, one door, and two outhouses. I told them I would. But it was to be let out for bids and was to be let to the lowest bidder, with all lumber, shingles, etc. to be freighted from the railroad, Sumatra, Montana. This schoolhouse was to be 28 by 28 feet inside. I put in my bid for $790.00; the lumber bill was about $200.00, so should leave me about $590.00 for the logs and labor. Labor was cheap at this time — about fifty cents per hour.

"There were lower bids than mine, but they awarded me the contract, as they felt the lowest bidder was not capable of doing the work. This school was called the Calf Creek School. By the time I had finished the schoolhouse, it was almost time to cut grain and harvest the wheat and oats. I went into Melstone and bought a new John Deere binder. It cost $325.00. I cut enough grain for others to pay for it. I planned to finish cutting Mr. Beckenhower’s wheat, then go home to do my own.

"It was late when I finished Beckenhower’s wheat, so I pulled for home, took the binder off the moving trucks, let the fences down, and made one cut down the side of the field. I then quit, fed my horses, and turned my horses
loose. Next morning I got up at daylight but could not find my horses. They went a long way from home to feed. I found them east of my mother-in-law’s place. As I was bringing them back by her house, I saw a big black cloud materializing. She said, ‘You better wait a while and see. It might rain.’

‘While I was drinking a cup of coffee, it started to hail. The hail was about the size of golf balls, and the ground was so hard they would hit the ground on the west side of the cabin and bounce clear over the cabin. When some of them hit the logs they would sound like a cannon going off. This only lasted a short time, then came small hail the size of peas. The wind would whip first one way and then the other, really cutting things off. Mother had a lot of fryers (chickens) and it sure knocked them out, as they did not have time to get under cover. It killed eight of them. We gathered the remaining ones all up and carried them to the chicken house.

‘My brother-in-law did not haul enough dirt on their cabin roof, and the result was the rain and mud began to come through. It rained mud all over everything in the cabin. They had the piano there, and we had put a quilt over it to partly protect it. Everything else was covered with mud. I told Mother and my wife’s two sisters to come home with me. We had to follow the high ground, as the coulees were running a lot of icy cold water.

‘On getting home, I found my oat crop entirely hailed out. It cut the straw down to about half the size it was and there was about one-half inch of oats on the ground. I had a small patch of corn, and it beat the corn clear down to the ear. The watermelons we had were all beaten in on the half that was up. Sure a sad blow. I didn’t have to cut any more grain this year, so I got ready to go to the Judith Basin for the rest of the harvest and then threshing.

‘We stayed on the homestead for five years. I worked where I could find work. Besides the harvesting at Judith Basin, I got a job from Herb Mosby at Mosby Post Office, taking down some log buildings and rebuilding them for a store, post office, and a house to live in. I think a man and his family by the name of Gates was the postmaster and store manager. We had a good supply of groceries but not meat, so Mr. Mosby let us have a quarter of beef, which we kept in Mr. Mosby’s ice house. There was no refrigeration at this time, nor was there electricity; we used oil lamps.

‘June was born in June of 1916. I had to deliver her because there wasn’t time to get to the midwife. We had a bottle of carbolic acid crystals, so I sterilized my hands and did as the doctor did when Nadine was born. When the midwife came, she said all was well.

‘I remember the winters that were so hard and the snow so deep we couldn’t get out to get feed for the horses. The horses got so weak they would walk off a cut bank and get stuck in the snow. The snow would drift over them, where they would smother and not be found until spring.

‘In 1920 I went to work at Cat Creek and when my wife finished teaching in 1921, we moved to Cat Creek, where we lived in an oil field shack. I was later transferred to Winnett to work on the loading racks, loading tank cars.’ (See also GRIEBEL — Winnett)

HADDOCK, Thomas Thomas and Agnes Haddock had four children listed in the District #107, Weede School census. They were Leah (1901), Thomas (1903), Leonard (1905) and Ruth (1907). They were listed only in the 1913 census, which was the first census taken in the area.

HALVERSON, Halver (Sec 23-14-29) Halver Halverson bought a section of land from the railroad and subdivided it into plots containing two to fifteen acres per plot. He then sold these plots to a great number of individuals. There is no evidence that anyone ever developed or lived on their plot, and all the land reverted to the county for taxes. The year was 1920. There was no road, no water, and evidently, no people. An oil promotion or land scam, maybe?

HANDEL, George (Sec 21-14-30) George Handel bought this land from the railroad and later sold it to C. D. Prather.

George was an early-day freighter and merchant from Musselshell, Montana. He had a store in Flatwillow, Montana. This piece of land was well-known as a good river crossing and was on the trail used by the Army between Fort Keogh and Ft. Maginnis. One would assume that he hoped to start another trade and freighting center.

HANSEN (Sec 12.14-12-30) Arthur, Edith, Lily and Rasmus Hansen were homesteaders in Sec 12.14-12-30. They all lost their land to taxes.

The 1916 school census for District #164 is the last listing of Rasmus and Elsa Hansen’s son, Clarence (1899), and a daughter, Florence (1894). Florence married Arthur Wilkinson. (See also WILKINSON)

HANSON, Herschel (Sec 25-21-29) Mr. and Mrs. Herschel Hanson homesteaded on a Missouri River bottom about ten miles above the mouth of Crooked Creek. Mrs. Hanson died in childbirthing, and her body and that of the baby were shipped to Hawkinsville, Georgia, for burial. Mr. Hanson sold the place to Anton Heine.

HEALY, Ed (Sec 17-16-30) Ed and Bob Healy came to the Musselshell River in 1900 to homestead. Ed filed on the west side of the river, and Bob filed on the east. Bob only stayed a few years before he turned his holdings over to Ed and left.

Ed and his wife, Margaret, had three children. One of the sons drowned in the river near their home in 1920. The other son, Dale (1922), is mentioned as having joined the CCC’s in 1939. Their daughter, Mary, was born in 1923, but we have no further information on her. Ed and his wife were divorced and she went to live with her father, a man known as ‘Booze.’

Ed ran cattle and a few horses. He had a small threshing machine, and used to thresh alfalfa seed for the ranchers, clear down to the mouth of the Musselshell, 26 miles from
his home place.
After leaving the river, Ed made five-year leases on his ranch to various people — some of them being Gordon Burr, Albert Duffner, Guy Davis and Lyle Kimble. During these times, Ed lived in Winnett and also spent some time on the West coast. In 1946 he sold his holdings to John Hedman. After selling the place, he said he was going to buy a small place near Billings.

Henneman, Ray (Sec 19.30-21-29) Ray Henneman, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Henneman, spent a number of years on the Missouri River between Ceekay and Wilder. When the Corps of Engineers bought out the homestead, Ray went to Malta where he was married. He and his wife both died at Malta. (Marie Zahn)

Henneman, William H. (Sec 19.30-21-29) Mr. and Mrs. William H. Henneman owned land near the Missouri River and also on Big Crooked Creek near Byford. They had three children — Carl, Ray and Ellen. When the Fort Peck Dam was built, the homesteads along the Missouri River were bought up by the Corps of Engineers and the people were forced to leave. Hennemans left in about 1936.

Hensley, John (Sec 22-12-30) John Hensley homesteaded in the Willow Creek area and later bought the Robert Wombles homestead. He sold out to W. A. Donaldson.

John and Daisy Hensley are listed as parents in the 1916 school census for District #164. Children listed were: Jay (1907), Helen (1909), Harold (1912), Lelah (1915) and Martha (1917). They were still listed in the 1921 census for this district.

Hickman, "Dad" "Dad" Hickman came in the early 1900s with the Long S herd from the south with a man named Herron, a trail boss with 3000 head of cattle and the owner of the Long S Ranch. "Dad" settled near the mouth of Crooked Creek on the Musselshell. Later Joe Barisich, known as Joe "Bush," bought the squatter's rights from Herron. He homesteaded it when the land was surveyed in 1912.

Hickman was pictured on a post card as the oldest cowboy on the range. He filed a pre-emption claim on the Musselshell about a mile above the Long S; then in 1906 sold it to Will Dumond. This is the same bottom that Walter Looke once had and lived on. Walt Fletcher and Charlie Bateman also came with the Long S. (Winnett Times)

Hill, John Sr. John Hill, son of John and Lucinda Hill, was born in Buffalo, Kansas, in 1878. He married Effie Rowton in 1897. They came to Montana on the train in the summer of 1902, bringing with them two small children, Johnny and Anna. John and Effie arrived in Custer, where they bought a team and wagon and continued on to the Musselshell River country. John worked for two months on the Jenison Ranch before loading up his family and touring around the Judith Mountain country. Then they came back and filed a claim on the old Mosby place.

John built their log cabin with an axe. Shortly after completion, he sold the place to Bill Mosby and moved to the old Easton Rowton place, where he and his family lived for the greater part of two years. Two more sons, George and Lou, were born during this period.

Never to be in one place too long, the family then moved to Dripping Springs, northwest of Sand Springs. While there, John did assessment work and also put in an irrigation system, somewhat more difficult and complex than present day systems. For the next several years, the John Hill family moved back and forth between the Burgess place and Dripping Springs, pasturing their 1600
The John Hill Family: John holding Evelyne, Ruth, Johnny, Anna, George, Lou, Fred (between George and Lou); Floyd (in front of Anna)

head of sheep. Fred was born at Dripping Springs on August 18, 1911. In the spring of 1912, Effie passed away and is buried there on the place.

In the spring of 1914, John married Ruth Briggs. Floyd (3 - 11 - 1915) and Evelyne (7 - 24 - 1919) were born in Mrs. Smith’s Maternity Hospital in Miles City, Montana.

(Winnett Times 7 - 19 -73) "Montana’s first gasoline refinery was built at Mosby and produced gasoline from Cat Creek oil field crude, Montana’s first commercial oil field. The Charles well was drilled in on February 20, 1920.

"Soon thereafter John Hill and Lemuel Rowton built the refinery back of the old store at Mosby. A section of big casing was used as the still, with pipes running out of it. Gasoline was simply run off into barrels. The fuel was used in many of the cars and trucks in operation in those days.

"In 1921 John sold his interest in the refinery to Lemuel Rowton, who expanded the business into also producing kerosene. He operated the business for a number of years.

"One morning in the late fall, Rowton began firing up the refining process, and after things got going good, he detected a leak in a pipe. He fled the scene; seconds later the refinery exploded. The Hill boys found bits of tin from the refinery building on top of a bluff estimated to be 200 feet high."

1930 saw the Hills moving again, this time to the Lepper Ranch (now Fraser Land and Livestock) on Flatwillow Creek. Due to the many moves over the years, education was a continual challenge for the family. The kids attended the first school at Mosby, and later John hired teachers for a home school for several years. They then moved to Lewistown so the children could be enrolled in grade school there.

The three younger children — Fred, Floyd, and Evelyne

— graduated from Winnett High School. In 1936 Ruth and Evelyne moved to Seattle, where Evelyne continued her education. John stayed at the ranch until 1943, when he moved to Winnett, bought a house, and lived there until his death in 1956. He is buried in the Winnett Cemetery.

John had seven children - John R. (1898), Anna (1900), George (1904), Lou (1906), Fred (1911), Floyd (1915) and Evelyne (1919). (See also HILL, John R. and HILL, Lou)

Anna died after a lengthy illness and was buried in Deer Lodge, Montana. She never married. George married Lela Green, a school teacher, on April 12, 1924. They have one daughter, Betty Hill (Stell). After various investments, they went into the grocery store business, the last one being at Big Fork, Montana. They are now retired at Ronan, Montana.

Fred graduated from Winnett High School in 1931. He married Grace Trimble of the Valentine area. They have two children, Karen and Jim. Fred made a career of the oil field business. They retired and built a home in Big Fork, Montana, where they still reside. Evelyne married Bruno Betti, and they live between Ft. Lewis and Olympia, Washington. (See also HILL, Floyd - Winnett) (Lou Hill and Floyd Hill, sons of John)

HILL, John R. (Sec 4-13-30) John R. Hill was born in 1898 in Buffalo, Kansas. He received his early education in Montana, coming to the state at the age of four with his parents. John and Effie. He cowboayed in the early 1900s, working for Murphy Deaton, the 79, and Weede Cattle Company.

John R., married Hellan Allan Winters, daughter of Walter B. and Cenia Allan, in 1921 at the Presbyterian Church in Lewistown, Montana. They went back to the river and eventually bought the old White place, acquiring adjoining land over the years.

Lou Hill recalls a time when John had leased the Herb Mosby place. He cut alfalfa hay in meadows. It rained. John turned the hay and it rained again. Once more, John turned the hay. Again, the rains came, bringing a raging flood to the Musselshell. In no time at all, John’s hay was gone, washed away by the flood. The water was so high John had to tie his boat to the railing on house. That very same year, however, he cut a crop of hay on the Wattersen place; in fact, the buffalo grass was eight to ten inches high, so they cut it for hay.

John and Hellan lived at Mosby before moving up the river to what is Lou Hill’s river ranch. In 1928 they bought the place Clint Woodford now lives on, and ranched there until they sold to Clint in 1966 and moved to Billings, where they lived until their deaths. Hellan died in January of 1977. John continued to work at the Public Auction Yards until shortly before his death in May 1981.

John and Hellan had four children: Alvin (1921) died of leukemia in December 1951 while a captain in the U. S. Air Force; Ted P. (1924) lives near Columbus, Montana: Pohney (1929) (See also RICH, Charles); Jack (1935) (See also HILL, Jack - Winnett)
Lou and Margaret had three children — Lynn (1929), Louanne (1931) and Phil (1933).

Lynn attended grade school at Weede and Winnett High School, graduating with the class of 1947. He worked for his dad on the home place. In the spring of 1948 he died from the results of an accidental explosion. Louanne also attended schools at Weede and Winnett High School, graduating in 1949. (See also WOODFORD, Clint) Phil received his education at Weede and Winnett High School, graduating in 1952. (See also HILL, Phil)

Mugs passed away in the winter of 1985. Lou is still living on the ranch.

HILL, Phil Phil Hill was born September 4, 1933, to Margaret and Lou Hill of Mosby. He grew up on the Musselshell, went to a country school and then graduated from Winnett High in 1952. In the summer of 1953, Delores Lindquist from Funk, Nebraska, came to Montana to teach Bible school. She came back in the fall to teach country school near Steve’s Fork in Garfield County. Phil and Delores were married December 30, 1953, in Nebraska. Delores taught the following year at the Mosby School.

Lynda Lou was born in 1955. She attended country school and graduated as salutatorian in 1973 from Winnett High. She attended Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota, and received a B. S. degree in Secondary Education with honors. She married Terry Johnston from Minnesota and taught school four years while he attended seminary at Bethel. Upon graduation, he became the pastor at Cushing Baptist Church, Cushing, Minnesota. Lynda and Terry have two girls, Terlyn and Joyanne.

Sandra Joy was born in 1957, attended country school, graduated from Winnett High School in 1975 as valedictorian. She attended one year at Seattle Pacific College, Washington, and then attended Montana State University.
where she graduated with honors with a B. S. and RN in nursing. She married Kevin Ericson of Funk, Nebraska. They farm her mother’s farm, also have a fifty cow Grade A dairy. They have four children — Klinton, Kerrie Joy, Kendall and Kaleb.

Gary Ray was born in 1959 and attended country school. In August of 1967 he, along with his maternal grandparents, were killed in a car accident at Alzada, Montana.

Scott LeVern was born in 1961 and attended seven years of country school. He attended Winnett High School, where he completed his eighth grade year and high school and graduated as valedictorian in 1979. He graduated from Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas, with a degree and honors in Animal Science. He married Lynette Sylvester from Kansas, and they farm at Abilene, Kansas, with two girls — Katie and Melissa.

Kevin Gary was born in 1969. He attended school in Billings and graduated from Billings West High School in the spring of 1989.

Delores and Phil Hill still ranch on the Musselshell with cattle and sheep. They are charter members and active in the First Baptist Church. They have also been involved with their children in 4-H for over twenty years. (Delores Hill)

HOTLEDahl, Andrew (Sec 25-18-29) Andrew Hotledahl (a Norwegian) and Gus Nordquist (a Swede) came to the Lower Musselshell area in the early 1900s. Their places were near the old 79 Trail, where it crossed the Musselshell just across the river from the mouth of Lodgepole Creek. They ran horses and cattle.

In about 1915 they dissolved their partnership, and Hotledahl sold his ranch to Berry Roberts. It was later sold to Martin Wangersness.

Hotledahl left the area after selling his place, but it is unknown where he went. (Marcus Matovich)

IRVINE, Ed (Sec 18-21-27) Ed Irvine married Helen Douglas, daughter of Rachel Douglas, and they lived on their Missouri River homestead until 1935 when they sold out to the Corps of Engineers for Fort Peck Dam.

Ed and Helen, with Helen’s mother and sister, moved to a ranch 30 miles northeast of Laramie, Wyoming, with all their livestock and possessions. After Ed died in 1948, Helen turned the place over to one of Ed’s nephews. She moved to Laramie to the Iverson Home for Ladies. She lived there for 20 years and died June 29, 1986, at the age of 91. (Marie Zahn)

JOHNSON, Ed R. (Sec 10-14-30) Ed and Ida Johnson were homesteaders. When School District #107, Weede, was formed in 1913, they had one child listed, Calvin (1902). Their address was listed as Mosby, and they were listed for the final time in 1916.

JOHNSON, John E. (Magnuson) John Magnuson, son of John and Christine Magnuson, was born in 1878 in Stockholm, Sweden. He immigrated in 1887, at nine years old, with a brother-in-law. He changed his name from Magnuson to Johnson, since he couldn’t pronounce Magnuson in English. His brother-in-law went back to Sweden, but John stayed on, herding cattle and working on ranches near Tolene, Nebraska.

In 1906, at Gothenburg, Nebraska, John Johnson married Minty "Alice" Waltermire, daughter of Joseph and Nora McClellan, who was born in 1889 at Etna, Nebraska.

John and Alice moved to eastern Montana in 1914, and they lived on the Garfield side of the Musselshell River.

They had five children — Joseph Edward (1908), Rubie Marie (1910), Wayne Howard (1912), Hale Lee (1914) and Ivar Lee (1918).

John E. Johnson died in 1951, and Alice died in 1966. (JoAnn "Josie" Bohn)

JOHNSON, Joseph E. Joseph E. Johnson, son of John and Alice Johnson, was born in 1908 at Etna, Nebraska, and came to Montana with his parents in 1914.

Joseph married Phyllis Josephine Rukavina at Winnett in 1933. (See also RUKAVINA) This union was celebrated with a wedding dance that lasted for two days. John and Phyllis lived on a ranch on the north side of the Missouri River from 1933 to 1938, when they moved to a ranch near Bridger.

Joe and Phyllis had six children — Thelma Marie (1934), Joseph Edward Jr. (1936), JoAnn Rose (1937) (See also BOHN, Rex — Petrolia), Velma Lee (1941) (See also DAUM — Winnett), John Emery (1941), and James Ervin (1946) (See also JOHNSON, James — Winnett).

Phyllis died in 1951. Joseph died in 1982. (JoAnn "Josie" Bohn)

Wedding picture of Joe and Phyllis Johnson. At top: Father Müller. Mike Vlastelic and Anna Rukavina; Bottom: Bride and Groom
JOHNSON, Knute  Knute Johnson and family lived at Weede from 1923 to 1926, and Knute served as postmaster there. Knute raised turkeys and sold them by the truck load in Winnett and Roundup (Montana). He even sent a load to Chicago. He trapped coyotes, but we don’t know whether he did this for the furs or to save the turkeys.

Johnsons raised a large truck garden and sold produce all summer long. In 1925 the following item appeared in the Winnett Times: “Knute Johnson has 2000 strawberry plants, now bearing. This makes a beautiful sight, as the plants cover a large area, and the berries are so large and numerous the patch appears as a large red splotch on the landscape. Mr. Johnson grows the everbearing variety, and each year has a large crop. Most of the berries are marketed in Cat Creek, where drillers and tool dressers devour bushels of the luscious berries daily. Surplus berries are marketed in Winnett, Melstone, and Roundup, and supply has never caught up with demand. Mr. Johnson expects to net $10000.00 from his crop this year.”

Knute and his wife had two sons, Ernest (1917) and Lester (1921).

In January of 1926 Knute passed away in Miles City, Montana. His brother, Ole, from Norma, North Dakota, and his wife, Anna, were at his bedside at the time of his death. (See also JOHNSON — Kelley)

KAMPF, Samuel  (Garfield County) Sam Kampf was born June 14, 1919, at Laredo, Montana. Grace Alexander was born August 10, 1918, at Bozeman, Montana. She and Sam were married December 3, 1958. Grace, by a former marriage had two daughters — Patricia (1944) and Deborah (1951). A son, Samuel Alexander (1961) was born to Grace and Sam.

Sam and Grace now live on the former Elisabeth (Elizabeth) Kleiman homestead. Grace’s mother, Helena (Lena) Kleiman Alexander, and Anna Kleiman Solf were sisters. A complete genealogy of the Kleiman family was compiled by Grace, and a copy was presented to the public library in Winnett. (See also BOWEN and KLEIMAN; also KASTNER and SOLF — Winnett)

KEITH, Lon  Dr. L. S. and Carrie Keith were married in Illinois. Lon practiced medicine in Illinois, California, Oregon, and Canada before coming to Montana in 1916. They settled in the Benzien area, where they bought a relinquishment. Dr. Keith did not take the Montana Medical Examination, as he did not intend to practice, but there were so few doctors in the area that he was always being called upon. He traveled many miles horseback in all kinds of weather to help the sick. Dr. Lon died during the flu epidemic of 1920, and Carrie passed away in 1931 in Great Falls at the home of her son, Charles.

Herbert Field Keith, son of Dr. Lon and Carrie Keith, was born in 1888 in Bloomington, Illinois. He moved to the Lower Musselshell River and leased the W. G. Roberts place. Bert served in the Army during World War I, and after being discharged, married Dagmar Nordahl, daughter of Carl and Marie Nordahl. They had twins, Carl (Jack) and Wanda (Judy). Judy passed away when she was six years old. Jack received his primary education on the river and high school at Winnett. During World War II he served in the Navy aboard a destroyer in the Pacific Theater. Verda Rowton Keith Loebn wrote the following: “Thirty-nine years of my life I lived on the Musselshell River. I was born the daughter of Parley and Alma Rowton in 1936 south of Mosby, and was helped into this world by my Grandma Mary Rowton. We lived about two miles south of the highway then. When I was in first and second grade, I stayed with Lou and Mugs Hill and walked to school with their kids, a journey of about a mile and a half. The Weede School was where I went for eight years. Hills lived across the river so we had a trolley to ride, except when the river was frozen over.

‘Most weekends when I boarded at Hills, I would ride with the teacher on Fridays to our turnoff, where I would either walk home or someone would pick me up. One time when I went home the folks were gone; as darkness descended, I became frightened, so I got blankets and pillows and put them on the table, by the front window where I could see the road. I laid up there to watch the road, and when my parents got home a little later, I was asleep.

‘When I was a third grader, my parents sold the place we lived on and bought a place from Horace McGiboney, which was closer to school. There we lived in a log house with the kitchen and living room together and one bedroom. Later we had a frame house moved in, one that had been owned by Elmer Eager and came from west of Winnett. One winter while I was in high school, this house burned down. Dad and Vernon were warming up oil on the heater to put in a tractor, and it got too hot and blew up. Vernon was in the house at the time, but didn’t get hurt. Then they had a house built out of square logs brought in from Wyoming.

Jack and Verda Keith
"The most trouble I remember getting into was from my Dad. One day when I went to school, there was to be an auction sale at the place we had just moved to. The other school kids hadn't brought their lunch and I had. They talked me into hiding mine and telling the teacher I didn't have any lunch, in hopes that we could get out of school to go to the sale. It worked! However, the teacher, Mrs. George Ore, and Mom got to talking and discovered I had lied. The next morning before I left for school Dad got an apple board. Although I tried crawling under the table, it didn't work, as I still got a feel of the apple board.

"Mom moved to Winnett when I started high school, where I graduated in 1954. Shortly after graduation, I married Jack Keith and moved down the river about 25 miles, where the old Mecaha Post Office used to be. We lived in a three-room log house, which I had never seen before. We had no electricity, phone, or running water, only a wood cookstove and heater.

"Jack's mother, Dagmar Nordahl Keith, passed away May 1, 1954, of heart failure. His father, Bert, whose family came from Illinois, lived with us until 1969, when he moved to the Roundup Nursing Home, after experiencing a slight stroke. He passed away there in August of 1971.

"The place we lived on ran about 50 cows. The first summer we had good-looking crops and garden until the 16th of August, when we were completely hailed out. The day it hailed I was canning corn on a wood cookstove, and it wasn't long before the rain and hail washed the shingling out of the walls, with water running into the house. The water was running deep around the house. We figured if the storm went right up Lodgepole, it would flood, so we got into a vehicle and drove as fast as we could to higher ground, but it didn't flood. The millet did come back up though, and due to a late frost, we were able to put up hay.

"Claude was born July 6, 1955. Clyde was born April 8, 1958. In January of 1960 he got sick one cold, snowy night, and we took him to the Jordan Hospital the next morning. He had viral pneumonia and passed away a few hours later.

"In March of 1960 we sold the place to Marcus Matovich and bought the W. G. Roberts place, which would run 150-200 head of cattle. Because the first couple of years were real dry, we had to sell part of the cattle. Then we were blessed with a bumper alfalfa seed crop and could breathe a little easier. I worked out in the field part of the time in place of a hired man, and my sisters babysat in the summer.

"Judy, our daughter, was born May 27, 1961, in Roundup; and Kevin, our youngest son, was born July 17, 1964.

"Entertainment on the river was lots of card games, especially pinochle, with neighbors Dick Gibsons, Knute Nordahls, Carl Petersens, Harry Nordahls, and others. We had no phones until 1960 and no television. Every New Year's Eve there was a get-together with supper, cards, and dancing to a record player till wee hours of the morning. Of course, kids were included. As I remember, Tom and Edna Wangseng spent every New Years but one with us.

"Jack and I were both on the school board for years, and also served as managers of the Ross Hall. Dances were held the last Saturday of the month, June through October. Lots of good times were had there. Almost always we had a bunch of weary dancers travel the extra three miles to our house for breakfast, with soudough hotcakes being the specialty. One morning we had twelve couples. It was not unusual for the breakfast guests to sleep for awhile before beginning the drive home over the treacherous river road.

"In the spring of 1974, Jack found out he had cancer of the blood, lymphomas. He was on medication for a year and a half and seemed to be doing well, but in July of 1975 he became ill. We went to Salt Lake VA Hospital, where Jack was being treated, but he passed away August 27, 1975.

"After Jack died, I moved to Winnett, a move which had already been planned before his death, as Judy was starting high school. I married Don Loeb in January 1976, and moved to Grassrange in June. Don worked at the sawmill. A lot of our weekends were spent taking the camper and the kids and going fishing or hunting. Don was killed in February 1977 in a snowmobile accident. Kevin and I moved back to Winnett in August of 1979." (Verda moved to Three Forks in 1989)

"Claude (1955), son of Verda and Jack Keith, received his education at the Ross School and Winnett High School, where he graduated in 1973.

"Claude married Kathy Coffey in August of 1977. Clyde, their son, was born on July 26, 1979, his great-grandfather Bert's birthday. Kasey, another son, seemed to be in a hurry and was born October 12, 1981, on the river, delivered by his dad and great-great aunt. Pearl Nordahl. Claude and Kathy were divorced, and Claude married Debbie Graham on December 31, 1984. A baby girl, Crystal, was born February 2, 1988.

"Judy (1961), daughter of Jack and Verda Keith, went to grade school at Ross and graduated from Grassrange High School in 1979. She married a classmate, Dan Elliott, in July of 1979, and they moved to the river ranch to work until 1984, when Dan went to work at Cat Creek oil field. They have two daughters, Jessie (1982) and Jenna (1986). They started working for Rex Bohn in April 1988.

"Kevin (1964), son of Jack and Verda Keith, went to Ross School and graduated from Winnett High School in 1982. He married his classmate, Cara Kipf, in June of that year. They lived on the ranch for a year, and then moved to Bozeman. Where Kevin still works and Cara goes to Montana State University. Amber, their daughter, was born September 6, 1982, and Chase, a son, was born on May 11, 1988. (See homestead picture, page 416.)

KIMBLE, Lyle and Lloyd Lyle and Lloyd Kimble and their families came to the area in 1946, when they leased
the Ed Healy place on the Musselshell River. They had previously been large equipment operators for Morrison-Knudson Co. They stayed on the Healy place until the expiration of their lease in 1951, at which time they purchased the John O'Dea Ranch.

Lloyd went back to work for Morrison-Knudson at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and another brother, Harold, came to the ranch. Harold and his family stayed at the Gilfeather Ranch and worked on the Kimble Ranch until 1953, when they moved to Illinois.

On the O'Dea place, they developed an elevated irrigation system that allowed them to irrigate pasture and hay land. They built up a good herd of cows and were among the first in the area to insist on performance tested bulls for their sires.

Donald McNeese, a nephew, stayed with the Kimbles while he attended high school in Winnett. His parents were working construction in South America at the time.

In 1964 Kimbles sold their holdings to Tom Heron.

KLEIMAN, John William

William Kleiman was born in Germany. He married Elizabeth Mary Schmidt in Kansas in 1890. In 1901 they made the overland trek from Kansas to Garnell, Montana, described by daughter Katherine.

"I was eight years old and we left Kansas in August of 1901. We were on the road for five weeks, but never traveled on Sunday, that being rest day, washday, and so on. It was September when we reached Montana near Garnell in Fergus County. My mother's brother, Uncle Frank, had been out here before and knew exactly where our family was headed — eight of us, — Mother, Dad, and six children (six months to ten years), an uncle, aunt, an orphan cousin, and grandparents (Mother's parents): also a man and his son who came along to see the country and work during the fall months.

"The vehicles used were three covered wagons and a spring wagon in which many rode and had two (possibly ten) kegs in back where we hauled water. There were two dogs and horses (no extras) — a light buggy team for the spring wagon and two work horses each for the wagons. The spring wagon was a surrey with the fringe on top. There were four steel braces in the corners. To me it was beautiful. The buggy whip had a tassel, no doubt. The covered wagon had brackets so the bed could be made wider. An ordinary bed spring fitted exactly so there was at least one good bed for the bunch. The men used bedrolls and slept on the ground along side the wagons, so as to watch where the horses drifted. A bell was put on one horse (a leader), and also they were all hobbled.

"We had a camp stove and pieces of flat metal that made into a sort of stove where we could place kettles. We used a lot of cured meat; also the men killed wild chickens, rabbits and sage hens, and once an antelope. It may have been out of season, but it tasted good. We bought supplies along the road. Water was the worst barrier. All water was boiled; in fact, all the children drank weak coffee. As for myself, I sneaked so much sugar I can't drink sweetened coffee since. A tarp was spread on the ground picnic style, and I imagine oil cloth in the middle. We used tin plates and cups, and, as we called them later, our black tableware.

"The women and girls all wore dresses and the men ordinary work clothes. In those days it was a disgrace for women to wear trousers; also dresses were long, not far above the floor or ground.

"While going through the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana, our horses were driven away from camp, possibly by Indians, and we spent most of a day overtaking them. We had no saddle horses, so that meant a long walk for several. All came out okay. While in the reservation, we kept our dogs tied at night. The story of Indians liking nice fat dogs to eat was in our minds. Our light team had lots of get up and go, but all grew weary enough to be quite gentle. I think we were partial to Fanny (the black). We had raised her and she was only three when we took her for the trip.

"The names of the entire group were: Mother Elizabeth Kleiman, Dad William Kleiman, Joe, myself (Katherine), Mary, Lena, Frances and Willie; Grandma and Grandpa Mary and Dominic Schmidt. Uncle Frank, Aunt Angela Cousin Frances Balding, friend Charlie Overfelt and his father. We were all quite fair complexioned, from towheads to dark brown and black, and grandparents were gray.

"We followed the general course of the railroad at the time, and forded many streams and rivers. We started from near Atwood, Kansas, one day's drive by team from Stratton, Nebraska.

"Luckily we all kept up our courage and strength as far as I can remember. Grandma had the usual headaches grandmas have and often had her food carried into the wagon. The only exciting incident I recall is when Uncle Frank went to cross a bridge over a small stream and the bridge gave away and the wagon landed in the water.
This was the supply wagon, and a lot of food had to be thrown out, even to the huge box of crackers we were in love with. Grandma was ill and to see her crawl out the rear opening in the canvas was funny. I think it cured the headache. We had a lot of fun and the change of habitation meant very little to us children.

In 1915 the Kleimans moved to the Musselshell River near Mosby, where they spent the rest of their lives. William died in 1935 and Elizabeth died in 1956. They had eleven children: Joe never married; Katherine married Dow Bowen; Mary died young; Lena married Volney Mike Alexander, then E. A. Dilly; Frances married Elmer Eaton; Willie died young; Frank never married and died in 1956; Anna married Joe Solf; John never married; Elizabeth died young; and Mary died young.

**KYLE, John** John and Hattie Kyle’s children were among those listed on the first school census of District #107 in 1913. They were Beryle (1896), LeRoy J. (1899), and Norma O. (1907).

**LANE, George** (Sec 8-13-30) George and Myrtle Lane bought the Sarah Smith homestead. They had a daughter, Dora (1908) listed in the Weede School census. She was listed in the census in 1915, 1916, and 1917. They sold to Anna Burgess.

**LAPHAM, Phlebus “Fleet”** (Sec 17-21-30) I. Fuller Laugeman, son of Arthur and Gladys Fuller Laugeman, was born in 1923 in Springfield, Illinois. My father died of scarlet fever when I was about two and a half years old.

"In June 1927 my mother, Gladys Fuller Laugeman, married Phlebus "Fleet" Lapham in St. Paul, Minnesota. They came out to Lewistown, Montana, then on to the Missouri River via Roy and Valentine. At Valentine we met the Roland Matthews family. Mrs. Matthews was Fleet’s sister, and so now I had a new aunt and uncle and four new cousins. Fleet had leased Roland’s place which was the first river bottom on the Missouri up from Fort Musselshell on the Petroleum County side of the river. I remember a stop at the Tony Weingart Ranch at Barrel Springs, then across Crooked Creek, and finally to the ranch over the rough prairie and badland trails that passed as roads in those days.

"My stepfather, Fleet, served in World War I in France, where he was a scout and a sniper. He returned to the Missouri River country and ranching. In the fall he trailed steers to Malta to the Great Northern Railroad, to be loaded out to St. Paul. When he got back to Malta, he would pick up the four-horse team and wagon and load a six-month’s supply of food and ranch supplies, then return to the ranch. It was a good primitive ranch life. Water came free from the Missouri via wooden barrels on a horse drawn stone boat. There might be six to twelve inches of mud in the bottom of the barrels if the river was high and muddy, but no one ever died from drinking it; it really was quite good water. My half brother ‘Pete’ was born in 1930 and now lives at Charlo in Flathead Basin.

"At that time every river bottom that was liveable, on both sides of the Missouri and the Musselshell Rivers, had a set of ranch buildings and a family living on it. Although the river bottoms were all settled, the area back from the river was isolated and primitive and about as far as you could get from a railroad in Montana. Above us, at the mouth of Soda Creek, was the ranch of Bill and John Town; across the Missouri River near the mouth of Jim Wells Creek was the UL Ranch. Below us was Fort Musselshell and the ferry to Phillips County. Below the fort was the mouth of the Musselshell and across the river was the Anderson Ranch. At that time, the Missouri and Musselshell had more than their share of colorful characters, both good and hard cases, and some of their past deeds and shenanigans were famous along the river.

"In the early 1920s there was a good horse market. Organized horse thieves stole horses in Wyoming and trailed them north to Canada through the UL Bend country. They often stole horses in the Canadian provinces and sold them in Wyoming. 'Double shooting the turn' you might say. Several times, by moonlight, Fleet saw bands of stolen horses being swum across the Missouri at the old Indian ford below the mouth of the Musselshell.

"The man, JC, at Fort Musselshell, who ran the ferry was a good friend of Fleet's. His front job was running the ferry, but his main endeavor was producing an excellent grade of 'Montana Moonshine,' which found a ready market in the towns of Central Montana and the Hi-line towns from Havre to Glasgow, plus lots of places in between.

"Right below the ferry crossing was a large willow island where JC had a 'still.' One day my mother and I walked down to the fort, which consisted of a couple of log cabins joined together. There was no one around, so as we waited my mother spied a dirty, greasy, dish towel. She gave it a good washing and hung it on the line to dry. A few minutes later JC came scrambling up over the river bank and breathlessly asked, 'What's up? Who's around?' Then we knew that hanging the dish towel was the signal for strangers on the bank.

"At another ranch, they set up a moonshine still under the blacksmith shop with the stovepipe from the still going out the chimney of the forge. They dug a tunnel from the blacksmith shop to the outhouse, where they had partitioned off the front of the hole under the outhouse, then could raise the floor of the outhouse to scramble out. They would start up the forge in the blacksmith shop, go to the outhouse and down through the tunnel, and proceed to cook up the mash. One story tells of a rather portly lady who went to the outhouse. While she was sitting there, the floor started to come up. She screamed and the floor boards sure dropped down again. She didn't stay long in the outhouse.

"One of JC's cohorts and purveyors of 'Montana Moonshine' was a florid-faced gent who went by the name 'Air Tight' Johnson. The sheriffs around knew him well and had picked him up more than once. Being unable to pin anything on him, or get anything out of him, they hung..."
the nickname on him. He and JC continued their questionable occupations until the repeal of prohibition put them out of business.

"Today one can sit on a high point and look out over the truly wild section of Montana. The rich bottom lands, the groves of cottonwoods and willows are gone forever along a hundred and thirty miles of river. Now you see the desolate shores of Fort Peck Lake, devoid of trees, reach to the gumbo hills. The beauty of the river bottoms is gone with man's quest for progress, electrical power and flood control. Was it really for the better? There are many people around the four counties who would answer resoundingly, 'No, it would have been better to have left it alone.'

"Fleet died in 1958, and Gladys died in 1961 of cancer. They are both buried in the Malta Cemetery. (Fuller Laugeman)

LARSON, G. (Sec 3-12-30) Larsons moved to Weede in 1924 and took over the operation of the post office there. (W. T. 12-1-24) "Emil Hansen and family were visiting with Mrs. Hansen's mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Larson, of the Weede community."

LONG X RANCH HISTORY (W. T. 7-14-60) "The old Long X Ranch, at one time one of the largest cattle outfits north of the Missouri River, has changed hands again. The new owner is Martin Matovich of Malta, who has taken possession from Clair Salsbery."

"The ranch originally was established in 1902 by the three Reynolds brothers of Texas. Forced by a drought out of Texas, the first trail herd of 6000 head of cattle was taken across the Missouri that year. For a number of years thereafter herds were pointed north to the Long X. In addition to as many as 10,000 cattle, about 1500 horses were run on the range."

"Headquarters for the cattle spread was a 160-acre homestead filed on by Norval Wallace, Long X foreman, and a 160-acre tract purchased from Lally Doney."

"The hard winter of 1906-07 was disastrous for the Long X. About 40 percent of the cattle were lost in that long and bitterly cold winter. Losses also were tallied when the cattle crossed the Missouri in the spring and drowned in the swollen stream."

"An average of ten men were employed at the ranch. Charlie Stuart, son of Granville Stuart, and a character known as Snakehead Gilbert cooked for the crew during a number of years when it was a womanless ranch."

"The Reynolds Cattle Co. closed out their holdings in northern Montana in 1915. Joe Reynolds remained to operate the ranch. Following Reynolds' death, his wife, Molly Reynolds, continued the ranching business. Ted Wilson, who had gone to work for Reynolds in 1929 bought the ranch in 1932. He added to the land holdings, and when he disposed of it in 1955, it consisted of 2400 acres of deeded land, leased acreage and 232 cattle."

"Salsbery, who sold the ranch to Matovich, has operated it for several years."

"Matovich was born in Petroleum County near the mouth of the Musselshell River and since 1949 has been associated with his brother, John, in the old Proudly Ranch which is joined on the east by the Long X."

Martin Matovich is a son of George and Mary Matovich of the Mecaha area.

LOOKE, Walter Mr. and Mrs. Walter Looke were some of the first settlers to settle on the lower Musselshell. They settled on the east side of the Musselshell about four miles above its confluence with the Missouri River, not far from the old Fort that was built during Liver-eatin' Johnson's day.

Looke came out of the Rosebud country in 1897. He established the Vincent Post Office in 1898. He stayed there a couple of winters and summers, then moved in 1900 to the Brunst country, then called the Seven Blackfoot country. The Vincent Post Office was closed on October 31, 1899.

LOVELESS, James (Sec 8-15-30) James and Lucinda Loveless were the parents of Jay (1900), Lorene (1903) and Virginia (1916). This information is taken from the school census of District #107 in the year of 1920. The first listing for the family was in the 1916 census.

According to the Winnett Times in 1926, Mrs. Loveless was bitten by a rattle snake while walking through a field of alfalfa. She was bitten on the leg, below the knee. Intelligent first aid and medical attention, provided by Dr. Alexander, assured recovery.

LUGO, John (Sec 19-16-30) (W. T. 11-20-25) "John Lugo, who had of late years resided in what is now Petroleum County, died in this city Saturday evening. Thus ended the career of a man who had figured conspicuously in one of the most sensational murder cases ever tried here and who led an eventful career in this section. Lugo was a Mexican, coming to Montana from California. In February 1908, the log home of a widow, Mrs. Schleuter, on the Musselshell River, burned down in the night and the widow and her children perished in the flames."

"Suspicion of foul play were aroused and John Lugo was largely responsible for directing them toward Ole Nordahl, a rancher residing a considerable distance from the Schleuter place. Nordahl was arrested, and at the trial Lugo was the most important witness against him. The evidence was wholly circumstantial and Nordahl was given a life sentence. After serving twelve years or so, he was paroled, went to another part of the state where at last accounts he was prospering."

"It was always the belief of Nordahl's attorney, Judge J. C. Huntoon, that there never was any murder in connection with this case, but that the tragedy resulted from a fire starting in the dead of night in intensely cold weather. At all of these very remote ranch houses, a considerable supply of coal oil was kept, as visits to the trading points were very infrequent. The Judge's theory was that the fire caught this kerosene, caused an explosion, and the in-
mates of the wooden structure perished.

"Lugo was intensely interested in securing a conviction and after Nordahl had been sent to the penitentiary, he took over Nordahl's place, which he had been holding on a squatter's right. Lugo had a good-looking American wife and one day she was found with her neck broken. Another wife of the Mexican passed away ahead of him.

"John was pursued in later years by misfortune. He was stung in the hand by the spine of a catfish and the wound not being attended to, blood poisoning developed and he lost part of his arm by amputation. He was arrested for cattle stealing, but managed to get out of that trouble and then had more difficulty through taking certain hides into Melstone. Later still, both his feet were frozen and he lost portions of them by amputation. He was over sixty years of age and had no relatives in Montana, but there are supposed to be some in California."

**LUTE, Marion** (Sec 8-12-30) Marion and Hattie Lute homesteaded near Willow Creek. 1920 is the last year they had children listed in the District #164 school census. The children were: Ernest (1907), Archie (1908), and Harvey (1911). They sold their land to Arthur Ovrum.

**MACHLER BROTHERS** Dominic "Toby" Machler, the son of Alois and Katie (Gerhig) Machler, was born in 1882 at Vorderthal, Switzerland. Toby came to the United States in 1905 and to Lewistown in 1911. He married Rosa C. Yaeger (1892) in 1911.

Toby settled near the Big Bend of the Missouri River and owned land in Sec 14, 15, 22, 23-21-29. He was instrumental in bringing his brothers — Joseph Siegfried (Fred) (1878-1944); Franz (Frank) (1883); and Michael (1885-1975) — over from Switzerland. They all took up land in the Chain Buttes area south of the Missouri River. The two Tresch brothers, Edward and Andrew, also came at the same time. (See also TRESCH)

Toby and Rose had six children — George (1914), Frank (1916), William John (1919), Rosa Katherine (1921), John David (1923) and Catherine Lorraine (1929). They moved to Beaver Creek about 1920, and later Toby and Cliff Belcher were co-owners of the Fergus County Sheep Ranch. (See also MACHLER — Blakeslee)

Fred and Mike did not marry. They made their home on the Missouri River ranch. Fred was killed in an automobile accident in 1944. Mike retired from ranching and moved to Roy, Montana, where he and John Mayberry owned and operated the Roy Bar for a number of years. Mike died in 1975.

**MARKS, Peter Dugal** (Sec 13-18-29) The following story was submitted by Inda Marks Mosby. "Peter Dugal Marks, known as 'Dugal,' came to homestead on the Musselshell River in 1910, about 38 miles north of where the Mosby Post Office is now. He homesteaded on the west side of the river.

'Dugal was born in Minnesota. He came to Belt, Montana, with his parents as a small child and lived his childhood years there. His mother died when he was about 14 years old, and later he and his dad came to the Musselshell River to homestead. Dugal's dad lived with him until his death in 1914 or 1915. We are told that George, Dugal's dad, was a humorous old character, who always owned trail hounds. George was buried down on the river place.

"Dugal married Mary McDermott on July 8, 1911, at Belt, where Mary had grown up. Her dad and mother were on their way to the United States from Ireland when she was born on July 15, 1893, in Vancouver, B. C., Canada. Her dad wanted to work in the coal mines somewhere and finally chose Belt.

"After Mary and Dugal were married, they returned to his homestead on the Musselshell. They lived in a one-room log house with a dirt roof for awhile, then moved it to higher ground on a knoll, adding two more rooms made out of logs. Some years later they put on a tin roof.

"In the early days our dad would make a trip with the team and wagon in the fall to Roy. He would bring back enough flour, sugar, coffee, tea, and such to last until the next fall. He said he cut a lot of hair in those days, especially Saturdays before a dance. He said he used to lend his good shoes out to some of the guys to wear to the dance: that is, if he wasn't taking in the dance. He got his mail at the Ross Post Office, south of his place about six or eight miles. Our dad's brother, Gary Kern Marks, lived in the neighborhood. He was in World War I, serving in the capacity as a cook and bugler on a Naval ship.

"We got our first radio in the early 1920s. We also saw our first airplane flying over our place. What a thrilling and amazing sight it was then, equally as exciting as seeing Neil Armstrong on T. V., landing on the moon in 1969.

"We got a gas light with a mantle, a great improvement over the kerosene light. This gas light flooded the room with light, humming as it fulfilled its duty. Another bright spot in our lives was our little, long-eared donkey, which
we enjoyed very much. Not to be forgotten are the ‘funny’ papers of the roaring 20s — Amos ‘n Andy, Blondie and Dagwood, Maggie and Jiggs, and Out Our Way. to name a few. It seemed the grownups enjoyed these comics every bit as much as the children.

“Our mother did a lot of sewing when I was young, with most of it being done in the evening and often into the late hours of the night.

“Liz was four years older than I, but we learned to cook at the same time. I thought I was eleven when I began cooking, but Ma said I was only nine; I do know my bread wasn’t very good until I got a little more height. We baked ten loaves of bread every day. Liz would bake ten loaves one day and I would do the honors the next day. In recipes, we had to do a lot of substituting. There were many mouths to feed, we had the Kastner kids living with us quite a bit. Their mother, Inda, who was our dad’s sister, died in 1925.

“Our dad lost money when the Roy bank went broke, as did a lot of people around who had money in that bank.

“I remember the 1930s as hot, dry and dusty, with the thistles rolling everywhere and the prairie dogs yipping all over the range. Cattle prices dropped so low they hardly paid their freight. Our dad depended on the cows and alfalfa seed for income. It was pretty rough going through those years for our family. When the Chion Butte Grazing District was organized, our dad became a member. He served on the board and was, at one time, its president. I remember him saying it was important for him to be a member, as his place, without cattle rights, wouldn’t be worth much.

“Ma always raised huge gardens through the years, doing most of the work herself. One summer during the 1930s, the migrating grasshoppers came upon our land. About 10 o’clock one morning they darkened the sky in the east like an eclipse over the sun. They landed, ate the garden and all other vegetation in just one short hour, and flew on, leaving a path of destruction behind.

“Although we worked hard, we also had a lot of fun in the 1930s. Our dad and mother just loved to talk. They were both good conversationalists; and when we had company, whether the company was six years old or 60, they took over. We didn’t seem to have a chance to get a word in edgewise.”

Dugal and Mary had twelve children. George (1912) married Irene Deniger in 1937. George ran the mail route from Mecaha to the Town Ranch for awhile. George and Irene have three children — David, Marilyn, and Pat — and now live at St. Ignatius, Montana. Elizabeth (1914) married Sam Kittel. Liz died in 1958. They have three children — Ronald, Richard and Walter. Peter (1915) served with the Marines in the South Pacific. He married Erna Vogel, who died in 1981. They have one son, Hans Scott, who works with his dad on the ranch. (See also MARKS — Brush Creek)

Inda (1918) married Everett Mosby. Inda ran the Mecaha Post Office from 1938 until it closed in 1941.

They have three children — Marvin, Arlene, and Donna. Everett and Inda live in Lewistown. P. Kern (1920) enlisted in the Marines during World War II. He married Evelyn Nordahl in 1946, and they have two children, Mary Louise and Edward. Dugal (1922) married Anna Rukavina in 1947. They live in Bridger and have no children. Edward (1924) served with the Army during World War II in the New Guinea area. He was killed in action in 1944. Robert (1926) served in the Korean War. He lives on the Marks Ranch near Mecaha. He was never married. Agnes (1927) married Edwin Burle in 1952. They have three children — Beverly, Connie and Stella. Agnes died in 1986.


Mary Marks died in 1960. Dugal continued to live on the ranch until around 1965. He spent his last three years living in Winnett. Dugal died in 1968. They are both buried at the Winnett Cemetery.

MASER, Michael (Sec 31-15-30) From a March 22, 1940 obituary, we learn that Mrs. Susie Barna was born in Hungary in 1868. She immigrated to the United States in 1895, and in 1900 married Michael Maser.

In 1902 they moved to Kendall, Montana, where he was engaged in mining and real estate. Later they moved to the Musselshell River and took up a homestead, where they remained until 1920, when they moved to Winnett.

In Winnett they opened a masseur parlor, and stayed until 1934, when they moved their business to Lewistown, Montana. They were also in the oil business during their stay in Winnett. They had no children.

Their place on the river was known for its good water well, which is still known as the Maser well. They sold the homestead to Bob Moss.
(W. T. 4-30-26) "Mr. and Mrs. Michael Maser returned from the coast where they spent the winter. They were quite surprised to find that during their absence, vandals had entered their home, through a basement window. They had eaten the fruit cake and preserves, sawed a hole through the kitchen door with a keyhole saw, and attempted to saw off the lock on a trunk in the basement. It is presumed that the forced entry and damage can be charged to some of the youngsters from the city."

Mrs. Susie Maser died at Lewistown in 1940. (See also MASER — Winnett)

MATOVICH, Dan  Dan Matovich, brother of George, came to the Musselshell River country in 1914. Later he moved to Canada where in Hanley, Saskatchewan, he married Matilda Sarich. Matilda, daughter of Dewey and Amanda Sarich, was born in Lika, Yugoslavia. They lived in Canada for a time, but Dan didn't care for Canada, so they moved back to the Musselshell River area. In 1935 they moved to Piper where they lived until they retired and moved to Lewistown, Montana.

Dan and Matilda had four children — two sons, Dewey and David of Grassrange, Montana; and two daughters, Mary Moseman of Christina, Montana, and Eva Birdwell of Lewistown, Montana. Dan died in 1980, and Matilda died in 1983. They are buried in Calvary Cemetery in Lewistown. (Marcus Matovich)

MATOVICH, George E. (Sec 13-18-29) George E. Matovich, son of Mr. and Mrs. Marko Matovich, was born at Lovinac, Croatia. Mary Tomlenovich (1884) was born at Lovinac. George and Mary were married in 1907.

George left Austria in 1908 and came to the Musselshell River country. He claimed 80 acres by squatter's rights, then later bought another 80 acres from a neighbor, thus beginning the history of the Matovich Ranch.

He went to Red Lodge and worked in the mines to make enough money to keep himself going and to be able to send for his wife, Mary. Finally he was able to send her money for her ticket, and she came over in 1911.

George and Mary had ten children, all born at Mecaha. Their children were — Marcus (1912), Anna (1913), Agnes (1914), John (1916), Phillip (1918), Martin (1919), David (1921), Paul (1922), Mary (1924) and George (1925).

In 1937 the original home and surrounding area was taken by the government for the construction of Fort Peck Dam. George and Mary, with the children still at home, moved to Columbus, Montana. Their oldest son, Marcus, and wife, Ruby, took over the remaining ranch and lived there for many years, adding more land as it became available.

George died in 1953, and Mary died in 1963. They are both buried at Columbus.

In 1956 Mary Matovich wrote "Unique Christmas Greeting," and sent it to each of her children for Christmas. The story was printed in the Lewistown News Argus (12-22-76):

"Since this will be my 72nd Christmas, I thought you children might like to know something about what took place in all those years.

"I was born on March 19, 1884, in Lika, Lovinac, Austria. My family was poor, and everyone had to work from daybreak until dark. We had no schools, but when you were old enough to work, you got your diploma from the school of hard knocks. Once you learned, you never forgot.

"Your dad and I were married on November 18, 1907. We were chosen for each other by our folks. God must have guided them in choosing your father. Your dad left for America February 17, 1908. I had $100.00, and he borrowed more from Uncle John, who was already in America.

"I stayed with his dad and stepmother for three and one-half years, then he sent me $100 for my ticket. At that time, he was working at Red Lodge. On June 12, 1922, Grandpa Matovich barbecued a lamb and invited all my friends and relatives to a farewell dinner for me. The next day, June 13, I left my family, my home, my friends, my all, for a strange country.

"Believe me, it wasn't easy. My ticket came to $40, and I had the rest of the money for further expenses. I went to Trieste. The ship I booked passage on was damaged, so I had to wait for the return trip of the ship, Martha Washington, and take it. I waited three weeks for that ship. The first rest of any kind that I ever had. The callouses on my hands were so thick you could cut them with a knife. While waiting there, the money that I was guarding so carefully was 'snatched,' not by a stranger (you could trust them), but by one of my own group. I saw who had it, so I got it back again.

"I was on the water 17 days and arrived in New York the last part of July. I started at once for Red Lodge, Montana. I stayed overnight at DeKalb, Illinois, with Papa's brother, Steven. Then I came straight to Red Lodge, getting there the 1st of August."
night we arrived at our home. The floor was dirt, so was the roof, but it was home — our home!

"The next morning I asked Papa where the water was, and he pointed to the Musselshell River. I didn’t know what a bog hole was, started right across the thing, and did I fall in! I had a terrible time getting out of that place, and I was a mess.

"Papa made that long trip five times on foot. Two times finding it, and then three times later, when he went back and forth to Red Lodge to spend winters working in the mine.

"On the 17th of July, 1912, our baby boy, Marcus, was born, just three months after we made that long trip on foot. We didn’t have a thing to eat in the house except some flour. Thank goodness, there were many prairie chickens and wild game. Whenever we killed a wild chicken, I always saved the feathers for pillows.

"That summer Papa went seven miles away, on foot, to help put up hay. He came home every week after midnight on Saturday and would leave Sunday right after noon. He worked there for two months for $2 a day. With $300 we had with us, we bought three mares and two colts. The year before, Papa bought five head of cattle. A wolf killed one, another broke its leg, so three head of cattle and five horses were all we had.

"On September 8, 1912, Papa left for Red Lodge again and stayed until April, around the 25th, when spring opened up. When he left for Red Lodge, Marcus was asleep in the house, and I went out and sat in the front of the house, praying as I always did. It was almost dark. A man came along, dragging a halter. I was scared; I figured if I ran, he would think I was crazy and if I stayed, he might hurt me. I just waited to see what he would say. He was a trapper, named Del Bunn. I couldn’t understand what he wanted, so the next day he came back with Joe Bush and wanted to know if I had seen his horse. I told him where I had seen him, and after that, he always sent me meat when he killed a deer.

"That winter Mr. Leedy made a raft and floated it full of groceries from Ft. Benton, down the Missouri River to Fort Musselshell. He gave Mrs. Rukavina and me a winter’s supply of food on trust. Why he trusted us, we will never know, but God love him, he did.

"Papa went back to Red Lodge that fall and borrowed the money to pay Mr. Leedy for the food. In those days, people were all in the same boat, and we had to trust one another, not like it is in these days, when the lawyers make the laws and we try to live and abide by them.

"We had a team of mares, so we could plow. Papa held the plow, and I held the lines. He used to bless me out, too. Especially when he told me to put the harness on Rosie, and I got the collar turned around.

"In the last part of March, in 1913, we had a terrible flood when the ice went out. The water and ice ran in and out of our house. I had fled to the hills, forgetting to shut the door. Old man Bush took care of the baby, and got six head of cattle out of the corral. With the rushing water,
ice, and floating logs. I thought I would never make it. I spent that night with Mrs. Rukavina. She was home alone with her three kids, as her husband, Mike, was also in Red Lodge.

"The next day the river went down and I went home. There was a big chunk of ice on my bed. It was a terrible sight! Mr. Fox had nine dead cows scattered from Uncle Martin's to Joe Bush's, where the river just came so fast and took them. That Musselshell River came with a lot of force when it went out. You kids remember that. There were 70 bridge planks washed up on the banks of the river. Where they came from, we'll never know.

"One good thing, we did get our sweet clover seed from that flood. We don't know where that came from either, but we were glad to have it. Little by little we got the things we needed. The first pieces of machinery we had were a walking plow and an old mowing machine we bought from Mr. Bean. I believe that mowing machine is still around some place.

"In 1917 Uncle Martin drowned in the Missouri River. He was crossing the ferry when the cable broke and a pulley hit him on the head. That was a terrible shock to us all. By 1919 we had six children — Marcus, Anna, Agnes, John, Phillip, and Martin, and were $9000 in debt. We owed that money to Carmichael and Uncle Phillip. That year we lost 60 head of cattle out of 200 from cold and starvation. The same year we bought the Paul Herman place, put $1500 down on it, and lost it. Some of you think you have it rough, what would you do if you had been in my shoes — couldn't speak English, read, or write?

"The next three years turned out pretty good and we paid off our debts. I was so sick from all the hard work I couldn't lift a 10-pound pail of potatoes, but the dear Lord gave me back my health without a doctor or anything. In 1921, when David was born, Grandpa Matovich came to make his home with us. He came to America before with Uncle Martin and thought it would be like it was in the old country — that boys would make the money and give it to him, but it didn't work that way.

"Uncle Martin kept his money, and in Grandpa's final attempt to get some of that money, he challenged Martin to a poker game. Uncle Martin cleaned him; he got disgusted and went back to Europe. Then he came back to America and stayed with us until 1929, when he went to Canada with Uncle Dan. Later he came back and lived with us from 1934 until 1936, when he died of a stroke.

"Paul was born in 1922, Mary in 1924, and George in 1925. I had ten children in 13 years without help of any kind. The dear Lord had his arms around me all the time, otherwise, I would never have made it.

"During the years I was raising my family. I never was over two miles away from home. You will never know how many pails of water I carried from that river. The day before I was to wash, I would carry 14 buckets of water. I always had heavy work to do and never missed putting up hay.

"Anna raised all the children, with Agnes helping her along. God love them, they were so young and had to work so hard. Remember the good bread they baked and how much of it you hungry kids could eat? Agnes did most of our sewing, as she still does mine today. In 1929 we bought our first automobile, a 'Chevy' truck. You all remember that? What a thrill!

"In 1931 we drilled our artesian well. Thinking we would build a house. Papa cut 30 trees a day. Then we sawed them in pieces and a four-horse team hauled them away. I pilled all the branches and burned them, just as I had 20 years before, when we were clearing land. We sawed the lumber and even had the cement, but when the Fort Peck Dam was to be built, we decided it wouldn't be the practical thing to do, so we took the cement back to Winnett. I guess the rocks are still in the very place we piled them.

"We got our first car in 1935. I had walked, ridden a boat, a train, a truck, and then finally, a car. And now, thanks to Clete Huff, I have even taken two trips on an airplane and enjoyed that, too.

"It was hard to lose your dad. He lived just like he died. Thank God, I had him as long as I did, and he was not permitted to suffer too much. Having you wonderful children has helped a lot. And now, on my 72nd Christmas, may God bless you one and all, and I pray that the dear Lord grants you a prosperous New Year and happy living —

Your Mother, Mary Matovich"

MATOVICH, Marcus (Sec 13-18-29) Marcus Matovich is the oldest son of George and Mary Matovich. He was born at the Matovich homestead in 1912, three months after his mother and dad made the long walk to the homestead. (See also MATOVICH, George)

Marcus and his brothers and sisters went to school at Fort Musselshell until that school closed, then attended other schools in the area. Marcus lived at the home place until after the Corps of Engineers bought the homestead for Fort Peck Lake in 1937.

Marcus married Ruby Barkdoll in 1936. Ruby was the daughter of Ruben and Emma Barkdoll, who lived on a homestead five or six miles north of Mosby. (See also BARKDOLL). They lived at the homestead until the spring of 1945, when the Fort Peck Lake filled up and the water was coming up onto the homestead. They bought the Dennis Adams place near Mecaaha and set up their headquarters there. They added homesteads (as they became available) to their ranch on both sides of the river. Some were purchased from the owners, and others were picked up on tax deeds. They built up a sizeable spread on the Musselshell during their fifty-plus years on the ranch.

Marcus and Ruby have one daughter, Floy (better known as Tiny), who was born in 1937. Ruby says, "When Tiny was six years old, we had no school. We put in eight years, first one school and then another. She was away from home all the time and very unhappy. When high school time came for her, I moved to Winnett with her for the next four years."

Marcus says, "We raised cattle, hay and alfalfa seed to keep the wolf from the door for sixty years. We lost cattle
to bad winters, wolves and other predators. We finally
got rid of the wolves and black bear, and now the govern-
ment is trying to bring the wolves back onto us. This can
only destroy everything we have worked for, for so long."

In about 1984 or 1985, Marcus and Ruby retired and
moved to Lewistown. They celebrated their 50th anniver-
sary in Lewistown in 1986. Bill Brindley, one of Marcus
and Ruby’s grandsons, is now managing the Matovich
Ranch on the Musselshell. (See also BRINDLEY, Bill)
(Marcus and Ruby Matovich)

Ruby and Marcus Matovich — 50th Wedding Anniversary

Tiny reminisces: "I was born in 1937 to Ruby and
Marcus Matovich, five miles north of Mosby. I was born at
Emma Barkdoll’s (my grandmother’s) place. When the
time came for me to arrive, Nell Petersen came to help.
Dave and Nell Petersen were close neighbors of my
grandmother, so Dave took his Model T and went to Jor-
dan after Dr. B. C. Farrand.

"The doctor had a newer car, but since he didn’t know
the way to Grandmother’s place, Dave left his car in Jor-
dan and rode with the doctor. The doctor drove much
faster than Dave. Poor Dave was really scared and told
everyone they flew on the ground. After the doctor had
finished his job and checked me to be sure I was all right,
they headed back to Jordan. Dave got his car and thought
his trip home was much better and not so fast. I was
named Floy Claudine, but my grandmother called me
‘Tiny’ because I was so small. Most people still know me
as Tiny.

"Until I was six years old, I spent my life on the
Musselshell River on the place my grandparents, the
George Matoviches, had homesteaded. We lived there
until the water in the Fort Peck Lake came up close to the
house. Most of the other Matoviches moved to Columbus
at this time. Not my dad! He wasn’t about to leave the
river, so we moved up river out of reach of the lake. He
bought the Adams place and we moved in. That place is
the headquarters of the Matovich land today.

"My mother was the hired hand and she did a lot of
riding and working outside. When she expected to be
gone for a long period of time, she would take me to a
close neighbor, Dagmar Keith, to stay. I always called her
Mama Keith.

"Our only way of getting around was horseback or a
team and two-wheeled cart. Our mail came by horse and
buggy or horseback. In the winter we stayed home for
months at a time.

"Life was pretty simple until I turned six. The folk had
to find a school for me and a place for me to stay, as there
were no schools running near home. The first year they
took me twenty miles up river to the Bowen School, and I
was to stay at Harry Nordahl’s. I didn’t last long because I
got so lonesome and homesick. The teacher thought it
would be best to let me go home and start when I was
seven.

"I went back to the same school the next year, and after
a lot of tears and struggle, I stuck out the whole term.
Mom would come every couple of months and stay over-
night with me before going home the next day. The school
had a teacherage for the teacher, so the school was warm when we got there. It was a mile and a half
from Nordahl’s to school. That winter was very cold with
lots of snow.

"The next few years there was a school a mile and a half
from home, but across the river. If the river was dry or
frozen, I could go right across and get to school. If the
river was high or the ice was going out, I either had to
miss school, or the folks had to take me across in a boat
or by horseback. That old river can be a monster at times,
and I missed a lot of school. Part of this log school
building is still standing at the fork of the 79 Trail.

"One year I went to the Benzien School about 32 miles
from home toward Sand Springs. They had school in the
spring and summer because so many kids had so far to
to walk. The winters were so cold and the snow so deep
they didn’t want their kids out in the winter. This school
finished just before Christmas.

"When that term ended, the Gibson kids and I were
moved to the Gibson place, where they had fixed up their
bunkhouse for school. It was a small log building with a
sod roof, and was really warm and cozy. The teacher and
I lived in this room, besides holding school there. When
summer came they built a bigger two-room building for
school, and then the teacher and I lived in one room and
school was held in the other room. I was still twenty miles
from home, so when winter set in, I never did get home
for weekends. For the longer vacations of three or more
days, Dad would come horseback, leading a horse for me
to ride home for a few days. I finally did finish the eighth
grade."
"In 1950 I was ready to start high school, so the folks bought a house in Winnett, and Mom and I moved to town. Sometimes Mom would have to go back and help on the ranch, and I stayed with Mrs. Belva Saylor or with the Kenny Thomases. I graduated in 1955." (Tiny Matovich Brindley) (See also BRINDLEY, Carl — Winnett)

MATOVICH, Martin In 1908 Martin Matovich, brother of George, came to work for Walter Fletcher in the saloon and store at Fort Musselshell. He transported supplies down the Missouri. In 1916 he married Rose Beaubien.

He was drowned at the Fort in 1917 when a cable on the ferry struck him on the head and knocked him into the river. His body was never recovered. Later a skull was found and identified as his.

His widow, Rose, married John Milesnick in 1918. (Marcus Matovich)

MATOVICH, Phillip (Sec 13-18-29) Phillip Matovich, son of George and Mary Matovich, was raised and went to school in the Mecaha area. He was a champion boxer at Winnett High School, where he graduated in 1937. In 1943 he married Bette Sult, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Sult, at Columbus, Montana.

They lived at his parents' original homestead until the early spring of 1944, when they bought the Nordquist place across the river from the present Marcus Matovich place. They stayed on this place until 1947, then moved to their present ranch on Calf Creek. They formed a partnership with H. R. Sult and Sons (Bette's family). They later bought the H. R. Sult shares and now own the entire ranch.

Phillip and Bette have three children — Harold (1944), Linda (Gershmel) (1945) and Carey (1952).

Harold was born with a love of music. By the time he was eight years old, he was finding a way to worm his way onto the bandstand to watch the musicians at dances — and to perform with them if given a chance! He learned to play practically every stringed instrument and he has provided thousands of hours of enjoyment to others playing at dances and all sorts of programs. Harold is a mail pilot and lives near Billings. He has two daughters — Charlotte and Joey.

When Carey was only 14 years old, she won third place in an essay contest sponsored by the Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers with an article on Fort Musselshell. The essay was published in the November 3, 1966, Lewistown Daily News. Carey graduated with a degree in journalism from the University of Montana. Several years later she returned to school and received a law degree from U of M. She lives near Billings, where she has a law practice.

Linda married Gary Gershmel. (See also GERSHMEI — Petrolia and Winnett)

MATTHEWS, Roland (Sec 17-21-30) Much of the following information was taken from an article in the Lewistown News Argus in 1982 and based in part on an oral interview by Laurie Mercier of the Montana Historical Society for the Montanans at Work Oral History project. Marcus Matovich also contributed to the information.

Roland Matthews was born in 1886 in a two-room cabin at Waverly, Kentucky, the state where "the corn is full of kernels and the colonels are full of corn." He was one of ten children.

Roland came to Montana in early 1907. He worked for awhile for Bill Spencer, a sheep rancher in the Larb Hills, about fifty miles south of Malta. Then he worked for the Long X Ranch south of Malta. This ranch ran cattle and horses. Roland recalled: "I'd bring the horses in for work. They called me the Kentucky Kid."

He says, "We would work on a cattle ranch through the spring and summer. Sometimes we'd get a winter job and sometimes we wouldn't. If we didn't get a job, a bunch of us would throw together, rent a cabin, buy oats for our horses and ride the grub line. The grub line was a name for the system of feeding the cowboys who traveled the line of ranches looking for work. We'd usually stay at each ranch for a day or two, and then move on our way."

Roland homesteaded in Garfield County in 1917. He later sold this homestead and bought a small ranch on the Missouri River near the mouth of the Musselshell.

He remembers riding in rodeos (or roundups as they were called then) in Miles City in 1917. He sold horses all

Roland and Beatrice Matthews, shortly after their marriage
summer in Miles City. During World War I, he sold horses to the cavalry. He says, "I bought 120 head of horses for sixty dollars each. I took them to Miles City and sold them for $135.00 as cavalry horses. The broke horses sold for $165.00." Roundup time in the early days was different from the roundup of today. Roundup usually began in April with the branding of the calves and lasted until the last herd was loaded for market.

The cattle were scattered all over the countryside, since there weren’t any fences to keep them in. Ten or twelve cowboys were hired for the roundup. Each was given eight to ten horses. They’d start in the early morning hours, round up all the cattle they found, and bring them back to the round-up wagon. In the afternoon, they’d brand the calves.

The last round-up wagon would pull into the ranch about the end of June. And the cowboys would start to get ready for the Fourth of July. They’d all brag about what they’d be going to do on the Fourth, but about all they did was get drunk.

The beef roundup would start in August. They would round up all the steers but didn’t ship anything under four years old. When the roundup was over, the cowboys who didn’t get a winter job would go riding the grubline.

In those days, very few cowboys carried a gun; or even when they did carry one, they seldom used it. Roland says, "Me, I never had much use for a gun. I did carry one. However, I used it more for pounding the snow out of my horse’s shoes than for shooting."

One of the highlights in the lives of the cowboys was the weekly dances held in the communities. Roland remembers traveling up to eighty miles (round trip) to go to dances. Roland says, "I danced in purt’near every schoolhouse in that county (Phillips). I didn’t own a Model T, so I usually just rode my horse."

Roland met Beatrice Lapham at one of the dances, and they were married in 1919. Beatrice, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Lapham, was born in 1898 at Battle Creek Michigan. She moved to Lewistown in 1917 and then homesteaded on the Missouri River.

During the 1920s, the Matthews raised cattle. Roland recalls, "The cattle business was all right, but some years prices went down. During the Panic, things got worse. Dust storms drove the homesteaders out. The cattle business is the best business in the world, ‘cause you always got something to sell, if you don’t lose the cattle. Farming, you might get a crop one year and nothing the next, but if you got cattle, you always got something."

Roland and Beatrice Matthews had four children — William, now of Victoria, Canada; Dave, Vern, and Betty (all of Lewistown).

The children all rode horseback to school until they got into high school. Then Beatrice and the kids moved into Lewistown for the school year. Roland would come in about once a month from the ranch. He says, "That’s the way you get along in married life."

Roland and family lived on the ranch from 1918 to 1934, when the government bought his land to build the Fort Peck Dam. Roland was not thrilled when the government approached him with the offer to buy the ranch. Roland explained, "To tell the truth, they just took my home, the only home I ever had in my life, the first one and the most prosperous, and they just took it away from me. I didn’t like it, but I couldn’t do anything about it."

The government paid him $9800.00 for his land. With that money, he bought a place near Sheridan, Montana. After Roland sold his ranch in 1936, he went to work as a mail carrier on the Roy to Valentine route. He made the mail runs every other day. He made a little extra money hauling passengers and freight. He remembers how he hauled a fella and his wife on their honeymoon one time.

When asked what Roland thought attracted men to living the life of a cowboy, he answered, "I don’t know, but I wouldn’t trade my experiences for all the money in the world. This is the most joyful life in the world. To be free . . . I thought at times that I had a tough time, but come to think about it . . . I had a lot of fun, even though I made little money. I wouldn’t trade those times for the world."

So at the age of 96, Roland Matthews was still going strong. When asked why, he answered, "Hell is full of old-time cowboys, and there’s no saddle horses in Heaven. So there’s nothing for me to do but just keep on livin’.""


MAXWELL, James James and Mary Maxwell bought land in the southeastern corner of Petroleum County in 1954, from Elmer, John and Leo Collier. They run sheep. Their home place is near Melstone, but they live in Petroleum County during lambing and shearing. They have four children — Olive, Lawrence, Mike and Tom.

Their place includes the following homesteads: Ed Lisle, Harold Campbell, Louis Gegner, Bessie Griffin, John Hensley, Robert Wombles, John Collier, Bernard Smith, Lily Hanson, Gilbert Semingson, L. Landsmark, George and Etta Mills, and Harry Barrick.

MAYS, R. G. and Homer (Sec 9-14-30) Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Mays and Mr. and Mrs. Homer Mays bought the James Parkinson place in 1944 and stocked the land with sheep. In the spring of 1945, they sold the sheep to J. E. Merrit of Ogden, Utah. They trailed the two bands to Winnett to be shipped to Utah. The first band numbered 2200, and the second band numbered 2100.

(W. T. 8-2-45) "Mr. and Mrs. Homer Mays and family left for Bozeman in 1945, but the R. G. Mays plan to restock their extensive range holdings this fall, if the moisture conditions improve. Shortage of range water is becoming acute in a number of sections of the country."

Mrs. Homer Mays applied to teach the Weede School and was hired to teach for the school year of 1945-46. Lack of grass and hay, however, forced them to sell their livestock in the fall of 1945. They then sold the land to G. A. Ostler and moved to Bozeman. Mrs. Mays continued
teaching, until a substitute could be found to finish the year for her. (See also MAYS — Winnett)

**McDANIEL, Robert** Robert McDaniel, son of Clarence and Frances McDaniel, attended Petroleum County elementary schools and Winnett High School. He married Audrey Wilkinson of the Musselshell River area. They had two sons — David and Allan, both of Melstone, Montana.

Robert and Audrey were later divorced and Robert married Arlene Wilkinson. They moved to Wolf Creek, Montana. (See also McDANIEL — Winnett)

**McGIBONEY, Horace and Lawrence** (Sec 28-14-30) and (Sec 33-14-29) The year 1913 saw three young bachelors come into the Weede area. They were Horace (Mack), Lawrence (Red), and James F. (Jim) McGiboney. These brothers had come from Missouri to Roundup, Montana, where they worked in the Klein coal mines for awhile.

Horace McGiboney filed on a homestead north of Roundup but relinquished it to go to the Musselshell River. In 1915 he married Florence Parkinson, daughter of Silas and Florence Parkinson, and they moved onto her homestead (Sec 28-14-30) in the Weede area. (See also PARKINSON) They had three children, two of whom died, leaving Marvel (1922). H. E. had many enterprises, in addition to stock raising, one of which was a Whistle log saw that he and James Parkinson purchased. They planned to harvest some of their timber and turn it into cash. In 1925 they purchased the Angelo Watterson holdings and planned to make that the home ranch. Marvel got her schooling in California, where she stayed with her mother’s sister. Florence died in 1933, and H. E. married Madge Westby in 1936. They continued to live on the ranch until 1945, when they sold to Parley Rowton and moved to California. Horace passed away in 1964 at the age of 76.

Lawrence McGiboney filed on Sec 33-14-29. However, after a few years he and his family moved to Roundup, where they operated a cafe. He later moved back to Springfield, Missouri.

**McGIBONEY, James F.** (Sec 25-14-29) James F. McGiboney filed on a homestead and started a ranch. In the 1920s he purchased the K. E. Park place. He married Leona Flint (who was working for Mrs. Sather) in 1924. They had four children — Lois (1925), James (1931), Donald (1934) and Hanley (1936). They raised huge gardens, selling potatoes, tomatoes, and corn to the stores and to people who came to pick. Jim earned extra money by working in the oil fields. After the children were raised, Jim turned the place over to the family, and he took off to enjoy life traveling, hunting, fishing, and visiting. He presently lives in Eagles Manor in Lewistown, Montana, and is 97 years old.

During World War I, James and his brother, Dave, served with the Army and were overseas. On September 28, 1918, Dave was hit by a shell and lost his leg. On September 19, 1918, James was severely injured in battle. The brothers had not seen each other for many years but were united in the hospital.

None of Jim’s children favored ranching as a way of life, so they wanted to sell and go their own ways. But because Leona wanted to spend her remaining days on the ranch, Hanley and his wife, Jane, ran the place until Leona’s death in 1984. They then put the place on the market and sold it to Steve Hale in 1987.

In 1964 Hanley located a snake den and dynamited it. He killed 35-40 rattlesnakes, one bullsnake, and what appeared to be a coral snake. The snake had orange, blue, and green stripes around the body and a small head. The coral snake is supposed to be common only in the South.

Lois married Adie Berg in 1954. They have two children, Jody (1956) and Darlene (1958). James had a ruptured appendix when he was 14 years old, and died of complications. Donald married Jana Nelson. They live at Great Falls, Montana, where he is a beer distributor. They have four children — Debbie, Doug, Shela, and Donny. Hanley married Jane Bevis, daughter of Nedra and John Bevis, in 1968. They have two sons, Glen Raymond (1971) and Monty Gene (1973). After selling the ranch, they purchased a home near Lewistown and opened a repair service that they call Auto Service

**McVEY, Arza R.** (Sec 26-12-30) Arza and Laura McVey were homesteaders in the Willow Creek area. They had two children listed in the school census of District #164. The children were Ralph (1908) and Doris (1911). The last time they were listed was in the 1920 census.

**MESERVE, Henry** Henry Meserve came to Montana from Canada in the late 1800s and eventually made his way to Illinois, where he married Jennie Ranney in 1899. Henry returned to Montana to establish a home. Jennie and two small children, Wilbur and Beulah, came from Quincy, Illinois, to Ft. Benton on a steamboat in 1903. They then took the stage to Windham, Montana. Henry had started a livery barn and freight outfit there. It included six wagons and sixteen two-horse hitchs. He freighted from Great Falls to Lewistown and from Billings to Lewistown. It was about this time that Henry and Jennie also established their original homestead at the very spot where Lewistown still gets its famous water supply. They later traded that homestead for property on the Missouri River.

Eventually leaving Windham and the freighting business, Henry, Jennie, and family moved to the river homestead, where Jennie and children spent most of their time. It was during these years that Myrtle, Ethel, Cosby, and Art were born. Henry freighted around Lewistown off and on, in order to supplement their income. The family later moved to Lewistown where Henry was working. Henry died in 1918.

After Henry passed away, Jennie and children moved back to a place near what is called the "Welter Divide."
Jennie made a living for her family by riding horseback to
Winnett and cooking for W. J. Winnett. The older children
stayed home and cared for the younger children. The
Meserve kids saw their first automobile around 1919-1920, when W. J. came out to
their home in his new Ford Model T to pick up Jennie and take her into Winnett.
This was an exciting event in their lives, one that was
talked about for many a day.

The Meserve kids received their schooling at the Welter
School until they moved to Winnett, where Jennie con-
tinued to cook for W. J. and the children attended school.

In later years, Jennie married Mark Kelley, and they ran
the Teigen Store until his death in 1940. (See KELLEY —
Teigen)

Henry and Jennie had six children. Wilbur “Webb,”
born in Illinois, worked around the Winnett area and mar-
rried Vesta Potter in 1930. They moved to Washington in
1958, where they raised several children. Webb died in

Beulah, born in Illinois, grew up around the Winnett
area, married Jack Keeyes, and moved to Oregon where
they raised a large family. Beulah died in the late 1940s.

Myrtie married Tom Richardson in the late 1920s and
they settled on part of the old Brady place with his
brother, Harv Richardson. They had a daughter.

Myrtie and Tom moved to Oregon to make their home.

Ethel married Harv Richardson and also settled on the
old Brady place before moving to Washington to make
their home. Ethel passed away in 1987.

Cosby was born and raised around the Winnett area.
He started first grade in Winnett. It seems the first day of
school Cosby proudly went to school. Well, instead of the
excitement of beginning something new and wonderful,
Cosby found himself in the butt of much teasing and howl-
ing. You see, Cosby had the most beautiful dark ringlets
covering his head. Although this didn’t make any dif-
fERENCE OUT in the country, when he became “citified,” he
was embarrassed and outraged to learn ringlets were not
the “in” thing in the Winnett schools. Needless to say,
Cosby’s mother placed much value in his ringlets.

After school was finally over that day, Cosby went
down to the Winnett Ranch and cajoled a hired man into
taking him downtown to the barber shop, where the
barber proceeded to cut away those ringlets, his
mother’s pride and joy. They got a candy box and ginger-
ly layed each ringlet into the box as it was forever
snipped away. When the barber finished to Cosby’s
satisfaction, he proudly carried the ringlets home to his
mother. He can still remember the shock and rage his
mother felt when he presented her with the candy box of
remembrance. Both he and the hired man were scarce
around the supper table that night and for several nights
thereafter!

Cosby finished school and worked as a teamster for the
W.P.A. In the 1930s, notably, helping to build the Valen-
tine Dam. He married Dorothy Jackson in 1933.

Dorothy was the daughter of Frank and Catherine
Jackson of Casino Creek, near Lewistown. Early recollec-
tions of her life include riding to school in one of the
earliest school buses. It was an old sheep-wagon looking
affair that was pulled by a team and had a wood stove in
it to keep the students warm during adverse weather.
Emblazoned across the side in large letters was “School
Bus.”

“Coty” and “Dot” began their life together on the
Musselshell River, living on the old Healy place. Cosby
worked the river bottoms, using 15 horses and a mule.
This was an unusual sight in those days, and people came
from around the neighborhood to watch the proceedings.
Later, Cosby and Dot moved to Lewistown, where he
worked at various jobs, including construction work on the
highway from Lewistown to Grassrange using draft
horses. It was in Lewistown, in 1935, that their only child,
Bill, was born.

Cosby continued to work on ranches for many years, in-
cluding Teigens’ Eagers’ near Winnett. While his
parents were working for the Eager Ranch, Bill started to
school. He rode a horse to and from the Eager place to
the Winnett School. Bill especially remembers the cold
winter of 1949-50 when it was 40° below zero for almost
two weeks straight. One evening as he was traveling
home, he froze his face, with both eyes turning black and
and his skin peeling.

In 1952 Cosby became foreman of the Petersen - Fair
Ranch near Jordan, where the Hooker Ranch is today.
Every fall he would ramrod a trail drive to Ingomar,
where 1000 head of steers would be shipped to market. It
was on one such drive that Cosby earned his “claim to
fame.” It seemed the owners of the ranch, who were
from Iowa, had some connections with the Farm Journal
editor. With much fanfare, the magazine crew arrived to
interview, take pictures, and write an article about the
cattle drive. Cosby was in the limelight throughout the en-
tire event, and when the story appeared in a subsequent
issue of Farm Journal, he began receiving fan mail from all
over the United States. In fact, it got so bad after much
teasing and humoring by his family and hands, that
whenever he got mail from some young, single female
who just knew Cosby was the man of her dreams, he no
longer opened the mail but instead tossed it into the
wood stove. Alas, his notoriety came to a smoky end.

Cosby, Dot, and Bill then moved to the Musselshell
River, buying the old Bowen place, where they lived until
retiring in 1970. They leased their land to Carl Petersen
and moved to Winnett, where they still reside (1989).
Cosby is 77 years old, and Dot will tell you she is 75 years
young.

Their presence on the river was greatly missed by all
their friends after their move to Winnett. It seemed Dot
was known for her outstanding culinary charms, as well as
her warm hospitality. Cosby could spin yarns by the hours
with acquaintances and was a favorite with all the young
people. Today, many old timers spin yarns about the way
Cosby could break just about any horse around. He was
adept at training rope horses as well. (For an account of son, Bill, see MERSERVE. Bill — Winnett)

Art, youngest son of Henry and Jennie, attended schools at Winnett and then worked around the area before enlisting in the Marines in World War II. He served in the South Pacific. Upon returning to Winnett after his discharge from the service, Art enjoyed rodeoing as a hobby.

In 1947 Art married Alta "Brownie" Kelly in Miles City. Art and Brownie had a daughter, Kathy. They ranched in the Big Timber and Winnett areas for many years before buying a ranch in the Melville area in 1981. They were living there at the time of Art’s death in 1987. Brownie still resides in Melville. (See also KELLY — Teigen)

MESSIER, Joseph Roberta Messier Donovan submitted the following family story. "Joseph Messier and his wife, Melina Benoit Messier, natives of Canada, moved with their children to the Missouri River Breaks in the fall of 1902. They traveled by team and wagon from their former home at New Year, in the Judith Mountains, where Joseph had been a superintendent of a gold mine.

Because winter was close at hand, they settled first in an abandoned cabin on the north side of the river, near the mouth of Fourchette Creek. The following spring they moved to a place known as Frenchman's Bottom, near the mouth of the Musselshell River in the UL Bend. The land had not yet been surveyed, and so, unable to file a homestead claim, they had only squatter’s rights.

They lived at several other locations along the river in the years that followed. During the winter of 1906-07, Mrs. Messier and the children lived in a dugout on land belonging to Mr. Leedy, so the children could attend the Leedy School. Mr. Leedy had built the school and hired a teacher for the benefit of his own children and some others in the area.

At that time, Mr. Messier was away on one of his frequent excursions to prospect for gold in distant places. When he was still gone the following fall, Mrs. Messier took her children and moved to Missoula, Montana. Mr. Messier returned to them there, and they once more moved to the river in the fall of 1908, where they lived for several more years.

The Messier children, all of whom are now deceased, include Agnes Messier Tripp (1890), twins, Ike and Joe (1891), Richard (Slim) (1896), Art (1900), Alma Messier Atwood (1903), Blanche Messier Foster (1905), and Georgiana Gels (1910). Agnes, Ike, Joe, Richard and Art were all born in South Dakota, where the family lived before coming to Montana. The others were born in the Missouri River country. There were other children who died in infancy.

When Messiers came back in the fall of 1908, they settled on the south side of the Missouri River on the old Kismet bottom near the mouth of the Musselshell, across from the UL Bend.

The Kismet store, post office, and ferry boat flooded and washed away that spring of 1908, also the 'Hauser Dam' washed out, causing more water with all the rain.

"Then the spring of 1912, the government surveyed these lands and opened them up for homesteading. Messier walked to Lewistown, 100 miles, as did the rest of the homesteaders to file his homestead entries. It was not unusual those days to walk such distances."

In about 1914 Messier sold to a Frenchman from Malta who had the property for about a year and then sold to Ed Anderson. Ed sold to the Corps of Engineers in 1937, and the land is now under the Fort Peck Reservoir.

MILES Nick, John (Sec 5-19-30) "Big John" Milesnick was born in 1889 in Brlog, Austria. At the age of 17, he and a friend, Louis Doctovich, came to Colorado to work in a mine. From there they went to Alaska, finally settling on the Musselshell River in 1913. They took up homesteads and formed a partnership, which lasted until about 1925, when they dissolved it.

In 1918 John married Rose Beaubien (Matovich), young widow of Martin Matovich. (See also MATOVICH) To this union six children were born — one son, John Stanley, and five daughters. The children attended grade school on the river, and for high school the family moved to Lewistown.

The court records of 1936 describe an interesting and complicated case of John Milesnick, plaintiff, vs. Evelyn and Henry Gauthier, defendants, involving ownership of about 20 acres of land west of the Musselshell River in Petroleum County. This land was alleged to have been created by a change in the channel of the Musselshell River and an accretion of alluvial soil brought down by the wash of the river.

The court found the plaintiff to be the owner of the lands created by the gradual change of channel. It added approximately 20 acres to the plaintiff’s holdings.

John sold to the Corps of Engineers in the late 1930s and moved his family to Belgrade, Montana.

The Milesnick’s son, John Stanley, was the subject of an article published in the New York Times during World War II. The battalion in which John served was under siege on the western front in Europe when their captain was killed. Lt. Milesnick gallantly lead his outnumbered company against a fierce tank and infantry attack.

The Times article stated: "At one critical moment, he (John) fought a personal duel with a Mark V-2 tank. He picked up a bazooka that had been dropped by a wounded man and fired five rounds at the tank while it sprayed around him with machine gun bullets but somehow failed to hit him."

MILLER, William William and Bertha Miller are listed as parents of Tillie (1900), Henry (1903), and Dorothy (1908), in the 1916 census of District #107. They were also listed in the census record of District #198 for 1921.

MOSBY, William Henry Mrs. George Mosby wrote the following article: (W. T. 7-16-64) "William Henry Mosby was born on Mosby Creek, Pettis County, near Sedalia, Missouri, January 18, 1855. The family lived
at Sedalia for many years.

"When a young man, he went to visit an uncle who resided at 'Mosby' Creek near Cottage Grove, Oregon. Here he met and married Miss Mary Ellen Dunn and they made their home at Cottage Grove for a few years. In 1891 he came east over the Rocky Mountains by team and wagon to Montana and settled on the Musselson River, near where Melstone is located. The family came later by train to join him. His brother-in-law, Bryon Dunn, and family came with them.

"A post office was established at the Mosby residence and was known as Baldwin. Mary Mosby served as postmaster. The family lived at Baldwin until 1902, when they moved farther down the Musselson and again a post office was opened at the residence, with the name 'Mosby' being chosen by the U. S. Post Office Dept., Washington, D. C." (They also established a saloon. Before the Postal Department named it Mosby, it was known as "Half Breed Crossing.")

"Bill Mosby was engaged in cattle and horse raising. Alfalfa was grown for winter stock feed. Cattle roundups would come through the country, going out east to graze the stock, also herds of sheep. While the cattle could swim across the river when the water was high from melting snow or heavy rains, a narrow bridge was built to make it possible for sheep to get over.

"Geologists and prospectors from the eastern part of the United States would come out that way and would need a saddle horse to ride out into the hills. Not knowing their way around or how to ride a horse, the family pony, Jimmy, was assigned to them, as he always knew his way back if the rider did not.

"The family lived at Mosby until Bill Mosby passed away in April 1913. Mrs. Mosby later made her home at Miles City and passed away in 1918."

Children of William Henry Mosby and Mary Ellen Dunn Mosby were: Millie (1884), Herbert E. (1886), Anna (1889), Wade (1890), Walter (1892), James (1895), Lena (1898), and Roy (1900).

Herb carried mail from Melstone to Mosby between the years 1904 and 1918. This started as a once-a-week route and ended with three trips a week. In 1917 there was a big ice jam on the Musselson River. Herb heard something near his bedroom door. He got up to investigate the noise and discovered an ice block coming in the door. Some mighty cold water was coming in, too! Dave Petersen was visiting them at the time. Dave and Herb got up on the stove and pried some boards off the roof; they helped Herb’s wife, Susan, and Mamie Hennessey, the teacher, to the roof. They stayed there all night, but luckily, the water never got very deep.

Herb built a hotel at Mosby in 1921. This lasted only two years before it burned to the ground from unknown causes. A son, William, married Faye Heath of Hardin in 1925.

Roy married Jewel Leona Mitchell in 1927. He delivered mail and sold suits and cars. One time Roy traded a suit of clothes for a load of cedar posts which he later sold. They lived in the Mosby area for several years before moving to Portland, Oregon, where he was a carpenter. He had one son, Richard G. Mosby, born in 1928 in Sacramento, California. He fought in Vietnam and Korea with the U. S. Army. He specializes in polka dancing. Before retirement Richard worked in a bank.

Walter married Margit Harriet Amanda Nordahl, daughter of Carl and Marie Nordahl. The couple ranched near Mosby until Walter's death in 1934. They had four sons — Lou, Everett, Kenneth (Babe), and George.

Lou was born in 1916 on the river. He lived in the Mosby area until he enlisted in the Army in 1942. He served in the cavalry in Burma, India, and China. Upon his discharge, he moved to Nevada, where he married and had a son, Jack. He returned to the river area in 1962, marrying Audrey Wilkinson McDaniel in 1967. They ranched on the river until Lou’s death in 1982.

Everett was born September 2, 1918, near Mosby, Montana. He worked for the CBC outfit when he was young. He married Inda Marks, daughter of P. D. Marks, in 1941. They had three children — Donna, Marvin, and Arlene. Donna married Billy Dutton; Marvin married Betty McDonald; and Arlene married Dick O’Connor. Everett and Inda lived in the Mosby area until 1974, when they moved to Lewistown.

Kenneth (Babe) married Lucille Hamilton, daughter of Clara Bump, in 1945. They had five children — Walter Ira (1946), Kenneth Guy (1947), Judy Faye (1948), Stephen Wayne (1950), and Michael Justin (1954). Kenneth and Lucille were divorced and Kenneth married Sharon Petek. They lived on the Healy place and worked for Bub Nunn. To this union three children were born — Cy, Micky, and George (Buck). Kenneth died in Roy in 1980.

George married Donna Dumond, daughter of Pearl Dumond, in 1948. They had a son, Harold Kent (1949). They divorced and George married Faye Bump, daughter of Ernest and Clara Bump. They have two children, Billy Bump and Cindy Lou. They lived in Petroleum County for many years working for the Bratten Ranch and other ranches. When George’s health started failing, they moved to Miles City.

MOSS, Robert L. (Sec 21-15-39) Robert L. Moss, son of D. C. and Georgia Ledford Moss of Clay County, North Carolina, resided in the Mosby area most of his life. He worked on cattle ranches for eight years before acquiring his own ranch in 1927.

Mr. Moss married Velma Smith of North Carolina in 1936. They had no children. Two items in the Winnett Times on March 12, 1959, reveal some of the difficulties of ranching on the river. "Only very few of the old timers say they ever saw the high water come as quickly and quietly down the Musselson River as it did this year. One thing that was heard frequently among the ranchers was how valuable a telephone would have been to warn them of the river condition."

"An ice jam, Monday, on the Musselson River at the
old Charles Place near Cat Creek endangered approximately 125 head of cattle, owned by Lyle Kimble and R. L. Moss, before the gorge was broken up with dynamite and the high water was relieved.

"The jam developed so rapidly with resultant high water that little could be done for the cattle which were trapped on an island formed by the present river channel and an old channel. Dynamite finally got the ice moving and the water level lowered rapidly.

"Lyle Kimble, Lee Shaw, and Bob Ostler used their trucks to haul the R. L. Moss cattle that were trapped by the high water from the Cat Creek side of the river to the end of the gravel road near the Hanlon Camp. The cattle were then trailed the rest of the way to the Moss Ranch."


MULHALL, Charles J. (Sec 10-14-30) Charles Mulhall's homestead was near Weede. His father was a dentist in Melstone, Montana, who sometimes helped Dr. Knight in Winnett. Charles, who was known as Jack, married Iva Park, daughter of K. E. Park in 1918. While they lived in this area, three children were born. The children were: Logan Joseph (1919), Lyle Cecil (1922) and Martha Elizabeth (1923).

They had a large truck garden, selling produce to the towns and camps. They also raised corn for their turkeys and for sale. In 1924 they shipped turkeys to Chicago, Winnett, Roundup, and Melstone.

When Petroleum County was formed, Iva helped her father, K. E. Park, transcribe the records from Fergus County.

In 1925 Charles brought in 1400 head of cattle, belonging to Mr. Hyndman, of Sheridan, Montana. He pastured them for the summer, then helped trail them to the Cheyenne Reservation. While looking after the cattle that winter, he got lost in a blizzard. After wandering around the hills for several hours, he had to let the horse bring him home.

He leased his place to Easton Rowton and went to Washington state looking for work. He found employment with the Fox Film Company, as an extra, in Western movies. In a letter to the Winnett Times in 1927, he said he was working on the picture Wolf Fangs, and stated that the day before he had roped a bear for the picture.

NAVE, Ed Ed Nave had a cattle ranch on the Musselshell River above the mouth of Calf Creek, he and his wife moved to Lewistown in 1923, when he was appointed deputy sheriff for Fergus County.

Ed was killed in 1941 when the car he was driving collided with an oil tanker. He and his wife had gone to Billings to pick up their daughter, Marjorie, who was driving home from Alaska. They were on their way back to Lewistown when the accident occurred. Both Mrs. Nave and Marjorie were hospitalized.

Ed was usually the officer sent to the river area if there was need for a law man.

NILES, Warren C. Warren Niles was born in 1870 at Belleville, Illinois. His mother died when he was a small boy. He came to Montana with his sister, Katherine, when she came west to Absarokee in 1883 to be married to Ed Adam. He lived with his sister and her family for several years; then he ran sheep near Melville, Montana.

While at Melville, Warren married Maude Dale from California. The couple moved to a ranch on Calf Creek in 1902. They had one daughter, Katherine, who married Art Winnett. Warren died in 1954 from cancer. He was 83.

This family raised some independent women, as proven by an article that appeared in the August 27, 1926, issue of the Winnett Times. "Lady cowpunchers are the order of the day in this part of Montana. Several hundred head of cattle, belonging to women ranchers, are being driven to the railroad for shipping. The herd is being chaperoned along their 40 mile trek entirely by women, with the exception of one man, who is serving as trail cook. Those in the party are Irene and Guy Bump. Eline Adam Warner, Katherine Adam, Mrs. Duff, and Katherine Niles."

Eline Adam Warner and Katherine Adam were daughters of Ed and Katherine Adam. Katherine (Kay) married William Stroup. (See also STRoup)

NORDAHL, Carl Carl Nordahl was born in Norway in 1866. He came from Norway to Montana in 1889 and settled in the Cascade area. There he met and married Marie Suzanne Sjoholt (1874), also from Norway, in 1894. Carl and Marie moved into the Musselshell Valley and settled on the east side of the river in 1900. They built a cabin and moved in with their children — Clara (1895), Knute (1896), Oscar (1898), and Margit (1899). A daughter, Dagmar, was born in 1900. She was the first white baby born that far downriver. Other children to come later were Anna (1901), Cora (1903), Harold (1905), Edward (1908), Guy (1911), Roy (1914), Clarence (1916), and Edna (1917).

Nordahls were active in getting school started, and in 1906 school was held on the Usher place, with Miss Belcher of Lavina as the teacher. When started, the school was in Dawson County; however, a shift in the channel of the river resulted in that land and several log structures being located in Petroleum County.

The Nordahls were hard-working, honest people, and it was a great concern to Carl that people might think that the infamous Ole Nordahl might be related to them. He told that although Ole came from Norway on the same boat, Ole’s name was not Nordahl. He took the name Nordahl, when registering as an immigrant.

Carl and Marie celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at the homestead in 1944. Hosts of friends and family came to honor them and spend the day. Their family bought them a new stove as a gift. They both passed away the next year.

Clara Nordahl died in 1912.

Knute Nordahl served in the Army in World War I. In
1923 he married Pearl Gibson. They made their home on the river until his death in 1976, and Pearl continued to live on the river with their son, Fred. They had five children — Fred, Evelyn, Clara, Kay and Rose Marie. Fred has stayed on the family place with the exception of time spent in the service during World War II. He served in the 41st Battalion and saw action in the European theater, where he earned three battle stars. As a hobby, Fred makes violins. One violin, he has on display, was made from any suitable wood he could get, including a piece from a car, a part of a sewing machine cabinet, and a piece of old mop board. It has an attractive appearance, neatly carved and sanded, well put together and varnished.

Oscar Nordahl married Mabel Wangsness in 1926. They had four children — Raymond, Alice, Freda, and Margit. As a young man, Oscar suffered a severe illness that left his health permanently impaired. They stayed on the river and made their living farming and ranching. Oscar died in 1956. Raymond never married. Alice married Kenneth Fogle. Freda married a man named Stinebaugh.

Margit Nordahl married Walter Mosby. Their children were Lou, Everett, Kenneth, and George.

Dagmar Nordahl married Bert Keith. They had one son, Jack. Anna Nordahl died as an infant. Cora Nordahl married Art Preston Busby. (See also BUSBY — Dovettal)

Harold Nordahl married Winona Kelly Meador, a school teacher from South Dakota. Winona, with her twin sons, Charles and Robert, came to the mouth of the Musselshell in 1927 to teach school. She and Harry were married in 1928. They had three girls — Clarice, Winona and Jessie. Charles Meador Nordahl was serving in the Air Force when taken prisoner by the Japanese. He lost his life aboard a Japanese prisoner-of-war ship that was torpedoed. Robert was at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and served eight years in the Army. He now makes his home in Michigan. Clarice married Grover Dondum and Paul Sims. Their children were Georgia, Harold and Shella. Winona married Ralph Davenport and Gerald Nunn. Jessie married John Dee Davenport. Ed Nordahl married Shirley May Rowton, and they lived in Choteau.

Guy Berg Nordahl married Neva Rowton, then May Ziesman. His home was at Helena. Roy Ernest Nordahl died at the age of 23 from injuries received when the horse he was riding stepped into a gopher hole. Roy was thrown to the ground, and the horse fell on top of him. He was taken to the hospital, where it was disclosed that he was suffering a severe concussion and a broken neck. He passed away the following day.

Clarence Kermit Nordahl passed away in 1929. Edna Nordahl was delivered by Dr. Lon Keith and only lived one hour.

There is a cemetery overlooking the Carl Nordahl homestead, called the Nordahl Cemetery. Most of this family are buried there.

NORDAHL, Ole

Ole Nordahl was born in 1873. He came to the United States in 1889. According to Carl Nordahl, Ole came on the same boat as Carl did. He was just behind Carl as they went through the immigration line at Ellis Island. When Carl came to the officials, they asked his name and he told them, “Carl Nordahl.” When Ole was asked the same question, he replied, “Ole Nordahl.” When Carl asked him why he took Nordahl when they were not related, Ole just shrugged.

Ole worked on farms in Minnesota and came to the Sun River County in Montana in 1889. He bought a small ranch and a bunch of cattle near St. Peter's Mission in Cascade County. In the spring of 1900 he got married and sold that place to come to the Musselshell River country. His wife died in 1902.

In the fall of 1907, after the death of Fred Schleuter, Ole called on Mrs. Schleuter and four children and suggested that she should move to his place and stay. She refused, so he asked for Martha, the 14-year-old daughter, and was again refused. Mrs. Schleuter spoke only German and didn’t understand much English; therefore, the daughter, Martha, translated for her. They told the neighbors that Ole came back later and made improper advances to both mother and daughter, then told them of the dire consequences if they told anyone what he had done. Mrs. Schleuter told her neighbors that she feared for her life and the lives of the family, if he came back.

In mid-January, neighbors spotted a fire at Schleuter’s and dashed over to see if they could help. None of the family were around, so the men thought she had taken the children and gone to a neighbor’s place for shelter. They knew the cabin had been built so that no one could be trapped in it by fire.

The next morning they went back to the cabin to assess the damage and to try to locate the family, as they hadn’t reached any of the neighboring places. They were horrified to see severely burned bodies in the wreckage. They notified the authorities in Fergus County, who came as soon as possible. It was determined there were five human bodies and one dog that had been through the fire. The evidence they found pointed to Ole Nordahl, who was arrested and charged with murder of the Schleuter family. He was found guilty and given a life sentence. (The above information was collected from articles about arrest, investigation, and trial of Ole Nordahl in the Fergus County Argus 1-24-08 through 6-26-08. For those interested in more details on this affair, check the Ole Nordahl file in the history section of the Winnett Public Library, where copies of the articles from the Fergus County Argus are filed.)

Nordahl served about 11 years of the lifetime sentence, returned to the river to straighten out his affairs, then left for an unknown destination. Ole Nordahl is no relation to the other Nordahls along the river.

(W. T. 6-23-39) "Word has been received here of the death in Burns, Oregon, on June 3, of Ole S. Nordahl, a former resident of what is now Petroleum County, who left Central Montana in about 1910, under a cloud of some kind of criminal conviction.
The information was received by officials in the form of a letter of inquiry regarding the whereabouts of a son said to have been adopted in this state. Nordahl is said to have left a small estate."

NORDQUIST, August W. (Sec 13-18-29) August "Gus" Nordquist, a Swede, came to the Lower Musselshell River in the early 1900s. He was in partnership with Andrew Hotledahl, a Norwegian. They ran horses and cattle.

Viola Nordquist (married in 1920 to August Nordquist) was born in Iowa in 1894. Before her marriage, she was a pioneer school teacher, first coming to Montana from Missouri in 1918.

Gus and Viola lived on their river ranch where the old 79 Trail crossed the Musselshell, directly across the river from the mouth of Lodgepole Creek.

After Nordquist and Hotledahl dissolved their partnership, Nordquist built a large, siding-covered log residence and later set up a country store. The first stock for the store was hauled by freight team from Roy, and later hauled by truck. Nordquist owned one of the first motor trucks brought into the neighborhood, which was noted for narrow, unimproved roads over steep hills and gumbo flats. Viola's nephew, Clarence McMain, helped run the ranch while Gus was busy with the store.

In 1929 Nordquists sold their store and moved to Winchester, Idaho. Their place is now part of the Marcus Matovich Ranch.

They had two children, Esther and Louise.

August died in about 1949, and Viola died in 1959.

NORMAN, Rex Rex Norman had a store in Weede which he sold to Mr. and Mrs. Carl Nelson in 1917. (See NELSON — Petrolia)

NOVAK, Stanley (Sec 31-21-28) Stanley and Josie Novak moved from their homestead to Hamilton, Montana. She died of cancer. Stanley remained at Hamilton. (Marie Zahn)

O'DEA, John (Sec 21-15-30) John O'Dea was born in Kearney, Nebraska, in 1870. He moved to Montana in 1892, where he worked on the Louie LaFelt Ranch. In 1896 he settled on the Musselshell River, about four miles north, downstream of the present location of Mosby. He watched the settlement of the river and was one of the respected "old timers." He was a good friend and neighbor, assisting them, not only with labor, but often with money. John enlarged his place with desert claims and land purchases until he had an extensive cattle ranch in Petroleum and Garfield counties. He told about hauling to Billings, with 16 and 20 horse hitches, in the early days.

In 1940 John built a new, four-room house to replace his old log cabin. When he got the house finished, according to the W. T. 8-9-40, some 200 friends decided to celebrate the event in a very unusual way. Having reached the venerable age of 70 years without succumbing to Cupid's bow. John was informed that every good man should marry at least once in a lifetime. Since John had no bride in mind, his friends produced one. Bill Stroup appeared properly costumed and ready to serve as the blushing bride, and D. Y. Wilson Jr. was resplendent as the deacon, ready to perform the ceremony. The wedding was followed with a dance that lasted until 4 a.m. Mr. O'Dea felt that the experience was an enriching event; however, he was well pleased that the marriage didn't last as long as the wedding dance.

In 1941 John was forced to move to Lewistown, where he could receive medical attention. During his stay there, he enjoyed the company of Lorne Boston, a former homestead neighbor. John died in February of 1942. He left his place to his only survivor, a sister, Frances McGuire.

OSTLER, G. Alvin (Sec 8-14-30) G. Alvin and Mary L. Ostler purchased the ranch holding of Homer Mays, the Parkinson-McDonald Ranch, in 1945. The land was located on the Musselshell River in Petroleum and Garfield Counties; included was the Hegna residence in Winnett, where the family made their home for the next six years (See also OSTLER — Winnett). The Mays land holdings totaled about 60 sections.

In August of 1946, thieves completely ransacked the Ostlers' ranch home sometime between 5 p.m. Monday and 10 a.m. Tuesday. Included in the loss were two iron bedsteads, springs and mattresses, cot, white enamel range, dinette set, davenport, several tables, end tables, coffee table, one antique and one wicker rocker, mirrors, 30 to 40 boxes of miscellaneous items which had not been unpacked, and a barrel of gas. This was formerly the Jim Parkinson home. No arrests were made.

In 1952, fire of unknown origin burned to the ground the same house. The log house was built in 1912 by Jim Parkinson. None of the Ostlers were there at the time, the house being used as a camp. Assumed burned were all their saddles, bridles, horse blankets, and other tack that had been stored there. The fire marshall investigated and concluded that the fire was caused by arson. No arrests were made.
PALMER, Henry (Sec 20-14-30) Henry and Leona Palmer homesteaded in 1914. They had two girls, Leona (1911) and Zola Fay (1914). The girls attended the Weede School from 1915 to 1918. Palmers sold out to James Reed.

Jim McGiboney tells, "One time a bunch of us young folks went over to Palmers to spend the evening. In the group was a young man whose parents were very strict. They lived within sight of the Palmer house. As the evening progressed, we got out the phonograph and started dancing. This young man had never danced before because his folks were against dancing. Well, he didn't dance much that night either. He was so worried about being caught that he spent most of his time looking out the window toward home."

(W. T. 1921) "Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Palmer and two daughters, Leona and Zola, returned Saturday from Kansas City, where they had been visiting some time. They are now living on their ranch near Weede, but expect to move to Winnett this winter, in order to take advantage of the school facilities."

PARK, Kuyphausen E. (Sec 20-13-30) K. E. Park (Why do you suppose they called him K. E.?), his wife, Martha Elizabeth, and two children set up camp on the Musselshell River in the year 1899. In 1902 they registered three children in District #26 school records. They were Ivy (1895), Custer (1899) and Cecil (1900). In later years they had two more children — Opal (1907) and Lee Norris (1915).

Lizzie Park was listed in the Polk Directory as Weede postmaster in 1904-05.

Park bought some railroad land to enlarge his holdings and raise cattle and sheep. In 1925 K. E. assisted in trailing 1600 head of cattle from the Mulhall place to the Cheyenne Indian Reservation. While they were on the reservation, they witnessed the killing of 200 Indian ponies by hide buyers who were paying the Indians $2 a hide and returning the carcass to the owner for his winter meat supply.

K. E. was elected the first county assessor for Petroleum County in 1925. He and his daughters, Opal and Ivy Mulhall, went to Lewistown, where they transcribed the records for the new county. Opal Park, acting deputy assessor, married Everett Blose in 1926 and moved to Billings, where he was employed as a mechanic.

Cecil Park married Veneva Morsbach, and they moved to the Park Ranch to operate it while K. E. was absent performing the duties of county assessor. Cecil and his wife stayed on the place for several years, trying various enterprises, such as turkeys, pigs, strawberries, etc. However, Cecil's health wasn't good, so they left in about 1927.

(W. T. 1-2-25) "Lee Norris Park was coasting on his new Christmas sled when he coasted under the heels of the stage horses. One of the horses kicked him in the head, rendering him unconscious. He was apparently not seriously hurt, and no mention was made of the condition of his parents."

The original Park homestead now belongs to the State, and the railroad land belongs to Alvin Clausen.

Parks moved to California in 1932 and often came back to visit.

PARKINSON, Edward J. Ed Parkinson made several trips into Montana during the 1890s, but came back with a trail herd in about 1900 and settled. He homesteaded in 1901 (as soon as he was 21) on the east side of the Musselshell River, in what is now Garfield County, but was then Dawson County. He punched cows for the NR and the N—, and broke horses for the RL, where he and his pal, George Gates, earned the reputation of being a real salty pair of hands. He also worked with another longtime river resident, George Christenot, whose family now resides on the hi-line. About 1901, he worked for the engineers who laid out the railroad through Pryor Gap, and in 1907 he worked on the Huntley Project.

He was selling real estate and settling homesteaders in 1909 when he met Edna Love. She had recently come to Melstone where her stepfather was station agent for the Milwaukee railroad, and her mother ran the railroad cafe. They were married in 1909 in Roundup. For a time, they continued to live in Melstone, where he worked hard to get Musselshell County carved out of Fergus County. When this was accomplished, he became Musselshell's first county surveyor. The family, consisting of Ed, Edna, and daughter Evelyn, then moved to Roundup. Here, Olive and Virginia were born.

About 1914 E. J. bought a place on the Musselshell River, just south of Mosby, on the west bank. (Interesting sidelight: In 1916 he and Edna, with some friends, traveled by car through Yellowstone Park. It was the first year that motorized vehicles were allowed within the park's boundaries.)

Ed bought top quality Hereford bulls to build up his herd, and in 1918 he shipped a trainload of grass-fed cattle, which topped the market in Chicago that fall. Also that fall, their fourth child, Eileen (Billie) was born in Melstone.

They ranted on the river until the terrible winter of 1919-20 wiped them out, along with most other ranchers in Montana. After watching their cattle die by the hundreds, they lost heart in ranching, and E. J. turned to his real love, engineering.

Their last child, Zoe, was born in early spring in a blizzard, at Edna's folks homestead south of Melstone. The weather was so cold and stormy that it was early May before Edna and Zoe could return to the ranch.

Ed was instrumental in getting Petroleum County established, and served as its first county surveyor, although he was not the first to be elected to that office. For a time he worked for Homestake Oil in Cat Creek, ran the Savoy Hotel in Winnett, and then worked for the State Highway Department in Great Falls.

Returning to Petroleum County in 1928, he again worked as county surveyor, then for the State Water Con-
servation Board. He built the first county road down the river to Fort Musselshell, where a two-day celebration was held to open it. At that time, there was a ferry across the Missouri at the mouth of the Musselshell.

In 1934 he ran the Civil Works Administration for Petroleum County, then built the diversion dam and canal for the Dead Man's Basin project. In 1935 he went to work for the Emergency Conservation Work (later the Soil Conservation Service) and was named camp superintendent and project manager for the Civil Conservation Corp camp at Winnett. He continued to work for the SCS until he retired in 1950.

He and his brother, Jim, opened a cafe in Ryegate, which Jim ran with the aid of his wife, Blanche. Ed was not an active partner.

The Parkinson family is well-represented in Winnett High School history, as four daughters — Olive and Virginia in 1931, and Eileen (Billie) and Zoe in 1937 — graced their graduating classes.

Virginia and Olive started high school in Great Falls in September 1927, transferring to Winnett in about February 1928. They lived in the dormitory their first year; then Olive worked for her board and room for Mrs. E. S. W. Abbott, and Virginia for K. E. Parks.

Billie started high school in September 1932, but became ill and left after Thanksgiving. The following fall, Zoe and Billie were freshman together, staying at the dorm, where Mrs. Parsons and Mrs. Gotzinger held sway.

After selling everything on the river, Ed and Edna Parkinson moved into Winnett. (See also PARKINSON — Winnett) (Eileen Parkinson Potter)

"We had a half brother, Eugene Perry, born in 1906 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He left the river in the 1930s to go to Texas, where he worked for the laboratory division of Shell Oil, a position he held until he died in 1965. He married twice, having a son, Eugene, by his first wife.

"Evelyn Louise was born in Melstone. At the age of 10, she contracted tubercular meningitis and died in 1921 in Roundup.

"Olive Fern was married in Great Falls on September 30, 1935, to Jerrell B. Scott. They lived in Cut Bank. Montana, until after World War II; then Jerry went to work for the U. S. Border Patrol, serving in El Centro, California; Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan; Fargo, North Dakota; and Ophel, Montana. Olive worked at secretarial and bookkeeping jobs, except in Fargo, where she was undersheriff. They had one daughter, Dianne. Jerry died in May 1976, and Olive three weeks later. They had moved back to Winnett just a year before their deaths.

"Virginia Lucille graduated from Winnett High in 1931, marrying Howard Cox a year later. They lived for a time in Cat Creek, then moved to Cut Bank. They had three children. They were later divorced, and Virginia married Rolland Leischner. They live in Seattle, Washington, where they are both retired. Rollie was a carpenter, and Virginia an accountant. Their daughter, Vaughn, is deceased. Their two sons, John and Ed, live in Washington.

"Zoe Inez graduated from Winnett High and attended Billings Polytechnic before serving in the Women's Army Corps for three years. Zoe married Raymond Graham in 1947 and has four children — Susan, Carrie, Jeff, and Bruce.

"I. (Eileen 'Billie'), was born September 5, 1918, in Melstone in the house provided for the station agent. I started school in Cat Creek, was in 2nd and 4th grades in Winnett, and finished the grades at the old Weede School on Flatwillow Creek. Graduating from high school in Winnett in 1937, I married Clarke Potter in 1943 at Cut Bank. Clarke and I lived for four years in Rapid City, South Dakota, where Clarke was farm store manager for Sears, and I raised kids. We have been in Cut Bank since 1950. Clarke has worked most of those years in the oil field. We have five children — Pharo Ann (1944), Claire Jeanne and Claudia Jane (1946), Dennis Bradley (1951) and Lester Andrew (1955)." (See PARKINSON — Winnett)

PARKINSON, Sillian (Sec 28-14-30) "Silas" Parkinson and his wife, Florence Chambers Parkinson, were married in Willow, Illinois, in 1875. They had eight children: Edward (1880), Delora Rola (1882). Deane (1884), Robert (1887), Florence (1889), James (1892), Blanche (Zoe) (1894) and Carol (1897). (As listed in 1902 school census of District #26)

The Sillian Parkinson family came to the Musselshell River in 1902 to join their eldest son, Ed, who was already settled there.

S. D. Parkinson was known up and down the Musselshell as 'Dad' Parkinson. Dad's place was about three or four miles south of the HT Ed's cattle ranch. Dad did a little desultory farming, and Florence worked as a practical nurse.

S. D. and Florence moved to California in the 1920s. They lived there until they passed away.

Delora Rola married George Gates. They ranched on the Musselshell, where she died in a few years, leaving two small children. George took the children and moved to the Flathead Valley.

Florence married Horace McGiboney. She homesteaded just west of her folks' places and taught school until forced to retire due to illness, from which she died in the early 1930s. Horace lived there for some years, and then moved to the Southwest, where he became a real estate agent. Marvel was their only child who survived past infancy. She is living in California.

Deane lived in Montana only a few years. He spent the rest of his life in Cheyenne, Wyoming, where he worked for the railroad until he retired. He and his wife, Ethel, had three boys and four girls. Deane died in the 1970s at the age of 89.

Robert spent most of his life in Montana, except for a brief sojourn in Mexico and seven years running a sugar plantation in Cuba. He ran a few sheep, but generally preferred to let someone else take the risks. Because of his expertise with the language, he usually tended camp
for sheepmen who had hired foreign-born herders. In later years, he had an apartment house for the elderly in Roundup. He finally retired to a home near Helena, where he died in 1977 at the age 91. He was married briefly to a young woman on the Musselshell, and they had a son who died at the age of 11. He has another son, Robert, who lives in Blythe, California.

Blanche married Claude Renshaw. They lived in Roundup, where he was mayor. They had two children, Downer and Roberta. In 1926 Claude and Blanche moved to Miami Beach, where he was city manager for 30 years, retiring in 1956. Roberta is deceased, and Downer is retired from Pan American, living in New York. Claude and Blanche both died in Florida a few years ago.

James left Montana with Deane, but went on to California, where he met and married his wife, Blanche Moody. They returned to the Musselshell in 1915 or 1916. He was just 21. They continued to live on the river, eventually living on the HT, Ed’s former ranch. In the 1940s they moved to Ryegate, where he operated a bar and cafe until he retired. He died in 1968. Blanche a few years later.

Carol, the baby of the family, lived with her big brother, Ed, and his wife for a time. She left the Musselshell with her folks when they moved to California. There she worked as a private secretary. She met and married Jack Bailey, of “Queen for a Day.” Although she had no children of their own, they raised Florence and H. E.’s daughter, Marvel. Carol died in the early 1970s in Hollywood. (Eileen Parkinson Potter)

PETERS, William T. William Peters married Edith E. Pound in 1897. They came to the Lower Musselshell area in 1918 and bought the relinquishment right from Ellie Ueck on her place about seven miles north of Mosby. They lived there until 1923, when Mr. Peters started working for Continental Oil Company at Cat Creek. In 1934 they moved to Rice, Washington, where they spent the rest of their lives.

Mr. and Mrs. Peters had eleven children — Robert (1899), Carson T. (1900), Mary Nada (Veglahn) (1902), Leslie (1905), Nannie Louise (Wiegert) (1907), Anna Dale (Rowton) (1908), Maude Elizabeth (Snow) (1910), Ivan E. (1912), William L. (1913), Paul Warren (1914) and Allen Rex (1919).

Anna Dale married Russel Rowton and is the only one of the children who stayed in this area (See also ROWTON)

Mr. Peters died in 1958, and Mrs. Peters died in 1959.

(Anna Dale Rowton)

PETERSEN, David David and Solomon Petersen arrived in Montana, Garfield County, in 1915. They took up homesteads northeast of Mosby about a mile apart. Solomon went to the service in World War 1, so David used both homesteads.

Dave was born in 1885, in Atlanta, Kansas. He received his education there, then as a young man moved to Galveston, Texas.

Dave was a small, thin man. It always amused him to tell how, when he moved onto the homestead, the neighbors said he was too little and skinny to last until spring. Then he would smile and say, “I outlasted all of them.” He built his home on a hillside. He had been caught in a tidal wave in Galveston, Texas, and he never wanted to get caught in water again!

Dave married Nora Nell Hetrick in 1917. She was born in Aliceville, Kansas, in 1898. The Hetrick family had come to the Mosby area in about 1900, settling in the Calf Creek area.

Dave and Nora had seven children — Carl Vernon (1919), Daniel Ernest (1921), William David (1923), Florence Leona (1925), Fern Elizabeth (1927), Elmer George (1929) and Elsie Marie (1931). The children were educated at Mosby and Winnett. All the children were trained in hard work and did their bit to help survive the disasters common to homesteaders.

Harvest and branding were special; all the neighbors turned out to help, and it turned into a social event. The family loved to dance and went to every dance they could. They were never too young or too old to go to a dance.

In 1965 Dave and Nora bought a home in Winnett and retired. Dave died in 1967. Nora lived in Winnett until 1980, when she entered the Yellowstone County Nursing Home where she died in 1983.

Daniel Ernest married Edna Manuel. He was a veteran of World War II. They had three sons — Daniel, Arthur and William. Dan was killed in a hunting accident.

William David married Frances King and moved to New York. They had seven children. He died of a brain tumor. Florence Leona married Bob Eike and they live in Melstone (See also EIKE — Cat Creek).

Fern Elizabeth married Carroll Hough and they had two sons, Glen and Neil. After Carroll’s death, she married Russell Kesterson. Elmer George married Maureen McCormick and lived at Helmlie, Montana. They had two children — Christine and Tom. Elmer died of cancer in 1981. Elsie Marie married Henry Bentley, who had two daughters, Toni Kay and Debra. Henry and Elsie had three children — Judy Marie, Mike and Ben. After Henry’s death, she married Wade Hunter and they had one daughter, Tina. Elsie is now living with her brother, Carl, on the river.

Carl Vernon married Alice Barker in 1940. Alice, daughter of Emil and Ina Barker, was born at Sand Springs in 1919. They worked on various ranches along the river before taking over the home place. Alice was the correspondent for the Winnett Times for many years. Her homey items were enjoyable to read and chuckle over, even though you might not know the people she was writing about.

Carl and Alice had four children — Larry, Donald, Vernon and Diane. Alice died of cancer in 1983. Carl still lives at the river place. Larry married Carol Aspholm. They live at the East Mosby Dome, where Larry works
part-time, and they run cattle on the homestead which he now owns. They have one child, Staci. Donald lives in Grassrange, Montana. Vernon lives in Heath, Montana. Diane married Larry Ahlgren and lives on the Pete Dobson place.

RAGLAND, Nellie Nellie Garrity was born in 1866 at Winchester, Illinois. Robert Smyly Ragland was born in 1883 at Coolidge, Kansas. Nellie and Robert were married and moved to Colorado. While in Colorado, they had three children — Alice Mae (1910), Ray Clinton (1913) and Doris Myrtle (1915).

Robert died in 1916 and is buried at Pueblo, Colorado. Nellie and her children came to Montana. In 1924 she married Chris Weingart at Lewistown. Alice Mae married Roy Hanson (See also HANSON) Doris Myrtle married William McNair.

Ray Ragland attended school with the Matovich boys. They were riding home from school one day. The Matovich boys had turned off to their place and Ray continued on. He went under a tree limb and was pulled off his horse, but his foot hung up in the stirrup. Mr. Mayberry, who was riding in the area, saw the accident. He caught the horse and freed the boy. He then hurried to the Nordquist place and got Mr. Nordquist and his truck to take Ray to Lewistown and the doctor by way of the 79 Trail. Ray died of head injuries a few days later.

RAUNDAL, Amund (Sec 24-17-29) Amund Raundal was born in Telemarken, Norway, in 1874. He came to Minnesota with his parents at the age of two. Later the family moved to the Red River Valley in North Dakota. Amund came to Straw, Montana, in 1895 and later homesteaded west of the Musselshell River.

In 1913 he married Willa Snorland in Lewistown. She was born in Glyndon, Minnesota, and came to Montana in 1912 and homesteaded near Roy. Amund and Willa had one son, Robert. The family moved to the Henry Algra place near Flatwillow in 1937. They retired in 1940 and moved into Lincoln Washington Hamilton's house in Winnett. Amund died in 1944, Willa in 1962.


Chuck and Pohney live on Lodgepole Creek and own the original Hill Ranch at Dripping Springs.

RIPLEY, J. S. (Sec 5-16-30) J. S. Ripley died in 1929. Lizzie Ripley was named administratrix, and his land was deeded to M. W. Ripley and his wife, Gladys. Lizzie was the mother of Alfred and Calvin Ripley, early day homesteaders near Calf Creek. Lizzie died in 1953.

(W.T. 11-21-24) "Cal Ripley is now trapping. The woods are full of coyotes, and also trappers. We wish the trappers all the luck in the world." (W. T. 12-15-24) "Mrs. Ripley spent the weekend with Mrs. Bowers." (W. T. 12-15-24) "J. W. Bowers has purchased a herd of cattle near Gage, and is enroute home with them. Alfred Ripley is helping him."

ROBERTS, Andrew Berry (Sec 24,25-18-29) Berry Roberts, son of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Roberts, was born in 1888 at Denton, Texas. He came to Montana in 1907, accompanying a trainload of cattle shipped over the Burlington Railroad to a station just west of the present town of Hardin, Montana.

Berry worked for the H Cross Ranch and the following wolf story was told about him. (Wolves were bad in those days and took their toll in livestock.)

"Josh McCuiston had about fifty head of saddle horses he wanted to take out of an H Cross pasture in the winter of 1911. So he sent Berry, with two big stag hounds, to do the job. When they got to Hay Stack Butte about five miles out the head of Curry Coulee, the dogs spotted a big gray wolf standing across the coulee and the dogs started across. Berry had to go about a quarter of a mile up to get across. When he got across . . . he found the old wolf giving the stags a pretty good fight.

"When Berry showed up, the wolf took off with the dogs after him. Berry said the dogs caught and threw the wolf thirteen times in deep, loose snow that was about a foot and a half deep.

"The dogs would catch the wolf and both would get on his head and neck. The wolf would get his wind, reach over with his hind feet and kick both of the dogs off and run with Berry after them. The last time they threw him. Berry had his jackknife open, stepped off his horse, and got the wolf by the hind foot and cut the wolf's belly open. If it hadn't been for Berry, the wolf would have surely won the battle.

"Berry got the horses out and rode back to camp. He told Josh the story about the dogs and wolf . . .

"It was a clear moonlit night. Josh couldn't wait to see where the wolf/dog fight had occurred, and thinking that
if the wind blew it would cover up the tracks. He saddled up and took off, dragging a little go-devil sled to haul the wolf back. He thought for sure it would blow or blow that night. It took him most of the night to get the job done, but he wanted to see the wolf and the tracks.”

Berry settled in the Lower Musselshell River area. In 1916 he married Alta Alva Fox. Alta, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Fox who homesteaded in the Lower Musselshell River area, was born in 1894 at Belt, Montana. Berry and Alta lived on the river until 1931 when the ranch was sold to Ward and Norman Taylor. The family moved to the Wyola and Hardin (Montana) area.

Berry and Alta had six children — Garnett, Berry J., Robert J., Lee, George and Alva. Berry died in February of 1956 and Alta died in March of 1956. They are buried in the Hardin Cemetery.

ROBERTS, W. G. “Zeke” (Sec 1.13-17-29) Zeke Roberts, son of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Roberts, was born in 1893 at Denton, Texas. He was educated at Denton. He came to Montana in 1911 and worked as a cowboy for several years before enlisting in the United States Army and serving in World War I.

Carrie M. Bagwell, daughter of W. C. and Gincy Bagwell, was born in Fox, Virginia. She was educated in Virginia. She moved to the Lower Musselshell in 1919 to teach school near Lodgepole Creek.

Carrie and Zeke were married in 1920 and lived on their ranch on the Musselshell until they retired and moved to Lewistown.

Zeke wrote the following: “I came to Montana from Denton County, Texas, by train and landed in Miles City, Montana, April 17, 1911, on Easter Sunday. To my surprise, about every other fellow I met on the street stopped me and asked when I came up from Texas. It puzzled me at the time how everyone could tell I was from Texas, but realized later that about half the cow punchers in Montana were from Texas and everyone could tell a green Texan kid like me as far as they could see him.

“I sold my saddle before leaving Texas so I could get me an ‘Al Furstnaw’ saddle. In about three days, I had me an outfit — saddle, bridle, blanket, spurs and short on money. The Montana Stockgrowers Association was meeting that week in Miles City, so I landed a job from J. P. ‘Josh’ McCuistton. He owned and ran the H Cross outfit on Squaw Creek. He told me he would give me $40 a month and all I had to do was eat, sleep and ride a pony.

“The middle of May the roundup wagon pulled out and on the first of July we were camped close to Jordan waiting for other roundup outfits to exchange cattle. Four cattle outfits, the CK, two 79, and the H Cross all celebrated the Fourth of July in Jordan. It was a lively time for all, but the 5th was a ‘headache’ day, and not a roundup wagon so much as moved camp. The 7th we camped at the mouth of Lone Tree Creek on the Big Dry. A big hail storm hit at 4 p.m., just at supper time.

“One of the worst things that happened was that a 79 remuda stampeded and piled up in a cut coulee, killing eleven head of horses for the 79 and two head for the H Cross. Killed thirteen horses in all. My cowboy days were spent with the H Cross, 79, and N Bar outfits. I lived in what is now Garfield County for forty-nine years — from April 1911 until April 1960. I now live in Lewistown. I still think Missouri River, Musselshell, and Squaw Creek breaks are the best place left on God’s Green Earth.”


ROBSON, George (Sec 36-14-29) George and Minnie Robson were homesteaders. They sold to Carl Nelson. The school census of District #107 for 1915 shows they had three children — Elmer (1911), Kenneth (1913) and Vera (1916).

James and Iva Robson were listed as the parents of one son, Fredrick (1916), in the 1917 school census for District #107, Weede.

ROCKETS, Joseph Joseph and Lena Rockets are shown as the parents of Luella (1911) and James (1914), in the school census for District #107 in 1921.

ROGERS, Jacob (Sec 13-21-27) Jacob and Myrtle R. Rogers homesteaded this land and sold it to Rachael Douglas on March 12, 1920. The Rogers moved to Kalispell, Montana.

ROWTON, Lemuel (Sec 18-14-30) Lemuel Rowton, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Rowton, was born in 1876 in Osceola, Missouri. In 1900 he married Mary Nancy Lilley at Yates Center, Kansas. They moved to the Musselshell River in 1907 and spent the rest of their lives in that area. They had ten children—Easton, Russel, Lawton, Parley, Mildred, Lucile, Shirley, Dawson, Neva and Warren.

Lemuel and Mary were instrumental in getting a school established at Mosby in 1907 and Lem served on the first school board. This new school district was in Dawson county and ran from the Missouri River to the Rosebud County line. All of Lemuel and Mary’s children attended this school and many of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren received their early education there.

The Rowtons ran sheep and cattle and the boys worked out as part-time help to add to the income. Lemuel and John Hill (his brother-in-law) built a refinery. Lemuel bought John out in 1921. This was the first refinery in the area and they processed Cat Creek crude. Lem later sold the refinery to Fred Dunlap.

In the early days their only transportation was team and wagon or saddlehorse. Because of distance involved in going for supplies, Mary seldom left the home place. There were chores and children that had to be taken care of. She was not the only homestead woman that lived this way; most of them did. It was not uncommon for these ladies to spend years within a five-mile radius of their homes. They learned to do without a great many things but the one thing they had in abundance was work. Mary died of heart failure in 1946. After her death, Lem lived
with their son, Parley, and his family until his demise in 1958.

Russel and Easton Rowton homesteaded places near their parents. After Mary’s death, Warren took over the home place. On Valentine’s Day in 1925, Russel and Easton went to Lewistown for their double wedding. Russel married Anna Dale Peters, daughter of William and Edith Peters of Mosby, and Easton married Mary Pribble, daughter of Sam and Mary Pribble of Weede. The community gave them a large party and dance when they returned to the area.

Easton and Mary Rowton had four children — Leone, Everett, Leta and Esther. They attended grade school at Mosby and high school at Jordan and Winnett. Easton followed ranching and supplemented his income by carrying mail from Mosby to Mecaha and from Mosby to Melstone. Mary taught school around the area, finally moving to the Hot Springs area where she taught until her retirement. She passed away in 1988. In the 1950s Easton sold his place on the river and moved to Jordan, where he lived until taken with a heart attack in 1962 at the age of 61.

Russel (1903) and Anna Dale (1908) had two children — Kent (1926) and Lucy (1927). Both children attended river schools and Winnett High School. Russel ranched on the Garfield side of the river and worked part time in the oil fields as a pumper. Russel had emphysema and his death in 1963 was attributed to this. Anna Dale moved to Lewistown, where she lived for several years before moving to California.

Kent married Hazel Coon (1946) while he was in the service. After his return to Mosby, he went to work at the Hanlon refinery. In February of 1955, there was an explosion and fire at the refinery and Kent was fatally burned. Kent and Hazel had four children — George, Sheila, Letha and Dennis Kent (who was born eight months after his father’s death). Dennis was killed in a car wreck at the age of seventeen. Lucy married John Calfee and they had three children — Steven Russell, Barry Hon, and Hanni Lou.

Dawson Rowton married Margaret Foster and they lived in Laurel, Montana, where Dawson worked in the refinery. They had three children — Larry, Mary Ellen and Doris.

Shirley married Ed Nordahl. They lived mostly at Choteau, Montana. He was known for his violin playing. He played for many dances. He worked for the county at Choteau. Shirley worked at a hospital. Their children were Lee, Lynn, Sharon and Betty. Ed died of cancer. Shirley lives at Choteau.

Lucile married Darrel Gibson. They lived at Helena. Their children were Wayne, Carolyn, Marilyn, Linda and Glen. Darrel died of cancer. Lucile lives at Helena.

Mildred married Glen Hiett and they lived at Arlington, Washington. Their children were Lou, Roy, Alene, Jean, Barbara and Winona. After Glen’s death, Mildred married John Black. Mildred is deceased.

Lawton married Agnes White. They lived in Idaho on a ranch for awhile. Later they moved to San Jose, California, where they still live. They had one child, Barbara.

Neva married Guy Nordahl. Their children were Gary, Roger, Donna, Gayle and Karen. They lived around Mosby for awhile and then moved to Billings. They later separated and both remarried. Guy is deceased. Neva lives in Port Townsend, Washington.

Warren married Marion McMain. They ranched the former Lemuel’s ranch and later sold out and moved to Lewistown and later to Zortman, Montana. Their children were Rosina, Dale, Ronald and a twin that died of acrib death. Marion died of cancer. Warren lives near Grassrange close to his son Ronald. (Alma Rowton)

**ROWTON, Parley** Parley was two years old when he came to Montana with his folks. He attended school near Mosby for eight years. In later years, he served in the Army two years.

In 1934 Parley married Alma Ellis from Bridger, Montana. She was teaching at the Weede School. She taught there about three years. They lived on the Angelo Watter-son place for several years. During the first summer, they lived in a sheep wagon and tent until they finished building a log house. They hauled water in barrels from a well several miles away. In the winter a lot of snow was melted for use. They had a small wood stove for heat.

Those were hard years, with drought and grasshoppers. Parley worked on a government project for two
dollars a day. Alma sold vegetables in Cat Creek and Winnett. One year she planted a thousand tomato plants, but an early frost got all of them. She was pregnant at that time also. They got their start in the cattle business by trading oat hay for a cow. Alma washed clothes on a washboard for ten years or more.

In about 1945 they bought Horace McGiboney's place. It was farther up the river. They moved a house from the Eager Ranch, near Winnett. In 1950 the house burned down from an overheated oil can on an oil stove. They built another log house at the same location. At first they had a cistern for the water. Later on water was piped from Lou Hill's well, thanks very much to him.

Parley and Alma had seven children — Verda (1936), Vernon (1938), Lloyd (1941), Janice (1944), Phyllis (1948), Rhoda (1949) and Gerald (1951). Gerald had an incurable disease and was sick all his life. He spent much time in the hospital before he passed away at the young age of five years.

In 1950 Alma and children moved to Winnett to send their children to high school. Verda was a freshman. On weekends they went to the ranch, except when it was very cold. They lived in Winnett for seventeen years. Alma worked at Clark's Store part time after Gerald's death.

Verda married Jack Keith. (See also KEITH, Jack)

Vernon married Donna Baucke and they continue to farm the home ranch, along with land purchased from Easton and Russel Rowton. They have three children — Tammie, Rodney and Patricia.

Lloyd attended Northern Montana College for two years, majoring in diesel technology. He married Marion Hinthor of Jordan and is in partnership with his brother, Vernon. They have three children — Bradley, Lorna and Darwin.

Janice married Mike Monaco after graduating from high school. He was a teacher at Winnett High School. From Winnett they moved to Noxon, Montana. Later they moved to Baker, Oregon, where they still reside. Janice works in a newspaper office. They have three children — Brenda, Colette, and Janine.

Phyllis attended college before marrying Jack Herman. They settled in Maple Valley, Washington. They have three children — Andrea, Alex and Andrew.

Rhoda graduated from Eastern Montana College. She married Robert Miller. They still reside in Billings. Their two children are Nicole and Ryan.

In about 1959, Parley discovered that he had Parkinson's disease. Even after several operations, his speech and walking didn't improve very much. He sold the ranch to Lloyd and Vernon in 1967. Parley spent about 11 years in private or public nursing homes before passing away in 1985.

At the age of 50, Alma went back to college in order to be qualified to teach again. She taught for twelve years before she retired when the Mosby School closed.

In 1979 there was a big ice jam at Rowtons. The ice cakes were huge. One large ice cake went through the chicken coop, and the corrals were nearly washed out. The water was a foot deep in the house and not only left a muddy mess, but also ruined the carpets. In addition, the refrigerator, washing machine, dryer, and furnace had to be repaired. Alma said that if it happened again, she'd move out.

Alma still lives on the ranch and plants a big garden in the summer. She keeps busy gardening, quilt-making, and crocheting. She lives in Winnett in the winter. (Alma Rowton)

RUKAVINA, Marko (Sec 1-19-29) Marko Rukavina, son of Ivano and Mara Rukavina, was born in 1876 at Pazarste, Yugoslavia. He immigrated to the United States and Montana in 1904. He went to work in the Red Lodge mines.

Marica Krpan, daughter of Martin and Ika Krpan, was born in 1880 at Lipe, Yugoslavia. She immigrated to the United States in 1906. Marko and Marica were married in 1906 at Trinidad, Colorado, where Marko was working at the time. They had known each other in the "Old Country." They left Trinidad in 1908 to return to Montana.

Later that year Marko and Louie Doctovich went by raft from Fort Benton down the Missouri and beached at Fort Musselshell. Marko established a homestead south of the Fort on the Musselshell River. Marko and Marica lived at the homestead for many years.

Marko continued to work in the mines at Red Lodge intermittently, while Marica stayed at the homestead to take care of it. They raised hay and cattle on the river until 1935, when the place was bought by the U.S. Government for inclusion in the Fort Peck Dam project.

Marko and Marica had ten children: Phyllis Josephine (1908) married Joseph E. Johnson and died in 1951 in Billings, Montana; Frank (1910) died accidentally in 1928 when he was thrown from a horse and kicked in the face; John Henry (1912) married Donna Cannon and died in 1967; Anton Edward (1914) served in the Army in World War II and died in 1964; Anna Lucille (1916) married Dugal Marks; Margaret Joan (1917) married Ivor Leo

Marko and Mary Rukavina — Golden Wedding Anniversary

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Charles Sandidge came to the river with his father and took a homestead on the west side. He carried mail for the Mecaha Post Office. After proving his homestead, he sold to W. D. Bowen and went to work for the railroad. Then he went to work for the Liquor Control Board in the 1930s and worked in Helena until his death in 1945.

SCHAEFFER, Robert A. Robert and Isabelle Schaeffer lived on the Fall Ranch with Isabelle's brothers for a number of years. For a full account of their lives, see SCHAEFFER — Cat Creek.

SCHLEUTER, Fred Fred and Bertha Schleuter were early settlers at the mouth of Flatwillow Creek, where Fred worked as a shepherd for the B. F. Lepper Ranch. The school census for District #26 in 1906 shows that Fred and Bertha Schleuter had four children — Martha (1894), Ida (1899), Elizabeth (1901) and Fred (1903).

The Schleuter family moved down the Musselshell River, probably in late 1906. They lived about 10 miles north of Mosby on the Bottoms place, close to the river. Mr. Schleuter worked mostly as a shepherd, but also worked some for Ole Nordahl repairing fence and doing other ranch chores.

Mr. Schleuter died suddenly in the fall of 1907, leaving Mrs. Schleuter and children alone. Mrs. Schleuter spoke only German and understood very little English. Most of the neighbors couldn't understand her unless Martha was there to translate for them. Mrs. Schleuter and her children perished in a fire, under suspicious circumstances. (See also NORDAHL, Ole and LUGO)

SHAW, Henry (Sec 15-14-30) In the 1899 school census for District #26, Henry and Winifred Boyle Shaw had three sons listed in the Weede area. Willie (1882) went to the Garnell area. Harry (1885) stayed on the place at Weede and had three sons — Floyd Leonard (1911), Forrest Winifred (1913) and George (1924). Harry died in 1935 and is buried at Roundup.

Clement (1886) is the Henry C. Shaw in the story that follows.

SHAW, Henry C. (Sec 15-14-30) and SHAW, Mary E. (Sec 5-12-30) Henry Clement "Clem" Shaw was born on January 15, 1886, in Sedalia, Missouri. He came to Montana before 1900 with his mother and some brothers. His mother, who was then Mrs. Boyle, settled on the "divide" east of Lewistown. Clem (or 'Bugger Face,' as he was sometimes called) worked as a cowboy for different outfits. Some of these outfits had headquarters out of Miles City.

Mary Emma Mead Orr was born on February 1, 1886, in Spearfish, South Dakota. She came to Montana with her mother and her stepfather at the age of three. Her stepfather was a freighter by the name of Frank Orr. About 1897 the family arrived in Lewistown. Mary Emma received some schooling there, probably she received an eighth grade education.

Clem had a homestead east of the Musselshell River, and he and his bride lived there in a sheep wagon for two years. Clem ran sheep in the area. His homestead is now a part of Joe Dutton's ranch. This place was referred to as Breed Springs.

When their oldest child became of school age, the family would move into Sumatra, Montana, for school. They continued to do this for many years.

After a time, Clem decided he did not care for life in what was termed the "sand hills," so he moved the family west to the Musselshell River. He had acquired the Billy Dunn homestead south of Mosby on the east side of the Musselshell River. There, he went into the hog-raising business.

During this time the children attended the Mosby School. Pansie, the oldest girl, went to high school in Winnett for at least one year.

The hog business turned out to be a disaster. John O'Dea, who was Clem's financier, acquired the Billy Dunn place as collateral for a debt, so the Shaw family moved across the Musselshell River into Petroleum County to the Gates place. At this time, the children attended school at the Weede School. This probably took place about 1927. The older children went to high school at Melstone.

Mary Emma was a great reader. She had a hunger for books and magazines. She said that she hated to throw any reading material away because she would re-read it whenever she had no new reading available. She owned numerous books. Her children acquired the love of books and reading from her.

In 1930 Clem and Mary Emma separated. Clem went off to hither and yon. Mary Emma and her children continued to live at the Gates place. Pansie managed to get a college education in Missoula, Montana, by working for her board and room. The older boys worked wherever they could to help support the family. Times were very hard, and doubly so because of the Great Depression. One winter the family had little more than coffee and potatoes.


Craig (1913) was a veteran in World War II, serving with the Air Force photographic laboratory. He married Laura Ferch in Texas, but they were later divorced. They had one son, Craig Jr. Craig died in 1957.

Glen (1915) was in World War II in the South Pacific. He was killed in 1942, and the Glenn Shaw Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars was named in his honor.

Bud (1917) married Anna Noll of the Flatwillow area in 1957 (See also NOLL, Pete; and ROSTAD, Bernt — Flatwillow) They live at the old homestead. They have two sons — Orval, who married Jolene Reynolds and has two children, Ryan and Grant; and Brett, who is as yet unmarried. Both sons are working at home.

Roy died as a baby.
Raymond L. (1919) was injured in the Marines in World War II. He married Yvonne Thomason, and they live on a ranch about ten miles west of Sand Springs, Montana. Erwin L. (1922) served in World War II with an ambulance unit in the European Theater. After the war, he worked in an earth moving business with his brothers, Ray and Lee. In later years he had a house in Winnett. He died in 1983.

Lee (1924) married Gunda Sikveland of the Dovetail area. (See also SHAW, Lee)

Daisy (1927) married Bruce Dutton. (See also DUTTON)

Jess (1929) never married and still lives on the place on Johnson Flats, west of the river and about three miles south of Mosby.

In 1946 Clem married Rose Brown of Miles City. They lived on a ranch in Garfield County on Calf Creek. Clem died in 1950. He is buried on the ranch, which is now owned by Ray and Yvonne Shaw. Rose died in 1981 and is buried in Rosebud Cemetery.

Mary Emma, Craig and Jess continued to live at the Gates place until about 1954. At this time they moved to a new house on the Johnson Flats, closer to Mosby.

Mary Shaw died in 1968 and is buried in Sunset Memorial Gardens near Lewistown. Mary Emma was a true pioneer woman. She had lived when the country was sparsely settled. She had her children without benefit of hospitals and raised them without any modern conveniences. She suffered the loss of some of her children, both as adults and as a baby. She knew the pain of loneliness and of being poor. Through all of these hardships, she endured and lived to be old. She found her happiness in the love of her children and in her books.

**SHAW, Lee** Lee Shaw, seventh son of Henry C. and Mary E. Shaw, was born in 1924 at Mosby. He went to school at the Weede School and at Melstone. In 1941 he and his brother, Ray, enlisted in the Marine Corps. Lee lied about his age to get in, as he was only sixteen at the time. His mother said she did not try to recall him, because she thought he would be safer going with his brother.

Lee and Ray were stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. They saw much combat in the Pacific Theater. Lee was wounded at the battle of Bougainville. He spent a year in the Naval Hospital at Seattle and was then given a medical discharge.

After World War II, Lee, Ray, and Erwin went into the earth moving business. They disbanded this operation in 1949.

In 1949 Lee married Gunda Sikveland of the Dovetail area. They made their home on a small place which had been occupied by Parley Rowton. Lee worked as a trucker for Kenny Bratten and also had a small ranching operation.

In 1952 Gunda began teaching at the Mosby School and later taught at the Cat Creek School and at the Weede School.

The ranching operation was unsuccessful. In 1964 Gunda and the children moved to Winnett, where Gunda taught continuously for the next sixteen years. Lee and Gunda were divorced in 1966.

They had three children. Gail (1958) graduated from Winnett High School and the University of Montana. She married Larry Willkerson of Miles City, and now works at the Miles City Public Library. Sarah (1960) graduated from Winnett High and from Montana State University. She married Bill Brindley, and they live on the Matovich Land and Livestock Ranch near Mecaha. (See also BRINDLEY) Laye (1962) graduated from Winnett High, then graduated from University of Montana. He married Lori Aubin in Calgary, Alberta, and they now live in California.

Lee Shaw died in 1974 and is buried in the Sunset Memorial Gardens near Lewistown.

Gunda married Dave Lewis and they live on a ranch eight miles north of Grassrange.

**SHERMAN, Sam** The Shermans were ranchers on the east side of the Musselshell River in the 1920s. They raised horses and gathered wild horses.

The Winnett Times reports, "Thirty-five wild bucking horses, including the original 'strawberry roan,' have been gathered by Sam Sherman, to supply plenty of horse flesh for the big 4th of July celebration to be held in the city. Mr. Sherman has completed the roundup of horses, and is busy making arrangements to build the corral and chutes north of town."

Sam Sherman claimed to be the only man to ever find gold on Crooked Creek. He was riding and found a calf in a washout. He climbed down into the washout and got
the calf out. At a nearby ranch, he stopped to have a visit and a meal. While scraping the mud from his boots, he noticed something yellow, like a grain of corn, in the mud. Picking it out, he discovered it was a gold tooth.

The Shermans moved to Susanville, California, in the late 1930s, then moved back to Grassrange in 1950.

**SHRANGER, Sherman** (Sec 8-13-30) Sherman and Hattie Shranger had the following children listed in the census of School District #107: Georgia (1907), Reata (1908), William (1911). Hattie (1915), and Gladys (1917). These children were in the first census of this district. The last listing for them was in 1917-18.

Transfer of land records indicate that they sold to Jesse Burlington.

**SIMS, Henry H.** Henry Sims, son of Thomas and Martha Sims, was born in 1887 at Galt, Missouri. He came to Montana from Missouri in 1911 and homesteaded in the Ross area.

Alice Atwood, daughter of Wesley and Catherine Atwood, was born in 1897 at Cross Timbers, Missouri. She came to Montana with her parents, and they homesteaded in the Mecaha area.

Henry and Alice were married in 1915. They made their home in the Ross community, until they moved from the river to the Ashley area, where they lived until 1933. They then moved into Winnett and lived there until 1943.

They had 12 children: Wesley (1917), Dorothy (1918), Howard (1919), Glenn "Jiggs" (1921), Claude (1922), Dean (1925), Irene (1928), Cecil (1930), Ray (1934), Robert (1936), Kenneth (1938), and Katherine (1940) (See also SIMS - Cat Creek and Winnett).

In 1943 Henry and Alice Sims moved to Lewistown, Montana, where he engaged in trucking and timber work. Then he was employed by the railroad at Lewistown until he retired in 1956.

Alice Sims died in 1966, and Henry died in 1967. (Glen Sims)

**SMITH, Bernard** (Sec 14-12-30) Bernard J. and Elsie B. Smith were homesteaders in the Willow Creek area and in School District #164. They are listed as the parents of three children in the census report for 1913. The children were: Carl H. (1906), Addis (1909) and Dora (1911). The Smiths did most of their trading in Melstone and Musselshell.

They raised chickens and turkeys for market, so it was necessary for them to trap coyotes. The coyotes must have been fairly thick, because the paper tells us that by the 1st of December 1924, Bernard and Carl had caught twenty-three. Carl helped his father with the trap lines. He also drove the stage for J. W. Bowers.

**SMITH, George** George Smith came into the Musselshell River area during the early homestead days. He settled on a place just across the Musselshell River, east of the John Winter place.

Mr. Smith is remembered as being the first to grow alfalfa on the Lower Musselshell. Soon the neighbors were buying seed from him to start alfalfa meadows.

George did no socializing and did not encourage close friendships: in fact, he was somewhat of a loner. Memories of the people of the area seem to indicate that he was a real "character."

John Winter told of one time, when he was riding at the top of the Blood Creek hill, he met a team and wagon coming down the road with Mr. Smith sound asleep in the back of the wagon. John tied his horse to the back of the wagon, and drove the team home to Smith's. Once there he tied the team to the fence, took his horse, and went home. Smith never did mention getting home.

Smith ran out of coffee one spring. Every morning he would appear at Mrs. Gilfeather's and borrow two tablespoons of coffee. He would never take more than two tablespoons, but he made the trip every morning.

One time he hired Bert Kastner to work for him. Smith told Bert what to do, and said he would be back when he got the table cleared. About four o'clock, Bert went to the house to get a drink of water. He found Smith asleep in the cellar, so Bert saddled up and went home.

One spring the Musselshell River came up to flood stage and stayed up for several days. When the river began to calm down, John Winter went to Gilfeather to get the mail. Mrs. Gilfeather asked John if he had seen Smith since the flood. Since he had not, he went across the river to check. When he got to Smith's, he found that George Smith had left with all of his possessions. No one ever heard where he had gone. (Hazel Gibson)

**SMITH, Paul** Paul and Lillie B. (Songer) Smith came from Wyoming to the Musselshell River area in August of 1912. They homesteaded and filed the first water rights on Lower Musselshell and Lodgepole Creek. Lillie B.'s two sons, Alvin and Clarence Songer, also came with them. In the fall of 1919, Millers brought in about 1400 head of steers. It was a severe winter; and in the spring when Clarence and Alvin Songer, Lee Maury, and Alvin Mock gathered, they found only 700 head. The rest had perished.

E. W. Carmichael bought the Miller cattle, and he and Smith ran them until 1926. 1926 was another bad year, so Carmichael got some cattle buyers to come up from Wyoming and bid on the cattle. Smith sold as did almost all the other ranchers in the area. 3000 cattle were trailed out of the Musselshell and Missouri River breaks into Lewistown, and loaded onto Great Northern Railroad cars in October 1926. Lillie B. went along to cook and was wagon boss.

"Smithie" was a practical nurse, tending the sick and delivering babies. During the flu epidemic, she and Dr. Lon Keith traveled night and day, doing what they could for their neighbors. The family resided on various ranches in that area until 1937, when Lillie B. moved to Winnett. (See also SMITH, Lillie B. — Winnett)

The Songer boys married sisters by the name of Elliott.
The Elliotts were homesteaders (Sec 17-12-31) in the southeast corner of the county. Clarence had two children, Vera and Dick. Alvin’s children were Betty Mae, Ida, Alvin, Jack, Ed and Mike. In 1941, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Songer and family of Tyler, Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Songer and family of Spokane, and their mother, Mrs. Lillie B. Smith, attended the funeral of their father, John Songer, in Buffalo, Wyoming.

The following bit of history was compiled by Ida S. Rigg and printed in the Winnett Times in 1941: “I am indebted to Mrs. Elsie Coon and Mrs. Lillie Smith for the following account of a Red Cross benefit in Mecaha for World War I.

“At a meeting called by Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Tina Busic, Mrs. Smith was elected chairman and Mrs. Bert Green was elected secretary. Plans were made to hold a benefit picnic, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Busic to take charge of necessary details.

“These details assumed rather generous proportions, as their first act was to borrow $200 to buy picnic supplies. Mrs. Ed Fox was the only person on the river who at that time had an automobile, which she gladly volunteered to use for the occasion. She, her son Fred, and the two ladies went to Lewistown where they spent the $200 for fruits, candy, gum and such novelties as hats and canes, that they thought could be sold at the picnic.

“Sam Sherman gave a white mule which was raffled twice. George Allan gave a two-year-old colt that was also raffled twice. The ladies of the community gave butter and each donated ten loaves of bread. The only white bread many of them made during the whole war period.

“The picnic was a great success. Everything was sold, including sixteen gallons of ice cream served in 1100 ice cream cones, eighty gallons of lemonade made by Gid Busic. The lumber, bought from McCane and Johnson of Roy, to erect a 40 by 60 foot dance pavillion, was sold and brought $60.00. The attractive hat check girl, Lillie Smith, claims to have checked more hats than there were heads at the picnic. $232 was sent to the Glendive chapter of the Red Cross.

“This picnic was long remembered by the 400 people, some of whom came over 65 miles to make it such a success.”

Lillie “Smithy” Smith — good samaritan, mother, cook and care-giver

SMITH, Thasla According to the school census of District #107, Thasla Smith had six children — Mary (1908), Lucy (1910), Irene (1912), James, and Charlie Clayton Smith.

The Winnett Times reported that H. E. McGiboney repaired and refurbished the Angelo Watters house, which he had purchased, for Thasla Smith and family. That same year, several neighbor men helped her apply for a widow’s pension.
SNYDER, Robert (Sec 6-14-30) Robert and Jessie Snyder homesteaded in 1914. They enrolled three children in the Weede School — Joel (1894), Ruth (1896) and Jack (1905). The bank repossessed their place in 1919.

STOFEL, Albert M. (Sec 19-19-30) Mr. and Mrs. Albert Stofel and their three sons settled on their homestead in 1915. Their daughter, Martha, and her husband, Harry Gracer, came at the same time.

Albert claimed 160 acres of land — half was in Dawson County (now Garfield), half was in Fergus County (now Petroleum County). The boys, Ed and Bob, filed on the Dawson side of the river, and Harry and Martha filed downriver toward the mouth of the river, next to Louis Ledoux.

When they left, they sold their places to George Matovich.

STONER, Samuel Samuel and Leota Stoner were the parents of Olivia Pearl (1910), Minnie (1914), and Samuel (1919) according to the 1921 school census report of District #107.

STROUP, William (Sec 5-15-30) William “Bill” Stroup was born at Mound City, Missouri. He and other members of the Stroup family took up homesteads in the Yellow Water area. (See also STRoup — Flatwillow) Bill later moved to the Calf Creek country east of the Musselshell River.

Katherine Adam was the daughter of Edward and Katherine Adam of the Calf Creek area. (See also NILES) Bill and Katherine were married at Winnett in 1926. They lived in the Cat Creek and Musselshell River areas for many years.

Stroup moved to the Lynn and Eline Warner homestead on Calf Creek. Eline “Linnie” was Katherine’s sister. They eventually sold this place to Phil Matovich, after Bill had worked at Cat Creek for several years.

When Bill and Kay left Petroleum County, they moved to St. Ignatius and remained there until Kay died of cancer in 1959.

After Kay died, Bill traveled quite a bit. He had lost the sight of one eye, so his many friends took him on trips. He especially enjoyed western shows and rodeos like the Calgary Stampede and the Cheyenne Rodeo. Mrs. Warner, Kay’s sister, drove around with Bill and they enjoyed the sights together. Bill always had time to visit with friends — anywhere — anytime!

Bill died in 1970 at Big Pine, California. (Wilma Stroup McFadden)

SULLINGER, Alfred and Dean Alfred and Martha Sullinger are shown as parents of Anne (1901), Floyd (1908), Freda (1910), Dean (1912), and Judith (1914) according to the census report of District #164.

The deed transfer books at Winnett show that Dean and Lauretta Sullinger bought land in Sec 26-14-29, from Ellen Jensen, a homesteader. They still own this land.

SULT, Harold R. Harold Sult (better known as “H.R.”), son of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Sult, was born in 1894 at Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He spent his boyhood in Iowa and moved to Marmarth, North Dakota, as a young man.

Edna Liming, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Liming, was born in 1898 at Pauline, Nebraska. She attended schools in Marmarth.

H. R. and Edna were married in 1916 at Baker, Montana. They ranched at Alzada and near Lodge Grass. They moved to the Mosby area in 1942 and went into partnership with Ralph Knuths. They bought land and leased more. The two main holdings were the one near the highway (the present Bill Brown Ranch) and one on lower Calf Creek (the present Phil and Bette Matovich Ranch). They bought, and brought in, Mexican Longhorn steers.

The Sult family formed a corporation, including the parents and sons, Roland Sult, Raymond Sult, and Edward Sult. Later, Phil and Bette (a daughter) bought shares in the corporation and moved from their river ranch to the ranch on Calf Creek.

(W. T. 10-1-42) “Largest Stock Shipment Here Moved Sunday.”

“The largest herd of cattle ever to leave Winnett over the Milwaukee in one shipment was loaded out Sunday on 39 stock cars. In the herd were 1176 head, mostly Mexican cattle, with a bunch of 36 whitefaces belonging to Marcus Matovich.

“The stock was shipped by H. R. Sult and Ralph Knuths, largest operators in this area, headquartering in the northeastern part of Petroleum County and the northwestern part of Garfield County, with thousands of acres owned and many more thousands leased.
"The partners headquarter on two locations — Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Sult and family occupying the old Warner place on Calf Creek, and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Knuths living on Lodgepole Creek.

"Roundup of the nearly 1200 head was begun on September 10th, and actual trailing to the railroad took four days of 20-hour shifts. Ten cowboys and the cook and 47 saddle horses were required to handle the shipment.

"Senior and junior runs to strong extremes in ages of cowboys. Ray Sult, 12-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Sult, was the youngest and declared by other men in the outfit as the 'best hand in the bunch.' Oldest man at 83 years was Bob Bailey, father of C. H. Bailey of Cat Creek. But 83 years doesn't mean anymore to Mr. Bailey than 50 years does to a lot of men we know. He's hale and hearty and able to handle his end of a day's work any old time.

"The Mexican cattle were a distinct curiosity to people who are used to seeing shorthorn and whitefaces on the range. The strangers were of every description and color — black, black and white, buckskin, sorrel, etc.

"Saturday night the 'dogies' were held about a mile north of the golf course, with camp being set up inside the golf course grounds. Residents of Winnett had a field day on Sunday, when at most anytime during the day, a car could be seen on nearly every ridge surrounding the herd. Most spectators expected to see some pretty wild stock, but were disappointed in that the herd was well behaved due to expert management by the 'hands.' Numerous rolls of film were used up in attempting to get a good 'shot' of the unusual scene.

"During loading operations, the cattle were held just across the highway north of Winnett. Loading began late in the afternoon and was completed in record time and the stock train pulled out shortly after 10 a.m.

"No estimate was available as to the price paid per pound, but it is thought the price for the entire shipment was around $100,000. They were shipped to feeding lots at Scotts Bluff, Nebraska, and the native cattle were shipped to Illinois.

"Largest single previous shipment out of Winnett occurred a number of years ago, when Walter J. Winnett shipped around 1000. With the range in the best condition it has been for a good many years and plenty of room for expansion of the industry in the county, it is highly probable that scenes like the one Sunday will become more common."

The Sults had four children: Roland married Clara Koebel from Jordan. They sold their share of Sult holdings and ranched in Wyoming for several years before selling that ranch and moving to Billings, Montana, due to bad health. They had two children — Margo and Sandy.

Ray married Patty McVay from Winnett and continued to run the ranch at Upper Calf Creek. They sold their share of Sult holdings and bought a ranch in Georgia, where they lived for several years. They sold the Georgia ranch and moved back to Sidney, Montana, where they operated a ranch. They have three children — John, Richard and Sheila. Ray died suddenly in January 1989, and is buried in the Richland Memorial Park Cemetery at Sidney.

Ed married Mirth Kiehl of Winnett. They sold their shares of the Sult corporation and moved to the Willette Ranch on the Musselshell in Petroleum County. Later he sold that place to Falls. He worked for local ranchers for several years and owned a bar in Winnett for awhile. Due to bad health, Ed and Mirth moved to Billings. They have two daughters, Vicki and Cathy. Ed died in 1968 and is buried in Sunset Memorial Gardens.

Bette married Phil Matovich. (See also MATOVICH, Phil) In 1960 Bill Brown bought the Sult Ranch near the highway, and Bette and Phil bought the lower Calf Creek Ranch, where they still live. Phil and Bette have three children — Harold, Linda and Carey.


**TAYLOR, Norman and Ward** (Sec 1-17-29)
Norman Taylor, son of William and Katie Taylor, was born in 1892 in Iowa. He came to Montana in 1913, lived near Roy for several years, then homesteaded near the mouth of Blood Creek on the Lower Musselshell River.

During World War I, Norman served in the 77th Division in France and was a member of the famed Lost Battalion. He then returned to his Lower Musselshell ranch.

His brother, John Ward, joined him in 1928, and their operation was called "Taylor Brothers." They lived on the Musselshell River for about 45 years.

Norm died in Miles City at the Veteran's Hospital in 1965 and is buried in the Winnett Cemetery.

After Norm's death, John remained on the ranch until retiring in 1972 and moving to Winnett. Neither John nor Norm ever married.

John died in 1977 and is also buried at the Winnett Cemetery.

**THOMAS, William Kendrick** (Sec 4-18-29)
William Kendrick "Kenny" Thomas was born in 1877 at Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Evalena Smith was born in 1879 in Henderson County, Kentucky. Kenny and Evalena were married in 1903 at West Franklin, Indiana.

They lived there for two years, and two sons, Otis and Owen, were born. They moved to Henderson County, Kentucky, where another son, Preston, and a daughter were born. Mr. Thomas and his family came to Lewistown, Montana, with his brother, Clinton, in the spring of 1914. After living in Lewistown during the summer, they homesteaded on the Musselshell River, ten miles south of the Missouri River in the fall.

Mr. Thomas and his brother walked from Lewistown to the river to look over the homestead. A few weeks later he moved his family down by wagon and hayrack. They lived for three weeks under a tarpaulin stretched over a pole to make a tent, cooking on a stove in the open. It rained all during the trip, making it necessary to bail water out continually from under the tarpaulin.
Living sixty-five miles from the closest town and store (at Roy) and fifteen miles from the post office at Ross, Mr. Thomas can remember carrying a fifty-pound sack of flour on his back for ten miles from Fort Musselshell, and also walking 12 miles back and forth each day to build a log cabin at Kismet. He also remembers the old Fletcher’s Saloon and Trading Post at Fort Musselshell when it was a typical early-day saloon with the doors shot full of holes. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas say they lived the hardships of all homesteaders.

While they lived on the homestead, a son was born, died, and buried at Mecaha. In 1918, a daughter, Goldie (Mrs. John Schreier), was born. The Mecaha Post Office and store was established two miles away in 1915, and homesteaders began to populate the river valley. The year 1918 was a prosperous one, and fine crops were raised.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and the three children lived on the homestead until 1927, when they moved to Saginaw, Michigan, living there four years, and coming back to Montana and the home place in 1931. Their sons remained in Michigan. During the years 1931 to 1936, the Fort Peck Reservoir was being surveyed. Mr. Thomas worked with the surveyors, and 15 surveyors and engineers lived at their ranch for three years while surveying the reservoir. In 1936 they again moved to Saginaw and returned to Winnett upon retirement in 1949 (See also THOMAS — Winnett).

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas still owned their homestead, but little was left of the log buildings. The water of Fort Peck Lake came almost to their land, making it the last ranch on the river at the south end of the lake. After the Thomases died, their daughter Goldie leased the homestead to Tony Weingart, then Marcus Matovich, until the U. S. Fish and Wildlife bought the land for inclusion in the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge.

**TOWN, Richard** (Sec 17-20-30) Born in England. Richard Town and his brother traveled to the United States as young men. Richard secured an ox team and traveled on to Montana in 1887. As he was passing through, he met Mary Hewitt, a native of Bervie, Ontario. Staying on in Montana, he filed on a homestead in south Phillips County, then a part of Valley County. Richard and Mary were married and lived in North Dakota for awhile before returning to Montana in 1904. They built a home in Malta, while establishing a horse ranch south of the Missouri River, at the mouth of Soda Creek, in what is now Petroleum County. Mr. Town loved Percheron draft horses and much of his operation revolved around raising them.

Mr. Town cleared the river bottoms, raised alfalfa for hay and for seed, and brought in cattle to stock the ranches he had developed on both sides of the Missouri River.

The Towns had four children — John, Ada, Eva and William. When the children reached school age, Mary Town and the children moved to Malta for the school terms, and returned to the ranch in the summer.

In 1922 Richard Town died from an infection caused by carbuncles on his head. Mary Town moved to the ranch full time and lived there with her two sons until she died in 1934. She ran the Bervie Post Office from 1922 to 1932.

Ada was a teacher and later County Superintendent of Schools in Petroleum County. She married Dent Stouffer and they moved to Colorado, where they spent the rest of their lives. (See also STOUFFER — Cat Creek)

Eva was also a teacher. She married Joe Murphy of Roy. They have a home in Roy and a large ranching operation near Roy. Eva had a great interest in Montana history and wrote numerous newspaper articles about early Musselshell River days.

John was born in 1901 in North Dakota and attended school at Malta. Although John was crippled in childhood from polio, he kept active. He and his brother, Bill Town, took over the management of the Town Ranch when their father died. In about 1927, they sold off the horses and concentrated on cattle and alfalfa. John took great pride in his ability to produce good crops of alfalfa seed, and for many years the ranch would produce as much as a full railway car of seed.

John liked the water and boating. He patrolled the river by boat to check on the livestock. Machinery and hay were ferried across the river by boat, but the cattle and horses were moved across by swimming, with John herding them across by boat.

In 1939 the ranch was sold to the government, but Towns had the opportunity to lease the ranch back for five years and continue to live there. They established a new headquarters on the smaller ranch on the north side of the river, but continued to raise cattle and alfalfa on the south side until 1943, when the Fort Peck Lake flooded them out. They had moved the house back up the hill out of danger. The next winter, they moved the house across the river on the ice to the new headquarters. They continued to ranch there for several years.


W. R. “Bill” Town ranched with his brother, John, on their place in northern Petroleum County. Bill married Evelyn Heiser at Malta in 1933. They had three daughters — Marilyn, Rosemarie, and Margaret.

Bill Town died in 1987 and is buried in the Malta Cemetery.

John Town had a favorite story he liked to tell about a flood on the river. "In 1908 we got one of the biggest floods that I ever heard of on the Missouri. It ran from hill to hill; and ran everyone to the hills. We lived in a tent on the hill for some time afterwards. The man who ran the store, post office and ferry was drowned and most of his stuff washed away, and that was the end of that ferry. They moved the Kismet Post Office up to the UL Ranch on the north side of the river for a few years, and the ranchers took turns at carrying the mail from the Leedy
Post Office.

"After the big flood in 1908, they had a flood sale of all the flood damaged goods at Kismet. There was a steamboat company that had an interest in the store, and they took the boat and gathered all the settlers along the way up and down the river and took them down to the sale on July 4, 1908.

"After the sale, they returned to the UL Ranch, where they had left George Beckler, an old, noted roundup cook, to have a chicken and dumpling Fourth of July dinner for everyone. They left Dad Hickman with Mr. Beckler to help, and keep him sober, as there was a large amount of wet goods stored in the UL house from the flooded store and saloon at Kismet.

"Mr. Beckler was a real good cook when sober, but when we all arrived back from the sale on the steamboat, the two cooks were dead to the world at the UL Ranch, but we found the chickens outside in a large hog-feed cooker boiling away with the feathers on. So my mother and Mrs. Fletcher dumped them out and got the feathers off, and the large crowd still had chicken and dumplings!"

TRESPH, Andrew and Edwin Sec 28,31-21-29
Andrew (1889) and Edwin (1894) Tresch were born in Switzerland. They came to the United States with the Machler brothers and took up homesteads in the Chain Buttes area south of the Missouri River. They stayed in the area until they retired and moved to Lewistown. Neither man married. Edwin died in 1978, Andrew in 1987. (Frank Machler)

TUOHY, Charlotte (Sec 7-16-30) Charlotte Dixon came to Montana in the 1860s with her parents, the Charles Dions. She married Larkin Sandidge and had two children — Cora and Charles. Cora married Thomas Gilfeather.

Charlotte and Larkin were divorced and she married P. J. Tuohy. After his death in 1910, she and her uncle, James Dixon, journeyed up the Musselshell River to visit her children, Cora Gilfeather and Charlie Sandidge. They both filed on homesteads. Charlotte stayed long enough to prove up. The Ross School was located on the Tuohy place for several years. Charlotte moved back to Helena, where she died in 1941.

James Dixon’s homestead was farther upstream. He lived there until he died, leaving his place to Charlotte and his sister, Emma Conlon.

TUSS, Peter F. (Sec 31.32-20-30) The following family story was contributed by son, Peter J. Tuss. "Peter Tuss immigrated to this country in 1905, under the sponsorship of his uncle, also Peter Tuss, who was a stonemason by trade in Lewistown. Dad worked with him about a year. He heard about the homesteads that were available at that time in eastern Fergus County, now Petroleum County. Wanting to go on his own, he went to the mouth of the Musselshell River and took up squatter’s rights on an acreage right on the river where it drained into the Missouri River.

"Pete Tuss worked for the Town Brothers to help make ends meet. He worked as a camp cook and handy man for the cowboys who were working the cattle.

"In his quest to find his niche in life, Peter F. Tuss used his very limited education. He could hardly speak English and could neither read nor write it. He was befriended by a banker in Winnett, Hamm Greene, who gave him the opportunity to lease some land 5½ miles southeast of Winnett, and he helped set him up in the farming business in 1918. My father was not a farmer, so he had to learn the hard way; and with little education and no experience in tilling. He did quite well. He worked at Kendall, Montana, in the gold mines when he was not farming.

"Peter married Katerina Mikich, widow of Matt Mikich (See also MIKICH — Teigen.) She had five children. They had both emigrated from Birbir, Yugoslavia.

"They loaded up and went back to the farm near Winnett. Six more children were born to this marriage — Frank (1922), Georgia (1923), Pete (1925), Jean (1926), Betty (1928) and Geraldine (1930). With little to go on, they still fed and clothed the eleven children and themselves.

"In 1925 my father got his first car, a Model T touring car, and with it he could pick up a little more work. He used to run bootleg whiskey from Lewistown to the coal mines in Roundup. He got the whiskey from his brother who had a still near Lewistown. Every trip was a nightmare for my mother, as this was against the law, and she was sure each trip he would get caught. To my knowledge, he never did get caught.

"We continued to live near Winnett until the stock market crash in 1929. That was when everything went bad for us. Hamm Greene lost his bank, and Dad lost all of his assets when the bank went broke. In 1930 he had to pull up stakes and we moved to the Tyson place near Lewistown in the foothills of the Judith Mountains. In 1937 or 1938 we moved into Lewistown and have been there ever since.

"My mother died in 1942, and Dad died in 1954."

TUSS, Rafael (Sec 20-20-30) Rafael Tuss squatted on a piece of land on the Missouri River, about three miles north of Peter Tuss. In 1917 Tony Weingart bought Rafael’s land and later sold it to Roland Matthews. (Peter J. Tuss)

UECK, Robert (Sec 20-13-30) Robert "Bob" Ueck was born in 1890 in Wisconsin. He came to Montana in 1911 and homesteaded in the Judith Gap area. In 1916 he moved to Melstone to work. He met and married Florence Ware, who had filed on a homestead (Sec 30-14-30). They bought the C. D. Prather horse herd and the T-P brand. They continued breeding horses with Steel Dust, Morgan, and Gold Dust sires until 1928, at which time they switched to thoroughbred sires so they could sell to the Army.

In 1938 they entered five T-P geldings in the Montana Pony Express Memorial Day Race from Roundup to
Billings. They also ran a string of bucking horses that were well respected throughout the area. They furnished stock for rodeos at Flatwillow, Melstone, Musselshell, Mosby, Meca ha, Winnett, and other shows.

Robert and Florence had two children, Joyce (1917) and Robert (1919). When the children became old enough for school, Florence moved back to Hopkins, Minnesota, with them. They sometimes summ ered on the ranch, but called Minnesota their home. Robert (Bud) entered the Air Force in World War II and became a pilot. He flew a Thunderbolt Fighter Plane that he called his “Boiler maker.” He flew over 100 missions and received three silver and fifteen bronze clusters.

In 1943 Robert sold his horse herd to the Komarek Brothers of Roy. They trailed the horses cross-country to their new home. Bob ran the mail route for awhile, and finally in 1945 he sold his holdings to Kenny Bratten. His love of horses, however, demanded that he keep a few for riding and trading.

Although he sometimes visited his family in Minnesota, he had no desire to live anywhere but in Montana. For the last ten years of his life, he traveled around the area, working for others. In January of 1953, Bob wrote to the Win nett Times and reported that he had spent Christmas and New Years in the hospital.

He wrote, “I was herding sheep near Laurel when my horse turned a handspring and rolled over me. I managed to scramble aboard the horse and make it back to camp. I gave the leg what first aid I could, turned the sheep over to the dogs and settled back to wait for the camp tender. He arrived two days later and took me to Billings where they found I had a double fracture just above the ankle on the right leg. This makes three double breaks in a row on my right hind wheel between the knee and ankle.”

Robert died on October 24, 1955, at the age of 65.

VAN PARKER, George (Sec 24-21-29) George Van Parker’s homestead joined the Herschel Hanson homestead. He sold his place to Anton Heine. (Roy Enterprise)

WANGSNESS, Nels Nels Wangsness was born at Bergen, Norway, in 1848. His wife, Mary, was also born at Bergen in 1857. They came to the United States in 1886 and settled in Minnesota where they stayed until 1914, when they came to the Lower Musselshell to homestead.

Nels and Mary had seven children. Alata married Theodore Wanseng. Theodore homesteaded in the Blakeslee community (Sec 22-16-25) and was killed in a car accident in 1928. Alata died of pneumonia in 1931. They left two sons, Tommy and Norman, who then lived with their uncles, Sever, Martin and Ed Wangsness. (See also WANGSEND—Winnett)

Another daughter, Mrs. John Statland, lived in Canada and did not come to Montana. Andrew did not come to Montana either. He lived in North Dakota.

Mabel came with her parents, two brothers, (Ed and Martin), and a sister, Alata, and settled on Martin’s homestead just across from the Ross Post Office. They lived in a tent until their two-room log house was built. She married Oscar Nordahl. (See also NORDAHL)

Edward came with the rest of the family to the Lower Musselshell area and homesteaded on Calf Creek. The area at that time was all open range, with no grazing rights and no fees to pay. Most of the settlers ran cattle. Edward died in 1934, as the result of a skull fracture received when the truck in which he was riding turned over on a hill east of Winnett. He never married. He is buried in the Gilfeather Cemetery on the Lower Musselshell River.

Sever homesteaded in Garfield County on Calf Creek in the Lower Musselshell area. He served as a mail carrier on the Mosby to Meca ha route. He moved from Calf Creek to Mosby because it was more convenient for his twice-weekly drive from Mosby to Meca ha and back.

(W. T. 1946) “Sever Wangsness, a fancy-free bachelor with a Norwegian accent and sense of humor, made his final official trip Saturday, June 29, 1946, on the Mosby to Meca ha route. He indicated that he is rather glad to be through with that twice-weekly responsibility, when a new carrier officially takes over on July 1st.”

Martin Wangsness, World War I soldier
"On some occasions, winter weather or extremely muddy dirt roads made the going plenty tough and delayed the mail. On numerous occasions, he brought the mail when the patrons assumed travel was next to impossible. About 2½ years ago, a detour of the hill near the community hall, and a detour across the river to the Allan Ranch on the west side of the river, resulted in Sever’s discovering the late Walter Allan, crippled from being thrown from his horse, and his semi-invalid wife unable to get to neighbors for assistance."

Sever never married. He died of a stroke in 1948 and is buried in the Gilfeather Cemetery with his parents and brother.

Martin homestead in 1915 on Sec 11-17-29, on part of what became the John Winter Ranch. He enlisted in 1918 and served with A. E. F. in France. He was discharged at the end of the war and returned to the Lower Musselshell area. He sold his homestead and bought the former Berry Roberts Ranch, where he lived until he retired. He never married. He died in 1957 and is buried at the Winnett Cemetery.

Mary Wangsness died in 1923, and Nels died in 1926. They were both buried in the Gilfeather Cemetery on the Lower Musselshell River.

**WATTERSON, Angelo** (Sec 15-14-30) Angelo Watterson Sr., born at Bannack in 1883, came to the Musselshell Crossing in 1898 and went to school there. (School census, District #22 in 1902)

He and his father located near the mouth of Flatwillow Creek in 1901. In 1904 he went to business college at Grand Island, Nebraska. He and his father filed on their homesteads in 1904. He had two sisters, Thasla (Moyer) and Elizabeth (Thayer), who lived in the Winnett area at one time.

The following information was taken from the W. T. 10-15-60 in an article titled "Early-day Mosby Homesteader Recalls History of Area."

"Angelo and his father came by stage from Junction, near Custer, with Cy Sherman, the stage driver. He spent the summer on the Major Cartwright Ranch, a mile and a quarter upriver from Musselshell Crossing. He homesteaded near the present Mosby Post Office in what was then Dawson County.

"In order to establish post offices and mail routes, it was necessary to carry the mail from one point to another for six uninterrupted months. Angelo assisted in this project to establish a post office at Weede in 1901. The route ran from Weede to Lone Tree, now Ragged Point, and on to Musselshell.

"Mosby, Bryon Dunn and Norman Brockway lived on a gumbo flat, known as Poverty Flat, between Melstone and Weede. Gust Anderson and Pete Bengston were others coming to the area in 1899.

"Watterson recalled that a family named Hough came to the area one spring and lived in 'Beaver Jack' Thomas Bogal’s cabin for a year or more.

"In the winter of 1899, two bands of Indians came along and settled, one on the south bank of Flatwillow Creek and the other a short distance upriver on the Musselshell. They molested no one, and in the spring moved west.

"Watterson lived on his place until 1920, then went out to work on various ranches as a herder and shearer. He always maintained his voting residence in Petroleum County and never missed an opportunity to vote, either in person or absentee. Jack Milburn once brought him down from the N Bar Ranch to vote."

Watterson sold his place in 1925 to H. E. McGiboney. He was married twice but had no children. Angelo died in 1966 of cancer, at the age of 83.

**WEAVER, James** (Sec 7-8-15-30) James Weaver, the son of Margaret Polk Weaver and Peter S. Weaver, was born in Nebraska in 1874. Jim was one of the earliest settlers on the Musselshell River. His mother came and lived with him from 1895 until 1898, at which time she moved to the state of Washington. She moved back to Petroleum County in 1926 and passed away in 1929.

Jim married Cordelia Lenten in 1919 at Winnett. "Cora," the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Taylor Lenten, was born in 1888 at Wheeling, West Virginia. Jim and Cora had no children, but she had a daughter, Maggie Underwood, whom they raised. Maggie married Wallace Paige Green. (See also GREEN — Musselshell River and Winnett; also WEAVER — Winnett and WILSON — Winnett)

**WEDEE, Sarge W.** (Sec 18-12-31) The Weede Post Office was authorized, May 25, 1901. Sarge W. Weede was named Postmaster.

The following description of Mr. Weede is taken from an article written by Edward E. Degner, appearing in the Winnett Times, September 29, 1966. "Mr. Weede was an old timer who had lived with the Indians and learned to make leather clothing. He was known by Walter Winnett, B. F. Lepper, Sye Sherman and other old timers. He made hand and foot wear out of buckskin, that could not be better made, trimmed with beads and fringes. At first his nice work was all done by hand. He tanned his own skins and the leather was soft as silk. Later, my mother helped him to get a sewing machine to do his work."

In about 1910, Mr. Weede sold his homestead and some railroad land he had purchased, to Silas Parkinson. Mr. Weede moved to the Yellow Water Basin.

**WELCH, Fred** Fred and Nancy Welch are listed as parents of Everette E. (1906) and Ruth (1907). In the census of School District #164. They leased the Robert White place near Willow Creek and moved there in 1927.

**WESTON, William and Etha** (Sec 8-18-12-31) William and Etha Weston homesteaded in the southeast corner of Petroleum County, near their daughter, Eva Mae Elliott, wife of Walter Elliott. Westons had three other daughters — Kate, Addie and Bertha.

William's homestead was sold to Ray Nyemaster and is now owned by Audrey Mosby, Etha's homestead went to
her daughter, Bertha Osborne.

**WHITE, Robert** (Sec 4-13-30) The 1923 school census for District #107. Weede, is the last census that lists these children of Robert and Margaret White — Jessie (1908), Gertrude (1910) and Richard (1915). These children were listed in the first census of District #107.

According to land transfer records, this land went to the Federal Land Bank.

**WILKINSON, Arthur** (Sec 1-12-30) Arlene McDaniel submitted the following story. "In 1912 Rasmus and Elina Hansen, along with Elina's brother, Alfred Christensen, came to Montana to homestead. They came from Chicago on the train to Melstone, and from there, by wagon to their homestead in the southeast corner of Petroleum County, at an area now called Chicago Flats. They brought six of their seven children with them — Arthur, Ted, Lily, Edith, Clarence and Florence. One daughter, Adella, had married and remained in Chicago. There were a few good years, with plenty to keep all of them very busy, but there were a lot of fun times too, so everyone enjoyed it. Then Montana got back to normal, and with poor crops and Rasmus' health failing, they decided to return to Chicago. They left a daughter though: Florence married Art Wilkinson, the neighboring rancher. Ted and Clarence joined the Army.

"Art Wilkinson bought the Hansen homesteads. He was born in Bangor, Maine, in 1875. Art ran away and came west when he was in his teens. His uncles, John and Hall Clement, had a sheep outfit on Flatwillow, and he worked for them until he went wolfing and running wild horses. He squatted on range that had been the CK roundup camp in years before. Here, he built a cabin and set of corrals. The stage between Fort Keogh and Fort Maginnis had a stop a few miles down the river, that later was the Prathers' homestead. The crossing on the Musselshell River was almost always good there; and supplies could come that way, but it was expensive. Art later homesteaded the land, and when he and Florence were married, he built a new house there. He and Florence raised horses in the early years, then some cattle were added, and of course, a big garden kept the family in groceries.

"Their home was actually across the river from Petroleum County, but the stage road from Melstone to Mosby was the only passable road to the ranch and their mail was delivered three times a week at the mailbox there. Many of the folks got groceries and necessities brought out by the stage driver. He would get through when everybody else was limited to horses and a sled. There were a few times it was frozen enough to let him use the river as a road. Everybody put up ice in the winter and enjoyed it in the summer, especially for the homemade ice cream.

"Audrey was born in the summer of 1917, and Marjorie, in the fall of 1918. There had been a schoolhouse for the children out on Chicago Flats, but because so many homesteaders had left due to rough winters and dry summers, it was moved down by the Musselshell River, with Addison Smith as teacher. Later, it was discontinued, and Art moved his family into Melstone for the school years. Arlene was born in the summer of 1926 and Deane, in the spring of 1930. "Horses were the main livelihood, and those ‘27’ broncs ran wild and free. The summer consisted of gathering different stud bunches for branding and working. Things became easier after the 1940s, as the summers became wetter and the price of livestock rose. Now, everything was fenced and all the open range was gone. "Art died in 1959, and Florence died in 1975. The ranch is still in the family, and though the last few years have seen a lot of grasshoppers and even more dry seasons, trucks and cars have made the journeys shorter and the water situation bearable. Audrey Mosby lives on the home place. Marjorie Sherman lives in Standish, California. Arlene McDaniel lives just out of Wolf Creek, Montana, and Deane lives at East End, Saskatchewan, Canada. There are nine grandchildren, two foster grandchildren, and five great grandchildren."

**WILLIAMS, Sam** Sam Williams had a place on the Lower Musselshell River that was just below the L. A. Fail place.

About 1907, Sam Williams disappeared from his home on the river. Ole NORDahl (no relation to the other Nordahls in the area) was suspected of foul play for a number of reasons. Ole had been beaten up earlier by Sam Williams for stealing a calf. After the murder of the Schleuter family, when the officials were searching Ole's cabin, they found a pearl-handled six-shooter that had been concealed in the chinking of the wall behind the stove, with newspaper pasted on the wall to conceal it. The gun was identified as the one Ed Healy had traded to Sam Williams. (See also NORDAHL, Ole)

After Sam's disappearance, Sam's dogs would show up at Lugo's camp wagon every morning for Lugo to feed them. The dogs showed evidence of digging, and when Lugo commented to the other men that he believed the dogs were digging something up, Ole left the camp and the dogs followed him. No one ever saw the dogs again, and it was rumored that Ole had poisoned them.

No trace of Sam Williams or his horse was ever found. (Marcus Matovich)

**WILLETTE, Joseph** (Sec 5-15-30) Joseph Willette, born in 1864 at Fort Fairfield, Maine, and Gertrude Peterson, born in 1879 at Mavine on St. Croix, Minnesota, were married in 1900. They came to the Lower Musselshell area to homestead in 1914. They had one son, George, born in 1905. He attended local schools and graduated from Winnett High School. He joined the United States Army in 1924, later going to West Point, where he graduated in 1928. He was a Colonel when he retired in 1958. He and his wife, Marianne (Toms), have one child, Susan (Hopper).

(W. T. 10-22-26) "Mr. and Mrs. Joe Willette, residing in the northeastern part of Petroleum County, known as the
bend of the Musselshell River, have one of the finest ranch homes in the north country. Their home was originally built of logs, 25' by 38', with a nine-foot ceiling. Ted Svindland and P. J. Anderson were engaged to true up the logs and Harry Timm to stucco the exterior and plaster the interior, which operation made a delightful and pretty home for the Willettes.

"Mr. Willette homesteaded on his present location in 1914 and made a start in the cattle industry with seven head of cows. This fall he sold 40 head and has a nice herd left. Alfalfa and hay crops are successfully grown each year."

Joe died in 1938 of a heart attack while milking a cow, and was found in the barn. He is buried in Lewistown. Mrs. Willette had an auction sale after his death and moved to Cut Bank, where she cooked in a hotel. She died in 1966 at San Antonio, Texas, and is buried there.

When Colonel Willette died in June 1989, his son-in-law was quoted in the San Antonio newspaper as saying, "He was a very dignified and reserved man, an authority on American military history; he was sent proof copies of military histories by the authors to verify the facts before publication. He knew some of the authors and did a great deal of reading on the subject, as this was a special interest of his."

WILSON, Harold In 1942 Harold Wilson, with the backing of William Brindley, purchased the John O'Keefe place from his heir, Francis McGuire. The Wilsons were from the Broadus area. They were in the process of moving their furniture and ranch equipment to the new ranch. Mrs. Wilson was in the car, and following her was the truck with their possessions. The truck was descending the steep hill toward Cat Creek bridge, when the brakes failed to hold. Wilson and Donovan jumped from the runaway vehicle. Wilson died instantly when he struck the bridge rail, and Donovan died a few days later from injuries sustained in the accident. Daniel Klein, the driver, realizing that he could not make the left turn on the road, turned right, through the guard rail, and circled in a small open field until he stopped. The driver, truck and load were undamaged and were returned to Broadus.

WINTER, John U. (Sec 11-17-29) Johnny, son of William and Anna Winter of Olathe, Kansas, was born November 1, 1887. His early years were spent in Colorado and Wyoming.

As a lad, Johnny dreamed of taking first money at the Cheyenne rodeo and riding with the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, not an unusual aspiration for a young western boy. He practiced his roping and riding, entering rodeos and working for cow outfits, and finally, in 1908, at the ripe old age of 21, he took second money at the Cheyenne, Wyoming, rodeo. A man by the name of Eben Low was impressed with his abilities and took him to Hawaii, as part of a Wild West Show, where he rode broncs and did trick roping. In 1910, he joined Buffalo Bill's troupe and rode with them for awhile. He was still riding in local rodeos in the 1920s.

In the spring of 1913, Johnny Winter helped Floyd Norris move to Montana. Floyd went back to Wyoming in 1914; however, Johnny stayed and settled at the mouth of Blood Creek where he made his home for the next forty-four years. Through the years, he acquired other places, forming a well-rounded ranch operation.

In 1917 Johnny married Hellan Allan and they had one daughter, Hazel, born at Mecaha in 1917. Hellan and John separated in 1919, and John married Eulalie Sterrett in 1928.

Eulalie Sterrett, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Sterrett, was born January 1, 1897, in Devils Lake, North Dakota. She received her early schooling in North Dakota, then went to Canada, where she went to teacher training school. She became a qualified teacher, and it was in this capacity that she came to this area in 1925. She continued her teaching career throughout most of her life. While living on the river, she was an active member of the Ross Community Club and was instrumental in the building of the club house. After moving to Winnett, she became very active in the Red Cross, the American Legion Auxiliary, Petroleum County Democratic Party, and other civic organizations. She will always be remembered by her students and co-workers. Eulalie passed away in 1972. John had died in 1958.

Hazel (Winter) Gibson received her primary education in various schools along the Musselshell River. When she was attending the Weede School, she, Alvina Hill, and the Benson children explored an old Indian cave in a butte near the river. They were unable to get to the cave entrance except by being dropped on a rope from a rock above the entrance. In the cave they found bones and bright-colored beads, which they gathered and took with them. Their parents weren't very happy, as they had heard that the cave was a burial ground for Indians who had died of smallpox. Mrs. Hill, Hazel's mother, took the beads and burned them, and the children were taken to town for vaccinations. They had sore arms instead of beads.

Hazel continued her education and became a teacher. She taught for many years in Montana and Wyoming before marrying J. R. (Dick) Gibson and taking over her father's ranch on the river (See also GIBSON, Fred).

WOMBLES, Robert (Sec 22-12-30) Robert and Myrtle Wombles were homesteaders. Their children attended the Weede School at the time School District #107 was formed in 1913. The names and birth years of the children were: Danna (1910) and Roberta (1912). Wombles sold their place to John Hensley.

WOOD, William (Sec 27-15-30) William Wood's obituary in the Winnett Times stated: "William Wood was one of the early settlers of Montana, coming here in the pioneer days from Minnesota. For awhile, he and his wife lived on the old Dave Jackson Ranch on the Musselshell River. He was a typical example of that type of pioneer of the old west who faced the early struggles and privations to contribute his share towards paving the way for the
settling of the country. His home was a mecca of hospitality and he will be long remembered as a true friend and loved by all who knew him."

William died in 1922 from a severe case of appendicitis. His wife and long time friend, Jim Taylor, were at his bedside when he died at the age of 50.

**WOODFORD, D. Clinton** Clint Woodford, son of Mr. and Mrs. M. M. Woodford, was born in 1932 in Abilene, Kansas. He came to Petroleum County as a lineman for the R. E. A. in 1954. Clint married Shirley Dunlap of Winnett in 1954, and they had a son, William B., born in June 1955. Clint went to work for the Jet Fuel Refinery that same year. Clint and Shirley were divorced; Shirley moved to Billings, Montana, and Clint continued to live at the refinery.

Louanne Hill graduated from Winnett High School in 1949 and shortly thereafter married Robert Sinclair of Winnett. They had four children — James L. (1949), Paula J. (1950), Margaret M. (1952), and Donald K. (1953). Robert and Louanne were divorced in 1956.

In December of 1957, Clint Woodford and Louanne Hill Sinclair were married and made their home at the Jet Fuel Refinery, near Mosby, Montana. In February 1959, a son, Jay Lee, was born to them; and in September 1960, a daughter, Jana Dee, was born.

In that same year, Clint and Louanne purchased the Ted Hill Ranch, with the buildings being very close to where the old Weede trading post and post office once stood. Although the family lived on the river place, Clint continued to work for the refinery. It was at this time, in 1963, that Clint's son, Bill, came to live with the family. In 1966 they purchased the adjoining ranch just south of them, the John Hill place. That summer saw them moving again, just a mile south of John and Hellan's house. In 1967 Clint gave notice at the refinery and went into ranching full time. Clint and Louanne continue to live on the John Hill place, raising sheep, cattle and hay.

James "Jim" Sinclair graduated from Winnett High School in 1968 and married Judy Oliver, of Havre, Montana, in 1970. They have a son, Jason, who is currently a freshman at Havre High. Jim and Judy were divorced. In 1988 Jim married Kate Sprague. They are presently living on the Lou Hill place and working for Clint Woodford. Jim and Kate have a daughter, Sabra, who is four years old. Jim's son, Jase, enjoys spending summers and special weekends with Jim and Kate.

Paula Sinclair graduated from Winnett High School in 1969. (See also BOHN, Jerry — Petrolia)

Margaret "Marge" Sinclair graduated from Winnett High School in 1970. (See also JOHNSON, Jim — Winnett)

Donald "Don" Sinclair graduated from Winnett High School in 1971 and married Judy Phillips of Winnett in 1972. Don and Judy have five children — Rory, a sophomore at Stanford High School; Brandi, an eighth grader; Jadra, a fourth grader; Laramie, a second grader; and Dexton, a loveable two-year-old (in 1989). Don and Judy were divorced in 1987. Judy lives at Stanford and works for the sheriff's department. Don is currently living in Helena, where he is employed.

William "Bill" Woodford graduated from high school at Winnett in 1974 and from Western Montana College in Dillon with a degree in elementary education. He married Jo Ward of Fairfield, and they moved to St. Ignatius, Montana, where he taught for eight years. Jo was employed as a pharmacist. Bill and Jo have three children — Bo, Chase, and Loni. Bill and Jo were divorced in 1985. Bill is currently elementary principal and district special education director at Soap Lake, Washington.

Jay Woodford attended school in Winnett. He went into the trucking business shortly after he graduated in 1977. Jay married Wyna Pease of Winnett in 1984. Wyna trucked with Jay until their son, Cedar, was born in 1986. They make their home on the old Jim McGiboney place, presently owned by Steve Hale. Jay continues to truck. Malori Ann, their baby daughter, is the newest addition to their family.

Jana Woodford received her schooling in Winnett, graduated in 1978, and graduated from Miles Community College with a secretarial degree. She lives in Bozeman, where she attends Montana State University. Jana has two children — Krynn and Devan.

**ZIESMAN, Reynold** Reynold Ziesman was born at Hyattville, Wyoming. Dorothy Bain, born in Idaho, spent most of her younger years at Worland, Wyoming, and attended schools there. They were introduced by family members and became acquainted at dances and other social gatherings. They were married at Worland in 1942.

They spent the first four years of their married life on the Ziesman family ranch, where they raised sheep, cattle, and put up lots of hay.

Reynold and Dorothy arrived in the Mosby area in 1946, and Reynold worked for William M. Hanlon.
Reynold assumed the position of superintendent and pumper of the East Dome field. That particular oil activity was situated north and east of Mosby. (A refinery, which produced what was known as “Jet Fuel,” also operated there for 20 years — 1953 to 1973.)

The Ziesmans are friendly and fun-loving folks. Dorothy is a fine musician, and is happy when “fiddling” for community functions. They are great nature lovers, and encouraged the wildlife of the area to become their closest neighbors. They especially enjoyed the capers of the many chipmunks that lived near their house. The chipmunks became so tame, they would crawl up onto Reynold’s knee for extra tidbits and attention.

Snack time: Reynold and friend

At one time, Reynold and Dorothy played host to a homeless robin which had been raised by a family in Winnett. The young bird was not ready to fend for himself, so Ziesmans volunteered to take care of it until it was ready to take off. It didn’t take the young robin long to find that if he sat on the front porch, Dorothy would invite him into the house. He would walk through the kitchen, jump up on a stool, and beg for his bite of hamburger or other tidbit.

Neighbors and friends were sorry when Reynold retired. The couple left the community in 1984. In their spare time, they had been building a new home, about two and one half miles east of Lewistown on Highway 200. With an eye to fuel efficiency, Reynold built the house in such a manner that all possible solar energy could be utilized.

Reynold, always busy, continues to beautify their new home. Dorothy continues with her music and is now playing with the “C. D.’s,” a musical group in Lewistown.

ZIESMER, Adolph The Ziesmer family moved to the Lorne Boston place near Weede in the early 1930s. Adolph and Gladys Ziesmer listed the following children on the school census: Stanley (1913), Florence (1915), Loretta (1919), Dorothy (1921), Viola (1923), Fern (1926), Robert (1928), and Donald (Mealen) (1930).

A. J. carried mail from Melstone to Mosby and from Mosby to Mecca until 1938, at which time his route was shortened from Melstone to the Horace McGiboney Ranch. Patrons of the Mosby Post Office who had been getting their mail from Melstone would henceforth get their mail by way of Miles City-Jordan bus service, and from Lewistown train and bus through Winnett.

The perils of early mail carriers on rural roads are well known. A. J. had his share of experiences, but one stood out above the others. All along the Musselshell, the roads were coated with ice, so Mr. Ziesmer had been using the river bottom for a road. Occasionally he was forced to climb out of the river bed, and it was at one of these points, near the mouth of Calf Creek, where the accident happened. The car slid off the road and over a 40-foot embankment. A. J. escaped with minor cuts and bruises. The car was badly smashed but was able to run on its own power after being pulled from the embankment by Dow Bowen.

From the river, Ziesmers moved to Melstone and then on to Columbia Falls, Montana. Mr. Ziesmer enjoyed coming “home” to Mosby to fish each spring. He made his last trip at the age of 93.