Kelley — Burgeton

SCHOOLS
1. Castle Rock (Caldwell)
2. Dixon (Twin Butte)
3. East Burgeton
4. Flannigan
5. Hodgen
6. 1st Kelley
7. 2nd Kelley
8. Kocer (Holeczek)
9. Mackrell
10. Minor
11. Rocking Chair Butte
12. Sheldon (West Burgeton)
Old Kelley invitation card

Six girls return to Kelly in 1989: Erma Dreisbach Hoffman, Virgene Munson Gamble, Muriel Black Munson, Kathryn Hodges Keebler, Mary Kroetch Poetler, Ruth Hodges Freburg

Now obsolete postmark and address
Kelley Community History

The North Willow Creek basin in which the Kelley community was located contains approximately 17 townships. It is bounded on the north by the Flatwillow Creek divide, on the south by the Musselshell River divide, and on the west by the foothills of the Little Snowy Mountains.

The Kelley community, located in the northeast quadrant of the basin, is, in general, subdivided into two areas, fairly equal in scope. The Mud Springs area was shaped like a hand. The thumb was a short coulee running north from the Mackrill place. The index finger came down to the east past Sarvis, Neff, Kozumpeck, Holecek and Kocer. The middle finger drained an area starting near Rattlesnake Butte and running south-eastward past the Sheldon, Kaufman and Hodges homesteads. The ring finger started at the Rasmus Nielsen homestead, down past the Starkweathers, and south by east to join the middle. The little finger had no homesteaders, as it ran south through a railroad section. Teepee rings along its banks showed signs of a previous owner.

Musselshell Hill, a feature of the Mackrill Ranch, exhibited an outcropping of oyster shell imbedded in red clay. This, along with a scattering of other fossils, would lead one to believe the area had once been covered by a shallow tropical sea. In fact the early homesteaders gathered oyster shell and grit for their chickens by robbing ant hills.

Dinosaurian remains found in some sections remind us of former inhabitants of the area in the Cretaceous period of the Mesozoic era some 135,000,000 years ago.

The Howard Coulee part of the Kelley community was largely contained in three drainages running southeastward from the divide separating the Mud Springs drainage. South of Howard Coulee were John Welmer and John Loffel on the North Willow Creek drainage, just about the only exception to the two most populous areas. Schellenger to the north, Tiller to the west, and Lynne Black to the east would pretty well establish the outer boundaries of the Howard Coulee district.

Many of the earliest claims were made on choice flat farmland. Where these claims happened to be on gumbo, the claimants for the most part stayed only long enough to prove up. One of these unfortunates was Kelley, whose name was drawn out of the hat to name the post office.

There does not seem to be any documentation of who first used the prairies and water supplies of the community which became Kelley. Undoubtedly there were sheepmen who found it of value before the influx of homesteaders of 1910 and later. In fact, it has been reported that Jim Wilson, a big sheep man from Flatwillow, lost a whole band of sheep in a blizzard on lower Mud Springs Creek when they drifted over a rather steep bank and were buried under a huge drift.
Most of the community was settled between 1910 and 1915. The post office was established in 1913 and Charles Roth was the first postmaster — the office being in his home (NE 1/4 E 1/4 Sec. 34,12-28). Bohumil (Bill) Holecek was appointed first mail carrier of the route from Musselshell to Kelley. Mail was delivered on Tuesdays and Saturdays by horse-drawn wagon in summer or by sled in winter until the advent of cars — a round trip of about 40 miles.

In 1918 Charles Roth and family left the community. Ray Dreisbach not only took over the Roth farm, but Mrs. Ray (Ora) Dreisbach was appointed postmaster. Except for a period from October 1923 to April 1926, during which time Clarence Dreisbach was named to that office, Ora served until July 1, 1938.

Burgeton

By 1917 there were sufficient settlers in the extreme northwest area of the community to establish the post office of Burgeton on February 28, 1917. Charles L. Burge was the postmaster and the office was located in his home. It gave service to some people who would have been forced to travel 20 miles. With the advent of cars and the exodus of homesteaders, the office was discontinued after only two years, on January 5, 1919.

However, the Burgeton community was to gain a little fame in later years. Although geologists had declared the area around Rattlesnake Butte a poor possibility for oil development, in July of 1938 a Canadian oil company decided to gamble and drill a well in Section 22,13-28. That company later contracted with Watson Oil Company for the well’s completion. The venture encountered a financial deficiency and was ended in August of 1942. (See also HAWKS, HOWARD — Winnett)

But all was not lost. That first attempt had located 437 feet of oil-bearing sand. In January of 1946 Dave Schrock, Harry Schwartz Jr. and E. McKenna moved Ike Taylor’s drilling rig to a spot only 355 feet from the first abandoned well.

The new well, known as Schwartz-Government #1 was located in the SW 1/4 SE 1/4 Sec. 22,13-28. It was completed the first of March in 1946, coming in as free-flowing from a “stray sand” between the second and third Cat Creek sands. An excellent description of the potential of this discovery appeared in the Winnett Times of April 11, 1946:

“...the well is expected to produce better than 100 barrels of 32 gravity oil daily. Disposition of the production has not been announced. One of the phenomena of the new well is that it is practically absolutely free of sulphur. Pennsylvania crude oil has a sulphur content of one-tenth of one percent, the Rattlesnake Butte oil has a sulphur content of less than three-hundredths of one percent, the only oil found in the United States with such a low sulphur content. This factor makes it a crude much in demand by refiners because of the less expensive refining process.”

The second well was drilled on land owned by Mr. Alvin Clausen. He, as homesteaders and other settlers abandoned the area, became the owner of eleven sections of land in and around the awakening oil field.

Of further interest concerning the second well, is the fact that J. Hugo Aronson, the “Galloping Swede”, future Governor of Montana, was responsible for the excavation of the rotary pits before the drilling began. No record on completion of the well was found.

Numerous other explorations were conducted at this site, and there were many dry holes. By 1985 there were about six wells producing from the Amsden sands. One gas well was completed. The gas from it is used for the pumping operation of other wells. Oil continues to be hauled from the production of a few wells in 1989.

Dim Trails

Every area has its share of once important dim trails. By 1914 the Mud Springs Creek area had already built homestead fences across what was known as the Melstone Trail. The homesteaders were still using the southern portion as the main road to Melstone, the principal railhead at that time.

Once a trail was established, it was the practice of teamsters, when the ruts became too deep for the comfortable use of their teams, to move over and straddle one of the ruts. This way the horses had a track to follow and hence helped prevent travelers from becoming lost on the unending prairie. When Clarence Dreisbach fenced his homestead just north of Mud Springs, he fenced across about ten deep ruts. This could lead us to believe that perhaps the trail had been established by the military. Anyway, it was out of use by 1914, and other trails being established.

What was called the Wood Road for the Mud Springs area crossed the creek just below the Hodges buildings. Part of the homestead was left unfenced to accommodate the trail. It was a busy trail as everybody needed posts and firewood, and the only “convenient” source was in the cedar breaks about 15 miles to the east. An additional 10 miles would reach the heavier timber east of the Musselshell River.

When the Milwaukee Railroad built into Winnett, two main trails were established for the Mud Springs area. A branch of the old Melstone Trail picked up much of the eastern part of the area. This led west from the Rasmus Nielsen homestead, north and west past the Schwartz place and across Flatwillow Creek at the Bachman place.

The western area had a trail over the “hogback” past the Naujok homestead, west and north past Swan Munsen and crossing Flatwillow Creek at the Lepper Ranch.

Most of the Howard Coulee area made use of the Kelley-Musselshell stage road and the Flatwillow-Musselshell stage road. All of these trails had their share of gumbo, steep hills and treacherous coulee crossings. This factor alone doubtless caused the abandonment of many homesteads.
Schools of the Kelley Community

The first school in the Kelley community was under the governance of Weede School District #107. Located in Sec. 13-12-28, it had an attendance of at least seven pupils. Ellwood Gross was the teacher from January 4, 1914, to March 1914.

On February 28, 1914, the Kelley and Circle Bar communities petitioned for their own district, to be formed from School District #107. That school district was #121 in the Kelley community. Two schools were established—one at the homestead of Harry Hodges where Nels Fradd was the instructor from September to December 1914; the other one was known as the East School in Sec. 32-13-29 or, later on, the East Burgeton School. Clara Chesley taught a very short term from November 9 to December 4, 1914.

On October 3, 1914, Kelley School District #138 was created from Circle Bar District #121. First trustees were J.W. Dixon, Karel Holecek and Harry Hodges. Then, hardly before the ink was dry on those creation papers, School District #149 was withdrawn on September 15, 1915, from District #138. First trustees were John F. Wingo and Oliver Carr. In the meantime, Kelley School District #138 set up a school called the Holecek School in Sec. 11-11-28 and hired Bertice Greenfield as instructor from April 19 to July 9, 1915; also, they hired Leon H. Cave to teach a term of three months from May 13, 1915, to August 4, 1915, in a small building at the Caldwell homestead in Sec. 32-12-28. This was known as the Castle Rock School.

The Board of Trustees of School District #149 then had the supervision of the former Holecek School. Changing the name to Kocer School, although in the same location, they hired Mr. C.N. Frankville for their district’s first school for a three-month term from September to December, 1915. They also provided a teacher for students in the northeastern part of the community — Mr. Herbert C. Sarvis — in 1915.

Meanwhile in Kelley District #138, plans were proceeding to build two permanent schoolhouses. Site elections were held, a bond election was passed, and bids were let to Mr. Otto Moore, a Kelley homesteader and contractor. He was to build a schoolhouse, coal and wood shed, and two toilets at each site. The total of his bid was $1852. Earl Dreisbach was later paid one dollar for digging the holes and setting up the toilets. Mr. John W. Dixon and John E. Flannigan were each paid one dollar for one acre of land for the school sites. Schools were named Dixon (NE corner of NE½ Sec. 32-12-28) and Flannigan (NE corner of NE¼ Sec. 26-12-28). The buildings were all completed by the spring of 1916.

Homer Richardson was the first teacher in the new Dixon school for a spring term of two months in 1916. C.H. Johnson also taught a two month spring term in the new Flannigan School.

In District #149 a building was placed near the Rocking Chair Butte, about ¼ mile north of the former Kocer School. Mr. Sarvis taught there in 1916, followed by Miss Lily Cooley in 1917. Miss Clara Chesley was teacher for the East Burgeton School. She was succeeded by Stella Paulius in 1917 and Ruth Straight in 1918. That school was then closed.

In 1918 District #149 had closed the Rocking Chair Butte School and built a permanent standard school building on Sheldon land in the SE corner of the SE¼ of Sec. 2-12-28. This was named the Sheldon School. Bertice Greenfield was engaged to teach the nine-month...
term. Also in 1917 Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Minor, a couple in the community who had adopted two children, were far removed from any of the existing schools. District #164 had been formed from part of District #149 and that district provided a teacher, Esther Hodges, to teach in the Minor home in Sec. 14-12-29. School was held in the teacher's bedroom upstairs. In 1923 the Dixon schoolhouse was closed; also the Flannigan School was moved to the SE corner of Sec. 27-12-28, just ¼ mile north of the Kelley Post Office. This was known as the Kelley School. In 1935 there were only two school-age children in the Kelley district. The teacherage, which had been built in 1927, was moved 3 miles west to accommodate those two students. Beatrice Blair was the teacher. It was the last term of the Kelley School. In October of 1935 the Sheldon School closed. That was the end of education in the Petroleum County portion of the Kelley community. During all this time the Small, Biehl, East Side and West Side schools of Musselshell County had educated students of the south end of the community. Schools in both ends often cooperated in presenting Christmas and other programs and track meets. The teachers who taught the twelve schools of the Petroleum County portion of the Kelley community are listed on the following pages.

Kelley School 1925-1926 Back l. to r. Teacher, Mrs. Zula Howell, Carl Andersen, Middle l. to r. Ruth Hodges, Muriel Black, Mary Kroetch, Blanche Howard. Front l. to r. Jack Black, Walter Andersen, Astle Howard

Kelley kids at West Side School in Musselshell County: Back: Two of the Purviance boys; Middle: Martha Loffel, Ruth Loffel, Walter Andersen, Purviance boy; front: Vernon Caldwell, Lida Loffel, Sara Loffel

The county superintendent visits! Back: Co. Supt. May Vontver, Virgene Munson, Louise Brummett; Front: Kathryn Hodges, June Hodges

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Kelley School picnic in rimrocks near Andersens about 1928.

Teachers — Schools — Locations — Dates

CALDWELL OR CASTLE ROCK (SW¼NW½ Sec. 32-12-28)

Dist. 138  Leon H. Cave

Dist. 138  Homer Richardson
         Guy Schellenger
         Ruth Straight
         Ruth Baker
         Mrs. A.C. (Myrtle) Caldwell
         Catherine Barnard
         Emma Johnke

DIXON SCHOOL (NE¼ Sec. 32-12-28)

         5-13-15 to 8-4-15
         5-8-16 to 6-30-16
         9-25-16 to 6-9-17
         9-17-17 to 10-12-17
         11-5-17 to 4-30-18
         9-23-18 to 5-16-19
         10-20-19 to 6-4-20
         9-3-20 to 4-22-21
         9-6-21 to 2-24-22

EAST BURGETON (Sec. 32-13-29)

Dist. 121  Clara Chesley
Dist. 149  H.C. Sarvis
Dist. 149  Clara Chesley
Dist. 149  Stella Paullus
Dist. 149  Ruth Straight

         11-9-14 to 12-4-14
         1915
         1916
         1917
         1918

FLANNIGAN SCHOOL (NE¼ Sec. 26-12-28)

Dist. 138  C.H. Johnson
         Lynette Blair
         Jessie Moore
         Jessie Moore
         Frank Hutchins
         (No School)
         Grace Streich
         (No School)

         5-1-16 to 6-23-16
         9-9-16 to 5-17-17
         9-19-17 to 5-3-18
         9-9-18 to 5-3-19
         10-6-19 to 5-21-20
         1920-21
         9-6-21 to 2-24-22
         1922

School Closed
Moved to Kelley School Site

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HODGES SCHOOL (Sec. 12-12-28)  
Dist. 121 Nels Fradd  
Sept. to Dec., 1914

HOLECEK SCHOOL (SE Corner SE¼ Sec. 11-12-28)  
Dist. 138 Bertice Greenfield  
4-19-15 to 7-9-15

KELLEY SCHOOL (SE¼ Sec. 27-12-28)  
Dist. 138 Amanda O. Swift  
4-9-23 to 7-27-23  
Mrs. Jessie (Howard) Hodges  
9-1-23 to 11-25-23  
Mrs. Mary Feaster  
11-25-23 to 4-29-24  
Mrs. Zula Howell  
1924-25  
Mrs. Zula Howell  
1925-26  
Winnifred Passey  
1926-27  
Harriet Culbertson  
1927-28  
Mrs. Mae Abraham  
1928-29  
Mrs. Good  
1929-30  
Evelyn Melius  
1930-31  
Evelyn Melius  
1931-32  
Evelyn Melius  
1932-33  
Mary Feaster  
1934  
Beatrice Blair (at 30-12-28)  
1935

KOCER SCHOOL (SE Corner SE¼ Sec. 11-12-28)  
Dist. 149 C.N. Frankville  
Sept. to Dec. 1915

MACKRILL SCHOOL (Sec. 14-12-28)  
Dist. 107 Ellwood Gross  
1-4-14 to March 1914

MINOR SCHOOL (E¼ Sec. 14-12-29)  
Dist. 164 Esther Hodges  
11-12-1917 to 3-8-1918

ROCKING CHAIR BUTTE (S½ NE¼ Sec. 11-12-28)  
Dist. 149 Herbert C. Sarvis  
1916-17

Dist. 149 Lily Cooley  
10-28-17 to 6-12-18

SHELDON (OR WEST BURGETON) SCHOOL (SE Corner SE¼ Sec. 2-12-28)  
Dist. 149 Bertice Greenfield  
1918-19  
Evelena Hawkins  
1919-20  
Sylvia Brummett-Maude Hawkins  
1920-21  
Maude Hawkins  
1921-22  
Guy Schellenger  
1922-23  
Mildred Holecck-Louise Schellenberger  
1923-24  
Miss Bowden  
1924-25  
Marie Killham  
1925-26  
Pearl Myers  
1926-27  
Azalea Spaulding  
1927-28  
Cordelia Wagar  
1928-29  
Minnie Sprung-Frances McDaniel  
1929-30  
Mrs. Lamp  
1930-31  
Esther Sauer  
1931-32  
Esther Sauer  
1932-33  
Winnifred Hennebry  
1933-34  
Nellie Cvelbar  
1934-35  
Nellie Cvelbar  
1935—

School Closed in October, 1935
Kelley Residents

Somewhere in the world there is an Indian papoose whose ancestors lived in a teepee outlined by one of the teepee rings. Somewhere there are children whose ancestors traveled on the dim wagon trails near Mud Springs crossing. There is no known record of the activity of those people, so there are no stories to tell about them. But, scattered over the state and nation, and possibly other parts of the world, are the progeny of those known to have resided within the boundaries of the Kelley community during the first seventy years of the twentieth century. It is for them that this history is written. It is dedicated to them, their ancestors, and all who lived or struggled there for years or for a very short time.

ADAMS, Blake Oren (Sec. 20-11-28) Blake, as well as his brother, Pope, and two sisters, Miriam and Kathleen, all homesteaded in the Howard Coulee area. Blake’s wife died when their only son, Reuben, was four years old. Reuben was raised with the help of his aunts, Kathleen Arnold and Miriam Loffel. Blake died from a heart attack while at the Tiller home in Lewistown in 1935. He was buried at Musselshell, Montana.

ADAMS, Kathleen Kathleen was a sister to Blake, Miriam and Pope Adams. She also homesteaded in the same area as her brothers and sister. She married Wayne Arnold, a barber from Musselshell, Montana. They later moved to California.

ADAMS, Miriam (Sec. 8-11-28) Miriam homesteaded between 1910 and 1913 in the Howard Coulee area (south of what was then the south Fergus County line). She taught in Westside School District #57, Musselshell County, for a number of years. A neighboring bachelor figured out that a man should not live on the land alone and was able to convince her of that same fact. As a consequence, she became Mrs. John Loffel.

ADAMS, Pope (Sec. 4-11-28) Pope homesteaded in the Howard Coulee area between 1910 and 1913. At the Fourth of July celebration at Flatwillow in 1921, he won the cracker-eating contest. In 1927 he and Pearl Myers, daughter of a former homestead neighbor, were married. They lived just across the Musselshell County line, but went to Kelley for their mail and were an important part of the Kelley community. Because of Pearl’s teaching experience, their home and her supervision were often used for the administration of the seventh and eighth grade State School Examinations.

They were good farmers, but the dry years and the devastation of their crops by grasshoppers in 1936 forced them to leave. They settled on a farm near Kamiah, Idaho.

Pearl wrote in October 1985 about their times at Kelley and after their move to Kamiah: "My parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Myers, lived near enough after we were married that we could always call on them for help when needed. Neighbors worked together on various tasks like butchering and harvesting. One could always depend on a neighbor to get a doctor or whoever was needed in an emergency. Horse-drawn machinery was used.

"My husband, Pope Adams, passed away in March of 1967. My parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Myers, sister Isa, and brother George, had all passed away before then.

"Our six children are grown and married except for one daughter. All live in various places in the West — one son in Japan. I’m alone in my big house here now — only my youngest daughter, Miriam, and her husband have a house right near. She works as a waitress at a cafe in Kamiah and drops in nearly every day.

"I have thirteen grandchildren. I visit my children and grandchildren during the winter. Quite a few of my kids and grandkids were here to help me celebrate my 82nd birthday on the 20th of August. My middle son Bob and wife Yoshiko were here from Japan, so we all had a great time together. He teaches English in a medical college in Miyazaki City, which is on the South Island of Japan. My oldest son, Bill, is working on building a log house near here. He lives north of San Francisco and comes up here for part of the summer.

"I think the Kelley monthly community club meetings that were held at various homes were the best times of fellowship that I can remember."
ANDERSEN, Anton  (Sec. 30-12-28) Anton was born in Denmark April 5, 1888. He filed for a homestead near Kelley in 1913. Also in 1913 he married Emilie M. Johnson of Minnesota. They had three boys — Carl, Wilbert and Walter.

Carl attended grade school in the Kelley area and graduated from eighth grade from the Kelley School in 1929. He attended Winnett High School for a time and worked at the Arlsto Theatre. He later married and had one child. The Winnett Times of May 17, 1929, alluded to some of his interests in grade school:

"The dinosaur relics in the Kelley country, by the way, are beginning to attract considerable attention. Last year Mr. Cottom, the Sunday school missionary, interested several persons in Lewistown in these finds and members of the Lewistown High School faculty, so we are told, came out and brought some of the bones to the High School Museum. This spring Rex Haight, principal of the Grass Range High School, whose hobby is geology and archeology, has already made a trip to Kelley to see for himself the dinosaurian remains.

"It is one of the Kelley school boys, Carl Andersen, who is the original discoverer of the prehistoric finds."

"Wilbert was born March 6, 1918, in Melstone. He attended Kelley grade school and graduated from the eighth grade there in 1930. He went into the service of his country and, in so doing, lost his life on August 2, 1943. At twenty-five years of age he was laid to rest in Hawaii."

Walter was born June 8, 1922. For grades one through four he attended Kelley School. Grades five and six were spent at West Side School in Musselshell County — five miles south of his home. For grades seven and eight a school was established that was only ½ mile south of his house. He graduated from Musselshell High School in 1940. He worked on the family ranch that summer and then joined the Air Force. He was discharged in 1945 and returned to Stevensville. He married Ella Reich. They have two daughters, Mary Sanders and Shirley Campbell; two sons, Victor and Dan. All were born at Hamilton, Montana.


Howard Hodges reminisced about the Anderevens: "My mother assisted at the birth of their first child, Carl, and spent about a week with them. She didn't want anything for her services, but Anton was real proud and insisted she take a new saddle he had brought with him. Anton was a very hard worker. Except for the terrible drought in the 1930's, he would have succeeded, if anyone could. They sold their ranch and moved to Stevensville, Montana, in 1940."

An article in the Winnett Times of September 25, 1925 stated: "Mr. Andersen has just completed a modern five-room farm home costing in the neighborhood of $5000. The new home has a full basement with a coal chute, furnace room, and all modern conveniences. It is a home anyone could be proud of, and upon its completion was paid for by the returns from Mr. Andersen's farm. Mr. Andersen is a Petroleum County farmer who has solved the farming problems of this section and makes a good profit from his farming operations each year."

Gravel for the concrete work for the Andersen home was hauled by wagon from Mud Springs Creek, a distance of nearly 8 miles.

Mr. Andersen served as school trustee of Kelley School District #138 in 1923.

BARNARD, Russell The Kelley items in the 10-7-21 issue of the Winnett Times stated: "Mr. and Mrs. Russell Barnard had a sale on Thursday of last week. The family will move soon to Illinois. Mr. Barnard's former home, to make their home there. The community regrets losing this splendid family, and the good wishes of all will go with them to their new home." Mrs. Russell Barnard's people lived in Lewistown.

BIEHL, Fred (Sec. 23-11-28) Mr. and Mrs. Fred Biehl owned a very large ranch in the Kelley community, in fact, their ranch and home was Kelley's show place. They had a beautiful two-story white house equipped with electricity. There were also large barns and sheds and pit silos. They were the first people within a large area to install milking machines; and a news item in the Winnett Times of 1923 stated that the family was making an "average of $100 a month on cream checks alone."

Fred Biehl owned a threshing machine. His outfit was pulled, and the separator was powered, by a huge iron-wheeled, steam-powered engine. He not only threshed in the Kelley community, but in some years took his equipment to the Judith Basin and worked there the whole harvest season.

Their's was a large family and it was quite traumatic.
when, in 1924, the family was quarantined with smallpox.

Their home was a popular gathering place for the social events of the community — Fourth of July celebrations, dances, and whenever a large space was needed. Young neighborhood children were intrigued by the electric lights and other modern conveniences of the home.

In 1925 Gladys Biehl married Frank Dixon, brother of Ora Dreisbach, the Kelley postmaster. That occasion called for the big charivari with a dance following.

In 1926 Mr. and Mrs. Biehl, accompanied by the rest of their family (with the exception of Gladys), moved to Moore, Montana. The community was sorry to lose this hard-working and sociable family.

**BLACK, Lynne W.** (Sec. 6-11-29) Lynne was born January 16, 1894, in Clinton, Minnesota. As a young man he came to Melstone, Montana, where he clerked in a grocery store. While there he met Gladys L. Pfaff who was working as a stenographer in her uncle’s land office. She had been born Oct. 29, 1894, at Inver Grove, Minnesota. They were married May 29, 1916. The first addition to their family arrived March 5, 1917, when a girl named Muriel Alison joined them in Melstone. A little over a year later Jack L. made his appearance. He was born in Miles City, Montana, October 28, 1918. The family moved to Lynne’s father’s homestead. There James K. joined them on February 9, 1923 — born in his grandfather’s homestead house.

Due to the great distance from school and other circumstances, the Black family moved to the John McColgan homestead before the winter of 1927-28. There they were only a little more than a mile northeast of the school. Here Wayne Joseph was born at home on October 23, 1929.

An article in the Winnett Times of May 17, 1929 honored the artistic ability of Muriel: "Muriel Black, a pupil in the Kelley school, is gifted with much artistic ability. Her work in drawing and water colors is outstanding for a ten-year-old child. One medium which is probably original with her is native gumbo. She makes a thin paste of gumbo and water, smears it evenly over a stiff pasteboard and when the mixture has dried, she tints it variously to make sky and ground. With this as a background, she skilfully arranges native mosses, weeds, and thin, flat pebbles in the semblance of trees, shrubbery, and mountain ranges.

"We have never seen anything like these landscapes and they struck us as being both remarkable in composition and beautiful in appearance." (Quote by Mae Vontver, Petroleum County Superintendent of Schools)

December of 1929 found the Blacks moving to the Kroetch place, as Mr. Kroetch wanted to go to Spokane, Washington, for the winter and wanted someone on his place. When he returned, Blacks moved to the Flannigan homestead. Here Joan Elizabeth was born September 1, 1932. (See BLACK -Winnett)

Muriel Black contributed the following memories: "Our school days were quite enjoyable. Besides those necessary lessons, we played Dare Base, Last Couple Out, Tag, Baseball, and in the winter there was always Fox and Goose in the snow and Snow Balling (sometimes Bawling!).

"We had track meets in the spring with other schools. One time my mother and Mary Kroetch’s mother made twin dresses for us. We wore them to one track meet and took first and second in the race, but because we looked so much alike, the judges said they couldn’t tell who was first and wouldn’t give us our 1st and 2nd prizes! We were just a little bit put out over that.

"Once in a while we would stay overnight with one of our friends. What fun that was. Of course we would really be ‘buddies’ with each other all that day and the next, at least.

"When my brother and I started school in the fall of 1928, I was seven and he was five years old. My folks held me back a year and started Jack a year early, as we had to ride horseback four and a half miles over a prairie trail and they didn’t want me to go alone.

"Most of the Kelley pupils rode horseback to school. We would put our horses in the barn and sometimes let them loose to clean up the grass in the school yard. Of course the yard gate was always supposed to be closed. But one day someone was a little careless and our horse got out and went home! Well, four and a half miles was quite a way to walk, so Carl Andersen and John Kroetch were kind enough to take us most of the way home on their horses. Everyone was pretty careful about the gate after that!

"One day we came home to find our folks had gone to town or to a neighborhood sale some distance from our place. We put our horse away, then played outside with the animals until dark. The folks still didn’t come, so we went into the house and waited. We weren’t allowed to light a lamp or fire. I don’t remember of being afraid until we heard a knock on the door. We were about to crawl under the bed to hide, but I finally got nerve enough to ask, ‘Who’s there?’ A voice answered, ‘Howard Hodges’.\[Image\]
Were we ever glad to see him! We knew him as about our nearest neighbor of three or four miles away.

"He came in and lit the lamp and started a fire and made good company for us. I asked him if he would like some coffee, as I had heard my Mother ask people that. I knew nothing about making coffee and I'm sure Howard knew it too, as he kindly said, 'No Thanks'!

'The folks soon arrived and I wonder what went through their minds when they came over the hill and saw a light in the house. When they saw the situation, they were very glad that Howard had stopped in. They were so much later getting home than they had planned. We had a pleasant evening all safe and sound; and I'm sure my mother made coffee!

'We had hard times and dry years and dust storms, outdoor plumbing (two and three holers), good old 'Monkey' Ward and Sears catalogs, and a shoveled-out path in winter. But we did have some great times, too. I'm glad to have lived in that period of time in Petroleum County. We learned to cope!"

BLACKSTONE, Thomas (Sec. 11-11-28) These homestead neighbors were industrious farmers and had one of the best flowing springs in the community. Mr. Blackstone was a catcher for the Kelley Baseball Team. In 1925 the Blackstones decided they could do better for themselves elsewhere. They had an auction sale and the community lost some good neighbors. They moved to Billings where they later operated a dairy farm.

BRUMMETT, John Wesley "Hardy" (Sec. 34-13-28) Mr. Brummett was born December 22, 1884 in Longwood, Missouri. On August 20, 1912, he was married to Marie Sylvia Manseau, who had been born on August 29, 1885. In 1915 they moved to the new little town of Winnet where Mr. Brummett was in the insurance and real estate business. The first Catholic church service was held in their home on May 9, 1916. On January 22, 1918, Marie Louise came to enhance their home.

In 1919 or 1920, they bought the homestead of Rasmus "Swede" Nielsen and Tony Nielsen of Kelley and lived in Rasmus' two-room cabin. They later built a much better house on the hill southeast of the cabin. Mr. "Hardy" Brummett went into the sheep business. He had a bad stroke of luck one winter when his band was caught in a blizzard and drifted before the storm to the Hodges home. Throughout the storm, the sheep had to be left there; and because of the scarcity of feed, many of the sheep weakened and died. Hardy told the Hodges boys that they could have the pelts of the sheep that died if the boys would do the skinning. When the boys reported that they had gotten six or eight pelts one day, Mr. Brummett (always liking to give young folks a break) said, "That's nice."

Mrs. Brummett was a classic lady who loved young folks and music. She was a most gracious hostess whatever the occasion. She spoke French fluently and never conversed with her daughter, Louise, in English. What a wise lady she was to so educate her daughter! In later years Louise's son attended school in France, and Louise and her husband, Thurman, visited him there.

The Winnet Times of December 21, 1925 stated that Mrs. Brummett translated a French letter which Treasurer Kindt had received. This helped to settle an estate of an American soldier who was killed in World War I.

Brummett's home was a gathering place for many occasions. They had an RCA Victrola and many records of the finest classical music. Louise recalled a dance that was held in their home one time when someone suggested that if soap flakes were sprinkled on the floor it would make it more slippery for dancing. This was done, and it wasn't long before Mr. Brummett had to go up on the roof and take the coffee can off the chimney and open all the doors and windows before people could even breathe, let alone, dance! Mr. and Mrs. Brummett were the first in the community to dance the "Charleston."

Seventh and eighth grade examinations were sometimes given in the Brummett home. Mrs. Brummett was the teacher of the Sheldon School for part of the year of 1920-21. Because she became ill, Maude Hawkins completed the school term.

Except for two brief periods during the winter when Brummetts were feeding their sheep on a ranch at Flatwillow (where Louise attended the Glaze School), all of Louise's elementary education was received at the Sheldon School. She rode her trusted and beloved pinto pony, Nellie, or Tony, a white horse. She attended Winnett High School for a time, but graduated from the Sacred Heart Academy at Missoula, Montana. She graduated from the University of Montana School of Pharmacy in 1941.

Louise married Thurman English who was a lifetime employee of the Great Western Sugar Company. They lived in Billings, Montana, and their four children — Leslie, Martin, Linda, and Donald — were all born there.

On September 11, 1942, Mr. Brummett died very suddenly at St. Joseph's Hospital in Lewistown from a blood clot. Burial was in Lewistown. Mrs. Brummett later took an apartment in Billings.

M. Gabrielle Sierret and Marie Sylvia Brummett
Caldwell taught the Dixon School from October 20, 1919 to June 4, 1920.
Frank and Inez both attended Winnett High School. Inez graduated from there in 1926. She married Theodore Bachman and moved to Kirkland, Washington.
Caldwells later lived in Winnett for a short time where Mrs. Caldwell was active in the Methodist Church and Sunday school. They left Winnett in 1938.

CARR, Oliver (Sec. 4-12-29) The Carrs were wonderful community people and tried their best to make a good living but the land they owned was not very productive. Mrs. Carr was a charter member of the Kelley Social Club and Mr. Carr was an important member of the Kelley Baseball Team, as well as a school trustee of District #149 when that district was first created from District #138 in 1915.

Bill Carr, born September 18, 1900, was a son of Oliver and an excellent drop-kicker on the Winnett High School football team. Anna Carr was born December 28, 1902.

CARSON, Armour (Sec. 28-13-29) Armour lived in the Kelley community but in 1921 he moved to the Weede area where their daughter, Elizabeth would be closer to school. Mrs. Carson was a local mid-wife.
Elizabeth was born February 18, 1915; James, in 1918; and Armour Jr. in 1922.

CARSON, Charles (Sec. 2-12-29) Charles was born in Hebron, Indiana, in 1878. He homesteaded first in North Dakota. In 1912 he came to Montana and spent a year working around the Melstone section. The following year he came to central Montana and settled in the Mud Springs area. He never married. Charles died in Winnett in March of 1939. The funeral service was in the Methodist Church. Rev. Ellen Rose was the minister.

CASSWELL, Russell (Sec. 28-12-28) Russell married Marvel Flannigan, daughter of another homesteader. They were active community members. Russell was a school trustee of District #138 in 1919. Like many others, their hard work didn’t offer enough returns. So on November 21, 1924, a surprise party was given, as Casswells were on the move to Minnesota.

CHESLEY, Seth N. (Sec. 12-13-29) Clara was a charter member of the Mud Springs Social Club. She was also teacher of the East Burgenot School in 1914 and 1916. The Fergus County census reveals a daughter, Rose, born February 7, 1920.

CLEVELAND, John (Sec. 2-11-28) John was a bachelor who visited in the community and often attended the community club. He, as some others, lived in Musselshell County, but was within the circle of the Kelley community.

COOLEY, Claude There was not information to be found on this family, but a news item in the Winnett Times affirmed their existence in the community by stating that “they moved on to the Pete Edwards’ place September 27, 1929.”
CULBERTSON, Harriet Mrs. Culbertson taught the Kelley School the term of 1927-1928. The Culbertsons owned a farm on the Musselshell River near Mosby. They had a son, Harold. Mrs. Culbertson taught first and second grades in Winnett during the school year of 1952-53.

DALY, John E. (Sec. 20-13-28) John filed on his homestead in the Kelley area on January 19, 1918. On April 29, 1921 he filed his intent to make final three-year proof to establish claim. His witnesses were Anton Schwarz, Christian L. Schwarz, Charles L. Burge and Leo C. Bachman — all of Winnett, Montana.

DEAN, Lester W. (Sec. 34-13-29) Mr. Dean lived on what was known to many inhabitants of the community as the "wood road." If anyone went east to the Musselshell River to get firewood or posts, they went by the Dean place.

He was somewhat of a local veterinarian because he was good at taking care of sick animals — horses especially. It is doubtful that he received much, if any compensation for doctoring sick animals, but he was a fine neighbor to anyone who needed his help.

He owned many fine horses and always used a beautifully matched team to pull his buggy. A portly man, he nearly filled the buggy seat, and how his well-trained horses did step!

Mr. Dean was a gentleman in every sense of the word — even to having exquisite table manners. Young folks were awe-struck at the very neat way in which he could line peas up on his knife and get them to his mouth. And he did not use honey as did the unknown poet of the verse:

"I eat my peas with honey,
I've done it all my life.
It makes the peas taste funny,
But it keeps them on my knife."

For all of his kind neighborly acts, he was not always fairly treated. During his absence in the fall of 1924, someone stole all of his poultry. However, nearly all people of the Kelley and Weede communities congregated at his home in the fall of 1926. It was his sixty-fifth birthday and they came to show their respect of a very fine gentleman.

Lester shipped some of his beautiful horses to Wisconsin in November of 1926, then traveled during the winter of 1926. His daughter, Mrs. Willbrook, and her husband and child of Payette, Idaho, returned home with him in March of 1927. In 1927 his sister-in-law, Mrs. Clara Bradner, entertained the Kelley community club at his home in honor of his sixty-sixth birthday.

In spite of acquiring very poor soil for his homestead, he stuck it out to the very end. He was reported to have been very ill and is believed to have passed away in 1928 or early 1929. School census reports a son of L. W. Dean whose birthday was January 10, 1900.

DEFRANCE, Guy Erwin (Sec. 10-12-29) Guy was a neighbor to the south of Otto Moore and was one of the men who left their land to serve in World War I.

DILLON BROTHERS, Joe and Bill (Sec. 27-12-28) These two men certainly had high hopes and much faith in the country's ability to produce. They were not homesteaders. They purchased a railroad section. Then they built a house, a barn and their own private grain elevator which was powered with a diesel engine. It is very doubtful that it was used very much. They were bachelors and the Winnett Times makes note of a brother Mike visiting them frequently. Joseph was a trustee of District #138, Kelley, in 1922.

DIXON, John W. (Sec. 32-12-28) John and Anna Dixon came to Montana from Kansas in 1913. Mr. Dixon was an energetic farmer and also a member of the first Kelley baseball team. Being interested in the school system, he served as one of the first trustees when Kelley School District #138 was created in 1914. He was clerk of the District in 1917.

Mr. and Mrs. Dixon were the parents of thirteen children — Clay, Ed, Ora, Olive, John, Blanche, Lewis, Willie, Everett, Charles, Albert, Frank and Leroy.

Olive, John, Blanche and Charles went to California to live. Everett returned to Kansas to work and to go to high school in April of 1923. John homesteaded southeast of his folks in Musselshell County. Albert and his wife and their baby Alma lived in the Dixon schoolhouse for a short time after that school closed. Willie was in the service at Hoboken, New Jersey, and was just ready to go overseas when he contracted the flu and died. Lewis homesteaded in the Kelley area in 1911 or 1912, even before his folks arrived. In later years, he was working around Lewistown, got sick and died within a month of his brother Willie's death.

Ora married Ray Dreisbach in Kansas. Then they, too, homesteaded in the same section as the Dixons. Frank married Gladys Biehl in April 1925. In 1926 they moved to the Biehl place near Kelley, but soon thereafter rented it to Mr. and Mrs. Otto Karstedt, and he and Gladys moved to Danvers. Frank worked on the Sisson and other ranches. In 1931 they moved into Lewistown where he was shop supervisor at the county road department. Frank worked there until his retirement. He passed away at 81 years of age on November 3, 1981.

Frank and Gladys had three girls — Muriel, Ruth and Ann.

Mr. John Dixon passed away at his Kelley homestead on March 27, 1923, just after his 73rd birthday. After his death, his wife Anna moved to California to be near her California children. She died there and was buried near Hemet, California.
DREISBACH, Clarence and DREISBACH, Earl
(Sec. 8-12-28) Clarence Dreisbach wrote his biography, "From Pioneer Days Toward the Close of a Victorious Life." Excerpts and quotes were taken from it to compose this history. It is hoped that his book can be bound in some form and placed in the Winnet library.

Clarence and his brother Earl came by train from Kansas and arrived at Kelley on February 9, 1913. As Clarence said, "We are seeking a home, and though we may meet with considerable trouble and hardships, we're going to toil diligently and make the best of it. There are hundreds of sections of land without a house on them but in our location (known as Mud Springs), we have quite a number of houses, from a 10 x 12 to a three-room house. The distance to town is 20 miles and there are no bridges or macadamized roads, so we will have experiences that will never be forgotten.

"Arriving at Joseph Holecek's little dwelling February 9, 1913, after traveling by wagon road for nine hours, we felt rather weary and much disgusted with the looks of the country. It looked at first to us like a hard place from which to select a home; but after talking with our friend, Lewis Dixon, his companion, Mr. Brucher, and some of the neighbors, and tramping over the country for several weeks, we came to the conclusion it was a good enough place for anyone to live, even though our mail box was 20 miles away and there were bad roads and no telephones."

The two brothers brought no stock of any kind with them — no chickens, cows or even horses. When they wished to go anywhere, they walked or caught rides with someone else. From Clarence's story, it seems that other people in the Kelley area at that time were: Roths (at the post office), Kocer, Arthur Millers, Slunskesko, McCollens, Lewis Dixon, Joseph Holecek, Mackrills and Hodges.

Bunking with their friend and shoe-string relative, Lewis Dixon, they first worked at building a house for Earl. Clarence, at the same time, began planting trees for his future home. He would get a few small ones each time they went to the "woods" for firewood or poles. For protection, in case of a storm, Earl had built a small cave. They carried water for drinking, or watering trees from a spring they dug out about ¼ mile from their claim.

At the end of May, 1913, Earl and Clarence, who still didn't have a house, left all their belongings in the care of Mr. Slunskesko who was going to build Earl's house. They then caught a ride to Lewistown with a drayman. There they hoped to find work so they would have money to purchase what they needed to run a farm. At the Lepper Ranch they became bogged in the mud as they crossed the creek. However, with the help from the ranch hands and an overnight stay, they arrived in Flatwillow by noon. The next day they bought food from the only store for the rest of their journey. The second night out they camped near Forest Grove.

Clarence found work on the McMillan ranch near Glengary. There he even milked cows — a task that he'd sworn never to do. Earl found other work. At the end of four months, they prepared to return to their claim. They had money to purchase a team of horses (a matched set of grays), a new wagon, and a wagon load of machinery, groceries and supplies.

Upon arriving home, they found that Mr. Slunskesko had completed Earl's little two-story 12'x14' house. It was nearly filled by the time they got all their purchases into it. They had no barn for their two new horses but had purchased blankets for them. Their next order of business was to go to the "woods" after poles for a barn. Clarence went to get the load of poles. It took longer than he thought it would, so it was dark when he traveled home. Without any track, he became lost. He would never have found his way but for the fact that his brother knew of Clarence's tendency to travel and so he had put a lantern on a pole as a beacon for him.

They found a spring ½ mile from their house and could now haul water in a barrel with their horses.

Earl had brought a Graphophone with him from Kansas. People enjoyed it, so they often took it with them when they were invited to parties.

Clarence was anxious to have a house of his own so he dug a little basement. In December of 1913, he purchased a small building from Mr. McCollens. Clarence said, "It looked more like a buggy shed than a dwelling."

On Christmas Day 1913, the two brothers were invited to a big Christmas dinner at Roths — at the Kelley Post Office. Clarence had to walk the 8½ miles to get there. Earl had gone earlier with the team and wagon to the Ray Dreisbach home. There were 29 guests. After dinner a well-decorated little Christmas tree, lit with candles, was placed on the table. The shades were pulled while the children of the community presented a short program. In the afternoon the older people and youngsters went home. The young folks were invited to stay for supper and games.

Clarence worked again in the Judith Basin in the summer of 1915, and by that winter had finished a very nice barn for his homestead.
The two men were doing well but they were getting very lonely. They wanted to have a family and they both made up their minds to get married. As Clarence wrote, "Neither of us had any special one chosen, but we both got busy, and in a little less than two month's time, I made a long-distance trip to Kansas, got married, and landed back at the claim." Clarence met and married Mable Miller Stambaugh on November 20, 1916. Mable was a widow who had one small girl, Bernice Stambaugh, eight years of age. Clarence wrote back to Earl at Kelley of Mable's friend, Minnie Lay, and encouraged him to come meet her. "Unknown lovers met and their plans were set. Six days later they were married." Both families returned to Kelley — Clarence at Christmas, and Earl a few days later.

Clarence reminisces: "I will first mention a few things briefly of some of the things we did after the first year of homestead life. We started to raise a family. We worked long days and every day looked forward with great pleasure to the great day to come when we could have about everything to our heart's desires, added to the 240 acres of land that Uncle Sam gave us. Besides the many long days of hard labor for thirteen years, however, we had many good times together in our home life as well as in social gatherings with our so-called neighbors as far as 8 miles away.

"We walked or drove a team hitched to a farm wagon until we purchased a Model-T that was almost ready for junk. We gave a man $150 in trade (composed of corn and livestock) besides some cash. He said he wanted to treat us right as he expected to deal with us again sometime, but he never did. After the deal was made, he said to me, 'Come over and drive it home.' I tried to follow the instructions he gave me. He had a wire gate a half mile from the house to go through. I thought I could get it under control before I drove that ½ mile's distance, but I didn't. I just opened the gate with the car, jumped a small ditch on the other side, and got it stopped finally. Then after giving it a good cranking up, I started down the road. Before I hardly knew it, I was a ½ mile's distance down the road and found myself parked on a small bridge with a front wheel hanging over the edge of it. I don't know how I stopped it, but it stopped. After getting it back again in line with the road, I mended a tire the wire gate had punctured and on down the road I went. I'll just finish this part of my story by saying — though the distance was only 10 miles. I didn't make the entire distance that day, but went back a half mile's distance and pulled it in with a team of faithful horses the following day.

"Speaking of long days, I tell folks sometimes I worked some 26 hours a day. Of course that is impossible, but sometimes it took that long to make a round trip to town with a four-horse team with grain, counting the time I left my bed till I was back in it. Just the same, I loved the dear old homestead until the time came for us to leave. Three precious children had come into our home to accompany our girl Bernice — Erma 11, Marvin 9, and Sylvia 3. The older ones dreaded to leave the 'grand old' saddle ponies that they rode to and from school and over the free range country.

"We had a lot of horses, cattle, hogs, and sheep, besides our poultry and farm implements. We talked about having a public sale. Then we just talked and talked, until one day we just got our bills posted. We had a very good public sale. With some of the proceeds, we purchased a small solid tire, two-wheeled trailer to load on all we had left except a small amount of cash, after paying our honest debts. We didn't know where we were going, but we had our 'dear old Sunflower State, Kansas' In mind, where my wife and I both had spent our childhood days with our parents and loved ones. Yet we didn't know each other while we were there.

"Dropping back to the old unfinished homestead shack, I will say that I never had much desire to go back. We didn't look back after we started; just looked straight ahead. The solid rubber tires on the trailer didn't stand the jolt very far, but we got nearly to Billings and there
had to get another set of wheels for it. It was rather a difficult task and made a long day of it on our first day's journey, yet indeed we felt very fortunate in securing the wheels to fit our trailer.

"After a good night's rest in Billings, we continued on our 'don't know where' journey! It was a wonderful trip for all of us over the mountains. God has certainly planned a great world for us to live in. We can go any direction we wish to, and see things we had never even dreamed of. We enjoyed the scenery at Thermopolis, Wyoming, very much — the hot springs and other things of nature. We stayed overnight there and traveled on in the direction of our old home state, sunny Kansas, but somehow we ran into the grand old city of Cheyenne, Wyoming. We stayed there overnight. This was during the month of August in 1930.

"Folks in Cheyenne are like folks in other places. They wanted to sell us a house the following day after our arrival. We didn't have enough to make the man's required payment, so he just took what we had, leaving us with the empty house, a small trailer load of things to put in it, several gravel piles, and $100 cash. There was myself, wife, three children, and the fourth one, Mary Jane, who came to us seven months later — six of us and almost an empty house. I had no job and couldn't get one in town."

Clarence did obtain work on a farm, and very soon thereafter secured a job with the Union Pacific Railroad. He worked for them until he was of retirement age. Mable died in March, 1949; Clarence in May, 1971. Both were buried in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Bernice attended both Sheldon and Kelley schools and graduated from the eighth grade in 1926. She married Wesley Hansen of Petrolia. He was killed in a truck accident near Lewistown, Montana, in 1931. Their baby, Zula, was only two months old. Bernice and the baby moved to Cheyenne to be near Clarence and Mable. Seven years later Bernice was killed when her car was hit by a drunken driver. Zula then made her home with the Dreisbachers until she married in 1948.

Erma attended Sheldon and Kelley schools until the fall of 1930 and finished elementary and high school at Cheyenne, Wyoming. In 1942 she married Roy Hoffman, who was in the service and who later worked for Mountain States Telephone Co. until retirement. They had one daughter, Peggy, born in 1945; and twin sons, Randy and Ronald, born in 1949. They have been active workers with many church and youth groups. They live in Arizona.

Marvin also attended Kelley and Sheldon schools and graduated from Cheyenne High School. He worked a few years, then joined the Marines, serving with them during the war. After the war he went to Alaska for a few years to earn enough to go to Oklahoma A and M, where he studied and became a veterinarian. He established his own hospital just out of Salinas, California, where he practiced until his death by heart attack in 1975 at fifty-five years of age. Marvin and his wife Joy had no children.

Sylvia is now Sylvia Mills. She has one child, Kim. Mary Jane Holmes has three children — Jerry, Patty, and Tom. Zula Samuelson has three children — Michael, Lynn, and Peter. Earl and Minnie had no children. Minnie became ill, and in 1922 they had an auction sale and moved back to Kansas.

DREISBACH, Daniel Raymond (Sec. 32-12-28) Daniel Raymond Dreisbach was born November 12, 1881 in Nebraska City, Nebraska. He married Ora Dixon of Kansas on October 22, 1902. On April 1, 1905, Mabel Isabel didn't fool them when she cried. She was really there. She was born in Grantville, Kansas; and on December 31, 1908, Orval arrived just in time to usher in the New Year.

In 1913 Ray and Ora and family left Kansas and filed on a homestead in Montana. Ray's two brothers, Clarence and Earl, and Ora's brother, Lewis Dixon, had already filed on claims in what was to be the Kelley community. There in a tar-paper shack, Marie Alice was born on September 19, 1915. Her grandmother, Mrs. John W. Dixon, was in attendance. Also, a nurse, Mrs. Oscar Rutledge of Flatwillow, came and stayed a few days.

In about 1918 the Roth family, who had been in charge of the Kelley Post Office since it's beginning, left the area. Ray Dreisbach then took over their place and Ora became the postmaster. Ray was trustee of the Kelley School District #138 in 1915. Ora served as School District Clerk for five years, from 1918 to 1923.

October of 1923 found Ray suffering with stomach ulcers so the family decided to go to California for special treatment. The Clarence Dreisbach's moved onto Ray's place to care for the Kelley Post Office. Mabel had married Warren Storer of Musselshell. Marie wrote of the trip: "That was an exciting trip for an eight-year-old. We started out in rain. Between Billings and Livingston there was one set of tracks in the mud, axle deep to our Chevy touring car with isinglass curtains. When we met a car, the men would lift one car out to the side until the other got by and then lifted it back into the ruts.

"We camped along the way in a tent. My bed was the back seat of the car. My brother slept on the running board, with a board attached to make it wider, which was folded up during the day. Mama and Daddy had folding canvas cots. Mama cooked on a little folding stove using 'canned' heat. We had lots of Campbell's pork and beans.

"We came back in July of 1924. Then we stayed on the homestead for a while. We had a good barn there with room in the end for hay. I can remember how good the smell of hay was when we went into the barn. We cut hay with a horse-drawn mower, raked it with a dump rake, then pitched it on a wagon by hand with a pitchfork; and then we pitched it off with a fork onto the stack and the person on the stack put it in place.

"When we harvested, we used a binder pulled by horses. The binder tied the wheat in bundles and kicked it out. Then we'd go along and shock several bundles together to keep the heads off the ground. When it was all cut it had to be hauled in and pitched into the
threshing machine. Usually many neighbors came and helped. Then the threshing machine would move to another farm and the men went there to help.

"In the spring of 1926 we moved back to the Kelley Post Office and Mama became postmaster again. Dad put in a gas pump when cars became plentiful. The gas station was installed and periodically checked by Vic Weiloff of Winnett. We also kept a few groceries for the convenience of the neighbors.

"When I was little, we got a Sears Roebuck catalog. I would spend hours looking through it. I'd make out an order — I'm sure it was never more than fifty cents, but they always sent what I ordered. One time I got a pair of isinglass glasses for my doll.

"I remember that at Christmas time Fannie Slunesko would get a package from relatives in Chicago. If Fannie came after the mail, she would open the package and give me some of the candy that was always in it."

In the fall of 1925 Ray hauled a whole truckload of pumpkins and squash into Winnett and had a ready buyer for the Enterprise Meat Market. Ray owned his own threshing machine and was one of the community threshers.

The Ray Dreisbachs kept the Kelley Post Office until its closure on July 1, 1938. They then sold their land back to the government; and in April of 1940, they had an auction sale of farm implements and household items. They left Kelley for good. Their home was moved to Roundup.

The Dreisbachs took another trip to California, this time just the two of them. They went in a pickup with a house built in the box and visited the San Francisco Fair and traveled throughout Southern California. On returning, they moved to Roundup, where Ray passed away December 13, 1945 and Ora on January 30, 1960. Both are buried in Miner's Cemetery in Roundup.

Mabel, their daughter, was born in Kansas in 1905 and came to Montana with her family in 1913. She and Orval both attended the Flannigan School. Mabel graduated from eighth grade there in 1921. She did not go to high school. She and Warren "Bud" Storer were married September 6, 1923. They had four children — Betty Louise, Mary Alice, Doris Raymond and Robert. Bud was a dance musician and was well known as he played for dances all over this part of the country.

Orval was born in Kansas December 31, 1908. He attended Flannigan and Castle Rock schools and graduated from the eighth grade at Dixon School. The next year Amanda Swift taught at the Kelley School and taught Orval his first year of high school subjects. From 1923 and 1924 he attended high school in Hemet, California. There Orval spent weekends and after-school hours picking oranges. When his folks returned to Kelley, Orval attended Winnett High School. He graduated from Winnett High School in 1926 and from the University of Montana in 1933, with a degree in accounting. He became a CPA in 1946, ending up as a tax specialist when he retired. He married Marion Butchart in 1934. They had two sons — Warren Glen and Leroy Earl. Warren Glen was drowned at age twenty-nine in a sailing accident.

When Orval retired in October 1971, he and his wife Marion spent four months visiting Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific Islands. Marion died of cancer in 1975.

In 1977 Orval married Jovita McEachern. They took a trip to Jasper, Lake Louise, and Glacier Park. They went to Winnett, across to where Dreisbachs used to live at Kelley, and on to Musselshell. Orval stated on his history return: "Whereas there used to be 100 families in the Kelley area. I saw only one house as we came through. That was up where the Munsons used to live. What a change!"

In answering his history questionnaire on October 8, 1985, Orval stated that he was 77 and having to slow up a bit. He passed away on January 7, 1986 after suffering a heart attack on Christmas Eve. Committal was in the Mausoleum of Acacia Memorial Park in Seattle, Washington. Marie attended the Dixon School her first two years. Orval and she drove the buggy in good weather and a sled in the winter. The teachers (Emma Johnke in 1921-1922, and Amanda Swift in 1922-1923) boarded with the Dreisbachs and rode to school with them. Marie’s third year was spent in Hemet, California. Marie graduated from the eighth grade from Kelley School in 1929. She went to Musselshell High School for her first two years of high school.

Because Orval was going to Missoula to college, he and Marie rented an apartment there and they both worked. Marie wrote: "I went to a lady's house every night after supper. I washed up all the dishes and looked after their two kids. That year I started high school in a beautiful building about three blocks from our apartment. Before the end of September a fire broke out and gutted the school. We high school students went to a grade school for some classes, out to the university for some, and
wherever they could find a vacant room. So that didn’t turn out so good. Lots of walking!”

For her senior year, Marie attended Winnett High School and graduated in 1933. She and Emmett Eden were married in June of 1933. They lived in Musselshell for a time and then moved to Joseph, Oregon where they operated a motel. Emmett was killed when struck by a car while getting his mail in the fall of 1988. (See also EDEN — Cat Creek)

EASLEY, Thomas (Sec. 4-12-28) Thomas “Dad” Easley was an early settler, coming here from Lewistown. He had been a friend of Charles Russell. He had a son, Jesse Lloyd, who lived with him and a daughter who was married to James Chapman of Lewistown. She and the children visited “Dad” and Jesse often.

Jesse wasn’t happy with farming in an ordinary manner. He fixed up a horse-drawn outfit and, with the help of a carpenter’s level and sticks, did a very good job of terracing the hills on their farm. He plowed furrows and had a machine made of lumber that would slip the furrow out.

Jesse had to be put in the hospital in Lewistown because of an illness which eventually affected his mind. He was also admitted to the hospital in Warm Springs for a time. In 1927 “Dad” had a sale of his property and leased the land to the Holeckes. He then went back east, stopping first in Warm Springs to visit Jesse. Jesse was dismissed from Warm Springs after a short time. He became a right-hand man for Ray Bohn of Winnett for many years.

Jesse Easley died in May of 1972 in the Roundup hospital. Listed as a survivor was a nephew, Bruce Chapman.

EDWARDS, Pete When this family left the community, Mr. and Mrs. Claude Cooley moved onto their place.

FLANNIGAN, George (Sec. 32-12-28) George homesteaded 3½ miles east of the Kelley Post Office.

FLANNIGAN, John (Sec. 26-12-28) John and Jessie Flannigan homesteaded one and one-half miles northeast of the Kelley Post Office. School District #138 paid one dollar to them for the Flannigan schoolhouse site.

The family consisted of eight children — Darell, Marvel, Bernice, Lulabelle, Eleanor, Arnona, Donald and Evelyn. Marvel married Russell Casswell.

GRAY, Morty (Sec. 23-11-28) The Grays moved onto the Fred Biehl place in the spring of 1930.

GROSS, Ellwood Mr. Gross taught the first school in the community — the Mackrill School — for 3 months starting January 14, 1914. This school was held in a 10’ x 12’ homestead shack located west of Musselshell Hill, north and west of the Mackrill ranch. Clarence Dreisbach in his book of memories stated: “Earl and I walked to one of our neighbors’ homes on a Sabbath Day, January 11, 1914. On the way we stopped at a little schoolhouse. There hadn’t been any school in it yet, but it started three days later. The schoolhouse is the same size as my shack, and like my shack, looks like a buggy barn. It will seat a dozen pupils by putting them close together.”

Among students who attended this school were: John, George, Mildred, and Henry Holecek; Perry Miller; Howard and Ivan Hodges. The teacher sat in the middle of the room and could reach each student with a yard ruler!

HANSEN, Emil (Sec. 30-13-29) Emil was born on June 6, 1885 in Germany. He acquired land in the Kelley-Weede area and married Martha Larsen, daughter of a neighboring homesteader, in 1922. They had four girls — Virginia, Margery, Viola and Freida; and one son, John. Virginia was born in Mrs. William Wiggins Sr.’s Rimbrock Hospital in Winnett; Margery on the ranch at Kelley; Viola and John at Melstone; and Freida at Musselshell.

Sadness overcame the family and the whole community in the winter of 1928-1929 when John, the only boy of the family contracted flu which developed into pneumonia and snatched his life at only one year of age. His little body was laid to rest in the Winnett Cemetery.

Emil was a rancher and sheeppman and had as quite close neighbors his brothers, Pete, Ernest, and Herman. He also had a sister, Alma, who later married her homestead neighbor, William Wiggins, and moved to the Flatwillow community. Ernest built up a fine ranch on
HARDING, Frank and Leslie (Sec. 6-12-30) The only news found on this family is the following obituary taken from the Winnet Times in 1923: "Alexander P. Harding — The death of Alexander P. Harding occurred at the home of his son near Kelley on January 21, 1923. Death was the result of pneumonia and heart trouble. Deceased was born in Iowa, February 17, 1847, and would have been 76 years of age on his next birthday. He served three years and nine months with the 18th Missouri Regiment during the Civil War. In 1871 he was married to Susan Ross, to which union one son was born — James S. — who died at the age of two years. In 1879 Mr. Harding was united in marriage to Amanda J. Lute. Their home was blessed with seven children, four boys and three girls. Mr. Harding resided in Montana for six years — three of which were spent on a farm near Flatwillow. For the past three years, he and Mrs. Harding have made their home with their son, Frank, at Kelley.

"Mr. Harding took sick about two weeks prior to his death. Mrs. Harding and three sons were at his bedside when the end came.

"Funeral services were held at the home. J.O. Neff officiating, and burial made in the Flatwillow cemetery. Besides Mrs. Harding, the deceased is survived by his sons, David and Arthur in Iowa; two daughters, Mrs. Fred Taylor and Mrs. Maggie McManigal of Blair, Nebraska: one daughter, Bertha Flynn of California Junction, Nebraska: two sons, Frank of Kelley and Roy of Winnett."

HARRIS, Bob Bob was the mail carrier on Musselshell — Kelley Route in 1934.

HILL, Floyd (Sec. 8-12-28) As of the publishing of this book in 1989, Floyd and Viola Hill are the only residents of what used to be the Kelley community. (See also HILL — Winnett)

HODGES, Harry (Sec. 12-12-28) William "Harry" Harrison Hodges, son of William and Mary Ann Hodges, was born in Wisconsin July 4, 1867. Jessie Ann Nokes, daughter of Charles E. Nokes and Julia Congdon Nokes, was born August 13, 1877 in Palmyra, Wisconsin. Harry and Jessie were married October 18, 1894.

They came to Montana from Platte, South Dakota, in March 1913. A former neighbor, Bert Mackrill, had moved to Montana, acquired many acres of land, and asked Harry to come be foreman of his ranch. Harry could, at the same time, file on his own homestead. Accompanying them to Montana were Esther, 16; Howard, 13; Ivan, 6; and Forrest, 3. An older boy, William, age 18, came later. They lived at the Mackrill Ranch, and Mother Hodges cooked for the hired men until the Hodges' homestead house was completed. For four happy years all went well with the family. Ruth was born at the home of a midwife, Mrs. Oscar Rutledge of Flatwillow, on March 19, 1916, and broke her older sister's nineteen-year reign as the only daughter of the family.

Harry built a dam on Mud Springs Creek and was an excellent gardener and farmer. On a hot, dry June day...
Harry was building a chicken house when a strong wind tipped a hayrack on him, breaking ribs and puncturing his liver. The family got him into the house, and a neighbor rode horseback to Musselshell for a doctor but there seemed to be nothing that could be done. He lived in terrible misery for one week. He died Saturday, June 16, 1917. As per Harry’s request, his body was laid to rest on a hill overlooking his beloved homestead. Good neighbors worked very hard on an extremely hot day to fulfill the burial request. Layers of underground rock caused them to dig in three different locations before a final site was found.

Mother Hodges and son Howard and daughter Esther, with the help of neighbors, managed to get along. Ivan and Forrest helped with the garden. Boarding teachers brought in some income. Howard also worked for neighbors.

Esther married Ellwood Gross in 1919 and they moved to Dilo, Montana, where Ellwood had a homestead. Howard married Jessie E. Moore of Winifred on July 2, 1920. She had been a school teacher at the Flannigan School. They lived on the Mackrill ranch, where Howard was employed. He also helped farm, when he could, at the Hodges homestead.

The winter of 1919 was one of the worst on record and the family truly had problems, as feed was short for both animals and family.

On Wednesday, August 11, 1920, Mother Hodges became so desperately ill that Ivan had to walk in the night to Mackrills to get Jessie and Howard to take her to the doctor. All of her own home doctoring and the neighbors’ help had been to no avail. Somehow she and Ruth were taken to Winnett where her oldest son, Bill, and his wife, Gertrude, lived. Forrest and Ivan stayed home to keep the garden watered. Dr. Alexander attended her, but she was beyond help. She died in Bill’s home in Winnett on her 43rd birthday, Friday, August 13, 1920.

Because there was no undertaker, services were held the day after her death in the first little white schoolhouse of Winnett. Rev. Aiton, Winnett’s first Methodist minister, conducted the services. Mrs. Aiton sang “City Four Square” and “The Perfect Day.” Mother Hodges was laid to rest in the Winnett cemetery. It had been her dying wish that Howard take over the homestead and keep the children — Ivan, 13; Forrest, 10; and Ruth, 4 — together.

Mr. and Mrs. Hodges had been very active in establishing the first schools and were instrumental in organizing the first Kelley Social Circle. Harry was one of the signers of the petition that created District #121 from #107, was one of the first trustees when District #138 was created from District #121, and circulated the petition that resulted in creating District #149 from District #138.

Esther eventually moved to her husband’s parental home in Madison, South Dakota. Twice a Gold Star Mother, she was named Eminent Homemaker of South Dakota in 1959. The Grosses raised seven children: Emerson, Wallace, Kenneth, Gordon, Lawrence, Viola and John. Esther wrote and published her memoirs, finishing them on her 85th birthday. A copy is in the local Winnett Library, namely, My Garden of Memories.

Ivan graduated from eighth grade from the Sheldon School in the spring of 1922. He worked for Swan Munson of Flatwillow that summer and entered Winnett High School in the fall. He worked at different jobs throughout his high school days and graduated from Winnett High School in 1926. The fall of the year found him entering Intermountain Union College. He was chosen captain of that college’s football team at the close of his freshman season. He was active also in the Intermountain Glee Club and was a member of their quartet. In 1930 he graduated with a degree in history and a minor in education. He eventually came back to his high school Alma Mater as teacher, coach and administrator. (See HODGES — Winnett)

Forrest finished eighth grade at Kelley School in 1924. He attended Winnett High School in 1925-26, then went to Great Falls High School for one year. He graduated from Winnett High School in 1929. He attended Billings Polytechnic for a time. He worked on the ranch with brother Howard and others; then he went into business with Howard in 1934, running the Mackrill ranch and, in addition, sheep of their own. Later, while working on a ranch near Harlowton, he met and then married, Belle Skillen on October 10, 1939. Previously married and divorced, she had a daughter, Ethel. To Forrest and Belle a daughter, Ellen, was born, Forrest and Belle were later divorced. After working in the shipyards on the west coast during World War II, Forrest returned to Kelley. The family members had deeded the homestead to him, so he established a residence there in 1946. Being surrounded by large ranchers, he worked for some of them and also on his own place for nineteen years. For the greater part of that time, he was the only resident of the entire Kelley community.

Because of the sparse population in the area, there were no properly maintained roads. So in 1965 he sold his place to a broker, Bloomdahl, who in turn sold it to Floyd Hill. Forrest was the last of the original owners to leave the Kelley community. The Hodges homestead had been part of the Hodges family history for fifty years. For-
rest bought a home in Roundup and resides there as of this date in 1989. His daughter, Ellen, raised five children — Brenda, Carla, Susan, Charles E. Jr., and Michael Corn-

Ruth finished the eighth grade at Sheldon School in 1929. She boarded with Aaarsuds and at the dormitory the first year of high school. She worked for her board and room at different homes for three years and graduated from Winnett High School in 1933. Ruth helped at the Howard Hodges home that summer. In the fall she left Kelley for good and sought work in Winnett. She worked for her room and board at Waldrops and did housecleaning, ironing and baby-sitting for others until November of 1934. At that time she went to Great Falls for six months to help brother Bill's family, as they were expecting an addition to the family. Bill was working in Kalispell and wanted help and company for Gertrude.

Upon returning to Winnett in July of 1935, Ruth went to work for Ella V. Millsap in the Montana Hotel. At that time the hotel was also running a dining room; so Ruth, along with Faye Boulden, cook, and Bob Gilfeather, who was working for his board and room there, waited tables, washed dishes, made up rooms, washed and mangled hotel laundry, and baby-sat the Whitten baby, Jeri. She saved her money and also earned a working scholarship to attend Billings Polytechnic in the fall of 1937; but, she found that her very good friend, Frances Longpre, was planning on getting married to Rex Eager, and that the position of Winnett Post Office Clerk would be up for grabs. Ruth quickly applied. After all — why spend money on a college education, when you could get a job of 8 hours a day for $65 a month, without the expense of formal training? Besides, she would be working for Ella V. Millsap, her former well-liked hotel employer who was also the postmaster. That sounded like a mint after working twelve hours a day for $20 a month and board and room!

Ruth’s brother, Ivan, was superintendent of the Winnett schools, so she lived with them, paying $15 a month for board and room. She bought her first “car,” a Montgomery Ward Hawthorne bicycle, so she could deliver the “Special Delivery” mail. Also she purchased a clarinet, and with Mrs. Harry Tripp’s patient help, learned to play it and then participated in the High School — Community Orchestra. She also bought and completed a correspondence course in filing.

After five years in the post office, she took a state merit exam for a junior file clerk. She passed and was offered a job in the State Unemployment Service in Helena. It was only a temporary position, so she took it just for the experience, as she had become engaged to Ernest Freburg, and they planned to be married in June. With an eye to the future and with a little girl in her plans, she purchased a new heavy-duty portable Singer sewing machine and made her wedding dress before returning to Winnett the first of June, 1942. (See also FEBUROG — Winnett)

HODGES, Howard Howard Earle Hodges was born October 22, 1899, in Wisconsin. He came with his father to Montana in 1913. He was married to Jessie E. Moore (daughter of David and Ida Moore of Winifred) on July 2, 1920, in Lewistown, Montana. This was at the time of the great Lewistown flood, when Spring Creek overflowed even into the Judith Theatre.

At the time of their marriage, Howard was working for Mr. Mackrill and also helping take care of his mother and family on the family homestead. After six weeks of marriage, they became the instant “parents” of three children — Ivan, 13; Forrest, 10; and Ruth, 4 — when Mother Hodges passed away. They moved to the family homestead.

The night of May 25, 1921, their first child was hankering to be born. Although Jessie’s mother was there to help, they also thought they should have the help of another midwife. Howard started out on a dark night to find his black team of horses; then he traveled about four miles east to Mrs. Carson’s. Upon arriving there, he learned that she was sick and couldn’t come to help. So back home he traveled and about another two miles to Mrs. Holecek’s. It was with some chagrin that he approached her, as she was the mother of the girl he had courted before Jessie appeared in his life. But, of course, she said, “I’ll come.” Kathryn Alice arrived on the scene on May 26, 1921. Howard has always jokingly reminded her of all the trouble she caused him before she was even born. Ruth was so happy to have a real doll in the house!

A year later a tiny little girl named June Annette was born on June 10, 1922, at Grandma Moore’s near Winifred. In the spring of 1923 the family moved to the Mackrill ranch and lived in the “lower” house, and Howard worked for Mr. Mackrill. That same year Howard brought his first Ford car. The family could hardly wait to see him come over the hill west of the barn.

On May 3, 1925, David Earle made his appearance. Kathryn, June and Ruth were mysteriously left at Grand-
ma Moore's at Winifred. When Jessie and Howard came after them, they had a baby boy with them. He was born at St. Joseph's Hospital in Lewistown, Montana. By this time Howard was in charge of the Mackrill ranch and the family was living in the very nice "upper" house. He had built a large sheep shed, and shearing and lambing were easier.

Another baby was due in the home in November, 1926, so the family moved into Winnett the first of that month; and Ruth entered school there. Bernice Stambaugh also moved in with the family to help. Dr. Alexander had just had an appendicitis operation, so Mrs. Ella Wiggins of the Rimrock Hospital was called in to deliver the baby. The little boy was stillborn and buried near his grandmother Hodges in the Winnett Cemetery. He was not named.

The spring of 1927 found the Hodges family moving again. Lunsford Miles, son-in-law of the Mackrills, decided to take over the ranch; so Howard bought the Kocer place, tore down the Hodges homestead house, and hired Tony Schwarz to build two bedrooms, a new kitchen, and a long porch onto the Kocer house. He also built a new barn.

In February of 1928 Howard purchased a brand-new Chevrolet Sedan. It was a modern miracle with windows instead of isinglass curtains.

Crops in the Kelley area were nearly all completely hauled out the year of 1930. At the Hodges' farm many fryer-size chickens were killed. Again, an addition to the family was expected that winter; and because Ruth needed a place to stay to go to high school, the whole family, with the exception of Howard, moved into the former Frank Nelson house at 101 West Wheeler Street in Winnett. On Christmas Eve, December 24, 1930, Dr. Alexander (with the assistance of Mrs. William Myers of Kelley) delivered Jessie Ann. Was it any wonder that the Campfire Girls' first stop as they went caroling that night was under the Hodges' bedroom window? Auntie Ruth saw to that! They lustily sang, "There's a song in the air, there's a star in the sky, there's a mother's deep prayer, and a baby's low cry!"

In 1931-32 times were tough for the family. The whole country was hurting and money was short for everyone. Many were leaving their homesteads. Earle had started school at Sheldon in 1931. Kathryn and June graduated from the eighth grade at Sheldon in the spring of 1935. They attended Winnett High School for about six weeks that fall.

The hard years were taking their toll on Howard and his family, and in the fall of 1935 he located a 240-acre irrigated farm near Fromberg, Montana. He sold his cattle herd (not too extensive by then) — all straight — cows, calves, yearlings, heifers — for 4½ cents a pound. In October the family left Kelley. Howard had been there for 22+ years. He had mixed feelings as he closed the house door for the last time, climbed wearily into the heavily loaded horse-drawn wagon, and headed the horses toward Fromberg. He had no reason not to hold his head high, however. At 17 years of age he had followed his dy-

ing father's admonitions to "Take care of Mother and the children." Then when he was almost 21 years of age, his dying mother has asked that he "Take over the homestead and keep the younger children together." As he climbed into the wagon, if he had listened, he might have heard a voice from the grave on a hill south and west of the homestead, and echoing from Rocking Chair Butte, "Well done, my son!" He had kept a home base for his "first" family. They were all now self-sufficient. The homestead still belonged to the family. At thirty-six years of age, he started over in a land that repaid him for his efforts.

Kathryn graduated from Fromberg High School in 1939. She married Jean Keebler. They raised five children — Shirley, Howard, Stephen, JaLayne and Gregory. Kathryn and Jean now live in Fromberg.

June attended Fromberg High School, but two weeks before she would have graduated with her sister, she died of spinal meningitis, after having scarlet fever and a mastoid operation. She was buried in the Rockvale Cemetery.

Earle graduated from Fromberg High School, then served his country for three years in World War II. He married Jean Parker of Fromberg. They had four children — Kim, Kip, Kirk and Anita Kay. Earle and Jean live on a ranch at Bridger.


Jessie, who had finished raising the three younger Harry Hodges children and had mothered four of her own, passed away May 14, 1977, at their home in Bridger. She was especially remembered by her children and grandchildren as the great chicken fryer and apple pie maker. She was laid to rest in the Bridger Cemetery.

Howard wrote of his Kelley memoirs: "My wife, Jessie E. Moore, came to our community to teach the then Flannigan School in the fall of 1917. She boarded with neighbors that school year and walked ½ miles to school. In the winter she would arrive at school about eight a.m. then have to build a fire in the school stove to have it warm when the children arrived. She taught all grades (first to eighth) and had about ten pupils. All this for $60 per month.

"My mother and sister became acquainted with her shortly after her arrival and both liked her a lot. They started a small match-making game to get me interested. On my eighteenth birthday, October 22, 1917, they organized a surprise birthday party for me. But, like most surprise parties, I learned of it; and as I already had a girl friend, I wasn't anxious to meet any new girls. So along with three neighbor boys (one of whom owned a Model-T), I took off for Lewiston on the morning of my birthday and didn't get back until the next day. What a lousy trick to play on my dear Mother and sister! So I didn't meet Jessie until Thanksgiving Day, 1917, when we had a
community gathering and potluck dinner at a neighbor’s home. But I want to say this: after meeting her, I never wanted anyone else. We were married July 2, 1920.

"I enjoyed life and living in Petroleum County, and would never have left but for the terrible drought of 1930 to 1935. I first saw the town of Winnett on July 4, 1915."

Howard now lives in Sage Towers in Billings, Montana.

HODGES, William C. Bill did not come out to Montana from Dakota when his folks did. He was then nearly eighteen years old, and in South Dakota he had a job, which he was loathe to leave; but letters from his family stating that he could have work on the Mackrill ranch, finally convinced him, and he arrived in Melstone on the eve of his eighteenth birthday, September 18, 1913. Mr. Mackrill, accompanied by Esther Hodges, met him when the train arrived about eleven p.m. in a cool fall rain. They had a buggy with a spring seat up front and a low box behind the seat which was made into a bed for Bill. He went to sleep and when he awakened near daylight, he could see completely bare buttes of clay. He told Mr. Mackrill that he wanted to get out, walk back to town, and take the first train to the east. Mr. Mackrill told him that if he would open the gate just ahead, he could walk back if he wanted to. So Bill got out, and by the time he got the gate open his feet were each a foot wide with gumbo and buffalo grass, and he knew that he was not walking back.

Bill worked on different ranches, and then enlisted in the National Guard in the spring of 1916. He had just filed on a homestead north of his father’s homestead when the Guard was called into service on the Mexican border. After serving there for five months, he was mustered out, paid with gold coins, and came back to Kelley to work. He was called into service again for World War I and was stationed for a time in Great Falls, Montana. There he met the sweetheart that he had to leave behind when he sailed to Europe to spend considerable time in the foxholes of France. He was mustered out and returned home August 16, 1919.

He and Gertrude M. Galitzek were married December 10, 1919 in Great Falls. They built a small home in Winnett, and Bill worked for a transfer company and also on the water system in Winnett. They later worked for Mr. Eager on his homestead in the Brush Creek area in Sec. 10-15-27. Dr. Alexander delivered their first son, William, to the Eager ranch on October 12, 1920. During the spring and summer of 1922 they lived and worked on the Dean place north and east of the Hodges’ family homestead.

They worked in Melstone for the winter of 1922 and then moved to Great Falls, where Bill worked as a plumber and at the smelter. He finally set up his own plumbing business. In the election of November 3, 1970, he was the successful candidate as a Representative from Cascade County to the Montana Legislature.

They had six children — William Jr., Helen, Grant, Harold, Wade and Patricia. Bill died just before his 90th birthday in September of 1985. Gertrude died in May of 1988 in Great Falls.

HOLECEK, Joseph (Sec. 34-12-28) Joseph homesteaded about the same time as his parents and brothers, but he was situated three miles south of their lands. He was the first to leave. He moved to Lewistown where he was involved in politics.

HOLECEK, Karel (Sec. 14-12-28) Karel (later called Charles) Holecek and Katrina Cervena were married in Czechoslovakia in 1886. Later, with four children — Bohumil, Joseph, James, and Helen — they immigrated to America and settled in Illinois. There Mary was born in 1895, Charles in 1896, John in 1898, George in 1901, Mildred in 1903, and Henry in 1905 at Braceville, Illinois. In the fall of 1912 the family, with the exception of Mary (who had died at the age of 8 months), filed on a homestead in the Kelley country. They also purchased some railroad land.

John, George, Mildred and Henry attended the Mackrill, Hodges, Holecek-Kocer, Rocking Chair Butte and Sheldon schools. When the Kelley Post Office opened, Bohumil was the first carrier between Musselshell and Kelley.

Mildred wrote, “Coming home from school in the spring after a thaw, and when the coulees were running full, John, George, Henry and I had to cross a coulee on a barbed wire fence. Our feet were just above the water and our hearts were in our mouths!”

Holeceks and their neighbors, the Kocers, raised fields of poppies. Mrs. Holecek was known for her SCRUMP-TIOUS poppy-seed kolaches. If the Holecek children had them in their lunches at school, there wasn’t anyone who wouldn’t give their whole lunch for just one little kolache!

Front page coverage in the Winnets Times of April 18, 1924, stated: “It will surprise many residents of Winnett to learn that a Petroleum County farmer won first prize at the First National Corn Show in St. Paul for the best ten ears of corn in the year 1913, and then won second prize in 1916. The first prize, a large silver cup standing two feet high, bears the following legend: Presented by First

"Mr. Holecek, the winner of these splendid trophies has been so unassuming and quiet about the matter that nine years have rolled by before sufficient attention was attracted to the matter to give it the publicity it deserves. Many were of the opinion that it has been only during the last year or two that prize corn was grown in Petroleum County, and it comes with somewhat of a surprise to find that a Kelley man won a National Corn trophy in 1915 and 1916. During those years the Kelley country was classed in the Musselshell District. However, it is now known as one of the big corn raising districts of Petroleum County."

From their 1924 corn crop, the Holeceks shipped 15,000# seed corn to the State Nursery at Helena and also filled neighbors’ and others’ requests for seed.

The Winnett Times also had the following announcement in the February 2, 1925, issue: "Once in a blue moon a couple slily slip away and are married, keeping the matter a secret from their friends until such a time as they are ready to announce the fact. That was the way it was when Mildred Holecek and Arthur Wright were married at the Methodist parsonage in Idaho Falls. Mr. Wright is an employee of Montana Auto Supply Co. in Dillon, and Mrs. Wright will continue her studies at the Normal College." They had a girl, Marjorie, born May 15, 1926 in Dillon. She is now Marjorie Danahy.

George Holecek was made Petroleum County Road Engineer in 1927, at a salary of $120 a month.

Holeceks, like their neighbors in that area of the community, were completely hauled out in 1928, and as George related, "After that, things just got worse each year." After two years of having to buy feed for their livestock, they thought that they could do better elsewhere. Consequently, in 1936, they moved to a farm near Joliet and Boyd, Montana.


HOVEN, Peter (Sec. 24-12-27) Mr. Hoven was noted in the 1918 Polk Directory as being a resident of the Kelley community. His wife was also listed as a member of Kelley Community Club in 1917. Before coming here, he was a South Dakota college friend of Ellwood Gross, who taught the first Mackril School in 1913. The Hovens moved to Hobson, Montana, when they left Kelley.

HOWARD, George "Bogue" (Sec. 10-11-28) George was born March 13, 1885, in Bozeman, Montana. He was called "a little bogue" when born and the nickname "Bogue" followed him all his life. He had four sisters and three brothers: Laura, Alice, William, Fred, Charles Edgar, Clara, Esther and Florence.

George homesteaded in 1916. He had married Pearl Small in March of 1915. They had two children — Astle Leroy, born April 29, 1916; and Blanche, born July 14, 1917. Pearl died February 20, 1920, and George eventually moved to the Flannigan place. Besides farming, he was the Musselshell-Kelley mail carrier for many years. This trip was made with horses much of the time.

Blanche and Astle attended the Kelley School. On June 11, 1926, George married Marie Killham (born June 24, 1899), a teacher of the Sheldon School the 1925-26 school year.

In October 1926 the Howard family moved to the home which had just been vacated by the Bly Mastens. Blanche and Astle continued their attendance at the Kelley School. Alice Louise was born May 16, 1927; Ivan Edward, September 9, 1928; Thomas Crandall, August 27, 1929.

Mr. and Mrs. George (Bogue) Howard
1930: Helen Elizabeth, August 9, 1932; and Ruth Evelyn, October 29, 1933.

Marie stated: "We struggled along trying to farm until 1936. Opening the area to homesteaders was a tragic mistake. No good ever came of it — only hard work, disappointment, and dishonesty!"

They moved to Stevensville, Montana, in 1936. Dorothy Jean was born August 9, 1941. They farmed until 1955, when they moved to Missoula, Montana. George B. continued to work until he was 75 years old. He died June 28, 1964, at the age of 79. He was buried in Sunset Gardens, Missoula.

Blanche graduated from Musselshell High School and was married to Edgar Campbell. They had four beautiful children. She died of bone cancer in June 1978 and was buried in Stevensville, Montana. Astle had died in February with a heart condition, after serving in the armed forces. He was buried in Weiser, Idaho.

After George B. died, Marie stated: "I've lived in apartments in Missoula. About the most worthwhile thing I've done was as a Foster Grandparent to Special Education pupils. I've been at North Valley Nursing Home in Stevensville for four years, crippled with arthritis, so I couldn't live alone. I go to the dining room by using a walker. I feel fortunate that two of my girls live in Missoula (thirty miles away) and my son, Ivan, lives just a short ways away. He has a 7-11 type of store and gasoline station."

Ivan often comes to this area to hunt and has friends in the Winnett community. He and his wife, Lois, have two daughters — Katherine Ann, who was born in Billings; and Suzanne Marie, who was born in Butte, Montana.

HOWELL, Mrs. Henry Mrs. Howell taught the Kelley School the year of 1924-25 and 1925-26. Mr. and Mrs. Howell owned a ranch in Musselshell County. Their holdings were in part of what became the Ragged Point oil field. They had many good friends in the Kelley community and came often to visit them and to attend the community club meetings. When Mr. Howell occasionally came early on Friday afternoons to get Mrs. Howell from school, he delighted in showing the pupils some of his kid games and tricks. Although the Howells were both lovers of children, they never had any of their own.

JARETT, Jesse (Sec. 28-12-29) Jesse homesteaded in the Kelley area and was listed in the 1914-1915 Polk Directory as owning 160 acres and having personal property valued at $840. In 1916 he owned 60 acres and personal property worth $690.

JOHNSON, Einar (Sec. 2-12-28) Einar was a bachelor neighbor of Lester and Walter Sheldon. During the horrible winter of 1919, he was a helpful friend in getting horses back on their feet when they were down.

JOHNSON, Henning (Sec. 20-12-28) The only information about Mr. Johnson was taken from school board minutes: Mr. Johnson was chosen to travel to Lewistown on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Kelley School District #138. They were seeking legal advice on the proper method of selecting sites for the Dixon and Flannigan schools, submitting plans to the State Board of Health, conducting a bond election, selling the bonds, advertising for a contractor, and then selecting one. Mr. Johnson's expense for seeking all such advice was paid from school funds.

JOHNSON, Knute (Sec. 32-13-29) Knute was a good hard working Norwegian. He married the Larsen's oldest daughter. He was also a member of the Kelley baseball team. The census showed a son, Ernest, born June 29, 1917, and Lester, born in 1921. (See also JOHNSON — Musselshell)

JORGENSON, Nels (Sec. 30-13-29) Nels neighbored Emil Hanson to the south. He was a bachelor and had a little trouble with the English language. He is reported to have said, "It's funny. I can say 'Yorgenson' real plain. But I can't say 'yug.'"

KAUFMAN, Fred (Sec. 12-12-28) Fred Kaufman's land was below and to the east of Rocking Chair Butte. A teacher of the Rocking Chair Butte school knew that Mr. Kaufman was gone for the winter and would not be using his cabin. Since the cabin was much closer to the school than was the place she boarded, she decided to move in. She was happily abiding there when Mr. Kaufman returned earlier than expected. Being very unhappy to find his home so occupied, he promptly threw all her belongings out, and she had to return to her former boarding place.

KELLEY, W.H. (Sec. 30-12-28) Mr. Kelley picked out his beautifully flat land, only to find that it was 100% gumbo. He was one of the early homesteaders whose
name was put in a hat — the name drawn became the post office name. Thus, he had a place named for him, although he never lived there after proving up.

**KLAUDA, Cyril** (Sec. 8-12-28) Cyril was a one-man band for Kelley dances and entertainment. He played snare drum, bass drum, and accordion.

Cyril Klauda — Kelley's one-man band

**KLAUDA, Martin** (Sec. 8-12-28) Mrs. Martin Klauda was a sister of Mrs. Martin Kozumpleck. There is not much information on the Klaudas, but in news items of the Winnett Times, it was found that “a baby daughter arrived at their home in September of 1921”; also, “after Kozumplecks moved to Melstone, Montana, Klaudas moved into their house to be closer to a school”; “they moved into Lewistown, Montana, but returned for the winter of 1922”; “Mrs. Klauda and children went to Chicago, Illinois, to live in 1933.” They had two other children — Elsie, born May 26, 1914; and Harry, born Sept. 9, 1915.

**KOCER, Joseph** (Sec. 11-12-28) Joseph Kocer did not homestead, but he and his family came to the Kelley community in the 1910 era. They bought the east one-half of Section 11-12-28, Northern Pacific Railroad land. They built a log house. They had two boys, George and Robert.

In April of 1915 Mr. Kocer was elected to be a trustee of Kelley School District #138. He did not hold that position long, because School District #149 (of which he was a resident) was created from part of District #138, and the former Holecek School became the Kocer School, as it was situated on the southeast corner of his land and was now in District 149.

Mr. Kocer erected a school building of his own very near to the Rocking Chair Butte for the next year. School was held there for two years and was known as the Rocking Chair Butte School. The building, which was owned by Mr. Kocer, was then moved to the Kocer home and used as a granary.

There is no known record as to just when the Kocers left the community. In March of 1923 a Kelley news item of the Winnett Times read: “J.M. Kocer and family took a Saturday evening ride in their benzine buggy, visiting with Russell Casswell family. They were forced to return home with Russell's buckskin hay burners!”

Former residents believe that Kocers left the area in about 1924 and moved to a farm north of Winnett for a time before returning to South Dakota.

**KOZUMPLECK, Martin** (Sec. 14-12-28) Martin and Annie Kozumpleck were part of the settlement known as “little Bohemia” — the Holecek's, Kocer's, and Kozumpleck's lands being contiguous. Mrs. Kozumpleck was a member of the Kelley Social Club.

Howard Hodges relates a sad story about them: “To me the death of the Kozumpleck baby was very saddening. I was just 16 years old and working for Swede Nielsen. Swede had the job of breaking sod for Kozumplecks to help them prove up on their homestead. I was doing the work with Swede's mules and had been having dinner with Kozumplecks every day for about 10 days. In so doing I became very attached to the little fellow. He just suddenly became very ill and died two days later. We buried him up on the hill at the corner of their quarter section.”

The school census showed children as follows: Annie, born June 7, 1910; Charles, born Feb. 28, 1912; and Adeline, born June 14, 1916.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Kozumpleck and their children
KROETCH, Lawrence F. (Sec. 23-12-28) Lawrence F. Kroetch was born March 9, 1887, in Plainville, Kansas. He married Effie Belle Haroldson who was born in Wisconsin. Sometime around 1915, he bought ¼ of a railroad section near Kelley. The Kroetches had three children — Joseph, who was born in Plummer, Idaho, on August 2, 1911; John, who was born in Spokane on Dec. 27, 1913; and Mary, who was born in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, on April 22, 1918. Joe, John and Mary all attended the Kelley School and all graduated from the eighth grade there.

The family were active community members, and all of them enjoyed singing and dancing. For one of the money-making projects at Kelley one year, an election was held to ascertain who was the laziest man in the community. Lawrence Kroetch and Howard Hodges were the chosen candidates. The one for whom the most money was collected was to be the winner. It was a very close race — a hotly contested issue — but just before the money was counted, Lawrence came up with enough money to put Howard in the winner column. The winner received a one-pound jar of Epsom salts to help keep busy!!

The following Kelley item came from the Winnett Times of 7-18-24: "Mrs. Lawrence (Effie) Kroetch and Mrs. Russell Casswell and children were driving to town. Going down a steep hill, the tongue of the buggy came down, frightening the horses. The ladies and children jumped out of the buggy and the horses ran away. Mr. Seargent of the Lepper Ranch found the horses and buggy, repaired the damages; and the occupants, with a few minor bruises, returned home."

The Kelley community was very saddened when Mrs. Effie Kroetch became suddenly ill with a thyroid condition, was taken to St. Joseph’s Hospital in Lewistown, and died four days later — October 30, 1928.

In 1938 the family moved to Billings where Lawrence, along with Lun Miles, also of the Kelley country, had a meat market. In 1938, Lawrence, with the help of Ray Gotzinger, dismantled the dwelling and sheds at Kelley, and took the lumber to Billings where it was used on a home lot there. On February 15, 1939 Lawrence married Anne Gotzinger, a widow.

Joe Kroetch graduated from Winnett High School in 1929, and from the University of Montana. He also attended Gonzaga University at Spokane, Washington. Joe was in the Air Force for a time during World War II and he worked for Husky in Cut Bank, Montana. He obtained his C.P.A. rating from the University of Montana and set up his own business in Cody, Wyoming. He married Frances Mace May 19, 1951. They had one daughter, Carol. Joe died May 18, 1982 and was buried in Cody, Wyoming.

John Kroetch graduated from Winnett High School in 1935, and attended aircraft school and was a weather instructor in the Philippines. During the Korean War, he also attended the General Motors Institute. Later he managed a Texaco service station in Billings, Montana. He married Olive Williams. They had two daughters, Leslie and Cindy. John and Olive live in Billings.

Mary Kroetch attended Winnett High School for a time until her father left in 1938. She graduated from Billings High School in 1939, and from Townsend Beauty College in 1940. She married Rupert Potter June 22, 1946. Rupert was a career Army officer from 1939 to 1963. He served in the Canal Zone for three years and also in World War II in Germany. He helped launch the first U.S. Satellite with Doctor Wernher von Braun, while stationed at Huntsville, Alabama. His last job before retirement was with the Homestake Mine at Lead, South Dakota, as an Electronics Technician. Mary and Rupert "Red" had two daughters, Mary and Linda, and two sons, James and Russell. Mary and "Red" live in Sturgis, South Dakota.

Lawrence Kroetch died July 24, 1973, and was buried in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. Anne Gotzinger Kroetch died April 4, 1977, and was buried in Spokane, Washington.

LAMPE, Martin Susie Lampe had two children — Ver- na Yahner (or Zahner), born June 13, 1903; and Elizabeth Yahner (or Zahner), born May 19, 1909. Martin and Susie Lampe had two children — Adella, born 10-21-1915; and Bernice, born 3-12-18. They lived in Kelley School District #138 and Mr. Lampe was elected as trustee in 1919.

LARSEN, Jacob (Sec. 30-13-29) Jacob and Caroline Larsen moved from Kenmore, North Dakota, and settled about 4½ miles east of Emil Hansen’s homestead. It was noted in the Winnett Times that their daughter, Anna, accepted a position as clerk in the Aristo Theatre in Winnett, June 10, 1921. Their oldest daughter, Emma, married Knute Johnson; Martha married Emil Hansen, January 3, 1922. Jacob Larsens moved back to Kenmore, North Dakota, and the Emil Hansen family moved onto their place in 1925. After Jacob Larsen’s death, Caroline Larsen made her home with the Emil Hensens for some time.
LAWRENCE, W.W. (Sec. 5-13-28) Mr. Lawrence was born July 23, 1868. He and Mrs. Lawrence came to the Petroleum County area and homesteaded in 1914. They had two children — a son, D.D.; and a daughter, Katherine. Mrs. Lawrence passed away in 1919.

The following news appeared in the Winnett Times: "While Mr. Lawrence was in Winnett on April 4, 1929, his hired man burned the weeds around some of the buildings. The fire got out of control when the wind arose. Mr. Lawrence lost both his barn and granary and all the contents except for one set of harness which was removed from the granary."

In May of 1944, Mr. Lawrence was helping with lambing operations on the Cook and Iverson ranches at Dovetail. He died suddenly of a heart attack while being brought into Winnett on May 22, 1944.

LEPKE, Henry (Sec. 20-12-28) In 1925 there was another Kelley sale and farewell dance and Henry and Nina Lepke left for Michigan. Roy Miller took over their place. The Lepkes had a son, Berton Lepke, born 4-21-1918.

LLOYD, E. J. (Sec. 29-12-29) Lloyd purchased a Northern Pacific railroad section five miles northeast of the Kelley Post Office.

LOFFEL, John (Sec. 32-11-28) John was not a homesteader of Petroleum County, but, like several others, he and his family were a vital part of Kelley community affairs.

In his search for just the right place to locate, he walked from the Mosby-Sandsprings area to Musselshell. He worked for a time in a dairy near Roundup before settling on his homestead. He met and married Miriam Adams, a teacher at Westside School District #57, Musselshell County. She and her sister and two brothers were also homesteaders in the same area on Howard Coulee.

To this union five girls were born — Martha, Ruth, Sara, Lida and Jean. Legend has it that after the second daughter was born, John vowed to let his beard grow until such time as he would get a son. When he left the community in 1942, he still had his beard!

The five girls all attended Westside School. When they were ready for high school, Mrs. Loffel spent 12 or 13 years in an apartment in Musselshell during the week, and back to the ranch on weekends. They managed to send all of the girls on to college and business college, even though times were pretty hard.

Martha became a registered nurse and worked in Billings. She moved to Culbertson, Montana, in December 1950. There she was married to Wilfred Hennes and had 4 children. She worked part time in the hospital in Culbertson and was working two nights a week right up to the time of her death in January 1987. She loved her work and was one of the best. She passed away when an artificial aortic valve failed.

Ruth graduated from the Billings Polytechnic Institute and went to Culbertson in the fall of 1943 to teach commercial science and journalism. She married Robert Mattelin and they had three children — Linda, Marion, and Milo. Ruth's husband passed away in 1962, and she still lives in Culbertson (1989).

Sara went to business college, was a secretary for the county agent, a homemaker, and more recently (the last 20 years) a classroom aide, and now a school bookkeeper. She and Arnold Thomsen had five children, with three sons still living.

Lida Kluzek was a science teacher, homemaker, lab technician, and is now retired in Arizona. They have two girls and one son.

Jean married during her college days, was a homemaker, a bridge teacher, and before her death, a school-bus driver in Lexington, Kentucky. They have three daughters and one son, and four grandchildren.

Mr. and Mrs. John Loffel

Ruth Loffel with kitten, Martha with a pet bunny
March of 1987, Jean passed away after a valiant battle of nearly seven years with cancer.


Among Ruth's memories of Kelley were the combined Christmas programs of the Eastside, Westside, and Kelley schools — particularly the time she had to sing one verse of "The Three Kings" all by herself; also, her delightful memories of the community club gatherings as she said, "and there was always one of those huge crocks of REAL lemonade with the rinds and seeds and all in it. Ahh! DELICIOUS!!"

MACK, Myron (Sec. 32-12-29) The only information to be found on Myron Mack came from the Polk Directories. The one dated 1914-15 revealed that Myron owned 160 acres and $1160 worth of personal property. In 1916 he owned 1640 acres and held personal property worth $590. His land was located four miles east of the Kelley Post Office.

MACKRILL, Bertis (Sec. 24-12-28) Bertis Mackrill was one of the earliest homesteaders and settlers in the Kelley community. He encouraged homesteaders to settle near his ranch and then bought their places as soon as their land was proved up. Often, he would hire them on his ranch to give them some cash with which to operate.

He was a great horseman, and also, a horse dealer. Associates remember him as a very prudent man who believed in taking very good care of horses and equipment. As an instance — when his hired men would go to the river for cedar posts or pine wood to burn, though they returned late at night, they would have to unload the wood after they had something to eat, because it was hard on the wagons to keep them loaded overnight.

The Polk Directory of 1914-15 noted that Bert Mackrill owned 800 acres with personal property valued at $4970. In 1916 the figures were: 1600 acres and personal property of $7530.

Mr. and Mrs. Mackrill (Helen) had one daughter, Lisle, who attended the local grade schools and graduated from Fergus County High School of Lewistown.

Their home was the site of many large community gatherings. Mrs. Mackrill liked to sing; and many community song fests were held around their piano.

An undated article taken from the Winnett Times and reprinted in the Grass Range Review recounts a gathering at the Mackrill Ranch during World War I.

"That the true patriotic spirit awakened throughout the land by the great war has penetrated the most remote section of Fergus County, and is not confined to the more thickly populated sections, was forcibly illustrated at the B.C. Mackrill ranch recently when neighbors for miles around gathered to do honor to the boys in that vicinity who had gone to the defense of the country. The Mackrill ranch is in the vicinity of Kelley Post Office, some thirty miles removed from Winnett and a railroad.

"The occasion was the dedication of a service flag containing twenty stars. Stewart McConochie was induced to make the long trip from Lewistown to make the address, and a more sympathetic audience never listened to a patriotic address. Notwithstanding the fact that the people there were far removed from railroad communication, and mail irregularity proves the rule rather than the exception, that indomitable patriotic spirit that has made America the envy of the world in its accomplishments of all its undertakings, was as much in evidence at this far removed spot as it is at patriotic demonstrations in our largest cities."

Mr. and Mrs. Mackrill were kind and thoughtful neighbors. Mr. Mackrill died in the early 1920s, and he left his ranch to the management of Howard Hodges, to run on shares. (See also MILES — Kelley)

MASTEN, Bly (Sec. 10-11-28) Mrs. Masten was the daughter of Mrs. William Small and a sister to Bogue Howard's first wife. Three of their children attended Kelley School in 1926-27. They were Goldie, Carrie and James. Mastens moved into the Blackstone house after that family left, but they were not there very long. They were believed to have moved to Gage, Montana, in 1927. Bly was a member of the Kelley baseball team.

McCOLGEN, John (Sec. 26-12-28) McColgen's place was well known around the community — not only for the goodness of the people, but because of a hill on the road north of their buildings. It was not a long hill, in fact, quite short, but very steep and of sandy soil. Its victims sometimes had to ascend it backwards. That was due to the fact that there was only gravity flow from the gas tank to the carburetor in the Model T cars. That little hill would be nothing to the cars of today; and probably about the second time the county road crew ran its grader through it, there wouldn't be a hill anymore. But it had its victims. Successful drivers were the ones who could get up enough speed and momentum to top the hill before the carburetor went dry.
Howard Hodges relates one of his memories of the McColgen family: "McColgens had been a childless couple and were so very happy with the birth of their first child. Wilmer. Mother helped when he left pneumonia from which he could not recover. He died at 6 years of age. A dance had been planned for Saturday night at the schoolhouse, and we had just started dancing when word came that the little boy had died. Some wanted to continue the dance, but Mr. Petersen called everyone to attention saying 'There's no way we can continue to have a jollification here, just a short way from a home where our neighbors are besides themselves with grief.' He was so right! The little fellow was buried on the McColgen homestead.'

John and Ella McColgen had two other children — Margaret, born Feb. 27, 1915; and John, born July 17, 1918.

McDONALD, Dan (Sec. 12-12-29) Dan worked for Mr. Mackrill and proved up on his own place. When Clarence and Earl Dreisbach were going to leave for Kansas to get their wives, Mr. and Mrs. McDonald went to the Dreisbach place to buy Dreisbach's chickens. They stayed for dinner, and Clarence was very nervous, as this was his first experience of cooking for a lady! School census: Daughter, Edna Turner, born 1908.

McGUIRE, Charles Charles and Myrtle McGuire lived in School District #138 and had one son at that time — Freddie J., who was born June 15, 1918. They were only on the Kelley School census one year -- 1918. In 1919, School District #149 census listed Freecie as being born May 23, 1918.

McKAY, Alice (Sec. 20-13-29) Mrs. McKay was a lifelong friend of Mrs. Harry Hodges. They grew up together in South Dakota. Mr. Mackrill encouraged Mrs. McKay to move to Montana and claim a homestead, promising her that he would then buy it from her for $1000. She proved up on it, and then moved to Melstone, Montana, where she washed clothes for the railroad men and ran a little home bakery. She was famous for her delicious home-baked bread. In this manner she supported herself and her family. School census of 1919 listed children as follows: Vera, born June 26, 1897; Ethan, June 12, 1908; and Edward, June 10, 1910.

MELIUS, Evelyn Evelyn was a teacher in the Kelley School during the years of 1930-31, 1931-32 and 1932-33. She was a niece of Lawrence Kroetch, and lived with them while teaching at the Kelley School. During her three years of tenure that school was raised from Rural to Standard to Superior (the highest rating offered Montana rural schools at that time).

Evelyn became an active member of the Kelley community, taking part in all the "doings." During many of these affairs, Ivan Munson was her companion. Later they both married other partners. Evelyn's first husband died. Ivan also became a widower. At the Winnett High School reunion and the "Kelley Kids" reunion of 1979, every effort was made by the other "kids" to get these two thrown together as much as possible. Ivan and Evelyn were married before the year was over. They are now living happily on a farm near Stevensville, Montana. During Evelyn's first marriage, she and her husband were foster parents to several children. Ivan has one son, Kenny, who is now attending college at Glendive, Montana.

MILES, Lunsford Lun Miles, a banker in Musselshell, Montana, married Lisle Mackrill, a daughter of B.C. and Helen Mackrill. In 1927 Lun decided he would like to quit the office life and try his hand at farming. Lun and Lisle moved to the Mackrill ranch. (The widowed Mrs. Mackrill returned with them.)

Lun was a good baseball pitcher for the Kelley ball team, and the family entered into all the social events of the community. In 1934 Lun ran for Petroleum County Commissioner and was a successful candidate at the primary election. However, he had a change-of-mind and declined the nomination in October, as he had decided to go into partnership with his former neighbor, Lawrence Kroetch, in opening a butcher shop in Billings, Montana. The Lun Miles family turned the management of the Mackrill Ranch over to the Hodges brothers.

In the fall of 1935 Lun purchased a ranch in the Rock Creek Valley. The Mackrill Ranch was sold to the Goffena family from Delphia, Montana.
MILLER, Arthur (Sec. 14-12-28) Arthur Pinkney Miller was born in Clay County, Kansas on May 3, 1862. Amanda Jane Downing was born July 1, 1870 in Kentucky, the only child in her family. Arthur, however, was one of twelve children, namely — Arthur, Henry Clarence, William Emmett, Perry Wesley, Eva Ellen, Emma Frances, Nora Ann, Vina, Senia, Ada Elmer, Sylvia and Cora Nettie. Arthur and Amanda were married July 14, 1888. They raised three boys — Harry, born February 2, 1889; Royal, born on Christmas Day, 1893; and Perry, born July 29, 1899.

The family came to Montana in either 1912 or 1913 and homesteaded 3½ miles north of the Kelley Post Office.

They evidently proved up on their homestead and then went to Melstone, Montana, to live in 1918. A news item in the Winnett Times of 1921 stated that they returned to their homestead from Melstone where they had lived for 3 years.

The Millers were good gardeners. They planted apple trees that bore them much fruit. In 1987, one tree still produced apples.

Grandpa and Grandma Miller generously shared their home with others. Many were the dances and oyster suppers that were served there. Grandma pumped the organ and Perry played the fiddle, and everyone had a glorious time until daybreak.

Arthur died April 5, 1947. Amanda died October 4, 1943. Both were buried in Lewistown, Montana, cemetery.

MILLER, Perry Perry was the third son of Arthur Miller, and came with his parents when they homesteaded. He attended whatever Kelley school was most near to his home. In the early 1920’s he married Pearl Rosziella Schulter. They had four children — Chestina Amanda, born March 21, 1923 in Lewistown, Montana; Gladys Louise, born July 16, 1929 at Kelley, Montana; Mirtha May, born June 8, 1937 in Winnett, Montana and Arthur Isaac, born April 24, 1942 in Lewistown, Montana.

Perry was a very good mechanic, and was capable of taking the parts from two or three different makes or models of cars and coming up with one in good working order. He was also a well-driller, and the whole Kelley community was excited and happy when he drilled a good water well for John Lofiel.

Somehow, in some of his mechanical work, Perry lost some fingers on his left hand, but that didn’t keep him from fiddling! He just re-strung his violin and played it the other way! That was lucky for the community, because his fiddling set many a toe to tapping.

Perry died December 14, 1965 and was buried in Richfield, Utah. He was preceded in death by his daughter “Tina” on March 1, 1948. She was buried in Lewistown, Montana. A son, Arthur, died on 6-29-1965 and was buried in Salt Lake City, Utah.

MILLER, Royal J. (Sec. 28-12-28) “Roy” was born December 25, 1893 in Canfield, Colorado. Daisy Starkweather was born August 28, 1895 in Castilla, South Dakota. Roy and Daisy were married September 11, 1915, and lived on Roy’s homestead. Their four children — Cecil, Floyd, Chris and Mildred — attended the Dixon, Kelley and Sheldon schools. Roy and family moved to several different locations in the Kelley community and helped many different neighbors.

The family moved to the Neff ranch in January of 1925, and the children attended the Sheldon School, which was about three miles east of there.

In 1933, when the boys were all through with grade school, Daisy, Floyd and Mildred lived in the Sheldon school teacherage during the very cold months, so Mildred did not have to travel alone so far in the cold. In the meantime, Roy had gone to Winnett to work for the water department, and the family, later, all moved there.

Mildred reminisced: “I remember the winter we lived in the teacherage at Sheldon and Mom had typhoid fever. She was really sick, and Floyd went into Winnett to get medicine for her. Floyd built the fires in the school before school started in the mornings and kept the schoolhouse warm that winter. The stove was fired completely with wood.” (See also MILLER — Winnett).

MINOR, Clyde (Sec. 14-12-29) Clyde Minor, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Minor, was born at Marysville, Missouri. He had five brothers and six sisters. He enlisted in Company B, First Regiment of Nebraska Infantry Volunteers. In 1898. In 1906 he married Mary Robinson in Cedar Rapids, Nebraska. They moved to Hobson, Montana, in 1909. The Minors homesteaded in the eastern part of the Kelley community and were somewhat isolated. They had no children of their own, but adopted a girl, Bernice, and a boy, Dale.

The family eventually moved to the Starkweather homestead, where they were only 1¼ miles from the Sheldon School.

While living and farming on the Starkweather place, Mr. Minor was victim of some foul play. He was seriously injured while plowing. Someone ran up from behind and hit him on the head, knocking him unconscious. A Melstone doctor came out at a neighbor’s bidding, and Clyde was
rushed to the hospital in Lewistown. Mr. Minor eventually recovered, although his one eye was permanently damaged. The Deputy Sheriff of the very new Petroleum County Investigated, but the case was never solved.

Bernice graduated from Sheldon elementary school and attended Winnett High School for a time. She drew the nickname of "Speed" because she never wasted time going anywhere. She and Henry Holecek were married in 1929 and had one girl. The marriage failed and Bernice later married Mr. Houde. No information could be gained on what happened to Dale Minor. The Minors later moved to the Kocer place that Hodges left. Clyde died in 1963 and was buried in Custer Battlefield cemetery.

**MINOR, Eliza** (Sec. 30-12-28) Eliza shared a section with the Anton Andersens. She had three children — Anna, born 7-17-01; Samuel, 1-19-04; and Gertrude, 3-24-07. Prior to the building of the Dixon School, these children attended the Castle Rock School.

**MINOR, Robert** Robert and Rachel Minor, whose address was Flatwillow, were listed in the Kelley District No. 138 census in 1919. At that time they had three children — Clarence, born December 19, 1911; Dewey, March 18, 1916; and Woodrow P., July 20, 1918.

**MOORE, Otto** (Sec. 32-13-29) Mr. Moore worked his land to prove up, played ball with the local Kelley ball players, but did a lot of contract carpenter work to obtain an income for his family. He was awarded the contract to build the Dixon and Flannigan schoolhouses in 1917-1918. Although he had homestead quarters and continued to farm his land, he built a permanent home for himself and family in Winnett on Lot 1 Block 32. In the 1932 Petroleum County election, he was chosen as Petroleum County Sheriff. (See MOORE — Winnett).

**MUNSON, Morris** (Sec. 8-12-28) Morris Munson, born 2-20-1883 in Geneva, Nebraska, and Lydia Otis Munson, born 3-12-1881 in Nebraska, homesteaded in 1911. They brought with them John (2 years of age) and Ivan (an infant). Carroll was born at Flatwillow, delivered by midwife, Mrs. Ella Wiggins, on 11-6-1913. When Carroll was six weeks old, the family left for Strang, Nebraska. There Virgene was born 3-17-1917. In 1920 they returned to Montana and bought land in Sections 8 and 9-12-28.

John and Ivan both started grade school in Nebraska, but upon coming to the Kelley country, they, along with Carroll and Virgene, completed eighth grade at the Sheldon School.

Gayle was born 11-21-1925 at Kelley. His sister, Virgene, at first wanted to send him back because he wasn’t a girl! She did so want a little sister!! But it only took about two minutes before she loved him dearly.

Munosons, like nearly everyone else in the community, were diversified farmers and most excellent gardeners. Also at Munsons there were tame pigeons, and many a young person was given the thrill of holding one of them or one of the squabs. Many folks remember Munsons’ nice dining room with the spoonholder on the table. Theirs, too, was a very hospitable home.

After several discouraging years, the Munsons moved to a farm near Florence, Montana, later moving to Hamilton, Montana. Here they both passed away — Morris on March 24, 1973, and Lydia, November 16, 1975.

John wrote of his Kelley reminiscences: "When we moved to the community, it was the most wonderful experience we kids could have. We made the trip from Winnett in a spring wagon. Our first house consisted of two parts-of-houses nailed together. The central building, known as the Sarvis house, was quite spectacular, in that it consisted of a steep, four-sided roof meeting at the peak. Later there were additions.

"I suppose by modern standards, we and many of our neighbors would have been considered ‘deprived.’ But none of us thought of that, and so all lived happy, normal lives to the fullest. On cold nights our schoolhouse turned into a block of ice. Even the ink bottles and wells froze. So we would all have to huddle around the stove until we got thawed out.

"When I was a sixth grader, I had the misfortune to take a tumble from our saddle horse and broke my leg. Drs. Berry and Alexander came out from Winnett to set my leg, getting there about midnight, and setting it by lamplight. It took me three months to recover from that one!!"

"The Kelley community was a little kingdom unto itself and living there was a tremendous experience. When I think of ‘the good old days,’ I think KELLEY!!"

John graduated from Winnett High School in 1929. He graduated from Montana State College in 1935 as a teacher; and he received his Masters Degree in Education from University of Montana at Missoula. In 1936, he married Grace Sauer of Tolley, North Dakota. As a teacher, administrator, and farmer, he also became the father of three girls — Karen J., Dorothy G., Sheryl L.; and of twin boys — John L. and James F.

Ivan went to Winnett High School and Billings Polytechnic. In March of 1942 he went into service in the Army. After the Army days, in 1946, most of the Kelley land was taken up, so Ivan settled in the Bitterroot Valley.
Montana. He married and had one son, Kenny. (See MELIUS — Kelley).
Carroll married Muriel Black, formerly of Kelley. (See BLACK — Winnett).
Virgine attended Winnett and Musselshell High Schools. In 1936 she moved to Florence, Montana, with her parents. She later worked in Missoula, Montana, and in 1942 went to Seattle, Washington, where she worked for Boeing during the war, and then for Sears Roebuck & Co. She met and married Harold Gamble (a Navy man) in January, 1950. They lived in Portland, Oregon, and later moved to Amity, Oregon. Harold passed away August 12, 1982. Virgine now travels a lot, but keeps her home in Amity.
Virgine remembers the time that she and Ruth Hodges cleaned the Sheldon schoolhouse and teacherage before school "took up" in the fall. Riders going through and using the teacherage dishes always left them sticky dirty. Virgine enjoyed the social life of the Kelley community and was the best babysitter in the country!
Gayle went to Sheldon School until its closure in October 1935. He went to Musselshell to complete that year. He attended Florence School and graduated from Florence-Carlton High School. After service in the Navy, he married Beverly. They had two children — Robert D. and Jody Craig. Beverly passed away in 1979. Gayle is now married to Carol and lives in Victor, Montana.
Gayle wrote some of his remembrances: "At club meetings Earle Hodges and I would try to keep up with our heroes — Jim Black and Walter Andersen — much to their disgust. I’m sure; but we were there anyway. And then, of course, there’s the time that Earle and I set our icehouse on fire. We sure packed water to get that out!!"
"It’s a good thing that people were strong and had lots of courage, because they certainly were tested to the limit. They left a lot of hard work here, and about all they ever got was the growth of their kids. But I’ll never know when I’ve ever known a better bunch of people. The families were really tops and all in just one little community!! Those were good days with lots of love and friendship."

MYERS, William (Sec. 6-11-28) Mr. and Mrs. William C. Myers homesteaded in Musselshell County. They also lived for a time in the Brush Creek area. In 1922, they moved to the Schellenger farm in what was then Fergus County. Four years later, they moved to the Oliver place in the Flatwillow community. In December of 1931 they moved back to the Schellenger farm where they lived until they moved to a farm south of Roundup, Montana, in 1934. At the end of that same year, they moved back to their original Kelley homestead in Musselshell county.
There were three children in the Myers family — Isa, George, and Pearl. Mrs. Myers was a midwife and helped bring many babies into the world, including some of her own grandchildren.
Pearl married Pope Adams. When Mr. and Mrs. Pope Adams moved to Idaho in 1936, Myerse accompanied them. (See also ADAMS — Kelley and MYERS — Flatwillow).

NEFF, Jacob (Sec. 3-12-28) Jacob Otis Neff was born Sept. 8, 1879, in Iowa. His wife, Bertha Blanche Scarborough, was born Nov. 17, 1881 in De Soto, Iowa. They were married in 1912. They had two sons — Otis, who was born in Lewistown, Montana; and Paul, who was born in Melstone, Montana. There was also a baby sister who didn’t survive her birth. She was buried on their Kelley homestead. Paul wrote his memories. "We lived in an old shack that Dad built with black felt paper on the outside and lath nailed to it to hold it on. Our barn was built into the hill with stone walls and large beams and hay piled on them for a roof. Our well was a dug one, but I can’t remember it ever going dry. We had a root cellar dug into the side of the hill where we stored our vegetables."
"I remember Dad going to Winnett in the middle of the winter to get coal and groceries. He, of course, went with a team of horses and took in some wheat to pay for the groceries and coal. He made it to Winnett, loaded what he needed, then started home. Darkness overtook him, so he stopped in the lee of a hill and slept in the snow until daylight."
"Our nearest neighbors, the Morris Munsons, lived about ½ mile up the coulee from us. Others to the south and east were about 2½ miles down the coulee."
"I well remember going up the trail to Dad and Lloyd Easley’s place and Lloyd teasing Otis and I about wearing dresses when we were little. Of course, we strongly denied it! But, of course, it was true that even boy babies wore long dresses in those days. I also remember about some boys of the community who came to our place — went in the chicken house, took eggs, and put holes in the
ends and sucked out the insides. I know later that Otis and I tried it, but Mother caught us, and for good reasons we didn't do it again.”

After a sale on a cold wintry day in January 1923, all the neighbors in the community came to bid a sad good-bye to these people.

In the absence of ministers. Mr. Neff had often been called upon to conduct funeral services. Each member of the family was an asset to the community.

A time after they left, the editor of the paper received the following letter from Bascom, New York: “You will find enclosed $2 for subscription to the Winnett Times. We cannot get along without the paper from HOME. We have been under quarantine for scarlet fever. Hope our paper will reach us next week. Wishing the Winnett Times and Montana in general great prosperity. I remain, J.L. Neff.”

Mr. Neff passed away in 1943. Mrs. Neff passed away in 1970. They were both buried at Clarence, New York.

No information was available on Otis Neff. Paul married Doris Weaver. They adopted three children — Timothy, Terry and Nancy. and have a beautiful home in Granville Summit, Pennsylvania.

NELSON, Mr. Mr. Nelson had the Kelley mail contract during the spring of 1930.

NIELSEN, Anton and NIELSEN, Rasmus (Sec. 26-13-28) Howard Hodges had these remarks about these two homesteaders: “Rasmus was always known as ‘Swede’ Nielsen, although he was of Danish origin. He gave me my first paying job when I was 15 years old — $25 a month, seven days a week, and bachelor grub. He had been a subcontractor for “Pick-handle” Burke in building the railroad to Grassrange. The railroad grade was all built with horses or mules pulling fresnos. He had four big horses and four mules, and I usually got the mules to work with. One time while breaking sod with the mules, they refused to work and I couldn’t get them started. I went to the house and told Swede about it and he said, ’That’s because you don’t know how to cuss — I’ll get them going!’ So he came out and let out a string of oaths! XO!!X! — completely unprintable — and the mules twisted their tails and took off. So I learned to cuss right then!!

“Swede and his brother, Tony, were good friends and neighbors for all their rough ways. When our father passed away, Swede was the one who came and prepared him for burial — bathed him, cut his hair and shaved him. He later would bring us a quarter of beef now and then, and it was certainly appreciated. He left after the bad year of 1919. He had proved up on his homestead. Before going he gave me his chest of carpenter tools and a writing desk, which I still have. It is a real antique. Swede and Rasmus were tough and wonderful people in the toughest of times.”

OLIVER, Frank Clifton (Sec. 8-12-28) Frank was born Sept. 15, 1893 at Geneva, Nebraska, son of Hellena Woody Oliver and John Oliver. He had four sisters — Nettie May Oliver Bassett, Margaret Allen Michaels, Cora Grace Oliver and Mary Gertrude Oliver; also four brothers — Thomas, who married Ellen Munson; Joseph, who married Hattie Mae Hickethier; William Earl; and Claude Logan.

He left the Kelley community in 1924 and moved to Canby, Oregon. There he married Elsie Larsen in 1925. They had three children — Evelyn, Leland, and Donna. Frank died in 1981 and was buried in Canby, Oregon. (See also OLIVER — Flatwillow).

PARK, Joe S. (Sec. 6-13-28) Cora Park was a native of Pennsylvania. Joe Park was born October 4, 1868 in Portland, Ohio. He and Cora were married February 2, 1894 at Brighton, Pennsylvania. They came to Montana in 1894, living first at Butte where Mr. Park was a millman, and later in or near Basin, Montana, where he was a miner. They had no children.

They moved to their homestead in the Kelley community in 1913. There they built up a fine farm, reaping good crops of grain and unparallelled dry-land gardens. In 1922 their watermelon vines of fifteen hills produced over 100 melons that averaged 22 pounds each.

Mrs. Park passed away at her Kelley home October 14, 1929. Mr. Park died in St. Joseph Hospital in Lewistown on August 17, 1940, after a three year hospitalization. A Mrs. Eliza Erwin was mentioned as a survivor.

PASSEY, Winnifred Miss Passey taught the Kelley school in 1926-27. She had an important part in the home talent play “Cyclone Sally,” presented by community members. This play was also presented to the Flatwillow community. Winnifred was Cyclone Sally.

PEEBLES, John C. (Sec. 28-13-28) Howard Hodges remembered this family: “He and his wife, Fanny, came from Lewiston, Idaho. A fine and neighborly couple and good friends of our family.

“At the time of my father’s death, he went with me to Musselselsh for a casket. We left about 2:00 p.m. and got to town long after everything had closed. But we went to George Handel’s house, and he came down about 10:00 p.m. and we picked out a casket and rough box. After feeding the horses and letting them rest, we headed for home and arrived about 1 1 a.m. The funeral was at 2 p.m. Later, I remember Jack putting his hand on my shoulder and telling me that I must be the head of the family now. For a 17-year-old boy, that was a big order and responsibility. He always helped us when he could. Jack and Fanny left after proving up and went back to Lewiston, Idaho.”

John Peebles was clerk of School District #149 in 1916.

PETERSEN, Herbert (Sec. 24-12-28) Herb leased the Mackrill ranch for a period of time. He married Mildred Straight. They had three children — Herbert, Ruth E., and Mildred. Petersens were active in school and community affairs. Mrs. Petersen was a charter member of the community club.
PHILLIPS, Louis According to the 1915 school census, Louis and Sarah Phillips were the parents of three children — Tony, born October 21, 1902; Frank, January 14, 1901; and Ralph, December 18, 1904. Tony died during the terrible flu epidemic of 1918. He was buried on their home place.

PHILLIPS, Walter (Sec. 8-13-29) In 1921 the Walter Phillips family moved to the Lester Sheldon house to be near the Sheldon School. The family also lived for a time on the Starkweather homestead.

PURVIANCE, Roscoe They were a strongly devoted family who didn’t believe in dancing or Sunday baseball. It appears that they were repaid for this strong character trait. They were able to raise enormous and beautiful truck gardens. They peddled these products, not only in their own community, but also in the towns of Winnett and Roundup. Their children at various times went to Kelley, Dixon and West Side schools.

RAY, David Otto (Sec. 14-12-29) The school census of 1920 revealed that there were three children belonging to David and Martha Ray: Sayne, born 1906; Jessie, 1910; and D.O., 1913.

REESE, Laura B. (Sec. 35-12-28) Laura bought the east half of a Northern Pacific Railroad section. Charles Roth owned the other half, which was just west of the Kelley Post Office.

RODE, John Mr. Rode homesteaded a flat gumbo section. The 1914-1915 Polk Directory revealed that John owned 160 acres of land and owned personal property worth $900. He only stayed long enough to prove up on the land which was not profitable for farming.

ROTH, Charles (Sec. 34-12-28) Charles Roth was the first postmaster of the Kelley Post Office, which was located in his homestead house. Mrs. Roth did most of the post office work. They were of the German Lutheran faith, and in the early years, church services were often held in their home.

Charles and Hannah Roth had five children — Elizabeth, Theodore, Walter, Paul and Carl. Charles served as school trustee for Kelley School District #138 in 1915. The Roth family left Kelley in 1918 or 1919.

SARVIS, Herbert C. (Sec. 8-12-28) Mr. Sarvis was an early homesteader. Reportedly, he came to his claim with a wind-powered high-wheeled cart, and was leading a cow. Having no horses, he invented this contraption, and with it, hauled his wood long distances. He also devised a wind-powered apparatus to pull a breaking plow. His was not the conventional homestead house, as it was tall and square with a four-sided peaked roof.

Originally he had been a missionary in China, and in the Kelley community, he became an active Sunday school and church leader. He taught the Rocking Chair Butte School in 1915. This school was very close to the butte. The carpenter who built the school left a ladder there. The butte was on top of a rather steep hill which sloped to the north. This created an excellent toboggan opportunity for the pupils. Using the ladder, they all piled on, and had great fun until one of them raised up too soon going under a barbed wire fence and nearly lost his tongue.

It is reported that this school had no outside privies, but that there were lots of large rocks.

Mr. Sarvis taught the pupils to sing "Jesus Loves Me" in Chinese. The chorus was as follows:

Oh, A so I su
Oh, A so I su
Oh, A so I su
Me foo me sling ah she

According to former pupils, Mr. Sarvis was an excellent school teacher, and somewhat before his time with his inventions.

SAUER, Esther Esther was a teacher in the Sheldon School during the years of 1931-32 and 1932-33. She was much appreciated in the Kelley community, not only for her teaching ability, but also for her talent at the piano.

SCHELLENGER, Guy (Sec. 18-12-88) Guy and Clara Schellenger were early homesteaders in the western section of the community. They both were school teachers.

Mr. Schellenger taught the Dixon School the year of 1916-1917, and one month in the fall of 1917. He was the Sheldon School teacher in 1922-1923. Mrs. Schellenger was a fine musician and gave some of the local children voice lessons.

When Petroleum County was formed in the fall of 1924, Guy Schellenger was the first elected senator from the new county.

Schellengers had two boys — Bernard, born July 2, 1915; and Ben, December 10, 1917. When Schellengers left this area, they moved to Selby, South Dakota. (See also SCHELLENGERS — Flatwillow and Telgen)

SCHWARZ, Anthony (Sec. 18-13-28) "Tony" was born December 7, 1892, at Beaver Crossing, Nebraska. He homesteaded in the northern part of the Kelley community; and while the Burgeton Post Office operated, he
received mail service there. He married Rose Beck of the Petrolia community. They had two children — Loron and Lavina. Tony and Rose were divorced.

Later Tony married Pauline Holmes, and they had a
daughter, Patricia. Pauline was a sister of Mrs. Glen
Stroup. Tony was a fine carpenter. He piled his trade in
the Petrolia, Kelley, and Winnett communities. He died
December 16, 1930.

SCHWARZ, Christopher (Sec. 18-13-28) "Chris" did
not homestead, but purchased the southern half of section

Ivy Rice was music instructor and study hall supervisor
during the 1929-30 school term in Winnett. She met Chris
Schwarz, and they hit it off just fine!

A former student reminisced: "Glee Club was always
held in the old music building after regular school hours,
and it came to be that in the spring of the year.

Chris' car would always appear somewhere close to the
school yard near the end of the singing period. Naturally,
some of the less reserved students decided that the next
time Chris appeared, and Miss Rice's baton signaled to
start a song the singers would all launch into 'I Love You
Truly.' But Miss Rice was a fine teacher and a rigid
disciplinarian; and when the opportune time presented
itself, the perpetrators of the intended mischief lost
courage and, instead, became possessed with uncontrol-
lled giggling. After delivering a fine lecture on music
appreciation, Miss Rice dismissed the class."

After Ivy and Chris were married, they lived on Chris'
northern ranch until 1937, when they moved to Winnett, and Chris
worked for the Soil Conservation Service and other
alphabetical government agencies. In 1942 he was
employed by Continental Oil Company, and they moved
to Cat Creek. Later they moved to Nebraska.

Chris died December 14, 1977. Ivy lives in Lincoln,
Nebraska, in her own duplex in a group of town houses
which are reserved for the use of those over fifty years of
age.

SHELDON, Frank Frank and Bess Sheldon lived on
the Mackrill ranch for a time in the 1920s. Bess was a
former Busby girl, and her sister, Amy, sometimes came
to stay with the Sheldons.

SHELDON, Walter Howard Hodges relates: "Walter
Sheldon homesteaded in the same section as our family.

After father died in 1917, I was behind with the plowing
in the spring of 1918. After Walter finished his, he let the
fence down and started plowing in the same field as I
was. He came every day until it was finished. Such good
neighbors."

Walt was clerk of the Sheldon school district in 1919.

SIPPY, Stephen (Sec. 24-12-28) Stephen and Win-
nifred Sippy homesteaded the SW ¼ of Section 24-12-28
for Mr. Mackrill. They were beautiful dancers, and
attending the kitchen dances, helped young folks learn
the art. They did not stay long after proving up. Young
children, in fun, called them Mr. and Mrs. Big River in
stead of Mr. and Mrs. Sippy! Mrs. Sippy was a very good
scribe and printed the specifications for the construction
of the Dixon and Flannigan Schools. They had two
children — Edward, born 9-26-1910; and Dorothy, born
7-8-1914. They left the community in 1916 or early 1917.

SLUNESKO, Joseph (Sec. 22-12-28) Mr. Slunesko
was a carpenter by trade and he helped many of the
homesteaders build their houses, barns, and sheds. Mrs.
Slunesko was a fine housekeeper, gardener and cook.
They had a daughter, Fannie, and son, Frank. They
homesteaded in 1914. According to the Polk Directory in
1922, they owned 480 acres.

Mrs. Slunesko did not leave home very often. She may
have become very lonely when Fannie was gone, and
Frank and her husband were gone working. At any rate
she must have become most despondent. In March of
1928, she decided that life wasn't worth the living.

Howard Hodges related his memories of what happened:
"She took her life by drinking battery acid. John and
George Holecek came and got me and we were the first
to see her. She was sitting in a chair moaning and the acid
was cutting her throat. George went to Winnett after Dr.
Alexander, but she was dead when he arrived. John and I
just had to watch her die. I never heard so much moaning
and screaming in my life."

"In compliance with her request, we dug her grave in the
corner of her beloved garden. Services were held the
next day. Mr. Brummett read some of the Catholic burial
service; then Fannie, the daughter, asked that some
Bohemian say a few words, so Mr. Holecek responded.

With tears running down his cheeks, all he could say (in
English) was, 'Well, boys, she was a good neighbor.' It
was a beautiful tribute to a good woman.'"

Mr. Slunesko, in later years, put a box on his corner
post and had Jack and Muriel Black deliver his mail to him
on their way home from school. He rewarded them with
raspberry candy. Mr. Slunesko and Frank moved to a
small farm near Billings, Montana, in June, 1932.

SMALL, William (Sec. 14-11-28) Mr. and Mrs. William
Small had four children — William Jr., Mary Ellen "Ella;"
Pearl and Ted. Ella was married to Bly Masten, and Pearl
married George "Bogue" Howard. Pearl died Feb. 20,
1920, leaving two children. Blanche and Astle. The Win-
nett Times of 6-25-26 states: "The house of Mr. and Mrs.
Small was totally destroyed by fire. Her son, William, built
a very hot fire to bake bread. The fire started from a
defective flue. Only a few articles were saved."

At 65 years of age, Mrs. William Small died at the home
of her daughter, Mrs. Bly Masten, near Cane, Montana.
She was buried in the Musselshell cemetery.

SMITH, Clyde (Sec. 28-13-28) Farming was a com-
pletely new experience to Clyde Smith. He had been a
shoe salesman before coming to Montana. He and his
family didn't stay long after proving up. Mrs. Smith, "Min-
nie," was a charter member of the Mud Springs Social
Club. They had two children — Virginia M., born
12-16-1914; and Robert, born May 14, 1916. Clyde was
Clerk of School District #149 in 1917 and 1918.
SMITH, Frank (Sec. 8-12-28) Mr. and Mrs. Frank Smith purchased the original Sarvis homestead in July of 1944 from Carroll Munson. Smiths had previously operated a sheep and cattle ranch in Golden Valley county, but wanting to get out of the sheep business, they decided to buy the 1500-acre ranch in the Kelley area. They hoped to devote their time exclusively to cattle raising.

In November of 1947 they moved from the Sarvis residence to the farm most recently occupied by Clyde Minor, the former Kocer place, which Frank leased. They only lived there a short time, and moved back to the Sarvis location.

In December of 1951 they decided to dispose of the Sarvis ranch and arranged to have a sale on December 18, but a winter storm struck and the sale was not held until March of 1952. The real estate was sold to Floyd Hill.

SMITH, John K. “Dutch John” (Sec. 10-11-29) Dutch John was a bachelor who enjoyed the Kelley community club dinners. He was found dead in his home, supposedly of a heart attack. August 20, 1926. He was buried in a Roundup, Montana, cemetery.

SMITH, Walter (Sec. 18-12-28) Walter Smith and Ellwood Gross were college friends in South Dakota who decided to homestead in Montana. Mrs. Walter (Evelyn) Smith was the sister of Mrs. Guy Schellenger. The two families shared the same section. At the time they were here, they had one son, Robert George, born May 14, 1916.

SNIFFEN, Charles (Sec. 32-13-28) Charles was a confirmed bachelor and shared one-half section with John Wingo. He proved up on his claim and then moved to Melstone, Montana, returning to the Kelley community sometimes to visit the Easleys.

SPAUDLING, Azalea Azalea taught the Sheldon School 1927-28. Winnett Times news items tell us that “Horace Mansue was hired to do some carpenter work around the school and teachage.” It makes one wonder if that helped lead to the marriage of Azalea and Horace. Horace was an uncle of student Louise Brummett and a brother of Mrs. Brummett. After marriage, Azalea and Horace made their home in Harlowton, Montana.

STARKWEATHER, William (Sec. 6-12-29) William Starkweather was born March 19, 1863 in Keokuk, Iowa. Belle Ashley was born June 5, 1867 in Elkhart, Indiana. They were married April 26, 1890. They had 12 children — Edith, Cora, Joseph, Daisy, Clarence, George, Emma, Harold, Howard, John, Abbie and Asa.

They homesteaded in the Kelley community in 1913. The children attended the Kocer, Rocking Chair Butte, and Sheldon schools. They were hard workers and considerate neighbors. When Harry Hodges died, it was the family’s good neighbor, Mrs. Starkweather, who sat up with the body and kept it packed in ice throughout a hot summer night.

After proving up on their homestead, they were forced to leave it because of the hard economic conditions. In 1919 they moved to Melstone, Montana, where Mr. Starkweather worked for the railroad, and Mrs. Starkweather worked in a restaurant. They continued to visit their homestead neighbors. Daisy later returned to the community when she married another homesteader, Royal J. Miller. Abbie Starkweather was first married to Bob Field and had two boys. She now lives in Roundup, Montana, and is married to Aaron Holliday. Harold lives in Laurel, Montana. Emma lives in Billings, Montana.

STRAIGHT, Ruth Ruth was a teacher of the Dixon School during 1917-1918, completing the term of Guy Schellenger. She was a sister of Mrs. Herbert Petersen. She also taught the East Burgeon School in the fall of 1918.

SWIFT, Amanda Miss Swift taught the Kelley School from April 9, 1923, to July 27, 1923. A little later, as County Superintendent of Schools, she visited and inspected all the Kelley schools. Miss Swift either walked or rode her faithful horse, Brownie, as she went from one school to the next. She offered help to the teachers and constructive criticism to students. She shared food of some form wherever she stayed for the night. Miss Swift was dearly loved in the Kelley community.

TAYLOR, L.H. L.H. and Jewel May Taylor were listed in Kelley School District #138 census of 1921. At that time they had one child — Lawrence A., born May 17, 1920.

THOMPSON, Dave (Sec. 24-13-28) Mr. Dave Thompson and wife, Pearl, were early Kelley settlers. While living there, they had a son, Cecil, born November 1, 1915. Other children listed were Clayton, born August 29, 1907; and Harold, born August 16, 1911.

TILLER, Wilbur (Sec. 22-12-27) Tillers lived in the extreme west side of the Kelley community, but were considered part of it. They attended the Kelley Community Club and took their turn at hosting it. Before they left the community, they sold their beautiful pump organ to the Kelley School for $15.00. (See also TILLER — Flatwillow)

WAGAR, Cordelia Miss Wagar taught the Sheldon School in 1928-29, and was a sister of Helen Wagar, who was teaching the Dovetail School the same year. For language and grammar lessons, the two teachers established pen pals between their respective students. This resulted in some good friendships, although the students did not know one another by sight.

While Cordelia Wagar was teaching, the students had their first hot lunch program. They brought potatoes to school and Miss Wagar would put them on a shelf near the firebox within the stove. Sometimes they were a little overdone or underdone, but HOT — and so much better than a cold sandwich that had gotten frozen in the lard lunch pail or smashed and frozen in the sack fastened to the horse’s saddle. Cordelia and Helen were married in a double wedding ceremony the summer of 1929. Cordelia
Kelley Remembrances

The following are some of the remembrances from respondents of the history questionnaires:

— A monthly Community Club was a potluck gettogether at different homes each meeting. The host family provided the hot food and coffee. Others provided the cold dishes, salads, cakes, pies, etc. This was first held on a Thursday, but in later years on Sunday. Charter members of this popular club in 1917 were Mrs. Thomas Blackstone, Miss Blair, Mrs. Oliver Carr, Miss Clara Chesley, Mrs. Anton Andersen, Mrs. John Dixon, Mrs. Dale Dixon, Mrs. Ray Dreisbach, Mrs. Jessie (Harry) Hodges, Miss Esther Hodges, Mrs. Karel Holecek, Mrs. Peter Hoven, Mrs. Joseph Kocer, Mrs. Martin Kozumpleck, Mrs. Lawrence Kroeotch, Mrs. John McCollgen, Mrs. Alice McKay, Mrs. Jacob Neff, Mrs. John Peebles, Mrs. Herbert Peterson, Mrs. Charles Roth, Mrs. William Starkweather, Mrs. Straight, Miss Fannie Slunesko, Mrs. Guy Schellenger, Mrs. Walter Smith, Mrs. Clyde Smith and Mrs. Bye.

Chief reasons for money-making activities of the club were to buy Christmas treats and presents for Santa’s sack for the Christmas programs or, later on, gifts to present to families leaving the community. Everyone looked forward to “Club” day — it was truly a family-fun day. Men, young men, and older boys played baseball, horseshoes, and mumbly-peg. Younger boys and girls played all kinds of games and ate lots of pie, cake and cookies. Women usually had a very informal meeting, raved over new clothes made without even a pattern, exchanged recipes, and visited their throats dry.

Older girls took complete care of the babies, tried to attract the attention of the older boys, and shared with each other their hopes that another dance would materialize soon. Also, as the girls matured, they sometimes heroically took over the washing of all the dishes — no small effort, as water had to be used sparingly; and, of course, no paper plates, paper cups, or plastic silverware were used. Folks from the communities of Flatwillow, Petrolia, Musselshell and Winnett were often very welcome visitors.

— Once a month church was held at the Kelley schoolhouse with Rev. Leee of the German Lutheran Church preaching.

— Sunday School was held at each of the separate schools at different periods of time, depending on the shift of the population. There were pretty Bible picture cards with texts which children were encouraged to collect to give to missionaries to China. Once a couple of girls timidly sang “Jesus wants me for a Sunbeam,” while at least one of them believed that a sunbeam was a particle of dust you saw in the sun’s rays when you swept the floor. She wondered why He wanted her to be that, but she was willing so to be.

— Catholics worshipped in Winnett where Fr. Mueeller was leader of the flock.

— Pie socials, box socials and kitchen dances were held, in spite of grasshoppers, hail and drought. How the married men did bid the young fellows up on the school marm’s box!

— One mother had to watch two young sons die while her husband was away working to make a living; and she had to live with their bodies a day or two until a cowboy happened by. It was the flu epidemic of 1918.

— Going to Kelley after the mail on Tuesday and Saturday became a special treat for families after cars were in use.
— What fun it was watching young folks and women learn to drive cars on two-track roads — in and out of ruts!
— People sat for hours in their cars in the gumbo at the bottom of the ‘‘hog back’’ until a team of horses could pull them out.
— Teachers were their own janitors and lived in lonesome little teacherages or boarded with families.
— There was agony for those who forgot to drain the car radiator or who believed that blankets thrown over the hoods would prevent freezing!
— People would often get ‘‘kicked’’ when they cranked their Model T’s.
— Singers of the community, including men and boys, gathered around the piano with Effie Kroetch, Sylvia Brummett, Gladys Black, Helen Mackrill, or Jessie (Mrs. Howard) Hodges at the keyboard. Their rendition of ‘‘The Bulldog on the Bank’’ with the basses and tenors coming in strong couldn’t be equaled by any singing group. They could take you to heaven singing ‘‘The Old Rugged Cross’’ or return you to lovers’ lane with ‘‘Let Me Call You Sweetheart’’ or ‘‘Carolina Moon.’’
— Two boys were independently walking home from school after a heavy wet snowfall. The first one thought he would drag his feet over a well-known small cutbank filled level with new-fallen snow; thus, he hoped to trap his brother who would follow in his tracks. But the brother didn’t fall for it, jumped across, and dragged his tracks also. They apparently forgot about the rather large lady teacher who would also be following in their footsteps in the dark! Wonder why she quit boarding with that family?!
— There were no regularly running streams, only coulees that could become raging rivers after a cloudburst or rapid chinook.
— Sometimes Model T’s had to cross coulees on planks.
— Holeceks had a wedding anniversary party every year.
— There were beautiful fields of poppies at Kocers and Holeceks.
— Dances were held at the Arthur Miller home. Younger teen-agers, who were too bashful, practiced in a room upstairs. Folks would get home from these dances in time to milk the cows in the morning.
— One could see sheep wagons on the hills and herders and well-trained sheep dogs rounding up the sheep.
— It was a thrill to hear music from the first 5-tube radio at the Kelley Post Office home of Clarence Dreisbach in 1924. It seemed unbelievable that the music originated in Des Moines, Iowa, or Denver, Colorado!!
— Gus Naujok from the Flatwillow Community visited and told fortunes by reading palms. How fortunate you were if you had a long, unbroken life line!
— It was comforting to hear the curlew’s sweet mournful call in the evening and see the horned lark’s neat little nest in the ground, often over-stuffed with baby birds. These true larks no longer exist in what was the Kelley community. They seemed to have left when the people did.
— One could hear the howl of the coyote and the mimicking answer of the farm dogs, as the moon slipped over Musselshell Hill, Rocking Chair Butte, or the gumbo flat.
— Young folks skated and rafted on Lun Miles’ lake.
— Christmas programs of combined schools were held, using sheets strung on a wire for curtains. Children got nervous giggles, so they couldn’t say their ‘‘piece.’’ There were real candles on the Christmas tree and Santa arrived in a Model T.
— Young folks swam in Brummett’s dam and rode in Louise’s ‘‘canoe.’’

Sherman Sterrett and Louise Brummett enjoy Louise’s lake and her sheep-trough canoe

— The community was divided north and south for rabbit hunts. The side with the least rabbits had to furnish the winning side with an oyster supper and dance the day after the hunt. The following morning red spots in the snow bore testimony to the carnage of the previous day. The rabbits were frozen and shipped back East to be made into fur-lined gloves and mittens.
— Charivaris were awesome and noisy. The neighbors quietly slipped in after dark, then serenaded the ‘‘honored’’ couple by banging tubs and throwing cans on the roof. Then the lady was given a ride in the dark in a wheelbarrow. She was left on the lonesome prairie and her husband had to go find her. Gifts (including a carefully folded diaper!) were given to the couple at a dance and lunch after the charivari.
— One school teacher from back East had been hired; but getting as far as Musselshell and seeing the country, decided not to go on to Kelley.
— A mail-order bride was rejected after arriving at her proposed husband’s domicile. She was a very beautiful lady, too.
— People waited impatiently for the packages to come from the mail order catalogs.
— There were Sunday baseball games between teams from Kelley, Flatwillow, Winnett and Musselshell; or games between the single men and the married men. One of the Kelley players had a hernia, but he didn’t let that stop him. He would just lay down flat on his back in the field, stuff it back in, and go on with the ball game.
Ice for ice boxes and for crank ice cream freezers was one of the niceties of living!
— With the scarcity of water many families were forced to use the “Order Of The Bath” for the weekly body wash in the metal washtub. Baby was first, with an added teakettle of hot water for each successive older member of the family.
— Telephones were installed in the western section of the community in 1925.
— There were many sad farewell parties until finally, there was no one left to present the pyrex dish, or to give the party.

Kelley had a post office for only 25 years, and for that length of time, earned a spot on the map. A route to boxes was established for those few who were still in the community on July 1, 1938, when the post office was closed. The mail carrier for that route was Louis Plum. Before another ten years had passed, there was only one original land owner in the community. Forrest Hodges. In 1965 he left. All had persevered through happiness and sorrow, years of plenty, and years of nothing. Then, as William Wadsworth Longfellow so aptly stated in his classic poem:

"The Day is Done"
they had all
"Folded their tents like the Arabs, and as silently stolen away."

Kelley Epilogue

On July 16, 1989, 23 Kelley kids and 17 “satellites” gathered for a reunion in Roundup, Montana. Present were Walter Andersen and his wife “Shorty”; Joan Black Kuster and her husband Douglas; Joe Black; Erma Dreisbach Hoffman and her husband Roy; Earle Hodges; Esther Hodges Gross, her daughter-in-law Dorothy, her granddaughter Susan, and great granddaughter Erin; Forrest Hodges; Howard Hodges; Ivan Hodges, his wife Inez and daughter Sylvia; Kathryn Hodges Keebler and her husband Jean; Ruth Hodges Freburg, her husband Ernest and their two daughters, Mavis and Nancy; and Mavis’ husband Bob Shotwell; George Holec; Mary Kroetch Poetter and her husband Rupert “Red”; Carroll Munson and his wife Muriel Black Munson and son Paul; Gayle Munson and his wife Carol; Ivan Munson and his wife Evelyn Melius Munson; John Munson and his wife Grace; Virgene Munson Gamble; Paul Neff and his wife Doris; and Mrs. “Cotton” Worthington.

After dinner at the Taste Freez of Roundup, all gathered in the city park for visiting and picture taking. Paul Neff and his wife had come the farthest. Eldest there were: Esther Hodges Gross (1897), Howard Hodges (1899) and George Holec (1901).
Munsons return (1989). Back: Paul, John, Gayle, Carroll; Middle: Ivan, Grace, Carol; Front: Evelyn, Virgene, Muriel


Walter and "Shorty" Andersen