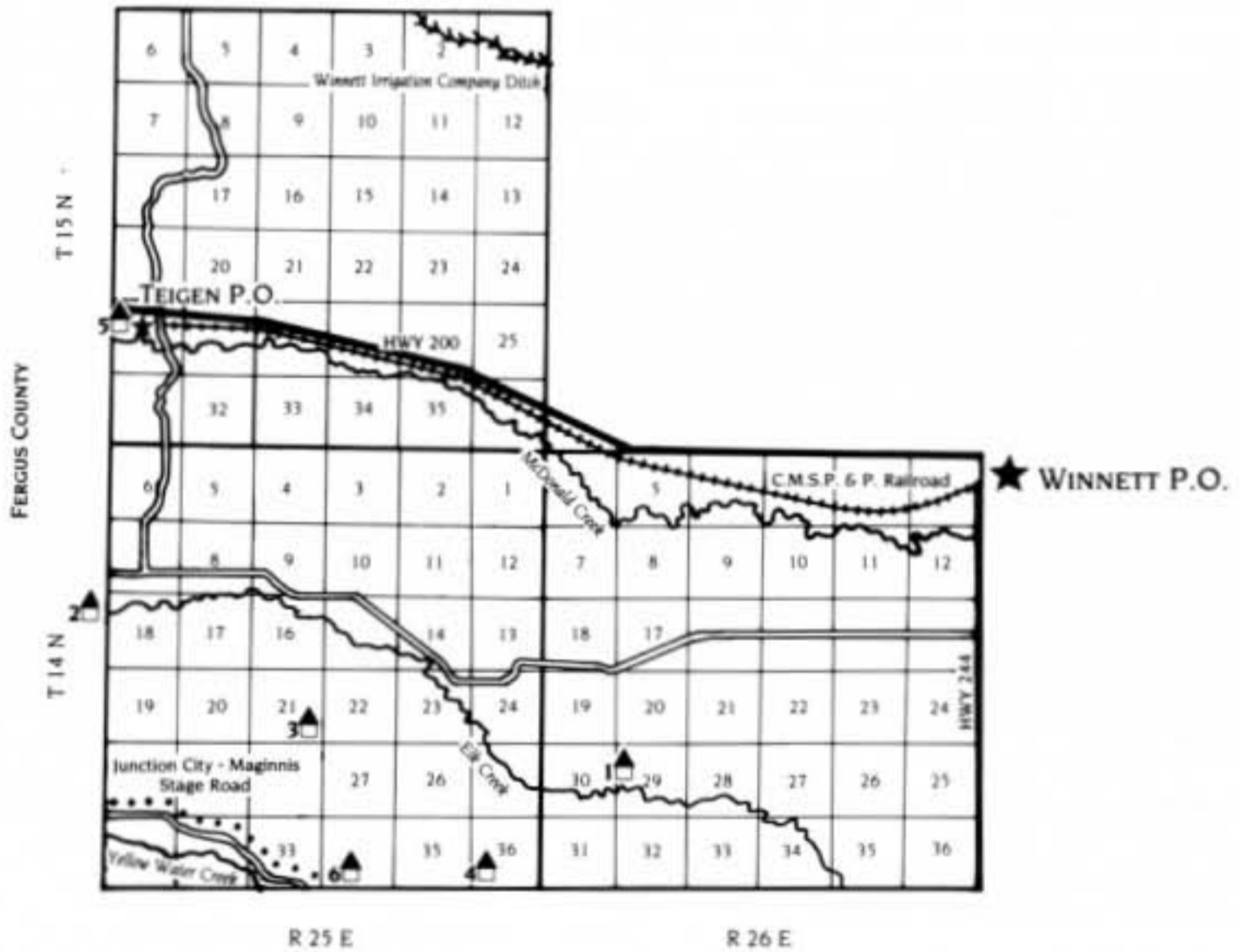


Teigen — Elk Creek

Rural Southwest Winnett



- SCHOOLS**
1. Elk Creek
 2. Kinnick
 3. Pineview
 4. Stroup
 5. Teigen
 6. Yellow Water

- School
- Post Office
- State Highway
- County Road (1986)
- Trail
- Railroad

PETROLEUM COUNTY

MILES



Teigen Ranch about 1905. The left section of the low log building served as living quarters before the two-story house was built.



The town of Teigen in 1915



Teigen Hotel, elevator and lumberyard in about 1918

Introduction

McDonald Creek heads in the foothills of the Judith and Snowy mountains, and Elk Creek, a smaller stream, heads in the foothills of the Snowy Mountains. Elk Creek has a much smaller drainage area. The two creeks run parallel about four miles apart after they enter Petroleum County. A ridge of low pine-clad hills separates the creeks until they near Winnett.

McDonald Creek joins Box Elder Creek about ten miles east of Winnett, and Box Elder Creek meanders southeastward another five or six miles before flowing into Flatwillow Creek. Elk Creek flows into Flatwillow at Petrolia Reservoir about nine miles west of the confluence of Box Elder and Flatwillow creeks.

There is an interesting story in the book *Wandersong* about the naming of McDonald Creek. *Wandersong* was written by Eleanor Banks, the daughter of Henry Macdonald. She writes of one of Henry's trips through central Montana at the time the town of Carroll was being built in 1874. "Little Mac" (as Henry was known) came upon a detachment of troops from Camp Lewis who were resting by a pleasant creek. The stream was full of beaver whose pelts were in prime condition, so the group spent the day catching beaver. Henry caught the most beaver, and at the end of the day, the captain of the troops complimented him and asked if he knew anything about the stream. Henry replied, "Yes, sir. It is the Kaiyo Itawapi Tuktai — 'Bear Wags His Tail Creek' of the Indians. It flows into the Box Elder."

"Too much Talkai (too many words)," said the Captain. "This is white man's country now and the creek should have a white man's name. What do you say we name it for our hunter-scout, McDonald Creek?"

Little Mac believed the Captain was joking, but the pretty stream is still known as McDonald (Macdonald) Creek.

Henry McDonald spelled his name McDonald during his early years in Montana; but, according to his daughter, he later resumed the original Scottish spelling of Macdonald. Small wonder there is sometimes confusion today over the spelling of McDonald Creek!

James Stuart wrote briefly about McDonald Creek in his book *Pioneering in Montana*. In the spring of 1880, Mr. Stuart rode down McDonald Creek (from Chamberlain near present-day Grassrange) searching for a ranch location. He says, "There is a fine hay bottom about nine miles below Chamberlain's on the north side of the creek. It is about two miles long and one-fourth to one-third miles wide . . . There is good gramma and buffalo grass on the bottoms and benches, also some stunted sage among it and some greasewood." After camping for the night on McDonald Creek, Mr. Stuart rode northeast a few miles and crossed the ridge between McDonald and Ford Creeks, but he wrote, "Do not like the country north and east of McDonald Creek. Too much sage."

And so Mr. Stuart continued his search for a ranch and ultimately settled in the lee of the Judith Mountains near Fort Maginnis leaving the valley of McDonald Creek to be settled by someone else.

Teigen, the Ranch and the Community

If you are streaking along Highway #200 going east from Lewistown past Grassrange, along McDonald Creek and halfway to Winnett, you will see a large abandoned two-story building with the windows boarded up. In this quiet spot, where now the peace and solitude is disturbed only when a big truck goes booming by or a noisy airplane flies low, you will find it hard to believe that once a little boom town started up, and people came for miles by wagon, by foot, or by horseback to do their trading.

Homesteaders could buy beans and flour, dried fruit and canned goods at the grocery store; they could choose between two restaurants for a meal. There was a hotel for those who wished to stay overnight, and a livery stable and blacksmith shop for their teams. The saloon offered its entertainment, and a large hall provided a gathering place for dancing, visiting, debating and programs.

There was an orange-painted house close to the railroad tracks for the section boss and a bunkhouse for the men who worked on the section. The Western Grain Elevator stood near the tracks, a red tower against the smokey green of Rattlesnake Butte. The lumberyard nearby sold the boards that went into many a thin homestead shack.

A little white schoolhouse stood on the hill about a quarter of a mile west of the hotel. It once was filled with eighteen children, from first graders to man-sized boys. Now Highway #200 lies close to the hills like a long stretch of licorice, where once was only a trail rutted by wagon wheels, and where, before that, there was no trail at all.

This story begins in the early 1880s when the country was very sparsely settled. Cattle from distant ranches grazed along the creek bottom, and deer, elk and antelope were plentiful. Buffalo herds had once roamed the country, but by 1882 most of them had been killed, their skulls and bones scattered here and there among the cactus and sagebrush.

It was in July 1884 that Mons Teigen and his partners, Knute Opheim and Ole Opheim, trailed a band of 3200 sheep from Gallatin County down McDonald Creek to the place where the Teigen Ranch is now. They had bought the sheep the fall before from a Mr. Kirk. They wintered south of Bozeman, near Anceney. In the spring, they trailed the sheep down the Musselshell Valley and skirted the east side of the Snowy Mountains, searching for a place to settle.

They liked the country around Wilsall, or that near

Careless Creek, but it was already settled. They would have stayed in the valley of Flatwillow Creek, but others were there before them. One of the partners went ahead and found the present location on McDonald Creek. They liked the broad valley and rolling hills on each side, so they each took a pre-emption claim of 160 acres and let the sheep spread out over the open range.

These were the first sheep east of the Judith Mountains, although Ashmier (Ed. probably Eschmeyer) on Fords Creek also had sheep about the same time. Cattle from the Dovenspeck, Sieben (not to be confused with Sibbert), DHS and Circle Bar were grazing along the creek bottoms. The Cattle Roundup Association had built round-up corrals at convenient locations where members could gather their cattle for branding and sorting. There was no trouble among the settlers — no war between sheepmen and cattlemen. There was enough land for all, so there was no dispute. One cattleman, however, did circulate the story that he had scattered saltpeter around for his horses, as a warning to keep the sheep away, since saltpeter is poisonous to sheep.

Teigen and Opheim set about making a home for themselves. They camped while they built log cabins. They lived on beans and bacon, and drank strong alkali water from the creek. Later they dug a well and found the well water to be just as strong. They worked hard, building up the beginning of a ranch. They cut some hay on a bench about three miles southwest, using scythes to cut it. They fenced a small pasture for the horses, with brush for shelter.

At this time Montana was still a territory and Meagher County included the land that is now Fergus, Judith Basin, Petroleum and part of Musselshell counties. Thus their location was in Meagher County, Montana Territory. The county seat was at White Sulphur Springs, and it was necessary to make that long journey in order to attend to the business of filing on land and other civil or legal business.

The nearest trading post was at Fort Maginnis, Montana, 25 miles to the west. An old account book shows bills of goods bought at the store of Broadwater, McNamara, and Co. in 1888. T. A. Marlow, later a prominent banker in Helena, was the bookkeeper and manager. A wide variety of goods, including flour, sugar, salt, lanterns, coal oil, kettles, tin plates, overalls, boots and mittens, could be bought there.

One invoice shows they bought 100 cartridges, 45-70 caliber, for \$3.75; 100 pounds of Ariosa coffee for \$23; 3000 pounds of tobacco for \$330; 750 pounds of tobacco for \$82. This was a lot of tobacco, but it was boiled and used in dipping vats to treat scab on the sheep. The first few years, Broadwater and McNamara sold the wool and held the money on credit. The wool was freighted to Fort Benton or to Billings.

Dr. Willard was the Army doctor at Fort Maginnis. Later he had a ranch called Willard's Crossing just above where the Hutterite Colony Ranch is now (1989). He raised the first alfalfa in this country. It was then called lucerne.

Sullengers' and George Ayers' ranches were just east of Dr. Willard, and Swend Holland's ranch was several miles west.

The main traveled road for this part of the country was the one from Custer Junction, past the town of Musselshell, to Flatwillow Crossing, through Chamberlain, then northwest to Fort Maginnis. Chamberlain was a stage stopping place, and a post office named Grassrange was officially designated there on March 27, 1883. Flatwillow Post Office received designation the same day.

The closest neighbors to Teigen and Opheim were the Bowens. They lived about four miles west, and were the earliest settlers in this part of the county. (See also BOWEN)

Other early settlers on McDonald Creek were the Moulton Brothers (Ben and Charles) who settled on their ranch west of Bowens the same year that Teigen and Opheims came. Walter Winnett came in and was trapping in this country, acquired land and then ran a freightline. Winnett, Stein and Goos settled at Edmond's Bluffs, where the town of Winnett now stands. Dave Foreman came in and later married Mrs. Bowen's daughter, and lived near Bowens. Over on Elk Creek, Dovenspeck and Bean had places. Bean sold to Henry Sibbert. John Olson came into the country about that time, too. He settled west of Dovenspecks. John Rowley was one of the first settlers on Yellow Water Creek.

The creek bottoms were grazed off by the hundreds of cattle that roamed at large, so the sheep fed mostly over the hills. Opheim and Teigen searched for wild hay to cut and had to look far off some years. In 1884 they cut hay with scythes on a bench two miles southwest of the ranch, and in 1885 they went over to the dry fork of Elk Creek, east of where the highway to Roundup now crosses it. The summer of 1886 was very dry, and they went as far away as the Becket country, where they camped on government land and cut hay with a second-hand mowing machine they had bought.

It is a well-known story that the winter of 1886-1887 was unusually severe, following the dry summer. The sheep belonging to Opheim and Teigen wintered fairly well, however. Mons Teigen told of the many carcasses of cattle to be seen the next spring. One coulee that he saw was so filled with the carcasses that one might have walked on them for several hundred yards.

In 1890 Knute Opheim sold his interest in the ranch and moved to Helena. In 1897 Ole Opheim drowned in the creek. His father came from Chicago to settle his estate, and Mons Teigen bought Ole's share, making Teigen the sole owner. Later that year, Mons went to Helena and married Elsie Bordsen, and they moved into the two-story log house which had been built on the ranch. (See also TEIGEN)

One day Mons was returning from a trip to town, and when he came to the place in the road where the first glimpse of home could be seen, there was only smoke and rubble left. The family had to crowd into the

bunkhouse until a new house could be built. In 1908 a carpenter by the name of Billy Howe built the house that now stands on the ranch. Later, in 1910, he built the barn and the sheep sheds.

In 1908 Bill Briggs settled on his homestead just north of the bridge that marks "Briggs Coulee." In 1910 more homesteaders started coming in and taking up land — Tom Francis, John Devault, William Seute and Ed Daniels, Melva Bolles and her two sons settled on a place about three miles southwest of Teigen. One son, Lawrence, also took a homestead. Julia Erickson and son Ross, Austin Johnson and George Wilson also came that year.

Stanislaus Schultz and his wife and children moved in. Three of his sons settled joining homesteads. Ole Vinge came from Norway about 1910, working on the Teigen Ranch after he arrived. The peak years for the homestead boom around Teigen were 1913 to 1916.

The Luebke family settled about four miles northwest of Teigen. Frank Bassett lived near Luebkes, and Jim Reed and his sons were about three miles north. Mr. and Mrs. Shepherdson and Don were east of Reeds. Further north Andrew Eckland and Sven Holmgren, Bill Smith, A. C. McKnight (later Lewistown's Chief of Police), Post, Martino, Walker, Cusimano, Shuster, York, Mansell and Barnes had their land. South of the Teigen townsite lived the Charbonneaus, Ahlers, Archers, Schultzes and Roy Marks.

By 1912, surveys were started for the Milwaukee and the Great Northern railroads. The Milwaukee Land Company laid out the townsite of Teigen and the building started. Tom Peterson built a store in 1914 and the Teigen Post Office was officially designated on November 24, 1914, with Mr. Peterson as postmaster. John Ferguson built a hotel and restaurant. Across the road, Bill Beedie had a livery stable and blacksmith shop. Peckham's saloon was in business — for a short time Mr. and Mrs. Peckham lived in a tent next door!

In the fall of 1916 the Western Lumber and Grain Company built a lumberyard and elevator. There had been a bumper wheat crop in 1915 and 1916, so there was wheat to take care of and a demand for lumber.

In 1917 a community hall was built on land donated by Mons Teigen and the Milwaukee railroad. It was a large building, 30 feet by 60 feet, and was first used in July 1917. Mrs. Bolles was a leader in the community and she helped promote the building of the hall. She also helped organize a debating society which met regularly.

The Polk Directory for 1918 listed George W. Conrad as postmaster and manager of the Western Lumber and Grain Co. The directory also listed T. A. Fallihee as proprietor of a general store, T. A. Peterson as owner of a general store, and J. P. Rutledge as blacksmith.

The Doughty store and post office sprouted up about four and one-half miles to the west of Teigen at the Doughty farm. The post office officially operated from July 22, 1918, until June 30, 1919. A school, with a large enrollment for a few years, was located there as well.

The Ferguson Hotel burned and Ferguson took up a

homestead. People were coming through the country in a constant stream, and many stopped at the Teigen Ranch asking to stay overnight. The house was often crowded with sometimes as many as 14 unexpected guests! Mons Teigen built the hotel (which still stands) in the fall of 1917. Boyds ran the hotel until 1924, when they moved in a building and started a store. Nels and Martha Oswick took charge of the hotel for a short time, and Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Carr ran the hotel and fed the Campbell Drilling Company crew while the Teigen No. 1 well was being drilled in 1925. Pete and Edna Teigen and boys were the last occupants of the hotel.

Schools

With so many families in the community, there was need for a school. The nearest school was Grassrange where eighteen children were crowded into a log cabin with one teacher. The Teigen area residents made application for a school district, but the regular process of getting school started was slow, so Mons Teigen had a schoolhouse built on the hill near the ranch, and he hired the first teacher — Miss Louise Smith — in the fall of 1914. Some of the first children to attend the school were: Beatrice, Cecelia, Helen, Victoria and Frank Schultz; John, Henry and Amelia Luebke; Alfred and Serena Mansell; Dean and Nova Reed; Don Shepherdson; Georgia Hanneuse; Frances and Johnny Ferguson; Angeline and Nettie Wipfli; and Bard Teigen. The students walked or rode horseback, through bitter cold sometimes, carrying their noon lunches in tin pails. They sat in double desks with all the restlessness, the mischief, the comradeship of any country school.

The first teacher was young and pretty, and some of the older boys liked school better than they had expected to! Bill Beedie was among the young men of the community who were interested, and he soon changed Miss Smith's name. Melva Bolles taught the following two years (1915 and 1916) and later came back again to teach from 1923 to 1929.

School District #134 was officially created on August 21, 1914. It included not only the Teigen area on McDonald Creek, but also an area south on Elk Creek. For many years two schools operated in the district — the Teigen School and the Kinnick School. (More is written on the Kinnick School in the Elk Creek introduction.) Other schools in the area, but outside the district, were the Doughty School (about 4½ miles west of Teigen), the Slack School north of Briggs Coulee, and later, the Reed School which was built near War House Lake.

Community Halls

Early-day dances were held at several different places. Ledbetter Hall was about ten miles north of Teigen; Bowen Hall was at the Bowen place to the west; and Bill Beedie fixed up a place to dance at the back of his livery stable before the Teigen Hall was built.

A dance was a happy get-together for the many scattered families. The entire family would get into a big wagon and ride ten to fifteen miles. Babies, toddlers, and all ages of children went along. The little tots had a good time playing and trying to dance, and when they tired out they fell asleep on the benches along the wall. Married couples had a great time, too, but the young people were the ones who enjoyed it most. It was the time and place where boys met girls; fun and gaiety were contagious.

George Wilson and Bill Briggs were the fiddlers for many of the dances. Sometimes Bill played the drums. He went to a dance almost every week, and usually his "Missus" and the "Little Briggses" went too. As soon as they could toddle, they learned the rhythm of the dances. Square Dances, Two-Steps, Waltzes and Fox Trots in a lively tempo were the favorites.

The wives usually brought cakes and sandwiches for the midnight supper, and coffee was brewed in a copper wash boiler. Outside, along the rows of hitching posts, some of the men had their rowdy fun. Sometimes they played pranks on some young fellow who was going with a girl, such as putting his saddle on his horse backward, or smearing axle grease on his saddle. The bottles and jugs were often passed around out there, too, and now and then, sad to say, there would be a fist fight. By daylight, the music would stop and all would start home, a strange weariness stealing through their very bones, yet with the fun and excitement lingering in their memories.

Railroad

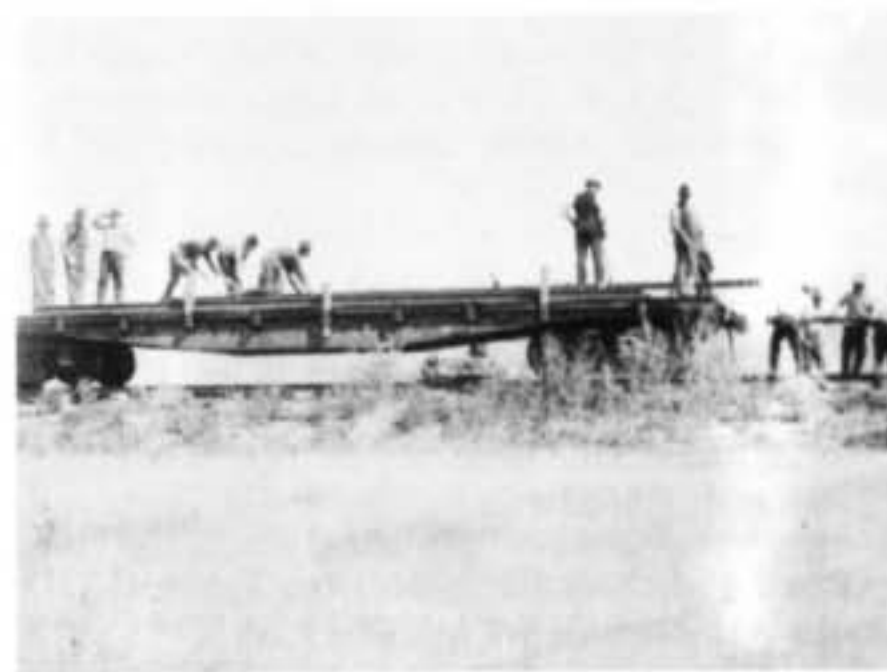
The building of the railroad took several years, from the first surveys made in 1911, until it was finally completed. Three different surveys were made before building of the grade was started in 1916; the rails were laid in the summer of 1917. Then the section house and bunkhouse and small depot were built. Bill Rozell was the first section boss. The train came three times a week at first, then every day except Sunday. During the Cat Creek oil boom in 1920, two trains a day steamed by!

What a wealth of excitement and thrill it brought each trip — the black smoke belching out of the engine, the whistle echoing along the valley, the bell clanging as the train slowed to a stop at the station, bringing mail and freight and passengers. The coach was often filled, the men wearing long overcoats and wide brimmed hats, the women in bulky skirts and high-topped shoes, children in quaint little outfits. In cold weather they would try to get close to the little coal heater in one end of the coach.

Sometimes the snow proved too deep and heavy for the plows they then used, and the train would be stalled for hours. The coming of the railroad made a big difference in life along its route, but the irony of the story is that it came just about in time to start moving homesteaders and their household goods out, because already they were finding that it was impossible to make a living on a few acres of barren land that they had claimed.



Work train laying rails between Teigen and Winnett



The train taking on water at the Teigen station

War — Oil — Drought

The bumper crop years of 1915 and 1916 did not continue. The drought came and stayed. It became a bitter joke that "next year's" crops were the only good ones. Homesteaders tried to find jobs — on section crews, ranch work — anything to make a living. Some mortgaged their land and spent the money, then left.

During World War I many young men from the Teigen community were in the service. Ole Vinge, Andy Eckland, Nels Nelson, Leonard Eld, Herman and Frank Luebke, Ted and John Schultz were just a few of the boys that went. At home the Teigen community formed a Red Cross Chapter, and they knitted, rolled bandages, and raised money to help in the Red Cross work.



Teigen Red Cross Chapter shows its spirit!

(L to R) Mrs. Mons Teigen, unknown, Mrs. William Briggs, little girls Jennie and Happy Briggs, Mrs. Tom Peterson, behind her Marie Afflerbach, standing on log — Louise Charbonneau, Gladys Tilden (teacher), and Mabel Peterson

The oil strike in Cat Creek in 1920 caused excitement all around the area and there was drilling activity in every part of the county in the next few years. Teigen was no exception.

Gordon Campbell (the geologist who was instrumental in drawing the first attention to the oil potential in Cat Creek) mapped the geological structure around Teigen in 1920. He conducted another survey in 1924, and on May 22, 1925, the Winnett Times quoted Mr. Campbell as saying, "The structure is perfect, with an excellent enclosure. It is enclosed with an igneous dyke such as found in Mexico and is an entirely new condition in Montana. I have thought that it contained oil for several years and have now made arrangements for the test." The site of the test was near the Teigen railway station.

Several other tests were being, or had been, made in the Teigen vicinity. "The Teigen Truth-Teller," published

by the Teigen School students, contained this ditty on April 17, 1925:

"North, South, East, and West
Everywhere they're going to test,
And then we'll sing
'When Dreams Come True!'

The little paper also reported: "Mr. Peter Dolsman has bought two lots in Teigen and moved in his ranch house. The Teigen boom has begun. Someone should take pictures of the townsite now and again in six months. Buy a lot and beat the boom, that's our slogan."



Mrs. Mons Teigen visiting at the Campbell well drill site

Unfortunately, like so many other oil wells drilled in the 1920s, the hole was P/A — plugged and abandoned.

The thirties were the driest years yet seen in Montana, and prices were so low that livestock was not worth shipping. Most of the homesteaders left, some went back to the states they came from — Minnesota, Iowa, the Dakotas. Many followed the lure of California. Some now live as near as Lewistown or Billings, Montana. Now and then someone comes back to look at the old homestead, and, no doubt, each one holds vivid memories of those long ago days.

The buildings that once made up the townsite of Teigen are gone. The community hall burned early in 1920; Peterson's store burned in 1924. The elevator was torn down and moved away in the early thirties. The section house was bought and moved to the Harry Dengel place. The Teigen Store, which was first owned and operated by Mrs. Boyd, was sold to Mark Kelley in 1928. After he died, his second wife, Jennie Meserve, ran the store and post office for five more years. She sold to Bill and Katherine Tait in 1946. The Tait's operated the store and post office until 1970, when the business was sold to the Huffs. They operated it until its closing in 1986. In the spring of 1987, the store building was burned, leaving only the hotel at the old townsite.

The Teigen School held its final term in 1934-1935. Bard Teigen had been a pupil during the first term of the school in 1914; Peter Teigen Jr. was a student during the final term. The schoolhouse was donated to the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1973 and moved to Symmes Park in Lewistown, Montana, to be used as a memorial to the one-room school.

The railroad schedule dwindled to an occasional train and the line was finally abandoned in 1972, and the tracks were taken up. The post office became a Community Post Office of Roundup in 1983. Even the sheep are gone. In 1976 the Teigens replaced their bands of sheep with cattle. In 1984 the Teigen Ranch celebrated a century of operation on McDonald Creek. The beautiful ranch is still in the hands of the Teigen family.

(The foregoing Teigen introduction is taken almost entirely from an article written by Bard and Ann Teigen for the *Lewistown News Argus* on December 21, 1963, and is used with the permission of Ann Teigen.)

Elk Creek

Settlement on Elk Creek began with the coming of the large cattle herds. Headquarters for these ranches were generally closer to the foothills of the mountains where water and wood were readily available, but the cattle grazed freely the length of all the eastward flowing streams to the Musselshell River. Line camps were often established along the streams.

Before 1900, water rights were filed on Elk Creek by Nelson Dovenspeck and Willard and Lillie Bean. Shortly thereafter rights were filed by Fred and Mary Stein and Emma Kinnick. This would indicate they were the earliest permanent settlers on the creek. Others with early claims for water on the creek were Ora Clement, John Johnson, Emma and George Egerly, Thomas Cruse, Jon Single and Frederick Finkbeiner.

The people on upper Elk Creek were served by the Grassrange Post Office and the Teigen Post Office. Lower Elk Creek was served by Winnett. A post office never existed along Elk Creek nor was there ever a strong sense of community or neighborhood. In the early 1920s, a Pineview column in the Winnett Times furnished the local news and occasionally in the 1930s news concerning the Elk Creek residents was written under the heading of Livewire Flat, Longview, Possum Holler or Owl Creek.

Schools

The earliest school on Elk Creek was east of the area encompassed in this chapter, but children from lower Elk Creek attended the school. It was known as the Bratten or Beer School (See *Petrolia Introduction*). For perhaps a year or two, children from the area were transported to Winnett via a team and covered wagon. (See *MORGAN*)

Lillian Story Hough (See *STORY*) wrote of another early school on Elk Creek. It was located about five miles west

of present Highway #244. The school was under the jurisdiction of District #159 and it probably operated for three or four years.

South of Elk Creek, closer to Yellow Water Creek but within T14-R26, three other schools operated at various times. The earliest of these was the Yellow Water School in Section 34. It opened in 1914 with Belle Davis as teacher (See *DAVIS*). Ginevra Van Tassell, Joe Langshausen and Dora Beer were later teachers. Most of the students came from the Yellow Water area. It is doubtful if the school operated after 1917.

Records seem to indicate the Pineview School in Section 21 had only one teacher. Mrs. Guy Schellenger taught a summer session of the school in 1921, a regular term in 1921-22 and another term in 1922-23. The school closed in 1923. Pupils in the school included the Redmond, Davis, Ringo and Schellenger children.

The last school to operate in T14-R25 was located in Section 36. It was referred to as the Yellow Water or Stroup School, and it opened in the fall of 1927 and closed in the spring of 1929. It served the McFarren, Lancelle, Stroup and Barnes children.

Just west of T14-R25, near Elk Creek, the Kinnick School served children in Petroleum and Fergus counties for almost 50 years. The school opened in 1914, was moved several times, and except for several brief interruptions, operated until 1962. Some of the families it served were Wards, Turners, Kjersems, Schultzes, Archers, Kinnicks and Gjerdes. The school was under the jurisdiction of District #134. After Petroleum County was formed, the district became a joint district with Fergus County. The Teigen and the Kinnick schools were both within the same district.

Oil!

During the summer of 1921, wild cat oil wells were being drilled all over Petroleum County. The Cat Creek strike in 1920 had spurred activity to a feverish pitch. Perhaps no drilling drew more attention in the town of Winnett than the drilling of the Oregon-Montana well in 1921. The property, six miles southwest of Winnett, was within sight of the town and had been heavily promoted both in Montana and in Oregon. Shares and royalties for 2500 lots were sold by Lloyd Addington and Lee Hoselton in the name of Oregon-Montana Oil and Gas Company.

One can well imagine the excitement when word reached Winnett on August 26, 1921, that oil had been struck on the site! The Winnett Times reported, "The excitement surpassed any like experience in the history of the city, even more so than the news of the discovery well at Cat Creek . . . when the tools were pulled up, heavy oil was dripping from them . . . and as the news swept the city, a stream of automobiles visited the well and brought back samples of the oil."

The excitement was short-lived, however. It was contended the oil could not be commercially produced without drilling deeper, and the operation was plagued with every imaginable problem. In December the *Winnett Times* reported, "Manager Addington, a driller of long experience, since taking charge of the well after the fiasco under the management of Lee Hoselton . . . assures he will give the well his closest attention." In spite of the bold promises, the well was never satisfactorily completed. There are still those who remember seeing oil from the Oregon-Montana. The fact remains, however, no oil was produced. On February 3, 1928, over 2200 of the Oregon-Montana lots were advertised for sale by the county because of delinquent taxes. In 1976 Red Carnell drilled a well immediately adjacent to the original well. It proved to be a dry hole.

AHLERS, Henry (Sec 7-14-25) Henry and Lydia Ahlers owned land just east of the Fergus County line north of Elk Creek. Lydia was clerk of School District #134 in 1922. In 1925 Henry served on the school board for the district.

The Ahlers had four children — Wilbur (1910), Raymond (1916), Albert (1917) and Lucille (1920). Little Raymond Ahlers wrote the following poem for the Teigen School paper, the "Teigen Truth-Teller." It was printed in January 1925.

"Oh, when I see the pretty candle light,
Shining in the window, oh, so bright,
And I see it every night
For jolly Christmastime is here."

Mr. Ahlers found work in Grassrange in 1925. Mrs. Ahlers and the children lived in Teigen, where the children attended school that year. In April Mrs. Ahlers moved to Grassrange.

Records show the Ahlers' homestead reverted to the county in 1926. It was purchased by the Archers.

ANDERSON, Sophia (Sec 28-15-25) Sophia Anderson was a sister of Mrs. Mons (Elsie Bordsen) Teigen. Sophia took up land down the creek from Teigen. She did not remain in the area, however, but returned to Helena to make her home.

When Peter Teigen started school in about 1906, he lived with Sophia for the school term. Peter stayed with her each year until she died in 1912.

ARCHER, William Floyd William and Ella Archer came to Montana from Washington on their honeymoon in 1916 with a team and wagon and a horse and buggy. Ella drove the horse and buggy. All of their belongings, including Mrs. Archer's piano, were hauled in the wagon. (The piano, incidently, is still owned by the family!) The Archers settled on a place about eleven miles east of Grassrange near the Fergus-Petroleum county line.

Shortly after they arrived in Montana, Ella was asked to teach the Kinnick School, and she taught the school again

in the early 1940s. Through the years she taught the Gjerde, Kinnick, Stolle, Kelly, Remillard, Schultz, and Ward children, to name a few.

The Archers raised six children — Deane (1917), Jack (1919), Victor, Nell, Peggy and Nancy. Deane, the oldest, still lives in the community. He served in the Civilian Conservation Corps during the late 1930s and then returned to farm the land his parents owned in addition to parcels which were added when early homesteaders sold or abandoned their property. Deane married Hazel Grosser at the Grosser's home in Winnett in 1941. The couple had two children, Larry and Tim, both of whom graduated from Winnett High School. Hazel died in 1972. (See also GROSSER — Cat Creek)

Jack, the second son, was killed in a horse accident when he was only seven years old. Victor and Nell both attended the University of Montana in Missoula. Victor went to Northwestern Medical School and became a doctor. Peggy attended school in Grassrange and Lewistown and now lives in Townsend, Montana. Nancy lives in Dansville, New York.

Ella V. Archer wrote a small book based on her life — *Miles and Miles Behind Me*. It is a candid and sometimes philosophical account which begins by saying, "Sometimes I wonder if the world will ever again change as rapidly as it has during the last sixty years — from the horse-and-buggy days of my early years to the wonderful and awesome trip to the moon of these later days."

She also observed, "Perhaps some day soon, a woman will no longer be a second-class citizen (the short ribs of the Adams of this world) but will stand side by side with her man and not only vote, but hold as many public offices as he does, where she can have just as much say as he exercises." A copy of the book is available for checkout in the Petroleum County Public Library.

ARVOLD, Ole (Sec 25,26-14-25) Ole Arvold bought eighty acres from Homer and Ida White in 1917. Six months later he sold the property to Henry Sibbert. Ole was not married.

AVEN, Anders M. (Sec 27-14-25) Anders Aven, a single man, received a homestead patent to 160 acres of land south of Elk Creek in 1914. He deeded the property to Henry Sibbert in the same year.

BAKER, Dan Dan Baker herded sheep for the Teigen. Ann Teigen wrote the following account of Mr. Baker in an article for the *Lewistown News Argus* titled "Shepherders — A Vanishing Breed."

"Dan Baker was a newspaper man. He had run a newspaper in a small town and had at times worked at the *Lewistown Daily News* office. He liked to write poetry and had plenty of time to think and write while out with the sheep. He was handicapped with a speech difficulty.

He was on the Lewistown paper staff when word came that World War II was over. The phones were ringing wildly. People wanted to hear all about it.

After answering quite a few inquiries, his patience was worn out. A caller asked, 'Is the war over?' Dan said

scathingly, 'What war?' "

BANGS, Viola (Sec 22, 27-14-26) Viola Bangs received a patent on 200 acres from the U. S. Government in 1920. In 1924 the land reverted to the county for taxes. Dell Huotte bought the property in 1928 for \$280. Again it reverted to the county for taxes, and John Hill bought it. In 1942 he sold it to King and Petersen. It is now part of the Joe C. King and Sons Ranch.

BARBEE, M. J. "Buster" Barbee was born October 27, 1923, in Lewistown, Montana. His mother, Alta Fields, was the daughter of Ed Fields, an early-day Fort Maginnis settler. His father, Martin "Mart" Barbee, ran a poolhall in the old mining town of Maiden in 1916. There were five children in the family — Montana June "Monte" (1915), Marta (1920), Buster (1923), Bill (1927) and Ronald, the youngest. Their mother died in 1936. Her sister, Bertie Fields Milnschmidt, helped care for the school-age boys during the school terms. The boys spent most of their summers on their grandfather's ranch near Fort Maginnis.

Buster served in the infantry in Europe during World War II. After the war he returned to central Montana where he worked on ranches, trained and traded horses, trapped and hunted. He killed a huge grizzly bear in 1960. He also did some prospecting for uranium and gold in the State of Washington. Incidentally, he is no slouch as a pool player!

Buster has always liked well-trained dependable horses, dogs, men and, yes, children! He has no patience with a horse that will set him afoot, a man who will break his word, or a child who will not try to do his best. Some of Buster's well-trained horses helped a lot of kids win ribbons at rodeos and horse shows.

Buster enjoys writing poetry, and from time to time, the poems are printed in the paper. The following is a sample of his humorous rhymes.

The Expert

"Now when it comes to calving cows,
I guess there is nothing I don't know.
I've calved cows on a hundred spreads,
From Montana clear down to Mexico.

I've pulled calves that had six legs,
With two heads and upside down.
Yes, old horse, they are lucky to have me,
For I'm a man that has really been around.

Now take that cow right over there —
Just listen to her beller.
See how upset she is, old horse,
I know she has lost her little feller.

Her hips are sunk, her belly's flat,
There's dried blood upon her tail.
The hair is curly where it's sucked,
The quarter is shiny as a new milk pail.

Don't worry old girl, I'll find him —
I sure hope that it's not dead.
Now I remember your calf, old girl,
It's that heifer with the real round head.

I bet that's her right over there,
It's gant as my uncle's brother.
Here comes a cow like her tail's afire
Darn! That calf has a mother.

Well I've looked this whole pasture over, horse,
Everything seems to be a pair.
I bet some two-legged varmint stole him —
There's not even a carcass anywhere.

That old cow has quit her belling,
That's her laying in that tall grass.
Why, I can't believe my eyes, old horse,
She just had herself a calf!"



Buster Barbee and his record-sized grizzly bear

Buster spent a good many years on the Teigen and the King ranches. He married Orene Raundal in 1971. (See also BARBEE — Winnett)

BEAN BROTHERS Dolphus Bean (1824-1908) and his second wife, Ann Eaton (1829-1901), came to Montana from New Hampshire in the early 1880s with two of their grown sons — Benning and Willard. Another son, Daniel, came later. They settled on Elk Creek and upper Yellow Water Creek and took out water rights on both streams.

Land records show Benning M. Bean and his wife, Mary, transferred 80 acres of land on Elk Creek to Willard E. Bean in 1898 (Sec 14,15-14-25). Benning and Mary acquired land on Blood Creek near Valentine in 1899 and lived there for a number of years. (See also BEAN — Dovetail)

Willard Bean recorded the purchase of 120 acres (Sec 23,24-14-25) on Elk Creek from the U. S. Government in 1898 under the Cash Entry provisions of the 1820 Land Act. Lillie acquired 320 acres of land (Sec 24,25-14-25) in 1903. They also recorded purchases of land from Barney Higgins and Thompson Letchworth (Sec 15-14-25) in 1901, from Edwin Lont (Sec 30-14-26) in 1900, and from Lewis Hovland (Sec 29,30-14-26) in 1904. In 1906 the Beans sold their entire Elk Creek property consisting of approximately 1200 acres to Henry Sibbert for \$8400.

Willard and Lillie had one son, Willard (1895). The *Grass Range Review* reported the following on May 14, 1925: "Mrs. W. D. Bean and son arrived in Grass Range on Tuesday from Hardin en route to Valentine to visit B. W. Bean and family for a short time. Mrs. Beans's husband, who formerly owned what is known as the Bean Ranch six miles south of Grassrange, died last February. The Beans own an eight-hundred-acre ranch near Hardin, which they have leased. On their return, they will make their home in Billings in the future."

Daniel Bean (1856-1928) and his second wife, Carolyn Colby (1859-1922) farmed with Dan's father, Dolphus Bean, south of Grassrange for several years before moving to Lewistown. Daniel Bean is listed as the first postmaster in Forestgrove from March 19, 1904 to May 15, 1908. Dan had one child, Edith, by his first wife. Edith died in Lewistown in 1892. "Carrie" had two children, Charles and Ida Mae, by her first marriage. The children took their mother's maiden name of Colby.

Two daughters were born to Dan and Carrie — Marion "Hazel" (1889-1955) and Martha Lenora (1900-1952). Hazel married Charles Foran in 1909. Charles came to Montana in 1899 and worked on various ranches before taking up land near Forestgrove. The couple had six children — Anne Caroline (1910) who died as an infant, Daniel John (1911), Dorothy Hazel (1914-1937), Charles Herbert (1917), Florence May (1922-1970) and Benning Albert (1924).

Of these children: Daniel did not stay in the area; Dorothy married Phillip Baird; Charles married and raised a family in the Grassrange area; Florence married Matt Vlastelic and the couple raised a large family near Grassrange. Their daughter, Dorothy (Kovacich), furnished information for this article. A son, Michael Vlastelic, is mentioned in both the Flatwillow and Winnett chapters of this book.

BEANBLOSSOM, Marvin (See HUFF)

BECK, Rudolph (Sec 14-14-26) See BECK — Winnett

BEEDIE, William William Beedie built the first livery stable in the little community of Teigen. Later Mr. Beedie married the schoolteacher, Louise Smith, moving off

north to start a family and raise sheep. (See also BEEDIE — Blakeslee)

BERGE, Isak (Sec 29-14-26) Isak was a single man, who it is believed, worked for Henry Sibbert. In 1913 Henry deeded certain water rights to Isak Berge. Isak received a desert land patent on 160 acres which he later deeded to Henry Sibbert.

BOHN Families Albert and Hattie Bohn, Charlie and Louise Bohn, and William and Florence Kindt came to Montana together from Illinois in 1912. A more complete history of the families can be found in the Petrolia section of this book, since it is the area where they all permanently settled.

It is interesting to note, however, the land agent mislocated them and they spent a summer (from April to October) living on Elk Creek until the error was discovered. Their first shelter consisted of 25 railroad car doors which formed the walls, tarpaulins which formed the roof, and horse blankets which were used for doors. Their nearest neighbors were the Henry Sibberts to the east and the George W. Kinnicks to the west. This would indicate they were misplaced three townships to the west of their proper location. Their first location was approximately Sec 7-14-25; their final location was Sec 7-14-28.

The families found the Sibberts and Kinnicks to be kind considerate neighbors, and their friendship lasted all of their lives.

BOLLES, Melva Melva Bolles and her two sons, Lawrence and Henry, settled about three miles southwest of Teigen. Lawrence also took out a homestead. Mrs. Bolles taught the Teigen School from 1915 to 1917 and again from 1923 to 1929. During the 1925 term, her pupils published a community newspaper known as "The Teigen Truth-Teller." A copy of the winter issues of the paper can be found in the Winnett library.

Mrs. Bolles and her son, Henry, lived in a house just south of the Teigen Hotel while she was teaching school in 1925. Henry married, however, and was living in Butte in 1929. Later he was a professor at Montana State College in Bozeman.

Mrs. Bolles died from pneumonia shortly after school opened in 1929. She was a sister of Judge E. K. Cheadle of Lewistown.



Great friends! Elsie Teigen and teacher Melva Bolles