



Second Eager Store completed in 1916

remote from the rest of the business district on Main Street, and a roomy one-story building was built for the store on the northeast corner of the intersection of Main and North Broadway Avenue."

(W.T. 12-19-1924) "The large Eager Mercantile Company store building will be the first courthouse for Petroleum County . . . the building and lot to the west were leased for \$150 a month . . . After signing the lease with the county commissioners for his store building, Mr. Eager leased Rudolph Beck's corner building (Ed. originally the first Aristo), which is now occupied by the bowling alley, and will move his stock of general merchandise therein."

(W.T. 1-19-1925) Ad: "FREE DANCE EAGER MERCANTILE BUILDING Tuesday January 13th Before County Takes Over Building, we are giving the people of Petroleum County a Complimentary Dance U R INVITED Eager Mercantile Co."

(W.T. 12-16-1927) Headline: "EAGER MERCANTILE COMPANY TO A NEW LOCATION Buy Walter Sevals Building Next Door East and will Move into new Quarters between Christmas and the first of January. To Install New Front."

Mrs. Gilfeather's article (W.T. 5-18-50) continued: "The store was located there only 20 months and extensive remodeling and enlarging had been done, when a fire on the Sunday before Labor Day, 1929, wiped out the Eager Mercantile Store and several adjoining business houses.

"The Eager Mercantile Co. was then re-established across Main Street from the drug store, in the block now



Eager store just before 1945 fire. Broadway Garage at right



Elmer Eager family: (Back row) Louise, Rex, Nell; (Front) Mrs. Eager, Mr. Eager

only occupied by Cole's Service Station (in 1989, B & D Service). There the company consisted of two stores, a dry goods and a grocery store. In the spring of 1930 the county courthouse was obtained on east Main, and Mr. Eager moved his store back into his building on the corner of Main and North Broadway.

"Eager Mercantile Co. was housed there until 1945 when a fire destroyed the building and entire stock. Mrs. Eager stated that she thought that her husband was finished with store business after that fire, but in a week he had set up a new store in the smaller and former Longpre Bakery building, which was west of the burned store.

"That building housed the business until May of 1950, when it was moved across the street into the former Winnett Mercantile Co., which had been purchased by the Eagers the middle of April 1950.

"The Eagers' son, Rex, is a business partner with his father. Rex is a quiet fellow who is a 'good hand' wherever he is, whether it be working behind the counter, trucking goods from Billings, operating a tractor at the ranch, or adding a long column of figures. Mrs. Elmer Eager still clerks in the store whenever she is needed.

"Pages and pages can be written about the Eager Mercantile Co., since the days Arbuckles coffee and Lewistown Belle and Five Roses flour were standard brands in grocery stores of central Montana. Here only mention can be made that Elmer Eager homesteaded on Box Elder Creek, north of town, in 1917 and owned the homestead until a couple of years ago. He owns a fine irrigated farm where alfalfa and Herefords seem to be the chief crops.

"Beginning with five registered Hereford cows that were purchased from Fred Colver in Fergus County, a fine

herd of registered Herefords is now owned by Elmer and Rex Eager. They sell herd sires to many stockmen in this part of Montana and endeavor to improve the quality of the herd by purchase of superior sires. Some years ago a rancher was checking off his shopping list in the store and remarked: 'I've bought prunes before in this store, but this is the first time I've ordered a bull!'

When the Eagers moved into town from the homestead, they lived in a house behind their store. Howard Lepper, the nephew of B. F. Lepper had built a new home at the corner of Rowley Street and Moulton Avenue, but he had died of the flu soon after occupying the house. The Eagers lived there for a time, and also in the original Jarrett house at the corner of South Broadway and Millsap. In 1926 they moved into the fine house at the corner of Broadway and Rowley, which had been constructed for the Oscar Badger family.

Besides handling the Winnett store business, which stocked everything from caskets to candy bars, machinery, shoes, clothing and food, Mr. Eager also was vice-president of the First National Bank when the bank was changed from Winnett State to First National in July of 1919. He was treasurer of the Brust Oil Syndicate in 1921. After the original store at Flatwillow burned, Mr. Eager stocked a store in that community. Mr. O. H. Redd was manager there.

As well as keeping up with the newest trends in farm machinery for the men, Eagers also stocked (in 1929) the Haag washing machine as a convenience for women. It was made to operate by either electric or gasoline power. Mr. Eager was drafted as mayor of the town in June of 1933 and served in that capacity until 1947.

During the years of drought and depression, store owners, the same as their charging patrons, found it difficult at times to pay their bills. A wholesale dealer pressed Mr. Eager for payment. He calmly placed the store keys on the counter in front of him and remarked, "Well, if you think you can do a better job than I can, here are the keys!" The dealer calmed down, and an agreeable plan for payment was made.

Mr. Eager's inability to pay may have been created because of his very kind heart. A typical example is of a customer who had suffered both grasshopper and hail loss and came to the store for necessities. She looked wistfully at the stacks of crated peaches (97 cents a crate), then walked away. She knew she wouldn't even have the cash for what the family had to have, and she would have to ask for more time to pay. Mr. Eager took her order, told her not to worry about the payment and said, "You better take about six crates of those peaches, too; your family should have some fruit." Also, whether the bill was paid or not, if there were children in the family, a small sack of dumb-bell suckers or other candy treats always mysteriously appeared in the bottom of the grocery box.

During all of this time, Mrs. Eager, too, had been busy. She helped in the store when needed. She taught many people the art of knitting, crocheting, and embroidery.



Nell Eager about 1919

An all around "good scout," she seemed to delight in inviting friends to the Eager home for parties.

In 1952, after thirty-seven years in the store business in Winnett, Mr. Eager sold his last store to Bill and Clara Herweg. Eagers sold their original homestead to B. C. Stewart and acquired the John Woods place on McDonald Creek, which Rex and Mr. Eager ran in partnership until Mr. Eager retired in 1962.

Many friends gathered at the Masonic Temple on Sunday, May 26, 1963, to bid a fond farewell and God-speed to these fine people who had contributed so generously of themselves to the development of this community. The Eagers retired to sunny San Clemente, California.



"Grandma" Lillie, Mary and Betty

In January of 1965 the Eagers moved from San Clemente to the new Western Manor in Billings. Mr. Eager passed away December 27, 1965. Mrs. Eager died on June 24, 1978.

Daughter Nell was one of the first four graduates of Winnett High School in 1919. She married Oscar Badger and they had two girls, Bess and Jane. Daughter Louise graduated from Winnett High School in 1932 and from Montana State College. She was a talented pianist and accompanied the Glee Club and other music groups through all her school years. She married Art Ward in 1941. After years of business positions, she succumbed to cancer on February 10, 1982, and was buried in Lincoln, Nebraska. Rex graduated from Winnett High School in 1930 and went into business with his father.

EAGER, Rex Rex, son of Elmer and Lillie Eager, was born December 11, 1912, in Beaver Crossing, Nebraska. He came to the Winnett area with his folks when they homesteaded in 1916. He attended twelve years of school in the Winnett school system, graduating from high school in the spring of 1930. After a short term of college work, Rex acquired an interest in his parents' store and ranch, and he worked at both occupations.

In 1937 Rex and Frances Longpre' were married, and they moved into their first home at 110 South Moulton Avenue. They planted trees and a lawn there, and this seemed to be an inducement for others in town to do the same. Two daughters joined them at this location., Betty was born December 2, 1938, and Mary, October 27, 1941.

1951 found Rex and Fran building a new home at the corner of West Main and South Moulton Avenue, a fine addition to Winnett's Main Street! Rex worked as a partner with his father until Mr. Eager retired, then operated the ranch until 1974. At that time Rex and Fran retired, moved to the shore of Flathead Lake, and built a new home for their retirement years.



Frances and Rex Eager

The couple had given many years of dedicated service to their home community and were sorely missed when they left Winnett. Fran was a charter member of the local Royal Neighbors of America, a very active member of the Garden Club, had been chairman and held other positions in the Red Cross, and was a highly-interested trustee of the Winnett Public Library from 1957 until 1972. Rex served on the town council, was mayor, school board trustee, and was on the board of the Mid-Rivers Telephone Cooperative.

Betty graduated from Winnett High School in 1956, and from Montana State College with a degree in Elementary Education in 1960. She and Marshall Bjork were marreid in the Catholic church in Lewistown, August 6, 1960. They had three children — Kristin Marie, Gregory, and Darryl. Betty and Marshall now live in Polson and are in business there.

Mary graduated from Winnett High School in 1959, and from the University of Nebraska in 1963, with a degree in Business Administration. She worked in the Mildred Hazel Shop in Billings, Montana, before marrying Douglas Wadman in the Catholic church in Winnett October 24, 1964. They have two children — Grant and Mariel. Mary and Doug live in California, where Doug is a petroleum engineer for Exxon Corporation.

Fran spoke of her memories of Winnett: "Winnett was a great place to raise a family in those days. The children were free to roam the rims, ride their bikes all over the country without the worries parents have now-a-days. They all enjoyed a lot of freedom, and people there were friendly, concerned, neighborly and trustworthy. We hardly ever locked the doors to our home until later years. The friendships made during those years will remain all of our lives."

EAYRS, Monty Monty and Nina Eayrs worked on the Bratten Ranch in 1975 and 1976. Nina was an accomplished artist. She painted an excellent picture of the old Winnett School. Her picture was re-photographed and copies were sold at the Winnett High School reunion of 1979. Revenue from the sale produced enough money for the purchase of a microfiche reader for the local school-public library.

EDGINGTON, Rev. When the Victory Memorial Church was being built, Rev. Edgington was one of the promoters. He delivered the sermon at the breaking-of-sod ceremony on May 29, 1921.

EDMUND, Emil Emil should go down in history as one of the carpenters who built the first residence in Winnett (with the exception of the W. J. Winnett buildings). It was the residence of H. B. Greene and was built in July of 1914. He also was prime mover in the building of the Schmidt (later Commercial) Hotel in April 1915.

He apparently was a loyal Legionnaire, as he attended the state convention of that body in Lewistown in June of 1921 and the national convention in Kansas City in October of that same year. He had served his country in

World War I. He left Winnett in 1923. On August of 1939, he was killed when struck by a truck. He was survived by his wife and one daughter.

EDWARDS, Leland Leland Edwards was a county patrol operator in 1946.

EGAN, Maurice Maurice Egan of Lewistown, Montana, a veteran of 3½ years of service in the Army, opened the Gusher Bar and Lounge of Winnett in July of 1946. It was housed in the old brick creamery building directly across the street from the courthouse.

He sold the bar to J. L. "Jim" Schafer and Otto Bixenaum of Moccasin, Montana, in September of that year, and he and his wife returned to Lewistown.

EGERER, Joe The Egerer family moved to Winnett and made their home at 13 South Teigen Ave. Mrs. Egerer was a sister of Mrs. Paul Pitman, who now lives at Valentine. Six months later Egerers bought the Hattie Hogan land in the Valentine area, added another room to the house, and made it a three-bedroom home. They planned to run sheep and do trucking.

Son Robert worked for his room (at the Commercial Hotel for Margaret Hedman) and board (at the Stockman Cafe) and attended high school. When Delmo Lodahl took over the operation of the hotel on March 1, 1964, Robert was knowledgeable enough about the operation that he was named manager.

Robert graduated from high school in 1964. He then enlisted in the Navy and specialized in dietetics and foods. He married Connie Hanson, a 1966 Winnett High School graduate. (See also HANSON — Winnett)

EIKE, Lyle (See EIKE — Blakeslee and Cat Creek)

ELBERT, Henry J. F. "Heinie" Heinie was first mentioned in the Winnett papers as joining a deer hunting party to the Musselshell in October of 1914. At the Flatwillow celebration of 1921, he won first in the fat man's race! In August of 1921, he was elected temporary fire chief of Winnett after there was some agitation for a better organized fire fighting organization.

Heinie was a very personable man in town and was a friend to everyone. He was on the Winnett baseball team and took part in all civic affairs. He worked in a meat market and was a World War I veteran. His wife, Eva Fleury, was of Metis Indian heritage. Heinie later moved to the Hi-line, where he operated a meat market.

ELDRIDGE, Lewis Lewis was hired on a temporary basis as water commissioner for the town of Winnett during the summer of 1981. His wife, Faith, became an excellent library aide in the combined school-public library. Daughter Lois had graduated from high school previously. Scott graduated from Winnett High School in 1983. Brice entered school here. The Eldridges moved to Frenchtown, Montana.

ENGELS, Cecil Cecil Engels worked for Floyd Hill, Clinton Hassett, and others in 1954 and 1955. He was also an active member of the square dancing group. He

moved to Miles City, Montana, in April of 1955.

ENLOW, Clarence Clarence was born on May 6, 1878, in Golden, Illinois. He came to Winnett from Lewistown to act as day engineer of the Winnett Electric Light and Power Company. Mrs. Enlow joined him, and they made their home here in October of 1921.

In December of 1921, Mr. Enlow was involved in an explosion at the light plant. His left arm was badly fractured at the shoulder and elbow, and a portion of his muscle blown away. One hundred stitches were necessary to close the gapping wound near his shoulder. His arm was about three-fifths permanently disabled. The Enlows later moved to Great Falls, Montana.

ERDMANN, Walter Walt and Ruth Erdmann and their children, Pam and Davey Lynn Schmidt, came to Winnett in August of 1945. The Erdmanns bought the Gusher Bar. The Brown schoolhouse near Cat Creek had been purchased by the Farmers Union Central Exchange. It was sold to Erdmanns, hauled to Winnett by Claude Allen, and converted by Amby Carrell into a home for the Erdmanns. It was situated behind the bar at 202½ East Main Street. Pam and Davey Lynn entered the Winnett schools.

Walter died in December of 1959. In February of 1960, Ruth sold the bar and residence to Ray Petersen of Spokane, and went to live with her mother, Mrs. Ray Olsen, of Billings, Montana. Pam graduated from Winnett High School in 1957. She married Jake Smith in October of 1959. They had three children — Franklin, Roxanne, and Steven.

When Ruth moved to Billings, Davey Lynn stayed in Winnett to complete her freshman year. She graduated from Billings West High School in 1963, after winning many first place awards in track and field meets. Friends in Winnett remember her as a person who liked all outdoor sports, especially riding horses. She entered the Air Force in 1963. Her big aim in life was to compete in the Olympics. During her stint in the Air Force, she worked as a medical service specialist and received specialized training for the specific sport events that interested her.

ERICKSON, Oscar Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Erickson reopened the Stockman Cafe in August of 1960 and had a grand "get-acquainted" party. They purchased the Earl Fleharty residence.

They had a son, Edwin, who was in service in the Army for three and one-half years — twenty-seven months of which were in Germany. He returned home in May of 1962 and enrolled in college. On April 1, 1963, Ericksons sold their interest in the Stockman Bar to Vernon Bauer and left Winnett.

EVENSON, Tom Mr. and Mrs. Tom Evenson and family from Choteau, Montana, moved into the Methodist parsonage during the summer of 1966. Mr. Evenson was employed building stock water reservoirs for the Bureau of Land Management in an area approximately 17 miles north of Winnett. They moved back to Choteau on

October 1, 1966.

FALLIS, Earl The family arrived here from Marathon, Texas, in May of 1921, with the intention of locating permanently. Earl was interested in the work at the Cat Creek oil field.

FARAGHER, Archibald "Archie" Faragher homesteaded in the Elk Creek area. (See also FARAGHER — Teigen) All other information was taken from news items and articles of the *Winnett Times*: Archie had been elected alderman both in 1919 and 1920 and his wife, Margaret, was vice-president of the first Women's Civic Club, when it was organized in April of 1920. She was a charter member of Rimrock Chapter #82 O. E. S. The Faraghers had two adopted children, Dale and Jean, who attended school in Winnett.

By the end of April of 1921, Archie Faragher and H. A. Stenson had completed the building of the Broadway Garage. (W.T. 5-21-1921) "The Broadway Garage has reached completion and is now occupied. The building is of brick and tile 56' x 120' and the front 22 feet high from the walk to the top. It has a storage capacity for 50 automobiles and is equipped with an electric automatic pump for washing cars — the pump starts automatically when the faucet is turned and stops automatically when turned off. The same system is used by the electric compressed air pump — upon a certain pressure the pump shuts itself off and starts again when the pressure drops.

"The garage is also equipped with a battery steamer and still for producing distilled water for battery service. Their own electric light plant is another convenience and added feature. The storage room also receives light from front and rear windows and skylights.

"The office room is 20' x 34', plastered and kalsomined, hardwood floor, and fine display windows. The size of the office gives the firm ample room for office work and the display of the auto accessories they carry in stock. It is the intention of the firm of Stenson and Faragher to confine themselves to storage and battery work and the sale of auto accessories. No mechanics will be employed other than the experts needed for battery repairing and building.

"In erecting such a splendid modern garage building in Winnett, Stenson & Faragher show beyond doubt that they have infinite faith in the future development of the city and are willing to back their faith with a great investment. They are to be complimented on their enterprise."

Archie was made president of the Central Montana Highway Association in February of 1929. In July of 1930, the Archie Faraghers left for St. Paul, Minnesota. Archie had been offered a position with the Ford Company in Fargo, North Dakota.

FARAGHER, Stanley In March 1929 Stanley Faragher and D. C. Walker, who owned the Midwest Oil Station, opened for business at the Broadway Garage, using the Midwest product. One pump held red gas, and the other, white.

The Winnett Service Oil Co., of which T. E. Hegna was president, and D. C. Walker, vice-president, took over the gas business of the Broadway Garage in May of 1930. Stanley was left in charge of that business.

In the meantime, and through the years, Mrs. Stanley Faragher had been teaching at several different schools in the county. The Stanley Faraghers left for Minnesota in May of 1930. (See also FARAGHER — Teigen)

FARNES, Raleigh Raleigh Farnes, son of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Farnes, was born and educated in Broadview, Montana. During World War II he served in the Burma Theater. On May 1, 1950, he and Ann Hanel were married in Miles City, Montana. They were the parents of three daughters — Rose, Rita, and Barbara — and one son, Dale. They lived in Buffalo, South Dakota, for many years, five of which were spent working for a banker on his ranch.

The Farnes family came to Winnett in 1971. They lived in the original Hegna house at 11 North Ashley Avenue, and Raleigh worked on the Bratten Ranch. The school-age children entered the local school. Raleigh worked for the Brattens until 1983, at which time he, Ann and Dale moved to Grassrange, Montana. Raleigh died there in December of 1984. Ann still lives in Grassrange. She enjoys basketball games and the Senior Citizens.

Rose graduated from Winnett High School in 1972, was married, and now (1989) lives in Shepherd, Montana. She had three children — Matt, Jamie and Lyla. Rita lives in Ronan, and has four children — Jon, Joshua, and Jory Nunn, and Brenna French.

Barbara graduated from Winnett High School in 1974 and married Joe Delaney, son of Milton Richard and Georgia Delaney. Joe and Barb are the parents of three children — Justin J. "J. J." Tacoma, and Tobi. This entire family participated in the Great Montana Centennial Cattle Drive.

Dale is a truck driver in Shepherd. He married Juanita Mote, who works in the Shepherd School.



Joe and Barb Delaney, J.J., Tobi, and Tacoma

FARNUM, Dave He sold his building, which was south of Boyd's garage, in August of 1921.

FERRIS, Mr. Mr. Ferris was a partner with McAneny of Great Falls, Montana. They owned and managed the M and F Cafe in April of 1921. The cafe was south of the Percy Napton law offices.

FLANSBURG, Beulah Beulah Flansburg, a widow, came to Winnett in about 1950. She was accompanied by two sons, Robert Flansburg and Clarence Yoctorowic. Beulah, a dutiful mother, worked for different restaurants, cleaned houses, and washed and ironed in private homes. She cooked in the Sugar Shack and was famous for her sourdough doughnuts and pancakes.

Clarence graduated from Winnett High School in 1956, but no record could be found of him after that time. Robert did not graduate from Winnett High School, but went into the service and to Germany, where he met and married a German widow, Magdalena. She was already the mother of three children — Ludwig, Erika and Lucia. Robert and Magdalena then had three sons — Siegfried, Robert Jr., and Steve.

At the end of Robert's service, he and his family returned to the United States and lived in several different localities. Sometime around the early 1980s, Robert returned to Winnett with his sons Siegfried, Robert, and Steve; and also with Erika.

A short time later Magdalena (now Hinckley) and daughter Lucia Weil and her son, Paul, moved to Winnett. Magdalena's oldest, Ludwig, came to Winnett about a year after his mother's arrival. Lucia is now re-married. Her son, Paul, attends grade school in Winnett. Erika married Robert Huff of Teigen on September 22, 1984. Siegfried graduated from Winnett High School in 1984, and in 1986 was a parachute specialist rated as Airman First Class. Robert Flansburg Jr. graduated from Winnett High School in 1986 and went into the Air Force. He is now stationed in Great Falls. Steven is a Winnett High School student.

A former resident recalled that at one time she took a carload of school children to a picnic. Upon their arrival home, the children all tumbled out of her car helter-skelter and went on their merry way — all that is, but one boy. He hung back, was last out of the car, and said, "Thank you for the fine ride. I really appreciated it." The driver does not remember who the other children were, but she has never forgotten Robert Flansburg, son of Beulah, who remembered to say "Thank you." Robert owns and operates Wymont Recycling in 1989.

Clarence Yoctorowic is deceased. Beulah was married to Robert Kastner for a time, but then divorced. She died as Beulah Kastner and was buried in the Winnett Cemetery.

FLEHARTY, Cliff Clifford Fleharty and his second wife, Maybelle, ran Casey's Cafe in 1944. Cliff did a lot of carpenter work, both in town and in the country, while living in Winnett during the years of 1944 to about 1950. (See also FLEHARTY — Blakeslee)

FLESCH, B. J. In July of 1943, Mr. and Mrs. B. J. Flesch arrived in Winnett from Lewistown and took over The Lunch Room. Mr. Flesch had previous experience as a cook in North Dakota. Their three daughters helped them. They returned to Lewistown in December of 1944.

FOLEY, G. H. Mr. and Mrs. Foley came to Winnett in 1919. They operated the National Rooming House. This was also their residence. Mrs. Foley died in her home from a heart attack on October 8, 1921, at the age of 33 years. Interment was in the Winnett Cemetery. Rev. Beer conducted the service, with undertakers Creel and Opp having charge.

FOX, George George was married to Odessa May Atwood of Winnett July 9, 1929, at White Sulphur Springs, Montana. They made their home in Winnett, where George was cattle inspector and also worked as janitor for the school district.

In November of 1929, Odessa purchased a half-interest in the Luncheonette from Mrs. E. C. Hillius and the two of them continued its operation as a partnership. They served regular meals as well as lunches. George was made custodian of the Petroleum County Courthouse and held that position, as well as being state brand inspector, until his death in July of 1956.

Odessa continued to live in Winnett until 1969, when she went to Bonners Ferry, Idaho, to make her home with her daughter Alice. She passed away there October 14, 1970. Services for both of these people were held in the Methodist church of Winnett, and burial was in the Winnett Cemetery.

The Foxes had two children, Alice and George, who grew up in Winnett. In 1940 George was bitten by a rattlesnake, but recovered after hospitalization. Alice graduated from Winnett High School in 1948. She married Maurice Sandaker, and they raised four children — Marcia, Valerie, Aaron, and Greg.

George Fox Jr. graduated from Winnett High School in 1951. George received a B. A. degree in accounting. He married Vavi Jo Mohar, daughter of Ladonna Gotzinger Mohar of Roundup, Montana. They had three children — David, Roseann, and Dan Kay. George has held numerous accounting positions, was Montana State Highway patrolman for three years, and has been cashier at the Golden Nugget in Las Vegas, Nevada. (See also FOX and ATWOOD — Musselshell River)

FOX, John R. John, born November 25, 1895, at Naples, South Dakota, lived in Winnett during the oil boom. He joined the Winnett Masonic Lodge on December 14, 1922, and was a tool dresser and pumper in the Cat Creek oil field.

FRANCIS, Nellie Nellie came to Winnett from Great Falls. She was a clerk in Rasmussen's store in June of 1921.

FREBURG, Ernest A. Ernest grew up in the Blakeslee community (See also FREBURG — Blakeslee). Ernest and Ethel (Curtis) Freburg moved to Winnett from Harlowton,



Ernest and Ruth Freburg (about 1978)

Montana, during the summer of 1937. Ernest had been hired as clerk in the Winnett Mercantile. They lived in an apartment of the Nancy Morgan home. Daughter Mavis Rae was born while they lived there on October 27, 1937. When Dan Sommerfield, a longtime friend of Ernest's, moved to Canby, Oregon, in 1938, Ernest moved his family to Dan's large two-story house.

Misfortune struck when Ethel developed pneumonia and died in October of 1939. Two fine ladies — Nancy Morgan and Hattie Woodard — then kept house for Ernest and cared for Mavis. When they could no longer help, Mavis went to stay with her grandparents, Henry and Anna Freburg, and her uncle Emil Freburg at Blakeslee, Montana.

In 1942 a trade of employees between the Winnett Mercantile and the Eager Mercantile resulted in Ernest's employment at the Eager store. The same year, on June 29, Ruth Hodges (See HODGES — Kelley) and Ernest



Teacher Nancy and Nurse Mavis (1986)

Freburg were married in the Congregational parsonage of Billings, Montana. The mutually admired Rev. Sloan, a Masonic Grand Chaplain of the state of Montana, tied the proverbial knot.

After a honeymoon of five days spent going through Yellowstone Park (total cost, \$38), Freburgs returned home to their bungalow which had been built by Roy Hopkins in 1921. It was on Eighth Avenue East at the foot of the rimrock. Dan Sommerfield wished to dispose of all the furniture in his house, so gave Ernest first chance to purchase whatever he needed. Thus the unfurnished house on the hill became the recipient of a table, four chairs, bed, cot, radio, and best of all, a fairly new Majestic wood and coal range — all from the Sommerfield house.

Ernest worked for Elmer and Rex Eager, and Ruth became an instant mother of Mavis and homemaker for all. January 1, 1948, found the Freburg family starting the Rimrock Dairy. Although well supported by Winnett and Grassrange patrons, it was not a financial success. By 1958 cardboard containers for all milk products were replacing glass bottles. Freburgs could not invest in the kind of equipment needed for that process; nor was it financially profitable for them to run a bulk-milk dairy.

Consequently, with no place to go but in reverse, the dairy, including all the cows and dairy equipment, was sold in the spring of 1958. The dairy franchise was sold to Darigold of Roundup, Montana, and Ernest delivered dairy products for that company for a year. During that same period of time, when he wasn't peddling dairy products, Ernest was working as part-time city maintenance man and water commissioner.

On July 1, 1959, Ernest was hired as Winnett Elementary and High School custodian and served for 21 years, a record time for a school custodian at Winnett! Ruth was hired as school district clerk in April of 1961, and as public librarian in 1968. From July of 1958 to October of 1986 the two of them served as watchers of the city water supply.

They are the parents of three children: Mavis, born October 27, 1937, to Ernest and Ethel Curtis Freburg; Eunice Ann, who died immediately after birth April 29, 1944; and Nancy, who arrived six weeks too early, and couldn't wait to be the first baby born in 1946, but was the last born in Lewistown's St. Joseph's Hospital in 1945 — on December 31, 1945. But she was a Happy New Year even without the gifts that are given to New Year first-borns!!

Ernest and Ruth both enjoy sports. They especially like Winnett High School boys' and girls' basketball! Ernest likes to read and work with carpenter tools. Ruth likes to do many things, as long as no cooking is involved!!

Mavis graduated from Winnett High School in 1955 and from Eastern Montana College with a Nursing degree in 1957. She worked in Billings Deaconess Hospital until October of 1962, when she and Robert Shotwell were married. They have three children — Melanie (Shotwell)



A four-point buck rings the Freburg doorbell!

Munson, David Shotwell, and Laurie Shotwell. After the children were grown, Mavis returned to her nursing profession, and is now (1989) a charge nurse in Valley Nursing Home of Billings, Montana.

Nancy graduated from Winnett High School in 1964 and from Rocky Mountain College in 1968, with a B. A. Degree in Elementary Education. She was a classroom teacher in grades one and two at Highland Park Elementary School of Lewistown, Montana, for eleven years. After receiving her elementary library endorsement, she now (1989) teaches library science and is librarian for grades K-6 in the three Lewistown elementary schools.

Having obtained all of their elementary and high school education in Petroleum County (except for the two years that Ernest went to Grassrange), the four Winnett High School graduates — Ernest, Ruth, Mavis and Nancy — are grateful for the education furnished by the many fine teachers of the county. To Ruth and Ernest it was fundamental and final for occupations which they pursued. To Mavis and Nancy, it was a large stepping stone to further training.

Ernest and Ruth continue to live (in 1989) in the same location under the rimrock, where they can lovingly look down on the town that loyally patronized their dairy venture and cheered them on through other endeavors. All members of the family delight in coming home to again traverse the backyard rimrock, watch the wild animals, and enjoy the fantastic view in all directions.

FREED, Elden Elden Freed, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Freed, was born January 14, 1883, in Wilmot, Ohio. He married Esther Graber at Mt. Eaton, Ohio, and the couple came to Montana in the early 1900s. Elden taught school at Moore, Geyser, and Musselshell before coming to the Petrolia area in 1912, and homesteading on Sec. 24-14-27.

Two girls, Lola and Ruth, were born before Mrs. Freed passed away in 1918, at 32 years of age. Elden's sister, Martha Cornue, assisted him in raising his two little girls.

1928 found Elden entering the political arena. He was chosen Petroleum County State Representative in the elections of 1928, 1930, and 1932. In 1936 he was elected Petroleum County Assessor, and in 1938 was elected as both county assessor and Petroleum County Superintendent of Schools. The Petroleum County commissioners appointed him as county manager and county superintendent of schools in September of 1943. He held this position until the first of January, 1951. He passed away in September of 1959.

Lola graduated from Winnett High School in 1930, attended Eastern Montana College for two years, and in June of 1933 was hired as teacher of the Cat Creek School and remained as such until 1936. She married Ted Neutz. They had two girls, Janice and Judy. Ted was killed in a motorcycle accident. Ruth graduated from Winnett High School in 1931 and also from Billings Business College. She married Gordon Petaja in 1938. (See also PETAJA — Petrolia)

FREEMAN, David P. David was first employed as office manager for the Mid Northern Oil Co. Later he was secretary-treasurer of the Mid Montana Refining Co.

On June 19, 1921, he married Miss Marian Smith in the Presbyterian Church in Lewistown, Montana, with Rev. Archie Griggs officiating. Marian came to Winnett from Vergas, Minnesota, and had been making her home here with her sister. She was employed by Rasmussen's.

FRENTZ, Charles (W.T. 6-10-21) "Charles Frenz is a brick and plaster contractor, and is a skilled mechanic in both branches of his profession. Mr. Frenz has made his home in Great Falls for years and is well known as a reliable and conscientious artisan all over the northwest. Mr. Frenz has been the superintendent of construction of some of the largest buildings in Montana. He also had full charge of building the immense brick stack for the Anaconda Copper Company at Great Falls, which at the time it was erected, was the highest stack in the world, being 86 feet in diameter at the base, 53 feet in diameter at the top, and 506 feet in height.

"With Mr. Frenz' large and varied experience in the building line, he is capable of taking care of anything that may develop in the upbuilding of the coming oil metropolis of the northwest. Mr. Frenz has invested extensively in city property in Winnett and expects to erect several houses on his lots in the south addition."

FRIX, A. B. Mr. Frix was a builder and contractor of oil rigs during the Cat Creek boom era. In the fall of 1921 he moved his headquarters to Billings, Montana. In November the company shipped a large amount of material to the Armells structure near Roy, where a deep test was to be drilled.

FRYSLAND, Marcus A new confectionery and soft drink stand was opened by Mr. Frysland in November of

1929. It was in the old Butte Block. Marcus came here from Highwood, Montana.

FULLBRIGHT, William Mr. Fullbright moved to Winnett as a driller for B. R. Gainer and Associates in the fall of 1944. Their children entered school here. They left in December of 1944.

FULLER, Lyle Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Fuller from Glendive, Montana, bought Floyd's Bar from Harold Dahl in March of 1965. They renamed the bar the D and L. In the last of May of 1966, fire destroyed the bar. It had been closed for several days previously. Lyle was away from Winnett, having employment elsewhere.

The building next to the D and L was also destroyed. That building had served as the office for the "Tent Hotel" during the first oil boom. Housing was very scarce for a long time, and oil field workers made full use of the Tent Hotel. When one roughneck rolled out of his bed to go to work, another would climb into it. "Daddy" Stewart, husband of "Mother" Stewart had a cigar store business in it at one time. The D and L building in the early days had housed the Oscar Badger-Hove Clothing Store, and later, Mother Stewart's Cafe.

GAINES, J. H. John Harry Gaines was born January 24, 1887, in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. Lura Osborne was born August 19, 1890, in Ashland, Wisconsin. They were married October 19, 1912. They had four children — Marjorie, Earle, Jack and Lura Anne.

Mr. Gaines came to Winnett as school superintendent in the fall of 1930 and remained here for 10 years. During some of the time that Mr. Gaines was superintendent in Winnett, he also acted as superintendent of his own home. Mrs. Gaines was ill with tuberculosis and had to be in a sanitarium in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The children and Mr. Gaines did a fine job of holding the house and home together. Mrs. Gaines' treatment was successful, and upon her return, she took her place in service to the family and community. Lura Anne wrote some of her memories of living in Winnett:

"Social events at Winnett revolved around school, club, and church activities. Everyone attended the political rallies without any bias. Church functions were equally well-patronized, if they promised some excitement or even just 'a good turn out.' Winnett was seldom a big name in athletics, but that didn't stem the flow of school spirit. Everyone attended the games and rooted hard to the bitter end. Winnett did take some trophies in boxing under Shorty Saylor's leadership. People around the state still remember Winnett for its many triumphs in boxing.

"My brother, Jack, and I spent a lot of time scouting the rimrocks for arrowheads and fossils. Winter fun involved skiing, skating, and sliding down the hills on anything that would skid. My mother and father loved music and served in any capacity available to further the appreciation of the arts in church, school and community."

Mr. Gaines died April 28, 1969; Mrs. Gaines, August 7, 1970. Both were buried in Kalispell.

Marjorie Gaines graduated from Winnett High School in 1931. She attended normal school and returned in the fall of 1933 to teach for two years in the Cat Creek School. She obtained her B. A. degree in education with a music minor from the University of Montana in Missoula in 1937. She married Cecil Smith in 1941. Marjorie, like her parents, loved music and gave many private lessons. She was also a judge for Guild auditions in the United States.

In 1932 Earl was chosen to attend the Citizens' Military Training Camp at Missoula. He won the loving cup for basic student and the medal for being the honorary student of basic students. Earl was in the service for quite some time after graduation from high school. He married Betty Louise Carr on August 19, 1939, in Seattle, Washington.

Jack graduated from Winnett High School in 1934. He graduated from the University of Washington at Seattle, then received a petroleum engineering degree from the School of Mines in Golden, Colorado, and a M. A. degree in geology from the University of Washington. He worked as a petroleum engineer, a construction engineer, mason, hod-carrier, and quarry man, and was a professor for several years at Pacific Lutheran University in geology, math and engineering. He has taught every level of school. He and his wife, Alice, have one son, Terry.

Lura Anne graduated from Winnett High School in 1939. She received a degree in education from the University of Montana at Missoula. Lura Anne had one son, Robert Jones, by her first marriage; and a daughter, Robin Maetche, by her second marriage. Lura Anne taught both music and Spanish. She now (1989) lives in Bellingham, Washington.

GALLAGHER, Jack Jack leased the shop department of Dunlap's Auto Service on April 1, 1947. Jack and an associate from Lewistown had been engaged in auto mechanics for several years. Mrs. Jack Gallagher taught the Blakeslee School during the 1947-48 school years, while her husband was a Petroleum County road patrol operator.

GANNON, J. W. (W.T. 10-12-1917, reprinted 11-4-1921) "At exactly 9:30 a. m., Wednesday, October 10, 1917, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad entered the townsite of Winnett. The tracklaying crew, with J. W. Gannon as engineer and J. W. Quigley as foreman, came quietly down the grade, one steel rail after another being moved into place. When the steel rail was dropped that fell on the townsite, the lever of the long-wished-for whistle of the locomotive was pulled by A. W. Ogg of the Winnett Land Company.

"A long, clear blast came forth from the engine breaking the news to the populace that the Milwaukee was in our midst. P. J. Anderson of the Basin Lumber Company then took charge of the lever and the great old engine continued to peal out the glad tidings. A. E. Hammond, our resident engineer, used the lever while the anxious people came flocking from residences and business places to get a good view of the first train into Winnett.

The blowing of the whistle in the west part and the cannonading by D. Anderson in the east part of town was spreading the glad news far and wide over the surrounding country.

"The growth and development of our town and county for the past three years has been wonderful. We have waited patiently, and now our dreams are realized. A new era dawns. Our town will take on new life while the farmer, who will have a home market, will redouble his energies in the cultivation of the soil and in stock raising. Let us make our town the best town in the county in which to live. Success awaits the Milwaukee in coming to Winnett. Long live the Milwaukee officials!"

GARFIELD, Frederick E. After homesteading at Sand Springs in 1914, Fred and Emma Garfield moved into Winnett in the mid-1940s. Fred kept himself busy carpentering and helping on farms. He passed away in Winnett June 17, 1951, of a heart attack. He had been having heart trouble for some time, but kept on working around his home until his last day. He was buried in Lewistown City Cemetery.

The Garfields had three daughters — Myrna, Margaret and Audrey; and one son, Frederick B. Mr. Garfield was noted as being an honest, upright worker, and a fine citizen. After his death, Mrs. Garfield made her home with her daughter, Mrs. Walter (Myrna) Haynie. Mrs. Garfield passed away November 20, 1966. (See HAYNIE — Winnett)

GARRIOT, Brice Brice was the proprietor of the Winnett Barbershop, coming to Winnett in December of 1955.

GASSER, Otto Mr. and Mrs. Otto Gasser moved to Winnett in June of 1960. They had just sold their home in the Ingomar country. They stayed for only a short time.

GEIS, Homer E. Homer Edgar Geis was born January 26, 1890, in Nebraska. As a young man he studied law and eventually became a practicing attorney. After moving to Montana, he became a member of the Fergus County Bar of the Tenth Judicial District of the State of Montana in 1912. He came to what was to be Petroleum County in 1914 and opened a law office in Winnett.

Homer also homesteaded and acquired other land in the Ashley community. Recognizing the need for a newspaper, he set up the print shop of the *Winnett Times*, hired an editor, E. V. Alexander, and the first edition of the paper appeared on September 2, 1914. In 1917 the business was sold to E. M. Berg.

As a lawyer, one of his first cases was representing Walter Winnett in the famous and unique "will on the hat" case (See also BALDWIN — Winnett). Homer served in World War I as a commissioned officer in the Navy.

Meanwhile, Gladys Geiger had homesteaded about three miles south of Flatwillow on Sec. 14-12-26. Gladys was born January 27, 1892, in Illinois. She, too, was caught up in the lure of homesteading. What happened next was well described in a clipping from a 1920 paper:

"Attorney Homer E. Geis returned Thursday after an absence of three weeks which he spent in Chicago and Lincoln, Nebraska. When he left, his many friends surmised that the trip was one with Cupid leading — the fact that he had built a new home, and the month being June, being taken as evidence that such was the case.

"He returned alone, but is not refusing to accept the congratulations being offered by his many friends, and it is quite certain that it is proper that we join in extending our heartiest congratulations. Mrs. Geis was formerly Gladys Geiger of Chicago, Illinois, the ceremony taking place at Calvary Church in that city on Saturday, June 12, 1920. The romance culminating in the marriage of these two young people started when Miss Geiger resided on her homestead in the Flatwillow country. She is well known to many here and is a young lady of pleasing charm and personality.

"On their return home, Mrs. Geis stopped in Lewistown for a few days. Mr. and Mrs. Geis will reside in the new residence just completed for them on South Broadway."

In November of 1920, Homer was elected State Representative from Fergus County, residing in Winnett. During the legislative session of 1921, he was named to the following committees: banks and banking; judiciary; petroleum and oil and gas affairs; new counties and divisions.

On February 8, 1921, Homer introduced a bill to create Edgerton County. This was one of the first attempts to create what was to become Petroleum County. The bill died in committee. (See county creation discussion in the Introduction.) In 1922 when an attempt was made to create Petroleum County by petition and election, Homer and his partner, R. H. Weidman, represented the petitioners at the initial hearing before the Fergus County commissioners. When the case was appealed to the Supreme Court, Mr. Geis and Mr. Weidman once again represented the petitioners. (The Geis and Weidman offices were in the Winnett Block.)

(W.T. 5-6-1921) "A baby daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. Homer Geis at the Sisters' hospital in Lewistown on April 26, 1921. Mother and babe are doing well and Mr. Geis is some proud dad."

Homer was a very active member of Sandman Post #95. He was also instrumental in the formation of the 40 et 8 voiture, a social order likened to the mystic Shrine. A voiture was composed of Legion members in good standing, who were essentially patriotic, with a special mission to look after funerals of comrades, and to keep fresh the memories of the days spent in the Army and Navy of the United States. Homer was made first chairman, or chef de gare, of the first Montana Grand Voiture.

Percy Napton, another early Winnett lawyer and friend of Homer's, wrote to Homer from California on August 12, 1923, urging Homer to come to that state to practice. That might have been an influence, for Mr. and Mrs. Geis and daughter, Mary Louise, moved to California in 1923.

Judge John Huntoon wrote to Homer: "I regret ex-