



The Bassetts visiting at Manuels. Standing left to right: Vicki, Joy, Earl, Viola and Darlene. Seated: Father and grandfather, Frank Bassett.

school at Heath and Forest Grove. He boarded with his Aunt Amelia Luebke Rulby. In 1925-1926 he boarded with the McClimans and went to the Neumann School. His teacher was Mrs. Mike Delaney. She let school out early in April when Doug was born. In the year of 1926-1927, Dale and Earl boarded with the Jake Strait family and attended the Blakeslee School.

In 1927-1928 the boys attended Blakeslee but boarded with the Henry Freburg family. In 1928-1929 and 1929-1930 school years, they boarded with the Forrest Fleharty family. Earl recalls how he spent 6½ years attending school, taking time out in the spring to help his dad plant crops. One spring (1928) Miss Ada Town, who was superintendent of Petroleum County schools, came out and demanded that Earl get back to school or she would send the sheriff out! The next day Earl was back in school.

In 1931 Earl graduated from the eighth grade and was the third highest in the examination scores for the county.

Earl recalls how homesteading was a hard life. People never raised much on their places because of drought or other disasters. They had very simple lives, and everyone helped out. There were lots of chores, and much wood had to be chopped to keep houses warm and to fire the kitchen range.

In 1941, two months before Pearl Harbor, Earl was drafted. He was later given a medical discharge and, on his way home, he stopped in Illinois to visit relatives and met his future wife, Viola Mely.

Earl and Viola were married in 1944. They have four daughters. Twila (1947) is now Mrs. Roy Hildebrendt of Bonduel, Wisconsin, and they have three children. Vicki (1951) is Mrs. Erick Olsen of Juneau, Alaska, and they

have two children. Joy (1952) is Mrs. Gene Culver of Billings, Montana. Darlene (1959) is Mrs. James Ring of Eugene, Oregon, and they have two children.

In 1949 Earl had such a good alfalfa seed crop, he paid all his debts and bought more land. The 1950s were dry years but he had no bad luck. Earl always gained or showed profit on the ranch.

The 1960s were years spent seeing that their girls got an education. All four graduated from Montana State University.

BASSETT, H. Frank (Sec 27-16-24) Frank H. Bassett was born August 21, 1881, in Soquel, California. He came to Montana in 1912 and worked for the railroad around Glacier Park building snow sheds. These sheds were built on steep sidehills over the railroad tracks. They were constructed in a manner to allow the snow to slide over the sheds and on down the mountain, rather than build up on the tracks.

In the winter of 1912-1913, Frank trapped coyotes, skunks, wolves, etc., in the Highwood Mountains. Wolves brought a twenty-dollar bounty. In 1914 he helped build the railroad depot in Grassrange. Here he met and married Elda Luebke in January of 1915. She was born in 1893 in Wisconsin and came to Montana in 1914 with her parents, Edward and Wilhelmina Luebke.

Frank and Elda Bassett had three sons. They are: Ray (1915) died in 1920 from diphtheria; Earl (1917); and Dale (1920).

The years of 1927-1928 were wet years. In 1928 Frank's 100 acres of wheat made 15 bushel to the acre, and wheat brought one dollar a bushel. It was the biggest crop he ever raised. In 1932 Frank and his sons got started in the sheep business. They bought some bum lambs from the Beedie Brothers. This was the year prices hit bottom. The county took their last forty acres, where the buildings and a soft-water well were located, for taxes. Frank purchased the forty acres back for twenty dollars at the tax sale. No one bid against him.

Bassetts didn't have a car during the years of 1931-1936. They drove a team and wagon 12 miles to Grassrange for supplies and the mail. Sometimes the mail would fill a gunny sack.

The year 1936 was dry and hot, in addition grasshoppers were plentiful. Even so, they purchased a new Chevrolet pickup and were buying county tax-deed land for fifty cents an acre. 1937 brought rain for the crops, and the herd of sheep was growing. The Bassetts bought a mile of Fords Creek land for three dollars and fifty cents an acre, and county land for fifty cents an acre. The years of 1939 and 1940 were also good years. Their hay production was up and lamb and wool prices were good.

After Earl and Dale were drafted, Frank couldn't handle all the work, so he sold the sheep and leased the ranch to Joe King II. The lease ran out in the fall of 1945, and Earl and Frank were home again. They started buying cattle. Frank continued to live on the place until his death in 1979. 1979. (See also LUEBKE — Teigen)

BEAVER, Raymond Raymond and Grace Beaver lived near the Heller property. They were both school teachers and had taught at Shawmut, Montana, and Grassrange. Raymond wanted to farm, but farming was not a productive endeavor in those days. The Beavers had no children. Mr. Beaver was one of the first persons to have a combine. Mrs. Beaver taught the Welter School one year. (Submitted by Agnes Lindseth)

An account of Mr. Beaver's death was printed in the *Winnett Times* of 11-8-29: "Raymond C. Beaver, prominent rancher residing north of Teigen in the lake country, died suddenly Friday evening from a cerebral hemorrhage. He was doing his chores at the time. His wife, watching from the house, saw him lean on the fork he was using for an instant and then fall to the ground. One of the Reed boys and Tony Brooks had just left the ranch. She shouted for them and was fortunate enough to make them hear. They returned and brought the lifeless body into the home.

"Although he had been subject to fainting spells for some years, his sudden death was a distinct shock to his wife and neighbors. He was a fine gentleman, highly educated and an accomplished musician. A host of friends regret his early demise."

After Raymond's death, Grace taught many years at Darby, Montana.

The date of Grace's death is not known, but she and Raymond were both buried in Iowa.

BECKLEY, Moses (Sec 34-17-25) Moses Beckley homesteaded on what was known as the Finley Flat, three miles west of the Welter School.

There were two Beckley girls, Daisy and Hazel. When Daisy married, a news item as follows appeared in the *Winnett Times* of July 10, 1925: "On Thursday, July 9th, a marriage license was issued to James Post of Teigen and Daisy May Beckley of Welter, Montana. They were married by Justice of the Peace, D. Y. Wilson. A number of Winnett girls sensed the situation and the newlyweds were generously riced after the ceremony."

Hazel married John Massey of Dovetail.

BEEDIE, James (Sec 18-16-26) James Beedie was born near Glasgow, Scotland, immigrated to the United States in about 1904 and became a naturalized citizen soon thereafter. He worked with his brother, William, and owned land in the Blakeslee area. During World War I, he served as a corporal in the Army on the west coast of the United States.

James died July 3, 1955. (See also BEEDIE, William)

BEEDIE, William (Sec 17-16-25) William Beedie was born near Glasgow, Scotland, in 1886. He arrived in the United States at age 16 (1902) and herded sheep at Utica for the Waite Ranch. William applied for U. S. citizenship July 19, 1912, and became a citizen April 18, 1913.

Louise Smith, born March 14, 1894, at Mitchell, South Dakota, moved to Montana in 1914 to become the first teacher at the Teigen pioneer schoolhouse. (The



Robert Beedie (about 1941 or 1942)



Beedie School (1929-30) Helen Jean Beedie, Mrs. Beedie, Penrose Walker, Mrs. Laura Walker, Barbara Beedie, Bob Beedie, Earl Walker, and Ned Beedie

schoolhouse has since been moved to Lewistown and now stands near the museum building.) While teaching at Teigen, Louise met William Beedie, and on July 20, 1915, they were married at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Anaconda, Montana.

He filed on a homestead in 1916. (That land is now part of the old Forbes Leslie Ranch.) Both he and his brother, James, ran livery stables at Teigen and Grassrange. Bill also ranched with Forbes Wiseman on a ranch south of Grassrange for a short time.

Around 1920 the two brothers leased the John Eschleman Ranch (in 1989, the David Hedman Ranch) and formed a partnership known as Beedie Brothers. Bill and Louise lived there until his death on July 2, 1945. In 1948 Jim, Ned, Louise, Barbara and Helen (Beedie) Stingley sold the ranch to Ed Delaney and moved to Lewistown, Montana, where Helen already lived.

William and Louise raised four children — Robert, Ned, Barbara and Helen Jean.

Son Robert had been inducted into the Army (Infantry) on July 8, 1941. He was the first man from Petroleum County to be inducted, and the first to be killed in action. He died the last day of the fighting to recapture the Island of Attu, of the Aleutian Islands, in May of 1943. He was 24 years old. Earlier he had been awarded certificates of excellence with the B. A. R. 30 Caliber Rifle. He was also awarded the Purple Heart and the Silver Star for "Gallantry in Action." His unit received the Presidential Unit Citation for its bravery and action in the service.

Ned worked in the filling station business in Lewistown for many years. He now lives at Valley Vista Manor in Lewistown, Montana. Barbara married Frank Tuss, and she and Frank make their home in Lewistown, as well. They are the parents of four children — Bill, Jerry, Nancy, and Bob. Helen Jean (Stingley) graduated from St. Joseph's School of Nursing in Lewistown, and has been a respected nurse all of her life. Helen had five children — Martin, Jeannie, Roberta, Georgianne, and Robbie.

Louise Beedie died June 1, 1980, at the age of 86.

BLAKESLEE, Charles E. (Sec 32,33-17-24) Charles E. Blakeslee homesteaded, in 1912, one-half mile west and one mile north of the present Blakeslee School.

The family started a post office in 1914, which was called the Blakeslee Post Office. That's how the community got its name. The mail came out on a star route and went on north and east to the Staff Post Office, a distance of about ten miles.

The Blakeslees also opened a country store in their home.

According to the Grassrange Review, Charles Blakeslee disposed of his Blakeslee property and moved to Grassrange in August 1917. He took charge of the Pioneer Implement and Auto Company.

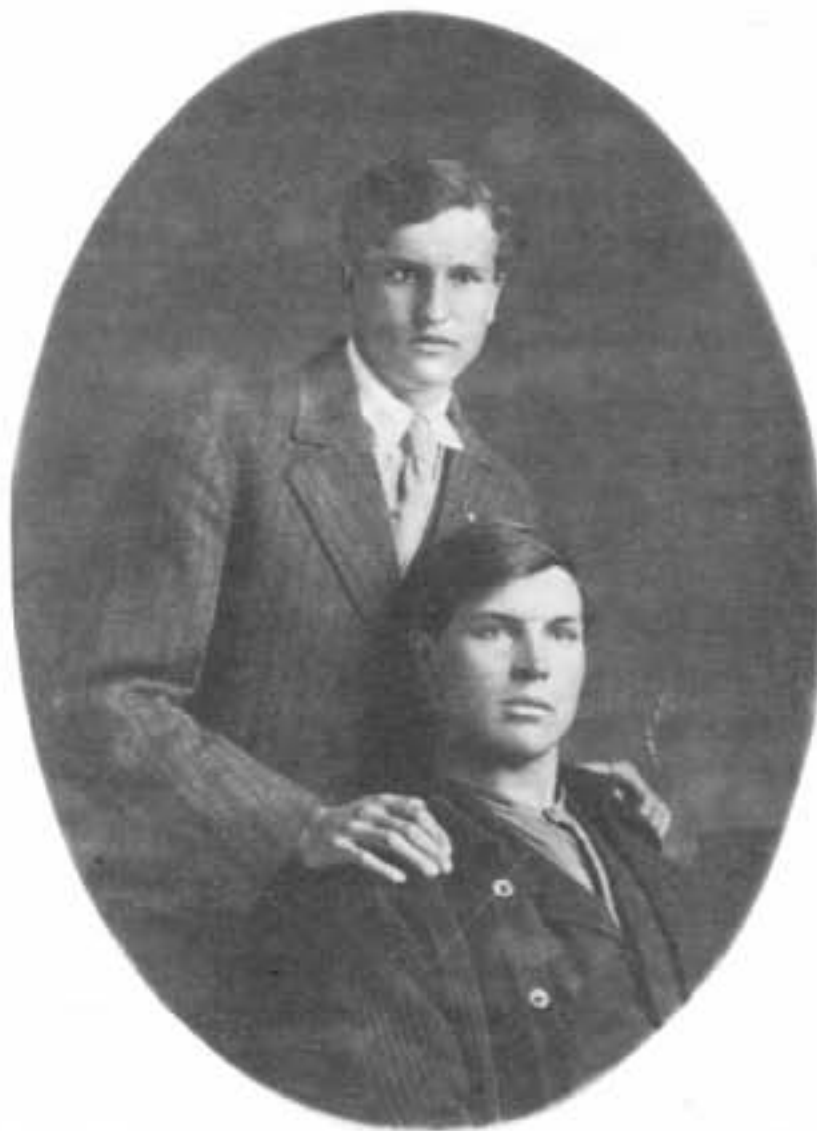
BLASER, Albert (Sec 9-16-25) Albert was the son of Frank Blaser and Emma J. McLean Blaser. Ann Braford was the daughter of Charles Braford and Grace McFarland Braford. Albert and Anna were married in Lewistown, Montana, August 2, 1913.

Their home in the Blakeslee area was directly south of Wild Horse Lake. The land, with its problems, gave them little inducement to linger after they had proved up.

Albert and Anna returned to the East. They were divorced in 1938. Albert remarried and became the father of a son, Albert, who now lives in Sycamore, Illinois.

The son, Albert, has been busy the past several years researching his Minnesota Bench roots.

Albert Sr. died July 3, 1962, and was buried in Spokane, Washington. His wife abides there as of 1989.



Albert Blaser (1910) and Frank Blaser

BLASER, Francis (Sec 8-16-25) Frank was the father of Albert, William, Allen, Earl, and Frank, and one other son. He homesteaded just one mile west of his son Albert.

An interesting circumstance of his life, while living in this area of the country, concerned his marriage. On July 8, 1913, he was granted a divorce from his wife, Emma McLean Blaser on grounds of desertion. That was practically unheard of in those days. The divorce decree was signed by Judge Roy E. Ayers of Lewistown, Montana.

Emma did not move many miles away when she deserted Frank. She married George Shipe, and became the owner of land in Sec 32-18-25. This was about ten miles north of her former home.

William Blaser homesteaded in Sec 7-16-25, just one mile west of his father's home. Albert homesteaded to the east in Sec 9-16-25.

Frank Blaser passed away September 26, 1944. Three of the six sons, which had been born to him and Emma, preceded him in death.

The picture on the following page is of Emma and one of the Blaser sons, Allen.



Son Allen Blaser and Emma McLean Blaser Shipe

BOWYER, Ray (Sec 12-17-25) (See MEAD)

BRECKENRIDGE, George (Sec 19-17-24) George built and ran the elevator at Grassrange, and his wife was postmaster there around 1928-1933. She lost her job when a new president, Franklin Roosevelt, was elected.

The Norwegian Lutheran Church bought the Breckenridge place.

BREDE, Ewald (Sec 23-16-24) Ewald "Walt" was a bachelor homesteader who came from Minnesota. He spent every winter in Minnesota but always returned in the spring to do his farming. He was the first one in the community to farm with a tractor.

He quit farming in about 1926 or 1927 and returned to Minnesota. Later, the Bassetts leased his 320 acres for \$10 a year. Walt came back in the 1940s in poor health. He sold his land to Earl Bassett.

BROOKS, Jesse (Sec 1-17-25) Five Brooks brothers and their mother came from Arkansas. The five sons were Ted, Jesse, Tony, Preston, and Hobert. They homesteaded close to one another. Mrs. Brooks cooked for a time at the Fergus County Sheep Company; later she and Hobert returned to Arkansas. The Brooks brothers, especially Jesse and Tony, worked on different ranches in haying, lambing, and shearing times.

Ted always remained on the homestead. Preston strayed farther from home as he drifted around working and cooking on ranches. Tony died on the homestead. Jesse died in a rest home in Lewistown. The others just drifted away. Ted married Lillian Cox, but the marriage didn't last. (Submitted by Agnes Lindseth)

BRUG, Frank (Sec 2-16-24) Frank Brug and his brothers, Carl (Sec 2-16-28) and Joe, came from Cleveland, Ohio, and homesteaded in the early 1900s. Carl and Joe eventually moved to Great Falls, Montana, had families, and are now deceased.

Frank married Mayme Sullivan in 1917. They later moved to Lewistown, Montana, Great Falls, Montana, and Los Angeles, California. Their daughter, Eleanor,

died in 1987 in Los Angeles. A son, Leo, and his family live in Ventura, California. Both parents are deceased.

BUCKLER, Delbert (Sec 20-16-24) Delbert and Hattie Buckler homesteaded south of what is now the Bill Lewis' place. They had four children — Blanche, Opal, Howard and Fred.

BURR, George (Sec 9-16-26) Dorothy Burr Fail provided the following history: "George Burr and Katharyn Frahm were married in Lynd, Minnesota, on June 24, 1913. They boarded a train the same day for Lewistown, Montana, where Dad was employed as a timekeeper on the railroad. My mother had taught school for four years before being married.

"Prior to their marriage, they purchased household furniture and had it shipped to Lewistown. Mother said afterwards how foolish that had been, as they could have gotten the same merchandise in Montana. 'But we were young,' she said. I can also remember her saying that their wedding was more like a funeral in that the relatives thought Montana was the end of the world and that they wouldn't see them again for an eternity.

"In the fall of 1913 they moved from Lewistown to the homestead which was located seventeen miles northwest of Winnett. They traveled via team and wagon and it took them about three days to make the trip.

"They lived in a friend's cabin while they built their own log home, which was ready for occupancy by January of 1914. My mother said when they moved into their log cabin, they had ten cents of their money supply left. For their first Christmas, mother's folks sent them a dressed goose that was stuffed with lard. In the lard, fresh eggs had been packed.

"Wells were hand dug in those days and they were never able to find water on their homestead. They had to haul it from a friend's spring and from Box Elder Creek, which was about one mile away. In about 1917, they moved from their own homestead to one belonging to Mother's brother. It was located about two miles east of their own. This move was prompted by her brother's going off to war and his place having an adequate supply of well water. We lived on my uncle's homestead until our move to Havre, Montana, in 1935.

"Five children were born to my folks between 1915 and 1930. Gordon, the oldest was born in Great Falls, Montana. Helen and Dorothy were both born on the homestead with midwives in attendance. Robert Stanley, the youngest, was born in Helena, Montana. One child was stillborn in 1917.

"My father farmed his homestead and my uncle's during our life there. We also ran sheep and cattle during those years. Dad was active in politics during his life in Petroleum County. He was elected as one of the first county commissioners for Petroleum County in 1924.

"In 1930 he served as a senator from Petroleum County to the Montana State Legislature. He also served a number of terms as Secretary of the Senate during the time the legislature met. In 1934 he was appointed a field

agent for the State Land Board. In this capacity he mapped and appraised state lands all over Montana. He held that political appointive job for sixteen years.

"In 1950 the folks moved from Havre to acreage near Plains, Montana. They moved from Plains to Missoula in 1961 and from Missoula to Coal Hill, Arkansas, in 1964. They lived there until Dad's death in 1974. My mother moved back to Missoula after he died and lived there until she passed away in 1980. Both Dad and Mother are buried in Missoula.

"As I look back on my parents' life in my own 68th year of living, I think of them as courageous, industrious, and remarkable people. They always said they had wasted 22 years of their life on a dry-land homestead. However, in spite of the difficult living conditions and the hard physical labor that people of those times endured, Dad lived to the age of 84 and Mother, to the age of 88.

"They had good health for the most part of their lives and were always able to keep interested in all things and constantly busy with their own activities. They were also always ready to lend a hand to any of us, if they were able. During the hard depression years, they managed to clothe and feed us kids. Three of us were given good educations. My folks paid their own way through life and out of it as well. Their generation was surely the foundation builders of this country."

Gordon, Helen, and Dorothy all grew up and received their elementary education in the Welter area schools. Gordon attended Winnett High School two years, then quit to work in his senior year. He married Edna Youderian in Winnett in 1937.

Helen graduated from Winnett High School in 1935. She graduated from Northern Montana College in 1937. She married Charles Bailey of Havre in 1937. They had two children. Helen died in 1961.

Dorothy attended one year of high school in Winnett and completed high school in Havre. She graduated from Northern Montana College in 1940 and Montana State University in 1942. She has worked as a journalist and elementary school teacher. She married Helmer Fredrickson in Havre in 1946. He died in 1953. She married David Fail of Winnett in 1974. He passed away in the fall of 1977.

Robert lived the first five years of his life in the Welter community. He received his education in Havre and graduated from University of Montana in 1954. He married Ann Robertson and they have three daughters.

CARLSON, Edwin (Sec 30-17-25) Edwin was a bachelor who homesteaded near Duck Creek on the hill. He received his mail at the Blakeslee Post Office.

Dale and Earl Bassett remember going up to his place in the fall of 1934 to get skunks. Edwin had a root cellar out away from the house. Dale and Earl went down into the root cellar and there was a hole in the back with fresh skunk signs around it. Dale and Earl had a little dog which they would send into the hole. The dog would come out pulling the skunks by the tail, and Earl and Dale would

then shoot the skunks. The smell got so bad that Dale and the dog had to go out for fresh air. They would coax the dog back down to get more skunks. The dog became blinded until they ran him through a reservoir and he got over it. They got five skunks that day, which were bringing \$1.50 a piece.

Edwin moved back to Minnesota or Wisconsin in the winter of 1931-1932.

COLE, Klein Mary Anna McGlory, the daughter of John McGlory and Mary Meade, was born October 4, 1882. She and Klein Cole were married in Maine. They had a son, Kenneth R., who was born in Springfield, Maine, on May 6, 1905.

When Kenneth was a young boy, the family moved to Warm Springs, Montana, where Klein and Mary Anna both worked as registered nurses in the hospital.

Klein passed away while there, and Mary Anna and Kenny came to Winnett to prove up the homestead on which Klein had filed before his death. The land was located in the Minnesota Bench area.

After a few years, the Coles left the homestead and moved to Winnett where Mary Anna ran the Bachelor Cafe. She later married Hiram J. "Bud" Willard who owned a large ranch north of Winnett, Montana, in Sec 3,4-17-27. Willards left the area during the drought era and located in Missouri.

Kenny worked his way through Winnett High School, graduating with the class of 1924.

Mrs. Mary Anna McGlory Cole Willard died at age 75 at Willow Springs, Missouri. (See also COLE — Winnett)

COLVER, George Harry The Colver family came from Iowa and were the parents of two sons, Edwin and Harold. Edwin and Harold attended the Staff School. Later the Colvers moved to an area in the Brush Creek country. (See also COLVER — Brush Creek)

COMBS, William Riley (Sec 20-16-26) The following obituary was printed in the Winnett Times of July 19, 1929: "Mrs. William Riley Combs passed quietly away at her home Monday, July 15, 1929, at the age of seventy-three years, eleven months, and twenty-five days.

"Mary Cornelia Owens was born July 20, 1855, at Bloomfield, Indiana. She was married to Riley Combs on December 24, 1875, at Medoc, Missouri. To this union five children were born. The oldest child died when about fourteen months of age. The surviving children are S. F. Combs of Vegreville, Alberta, Canada; H. E. Combs of Rathdum, Idaho; L. Millard of Anacortes, Washington; Laura E. Bridger of Winnett. The husband survives the deceased.

"The family lived in Missouri, Kansas, and Washington, until they came to Montana in 1916, where they have resided until the death of Mrs. Combs.

"Those present for the funeral were Mr. Combs, Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Combs, Mrs. Laura Bridger and daughter Eileen and son Aubrey Moore. The deceased was loved by all who knew her and had lived a religious life since girlhood."

COX, Charles (Sec 14-16-26) Charles and Lillian Cox were the parents of at least three children — George (1915), Goldie (1918) and Edward (1919).

COX, Perry (Sec 3-17-24) Perry Cox, son of Samuel and Alice Cox of Grassrange, was born in Princeton, Minnesota. He married Jenny J. Griffith of Blakeslee in 1915. Perry and Jennie Cox homesteaded north of the Blakeslee schoolhouse. Jennie was remembered as being a red-haired, jolly person who played the violin. She was an early teacher at the Blakeslee School, living in the nearby Wescott house while she taught. Jennie owned land in Sec 8-17-24.

CROWLEY, Mike (W. T. 7-6-1931) "Mike Crowley's ranch house burned to the ground last Saturday. Mr. Crowley's ranch is in the Welter country. The fire is of unknown origin and started while Mr. Crowley was in the barn getting things ready to move to Winnett. He had removed most of his goods from the house and loaded them into a truck preparing to move into Winnett for the winter season and was in the barn getting goods ready to take with him when he noticed smoke pouring from the house. The building burned quickly, destroying everything he had not moved into the truck. No insurance was carried on the building or household goods."

CULLINGTON, David H. David was an auctioneer. He also ran the county road patrol. He built the road which is south of the Three Buttes in the Blakeslee area. His buildings were located south of the Three Buttes, east of the road, and at the edge of the timber. David was killed when blasting caps exploded in his pocket.

A William Cullington owned land in Sec 30-16-24.

DAUM, Gene Gene and Velma Daum worked for Douglas Delaney after Doug and Oleta moved to the Roy Ayers place in 1967. Daums lived on the old Lutheran Church Ranch which had been the original Delaney Ranch.

Gene was the son of Jacob and Emma Daum. (See also DAUM — Flatwillow) and Velma was the daughter of Joe and Phyllis (Rukavina) Johnson. (See also JOHNSON — RUKAVINA — Musselshell River) Gene and Velma's two children, Brad and Terri, attended the Blakeslee School.

Daums later moved to the original Roy Ayers Ranch. Velma served as clerk of the Grassrange School District until Daums purchased the Clark store in Grassrange.

Brad and Terri both graduated from Grassrange High School. Brad is now teacher and coach at Winifred High School. He and wife, Patti, are parents of a daughter. Terri married Dale Myers of Grassrange. They live in Bozeman, Montana.

DAUM, Richard Dick Daum and his wife lived on the Skibby Ranch (formerly the Forbes Leslie Ranch) while Dick ran the ranch for Ed Skibby. Skibbys had moved to Lewistown and hired the ranch work done. Daums were hired after Kaufmans had left and were there until Munsks came.



Douglas and Oleta Delaney (1986)

DELANEY, Douglas Douglas was the oldest son of Michael and Gunilda Delaney. He was born and raised in the Blakeslee area and graduated from Winnett High School in 1944. Doug and his brother, Dick, built up a fine ranch. When they dissolved their partnership, Doug took over the original home place, or "church ranch" as it was sometimes referred to.

Doug married Oleta Miller. They had four children: Lynda Marie (1949) who married Doug Galvin, a speech and history teacher in Rock Springs, Wyoming; Sharon Oleta (1952) who married Vic Westphal and has two children, Trevor and Jenny; Michael Robert "Mike" (1954) who married Debbie Wilkinson, and has two children, Michael and Annie; and Debra Diann (1960) who married Marc Mallowney, a mechanical engineer in Butte, Montana. They have three children — Kate, Sara and Jessica.



Mike, Deb, Michael and Anne Delaney (1988)

Douglas served two terms (from 1956 to 1962) as a Petroleum County Commissioner. In 1967 he purchased the Donald Ayers Ranch west of Grassrange. He and his family lived there for a number of years while Gene Daum lived on the home (or church) ranch as his hired man. When Doug retired and moved to Lewistown, Montana, Sharon and Vic moved to the Ayers ranch. Mike and Debbie now ranch and raise horses on the home (or church) ranch. Mike was elected trustee of the Winnett School District in April 1989.



Mike and Gunilda Delaney (1959)

DELANEY, Michael Robert Michael Delaney Sr. was born January 7, 1893 in St. Joseph, Missouri. He married Gunilda Riese on July 21, 1921. She was born on March 1, 1900, in West Prairie, Wisconsin. They moved to Petroleum County in 1925 to live on the Minnesota Bench where they ran the Lutheran Church Ranch.

Sometimes churches were willed or given property, and occasionally they bought up more land. They hired managers who could operate the farm or ranch for them. Mike Delaney was one of these managers. He eventually bought the Lutheran Church Ranch.

Mike and Gunilda had two sons — Douglas (1926), and Milton Richard (1927) — and one daughter, Mary Helen (1935).

In 1925-26 Gunilda taught at the Neumann School. Later she was a teacher at the Three Buttes School. When the Delaney children were the only ones going to school, the ranch bunkhouse became the classroom. Dances were often held at the ranch for the neighbors.

Mike Delaney died suddenly at the age of 67 in Lewistown, where he had retired in 1951. He served as a Petroleum County Commissioner for 12 years, beginning January 1, 1939.

Milton (Dick) and Doug bought the original ranch from their mother. Later they acquired the old Fergus County Sheep Ranch, buying out Toby Machler's interest in 1946, and H. C. Belcher's share in 1955. The brothers then dissolved the partnership, with Doug having the home place and Dick taking over the old sheep company ranch.

DELANEY, Milton Richard (Sec 1-16-25) "Dick" Delaney married Georgia Dupea and they have two children — Jane (1953) and Joe (1955). Jane married Jerry Nunn and they live with their two sons, Randy and Cal, on the old Forbes Leslie Ranch. Joe married Barbara Farnes. They have three children — Justin, Tacoma and Toby. They own and operate the old Fraser Ranch east of Grassrange.

The entire family have been enthusiastic participants in pack trips, wagon trains and other horse-oriented events. The Great Montana Centennial Cattle Drive provided an ideal setting for a family outing. Joe was appointed Fergus County centennial cattle drive chairman, and Dick was named Petroleum County chairman of the event.



Dick Delaney ready to "move 'em out" after an overnight camp in the Bull Mountains during the 1989 Centennial Cattle Drive.

Dick and Georgia, their two children and their families, as well as Dick's out-of-state sister, Mary, and her husband, took part in the week-long affair. Barb Delaney's summary of the event probably speaks for hundreds of other Montana participants.

"On September 4, 1989, one of the most spectacular events since the Battle of the Little Big Horn, hit Montana. The Great Montana Centennial Cattle Drive from Round-up to Billings headed out and finished six days later without a problem.

"There were a herd of cattle, a bunch of horses, and a pile of people — a whole lot of fun! The people came from all over the United States and several foreign countries to help celebrate Montana's birthday, and it was great to have them, but it was the Montanans who made the Drive as Great as it was! The locals from the Winnett and Grassrange areas were in the Yellow Circle and won the 'Best Circle Award.'

"It was a privilege to be part of the greatest event in the best part of the best state in the greatest country in the world."



Mrs. Burl DeSilva (Pearl) and children, Virgil, Chet, Elmav

DESILVA, Burl (Sec 19-17-25) Burl DeSilva and Pearl Pitcher were married August 31, 1913, at Oswego, Kansas. They started for Montana in covered wagons and arrived three months later. Burl's dad, Lincoln, and mother, Ada, and their three youngest children, Joseph, Grace, and Ella accompanied them on the trip. Burl and Pearl homesteaded 12 miles north of Teigen, 1½ miles north of Wild Horse Lake and about 2½ miles south of the Fergus County Sheep Ranch. They had three children — Chester, born September 4, 1914, on the homestead; Elmav, born January 17, 1916, on the homestead; and Virgil, born February 25, 1917. The DeSilva children attended the Blakeslee, Beedie, Box Elder, and Staff schools over a period of time.

Chester was married twice and had seven children — one lives in Texas, and the other six live in Oklahoma. He has 19 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Chester died June 14, 1978, at Commerce, Oklahoma.

Elmav married Chester Brown on March 11, 1934. They are now living at Whitefish, Montana. They had two children — Toody, who lives at Whitefish; and Jerry, who married Bobi Thompson and is living at Havre, Montana. Elmav and Chester Brown have five grandchildren.

Virgil DeSilva was killed on the way to school one day in October of 1928. The three children were riding in an old jalopy. As they crossed a bridge that had no sides on it, the car skidded on some ice and overturned into the creek. Virgil tried to escape by opening the car door and jumping, but the car rolled on him. Virgil is buried in the Winnett Cemetery.

Burl died in March of 1966. Pearl died in November of 1986 in Commerce, Oklahoma. (Submitted by Agnes Lindseth)

DESILVA, Lincoln (Sec 24-17-24) Lincoln DeSilva was born near Dodgeville, Wisconsin, March 12, 1861. When just a young boy he moved with his parents to a farm near Alberton, Iowa. There he grew to manhood and married Ada Stiles in 1885. He farmed in Iowa for a number of years, later moving to Enid, Oklahoma.

In about 1912 he and his family moved to Montana, driving through in a covered wagon, and settled in the Staff area. Son Burl homesteaded or secured land in Sec 19-17-25. Son Joe located in Sec 3-18-28 of the Dovetail country. The Lincoln DeSilvas were also the parents of four daughters — Olive, LaVera, Grace and Ella. Memories of residents would lead one to believe that Olive and LaVera, at least, may not have accompanied the family on their westward journey.

Lincoln and family farmed in the area that became Petroleum County until about 1933, when they moved to Whitefish, Montana. Lincoln died October 10, 1941. From the Winnett Times obituary of 10-24-1941, we read: "He was a kind father, a devout student of the Bible, and active in church work." Lincoln was survived by the widow, four daughters, two sons, one brother and one sister. He was buried in Enid, Oklahoma.

DEVINE, Herbert (Sec 6-17-24) See DEVINE, Wilson

DEVINE, William (Sec 8-17-24) See DEVINE, Wilson

DEVINE, Wilson Everett (Sec 7-17-24) Laura Agnes Devine Davidson contributed the following interesting history of her family and their neighbors who lived in the Blakeslee area in the northwest corner of Petroleum County:

"My mother, Evalina 'Eva' Hassinger, was born in Day County, South Dakota in 1888. When her mother died in 1910, she, along with her sister, Minnie, and her father, Jacob, came to Montana to homestead.

"The women were merely getting their father away from brooding over the loss of his wife, and had no intention of remaining permanently. They had to freight their belongings and lumber for their shacks from Lewistown over Giltedge Pass in the Judiths because the spur of the Milwaukee Railroad had not yet been run to Roy, which at that point did not yet exist.

"My father, Wilson Everett Devine (known as Everett, but often using his initials, as in his brand), was born in 1893 in Indiana and came to Montana in 1912 to assist two married brothers, Herbert and Will (not the one with same initials who lived in Lewistown, and may still have relatives there) who intended to homestead. They urged him to file a claim, which they would then add to their holdings when he returned east. The Devines were able to get a boxcar to transport their homestead belongings to Hilger.

"Unfortunately, my mother and Herb and Will Devine homesteaded on flat land that proved of little value. Minnie Hassinger homesteaded on the north side of a long sand ridge just south of Mother's sagebrush flat, and Everett homesteaded on the south side of the same ridge.

That proved a godsend in that the sand ridge was more productive, and on father's land, a cold water well — hard water of 42 degrees Fahrenheit — was drilled from the sandstone, about 40 feet deep. It proved good drinking water for about 40 head of stock, a number of neighbors, and the oil wildcatters of the 1920s.

"My folks farmed about four hundred acres of land and had 1400 acres under fence. They ran stock on the wide open range to the east and northeast. They figured they got their feed and seed back one year out of three. Tornadoes twice destroyed their barns.

"An anticipated oil well was drilled on Russell Rowland's land in Sec 18-17-24 in the early 1920s. It was on the south bank of the Little Box Elder and came in as the Rowland No. 1 artesian water gusher. That water well helped us ride out the last few years there, in that it kept water holes full here and there along the creek. Until then the cattle had run on the range north of us and had watered in Bear Creek. (Some old maps listed it as Dog Creek.) In drouth, it did not have assured water holes.

"My uncle, Will Devine, left after proving up and returned to Indiana. Uncle Herbert Devine took over the Churchwell homestead just the other side of MacJannetts. Uncle Herb's wife was Elva. They had four children — Louise, Verl, Pearl, and Herbert Jr. — all born in Petroleum County. They left for the Plum Creek Ranch, which Herb managed for years for Cook Reynolds. He eventually bought the ranch which was in the breaks of the Judith River not far from Lewistown, Montana. Jess Warren, a bachelor, moved onto the Churchwell homestead after the Herb Devines left.

"The homestead just east of us, which we also operated under fence, had been taken about the same times (1910-1912) as my parents' by Asa "Jack" Woodward. Their house burned down in 1925 or 1926, and they left the area. Later they managed the Red Barn Ranch in the foothills of Black Butte. His wife was Marie, and they had a son, Blaine, about three years younger than I, and a daughter, Theresa, a baby when they left. They had other children later. When Marie died, Jack married again.

"Russell Rowland stayed on the homestead with his Grandmother Elliman keeping house for him. He had a real bunkhouse, perhaps the only one in the area. She was a very fine lady whose library of books supplemented those my parents had each brought west. This helped with the education of my sister and me.

"Petroleum County was not a nice word in our house. My parents objected to being included in the new county, but my father couldn't withstand a good sales pitch, and I know he signed one of the numerous petitions for division. I was in Blakeslee School when this was fought out in 1924. There were petitions for and petitions against and petitions against the petitions against!

"I remember that one of the sales pitches was that taxes would be lowered, as the oil fields near Winnett would pay all the county expenses. I remember vividly that our taxes had been \$300 the year before division,

and our first year in Petroleum they were \$600.

"But it was on the education angle that my parents finally waged war. Little Box Elder was often not fordable. The iron bridge at Sand Rock Spring was between a gumbo flat (which was impassable in wet weather) and an area of quicksand and bog at the top of the plateau. Also there was no direct road to Winnett, which was 40 miles away. We were oriented towards Roy, 17 miles northwest because of these road problems.

"Fortunately the county superintendent of Fergus County was Mrs. Hart, and her sister, Amanda Swift, was first county superintendent of Petroleum County, and they managed to get our district declared a joint school district so that Christenson School in Fergus County really paid our board and other expenses. We each finished elementary school in six years, three of those in what is now Petroleum County.

"My second year in school, Ruth and I boarded with Alley Thomases a little west of Blakeslee School. The next year, Perry Cox and my father fixed up an old homestead shack kitty-corner from the schoolhouse to live in during the school year. Jenny Cox and my mother rode herd on Harley and Merle Cox and my sister, Ruth, and me, each taking three-week turns. The Coxes had a three-year-old daughter also, and after moving away again, had other children. Perry and Jenny had homesteaded five miles east on Little Bear Creek.

"Coxes had each homesteaded but moved away before I remember and came back for only one year to try again. Then they left for the Judith Basin and later lived between us and Roy.

"The third year in Petroleum was the one after Blakeslee. Lillian Heard of North Dakota had been the teacher and was induced by our school board to return to teach just Ruth and me in a fixed-up MacJannett homestead shack. Because of Montana laws at the time, one had to hold school in one's district every five years or be attached to the adjoining district, and the two or three other people paying taxes in the district were willing to provide a school for just the two of us to keep from being adjoined to the more expensive Roy school district.

"When we started high school, Winnett officials tried to convince my parents that we must attend Winnett, but that would have meant our boarding there all year, and for two years they yielded our apportionment money to Roy. Then they refused, but the merchants (school officials) of Roy agreed to let us attend for free.

"We were then in the drouth — 1929 being the last crop until the late 1930s in our little Big Dry. The Depression was on, and my parents had always done their shopping and selling in Roy. Besides, Ruth and I were involved scholastically, and I was very involved in school activities. My only contact with Winnett High School was playing first-string basketball against them! We all stood in awe of one girl from Winnett, who could make every shot. She was a great forward.

"We left just after my high school graduation in May

1933 to live on Mother's parents' homestead in eastern South Dakota, where the dustbowl began five days after our arrival. I forgot to say that 51 percent of our cattle died the spring of 1932 in Montana, and that my father was seriously injured in a haying accident in the fall in the Judith Basin, where he had gone to make a grubstake for the winter — fractured skull. After we left, the house burned down. There is nothing left of the farmstead except the reinforced concrete foundation for the barn and the pump.

"While several of the more hardy homesteaders left and returned, often to leave again, over the 1920s and 1930s, my parents were the last original ones of this small section of the 'Big Dry' (as the ranchers in the foothills of the Judiths called this area) to leave. They were married in 1914 and left in 1933. My older sister and only sibling, Ruth Devine Wahl, was born in 1915, and I, Laura Agnes Devine Davidson (called Laura Agnes until I finished the University of Minnesota in 1940) was born in 1917.

"My parents retired in 1946 and lived in Salem, Oregon, where Mother died in 1947. My father died in 1975 in nearby Dallas, Oregon. My sister died in Paris, Texas, where her late husband had managed the Ford Tractor Training Center, he dying in 1984, and she in 1985. After 47 years of marriage, I am now alone. I had lived in Missoula, Montana, from 1946 to 1948 when my then husband was a student at the university. Ruth taught school for several years after attending Winona, Minnesota, college. I worked as a newspaper reporter for about six years after graduating from the University of Minnesota in 1940. Ruth had 3 daughters, and I, two."

DIXON, Alexander (Sec 14-16-24) Al Dixon was a sheepman who came from the Becket area. He and his wife, Hattie, rented the place Earl Bassett now owns. Earl worked for him in 1932-34, helping lamb and trail sheep around the country.

Dixons had one daughter, Josephine Margret, who went to school in Lewistown and graduated around 1932 or 1933. Al left in 1936 and moved to Townsend, Montana. He was a Spanish-American War veteran. (See also DIXON — Cat Creek)

EGGERS, Martin and Ralph (Sec 21-16-27) The Eggers came from Washington and homesteaded east of the Luebke place on the shale ridge. They lived in a log cabin and farmed for a living. In 1930 they moved to the Grogan place west of War House Lake and east of Eagle Butte.

In the fall of 1933, Martin went to the Lewistown hospital for an operation. After the operation, he got out of bed, pulled his stitches out, and bled to death. Their mother, Sophia, moved to Lewistown, Montana, in 1936 to live with her daughter, but moved back in 1937.

The Grogan place sold to the government in 1937 and Ralph and his mother moved to the John Devault place, southeast of the Luebke place next to Antelope Butte.

Ralph and his mother died in 1940 during harvest time. It is believed Ralph died from botulism poisoning. He was

found on the bed. His mother, blind and virtually helpless, died shortly after from the heat and lack of food and water. She was found under the bed. Dale Bassett considered this to be the worst tragedy of the community.

EIKE, Olaf Olaf Eike, son of Mr. and Mrs. Osten Eike, was born in Skortvig, Norway, February 10, 1883. His family fished and farmed for a living. Olaf was a fine young skater, and the children skated to school.

Olaf had made enough money at the age of 19 to buy a ticket for passage to the United States of America. In 1910 he came via Liverpool, England, to New York. He traveled to Bower Brothers' sheep ranch at a place called Oka, near present day Judith Gap, Montana. There Olaf worked as camp tender to the Bower Brothers' many bands of sheep.

When the Fergus County Sheep Company was formed in the Staff area in 1910, Olaf was chosen as manager. (See also FERGUS COUNTY SHEEP RANCH) He also took out his own homestead on Bear Creek.

Olaf's wife, Hannah M. Kroft, was born in Brooten, Min-



Lyle Eike, ?, ?, Olaf Eike, Hannah Eike, ?, ?; Children: Bob Eike, Jean Eike, George Eike



George, Bob, Jean, Lyle, Olaf Eike