

nesota. She came to what is now Petroleum County and homesteaded on Box Elder Creek. Olaf was appointed postmaster when the post office at Staff was established on September 20, 1915. He served in that capacity for many years.

Olaf was replaced by Mr. Hoyem on the Fergus County Sheep Ranch in 1926. A year later, however, Olaf once again was hired as manager of the company. He stayed until 1932 when the Union Bank took over the property and A. H. Fuhs was appointed manager.

Mother Hannah died in 1931 and was buried in Minnesota. Olaf bought the Abe Helleland place for taxes, and he and some of the children lived there until 1939. He became mail carrier on a route from Winnett to Valen-

tine to Dovetail and back to Winnett. The route was a tough one as the roads had very little gravel.

In 1939 Olaf moved to Winnett where he lived in the Northern Hotel for a time. Eventually he moved a house to the property just behind the hotel for his retirement home. He died in December of 1963 and was buried in the Winnett Cemetery.

The Eikes had five children — Olaf Lyle, Robert John, George Hjalmar, Rose Jean and Charles. Charles died in infancy. Rose Jean became Jean Crawford and the mother of Robert Edward and Carla Jean Crawford. George, after serving his country in World War II, married and had two sons, Charles and Paul. George died in 1971. Robert and Lyle have histories written in the Cat Creek chapter.

Fergus County Sheep Company

In 1910 the Fergus County Sheep Company was organized for the purpose of acquiring the properties of Alphonso Jackman and P. T. McDermott, who were situated on Box Elder and Bear Creeks in Fergus County, Montana.

The property included 4200 acres of land (\$50,000); 11,800 sheep (\$45,000); equipment, including horses, wagons, machinery (\$6000); 800 tons of hay (\$4000); and \$5000 cash for operating expenses.

The purchase price was to be provided by selling \$25,000 worth of bonds and issuing \$85,000 in stock. Projected net earning for the year of 1910 was \$16,800.

The stocks and bonds were sold, and Olaf Eike, with his background experience in handling sheep, was hired as manager. He held that position until 1926 when Mr. Hoyem was named manager for a year. Olaf was hired again, however, and served from 1927 to 1932.

At that time the ranch, now consisting of 36,000 acres, was taken over by the Union Bank of Helena, Montana.

Albert H. Fuhs was placed in charge.

Dominic "Toby" Machler and Clifford Belcher later purchased the ranch. In 1946 Toby Machler sold his interest to the Delaney Brothers — Doug and Dick. In 1955 Delaneys also purchased Cliff Belcher's share. Milton R. "Dick" is now sole owner.

The old Staff Post Office building still stands among the other structures on the Delaney Ranch.

Cooks at the Fergus County Sheep Ranch were Annie Kruger, Mrs. R. P. (Nettie) Wallace, and Opal Buckler Junkin. Chore hired men were Wellington D. Junkin and Bush. Herders on the ranch were Bill Ming, Torval Bow, Sam Olson, Jonas Olson, Jack Eike (Olaf's cousin), Paul Lervick, Peter Loite, "Big Ole" Eike, Andrew Hauge, Chris Austed, Burt Hartwick (Olaf's cousin), Henry Samsal (Olaf's brother-in-law), John Hedman, Carl Hedman, Bill Hedman, Karl Sikveland, Tony Brooks, Jess Brooks. A mechanic was Oscar Thompson.



Fergus County Sheep Company sheep on a hill



First load of wool from Fergus County Sheep Company



Nette and Ray Wallace, Fergus County Sheep Company employees



Ole, Olaf and Bert Eike

FISHER, John John lived in the Hoosier Bench area of the Blakeslee country — so called because of those from Indiana who settled there. John was one of the excellent fiddlers of the community.

FLEHARTY, Cliff Cliff Fleharty married and moved to a ranch several miles north, and later ran a restaurant in Winifred, Montana. They had two sons, Russell and Buster, and two daughters, Doris and Bobby.

Cliff Fleharty died January 13, 1951 and was buried in the Lewistown Cemetery.



John Fisher and Floyd Harris

FLEHARTY, Earl (Sec 20-17-24) Earl Fleharty married Mary Botch, a school teacher, in 1928. (See also FLEHARTY, Earl — Petrolia)

FLEHARTY, Forrest Forrest Fleharty married Edla Freburg in 1924. They lived in the hills near Forest Grove, Montana, for one and one-half years. Then they moved to the original Fleharty homestead, where their daughter, Hazel, and son, Roy, were born. Dr. Hazel Freed, of Grassrange, went to their home to deliver both children.

When Jake Strait died, the Forrest Fleharty family moved to his place and took care of the post office for two years. In 1936 they moved to Iowa and lived on a farm south of Mount Etna for two years. They bought the Fleharty homestead near Lincoln Center, Iowa, and lived there until 1978, when they retired and moved to Corning, Iowa, where they now reside.

The Fleharty's daughter, Hazel, married Edward Maeder. They have four sons. Roy and wife, Shirley, also had four sons. One died. Both families live in Iowa.

While living in the Blakeslee community, all of the Fleharty boys enjoyed playing pranks on one another, and would also combine forces in beguiling their friends.

One Halloween evening a group of young people gathered at a neighborhood home and were entertained by the telling of ghost stories. When it was time for the party to end, one of the boys was reluctant to strike out in the dark to return home. The ghost stories had really put a chill in his spine.

Forrest Fleharty, a somewhat braver soul, gallantly volunteered to accompany his frightened friend home.

The two went their way and had just gotten around a hill when two figures, clad in white sheets and riding horses, came swooping down after them. Terrified and gasping for breath, the boys finally made it through the door of home.

Forrest's friend was shaking badly and could hardly talk through his chattering teeth. Forrest feigned uncontrolled fear. His friend did not know that Forrest had been the perpetrator of the entire episode.

FLEHARTY, Harold Harold Fleharty, son of Henry and Mae Fleharty, and his wife, Marie, had two sons and a daughter, Jo Ann. Harold died in 1984 and was buried in Quincy, Iowa.

FLEHARTY, Henry Henry and Mae Fleharty came from Iowa to live west of Blakeslee. They later moved to the Jones place with their sons Jake, Cliff, Forrest, Ray, Harold and Earl.

Each of the boys, along with their father, played some musical instrument, and were said to drive their mother "up the wall" with all their noise.

Mrs. Fleharty was known to bake bread every other day for her seven men.

FLEHARTY, Jake Jake Fleharty, a son of Henry Fleharty, married Gladys McBroom. They lived on the Jones place. Gladys' parents had lived on the Hoosier Bench west of Blakeslee. It was so named because several settled there from Indiana.

Jake and Gladys moved from the Jones place to the Barney place, four miles south of Becket. In 1940 they



Edla and Forrest Fleharty (60th Anniversary, 1984)



Mr. and Mrs. Henry Fleharty and son Ray

bought the present home place east of Becket, where they lived until they retired in Grassrange.

They had two children, Edith and Robert.

Jake was known as one who enjoyed pranks. One, as remembered by his minister, was a "fish story" involving Jake and his son, Bob. The two went fishing and there was a wager made as to who would catch the largest fish. Each presented their best specimen, with Bob's fish being

longer, but Jake's weighing more. Jake was declared the winner. Later, Bob found himself the victim of his father's joke when he cleaned the fish and found "mysteriously-placed" gravel in Jake's fish!

Jake and Gladys moved from Grassrange to Roundup in 1969 to be near their daughter, Edith.

At this writing Gladys is living in Roundup with grandson Gary and his wife. Jake passed away in the fall of 1985 and was buried in the Grassrange Cemetery.

Edith Fleharty married Al Nelson. They were the parents of two sons, Gary and Mark. Bob Fleharty married Eva Johnson and they have two sons, Mike and Monty. Bob and Eva took over his parents' place when Jake retired.

FLEHARTY, Ray (Sec 34-17-24) Ray Fleharty, son of Henry Fleharty, married Myrtle Freburg in 1935. They lived in Iowa for one year, and returned to live on a ranch just west of the Petroleum County line. They were living there when son, Don, was born on December 12, 1941, in St. Joseph's Hospital in Lewistown.

They moved to Iowa again to live on Ray's folks' place in 1945 and stayed for three years.

In 1948 they moved to Myrtle's parents home place in the Blakeslee community. Her parents had sold the place to Charles Kananen, who sold it back to Myrtle and Ray. They also acquired land in the mountains south and west of Forestgrove. This made fine summer pasture for their range stock.

Ray and Myrtle were mail carriers of the Blakeslee route for approximately twenty years. On May 10, 1963, Ray was loading sawdust at a sawmill when he died suddenly of a massive heart attack.

Don, then 22 years of age, assumed the responsibility of running the family ranch. He and his mother still live on the original Freburg homestead. Don attended all eight grades at the Blakeslee country school and graduated in 1960 from Grassrange High School.



Myrtle and Ray Fleharty and son Don.

FREBURG, Emil Emil Freburg, son of Henry and Anna Freburg, was born September 24, 1915, in St. Joseph's Hospital in Lewistown, Montana. He attended eight years of grade school at the Blakeslee School.

In 1942 he enlisted in the Army, and served overseas. He served for three years and three months in the Communication Corps.

After his return to the states, Emil married Marian Rodekuhr, daughter of a former Blakeslee area homesteader. They had two children, Patricia Jo (1951) and Scott Alan (1958).

Emil worked in Montgomery Ward's store in Lewistown from 1946 to 1949. He moved to Akeley, Minnesota, where he ran a bulk dairy farm for several years. He later managed the Montgomery Ward store in Walker, Minnesota, until retirement.

Emil and Marian now live in Winter Haven, Florida.

FREBURG, Ernest Ernest Freburg, son of Henry and Anna Freburg, had all of his elementary schooling at the Blakeslee School. He attended Grassrange High School for two years and the next two years at Winnett High School where he graduated. After graduation he worked for Rasmussen's store of Winnett, and Seute's grocery store of Lewistown until 1935. He then went to work on ranches for about a year.

Ernest and Ethel N. Curtis were married on October 24, 1936. They were parents of a daughter, Mavis, born October 27, 1937.

Ernest worked at Van Dyke's store in Harlowton, Montana, until the summer of 1937 when the family moved to Winnett to work for George Waldrop in the Winnett Mercantile.

Ernest lost his wife, Ethel, in October of 1939. From June of 1940 to November of 1948 he worked for Elmer and Rex Eager in the Eager Mercantile. On June 29, 1942, Ernest Freburg married Ruth Hodges. (See also FREBURG — Winnett)



Ethel and Ernest Freburg

FREBURG, Henry (Sec 34-17-24) Henry Freburg and Anna Carlson both emigrated from Sweden. They were married in Anaconda, Montana, on July 29, 1905.

In 1911 Henry took up a homestead on the Minnesota Bench, one-half mile east of the present schoolhouse. He spent his first year there building a two-room house with an attic.

In 1912 his wife, Anna, and three children — Edla, Ernest, and Myrtle, joined him from Anaconda. Their ages were five years, three years, and ten months respectively. Their brother, Emil, was born in 1915.

Edla went to school in a tar-papered shack north of the present Blakeslee schoolhouse, when she was six years old. She attended the Blakeslee School after it was built. For one year, she cared for the children of Jennie Cox, the school teacher. She married Forrest Fleharty.

Myrtle Freburg also attended the Blakeslee School, and Grassrange High School for two years. The next two years were spent at Winnett where she graduated. After three years of nursing school in Bozeman, Myrtle graduated as a registered nurse. She was a special nurse until she married Ray Fleharty in 1935.

The Freburgs later moved to Lewistown, Montana, where they lived for some time. Henry died in June of 1947, Anna, in September of 1962.



Henry Freburgs moving to homestead in 1911 (Picture taken in Lewistown)



Myrtle Freburg (Fleharty), Ernest Freburg, Edla Freburg (Fleharty); Emil Freburg, Henry Freburg, Anna Freburg

FUHS, A. H. (Al) A. H. (Al) Fuhs was an early manager of the Fergus County Sheep Ranch, which is now owned by Dick Delaney.

Fuhs later bought the ranch on which Mark Lewis lives. Al and his family lived in that area for a number of years before retiring.

Upon Al's death, LeRoy Long leased the ranch from the Fuhs estate from 1951 to 1974. The property was sold to William and Mark Lewis in 1974.

GREENFIELD, Alice (Sec 34-17-24) Alice Greenfield and her son, Roy, and nephew, Bertice, all homesteaded — Roy in Sec 35-17-24, and Bertice in Sec 13-16-24. Alice was the first teacher of the first Minnesota Bench School.

Warner Kruger wrote of her (W. T. 5-4-72): "She had gone through hardships, one of losing her husband, one of losing a boy in a hunting accident. Women those days just took the bit in their hands and took off — in this case, to a new land."

She married a local farmer, Dan Sommerfield. When the Winnett School District #159 was created in 1916, Alice Sommerfield was chosen as clerk. She and Dan had moved to Winnett to make their home.

Roy married a daughter of an area homesteader, A. O. Yeager. They later moved to Anaconda, Montana.

Bertice was the third teacher of the Blakeslee School. He continued as an excellent teacher in many schools of what later became Petroleum County. (See also KRUGER, Warner — Blakeslee; GREENFIELD — Winnett)

GRINDY, Elmer (Sec 11-16-24 and Sec 28-17-27) Elmer Grindy was born in Duluth, Minnesota, on April 1, 1891. He came to Montana with his father and two brothers in about 1912 or 1913 and took up two tracts of land.

On February 14, 1917, he married Gracia Clyde Rowland. Gracia's parents homesteaded about 10 miles southeast of Roy, Montana, not far from the Petroleum County line. Her father, William Rowland, also operated a creamery in Grassrange for a time. Like the Grindys, the Rowlands had come to Montana from Minnesota.

Gracia was an experienced and respected school teacher. Warner Kruger, one of her pupils when she taught the Blakeslee School, wrote fondly of "Gracious Gracia."

"This fine person," he said, "wore the latest fashions, not the hobble skirt, but very effeminate indeed. She was the very essence of feminine regality, tall (and just that) very regal. She wore a smile constantly, however she had perfect control of the students. I know, because I became the wearer of a dunce hat on a stool as a result of her rigidity. . . It seems every new teacher we had had some special quality.

"In Miss Rowland's case she was quite lively, therefore took time out to teach both adults and children home talent plays. We would practice well, and then put the play on. The little old house just bulged with people that night. Some of the bachelors took a great interest in act-

ing. I'm sure they didn't realize that they had such latent talent. Of course the usual dance followed and how everyone danced; then a big midnight supper.

"Gracia was a perfectionist with grammar. When she taught the parts of speech, you never forgot them!"

Elmer and Gracia had five children, four of whom were born before they left Montana in 1929 — Ruth (1917), Jean (1918) Lois (1919), John (1926) — and Donna born in Minnesota in 1936.

Elmer and Gracia bought Gracia's parents' homestead in 1921 and made their home in the area until 1929, when they returned to Minnesota where they lived until World War II. During the war, Elmer spent three years in defense work at Pearl Harbor and the family lived in Lewistown, Montana. Later they made their home in California.

After Elmer's death in 1957, Gracia returned to Montana where she again taught several small country schools. She died in 1974.

Ruth became a registered nurse. She and her husband, Grant Viertel, make their home in Lewistown, Montana, where Ruth served as supervisor of the Montana State Center for the Aged for a number of years. Jean made her home in California until her death in 1960. Until 1989, Lois and her husband, Vic Reinemer, lived in Washington, D. C., where Vic held several important political appointments. John graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in education. He was a school administrator in California until his retirement.

GRINDY, Henry (Sec 27-17-24) Henry, son of John Grindy, settled in the Blakeslee country and also owned land adjoining his father's in Sec 28-17-27 of the Ashley area. In 1929 Henry sold his 280 acres of Blakeslee property to Elmer.

Residents of the area recall that Henry was a very jovial person who radiated cheer. He played the fiddle and was labeled as the best dancer of the old-fashioned Norwegian dance called the "Hulling." All of the Grindy men were known as excellent dancers.

Henry returned to Minnesota in 1929 and died shortly thereafter from tuberculosis.

GRINDY, John (Sec 22-17-24 and Sec 28-17-27) John Grindy owned property in both the Blakeslee and the Ashley communities but there is no evidence to indicate he ever lived in the area northwest of Ashley.

John and his wife, Christine Strandemoer Grindy, were the parents of 13 children, five of whom died young. The surviving children were: Emma (1882), Noel (1884), Henry (1886), Elmer (1891), Clarence (1893), Albin (1895), Franklin (1902), and Clifford (1903).

John and two of his sons, Henry and Elmer, came to Montana from Minnesota in the mid teens to take up land. Records indicate a younger son, Franklin, went to the Blakeslee School. Warner Kruger relates an amusing story concerning Franklin and the school teacher who was to become his sister-in-law.

The teacher Gracia Rowland, according to Warner,

"had the daintiest handkerchiefs. They seemed to be only about four inches square. One day Franklin Grindy whispered to me, 'No wonder she only blows her nose on one side, the handkerchief is too small for her whole nose!'"

After completing school, Franklin drove the Grassrange-Staff stage for a time. In 1923 Franklin returned to Minnesota where he was engaged in the creamery business. He died in 1970.

John Grindy died of pneumonia in his homestead cabin in 1921.

GRINER, Francis (Sec 1-16-26) Frank and Caroline Griner homesteaded south of Kratochvils and northeast of Burrs. The Griners stayed as long as most homesteaders. They had five children — Lillian, Robert, Homer, Evelyn, and Eileen. The three oldest children went to the Box Elder School. They were like all homesteaders in that they took an active part in the community affairs.

When they left, they built a house on the back of their truck. They put the children in the back and went to their destination. Some thought it strange, but they got to where they were going and settled in the western part of the state. Robert died a few years ago, according to his obituary in the *Great Falls Tribune*. The family still lives in the Libby, Kalispell, and Coeur d'Alene areas. (Submitted by Agnes Lindseth)

GROGAN, Patrick (Sec 26-16-24) Patrick Grogan came from Ireland and met his future wife, Rose, in New York City. Rose worked as a maid, and Patrick drove a horse and buggy for the rich people of New York City.

They came to Montana around 1914-1915 and homesteaded west of War House Lake, near Eagle Butte.

There were two sons: Joe, who later had a place near Grassrange, and Francis.

When Patrick died, Rose and the boys moved.

HAILSTONE, David (Sec 15-17-26) Hailstones were the dairy people of the area as evidenced by the Winnett Times news article of September 22, 1922. "Of unusual interest is the sale of the Dave Hailstone herd of dairy cattle which will be held at the Winnett stockyards Saturday, September 30. This herd is the result of 12 years of careful breeding, and the head of the herd, Grand View Beets Hengerveld, is a grandson of the \$25,000 bull, Johanna McKinley Segis, who has 67 A. R. O. daughters to his credit.

"For some time past Mr. Hailstone has had the reputation of receiving the largest cream check from this shipping point. Here is considered an opportunity to secure the foundation of a good dairy herd."

Children of David and Rhoda Hailstone as remembered were: William, Margaret, Laura and Dorothy.

HANSON, Erick (Sec 25-16-26) See HANSON — Winnett

HARRIS, Floyd Floyd Harris, son of David and Louise Harris, married Lorraine Lenling in 1938. He met Lorraine when she lived with her mother on the Thomas place. Her mother was a housekeeper for Jess Warren.

Floyd and Lorraine lived on the McCliman's homestead until 1943. Floyd bought the Neumann place from his grandparents in 1942, but did not move there until a year later. Some of the homesteads Floyd leased included: Wyman, Savage, Packard, Seymour, Smith, Caraway, Hank Neumann, Anna Brandt, Norman, and Thomas. Later he purchased the Osterberg's land.

Floyd and Lorraine had seven children: Loretta (Dengel), born April 6, 1939; Judith (Cox), born November 25, 1945; Floyd William, born November 28, 1948; Karen Jean, born September 12, 1952 and who died February 19, 1969; David Keith, born November 2, 1954; Patti (Ortega), born April 11, 1962; and Michael Leslie, born April 11, 1962, and who died in July of 1962.

Loretta recalls that during her grade school years, their five miles to the Blakeslee School could be very bad due to mud or snow. Her dad would have to come for her by horseback at those times. She remembered a special treat once when their neighbor, John Fisher, came after her in his 1930 Model A Ford.

Floyd hauled water from the Blakeslee well from 1938 to 1952, when they drilled their own well. What a thrill it was to see water coming up out of the ground!

Floyd was a mail carrier from Grassrange to Blakeslee.

Lorraine is deceased. Floyd married Barbara Hill in 1973. He sold the ranch to Douglas Delaney and now lives in Grassrange.



*Golden Anniversary of David and Louise Harris (1966)
Back: Henry, Florence, Caroline, Julius, Otto, Martha and Fred;
Front: Anna Brandt, Elsie Callewaert, Louise Harris, Sarah Newmann, David Harris*

HASSINGER, Wilhemina "Minnie" (Sec 7-17-24)
See DEVINE, Wilson

HEDMAN, Johan A. (Sec 2-16-24) Johan "John" and Emma Hedman and children — Jeanette, Christine, Helma, Carl, John, and William — came to the United States from Norway in 1912. They lived near Lewistown, Montana, before homesteading in the Blakeslee area in 1914. Henry was the only child born in the United States.

Christine graduated from Grassrange High School and then took up nursing at Bozeman, Montana, where she



Emma Hedman's 80th Birthday



Henry, Christine, Bill and John Hedman

married Ed Siefert. They had three children — Shirley, and twins Edward and Edwina. Christine lived in the Bozeman area until her death in the spring of 1988.

Jeanette married Ralph Borsheim and lived in Great Falls, Montana. They had two children, Gene and Richard. Jeanette passed away in the fall of 1981.

John, William and Henry lived in the Crooked Creek area. Carl stayed for a while, then he moved to the Harlowton, Montana, area.

John Sr. died on the home place in 1942. His wife, Emma, then moved to Winnett where she lived until her death in the early 1960s.

John Jr. and his son David returned to the Blakeslee area in 1967, when John bought the Don Deyoe place. When John retired, he moved to Grassrange. He died in August of 1977.

David, his wife Judy, and their children, Brett and Johnna, still live on the ranch.

John's wife, Margaret, now resides in Winnett. All members of the Johan Hedman family are now deceased. (See also HEDMAN — Dovetail and Winnett)

HELLELAND, Abraham (Sec 19-17-25) Abe Helleland homesteaded about a mile south of the Fergus County Sheep Ranch. He was a native of Norway. Not too much is remembered of Abe; but he was jolly and full of fun. When he left, he went to Alaska. He kept in touch with some of his former neighbors for awhile. (Submitted by Agnes Lindseth)

HELLER, Arthur Arthur and Minnie Heller and their two children, Newman and Marion, moved from Wisconsin to the south end of the Welter community where they homesteaded. Their land was very poor. It was high on a plateau and very rocky — really unfit to make a living. Mr. Heller was crippled from having broken a leg that never healed properly. Newman and Marion went to the Box Elder School and later Marion went to the Welter School. The Hellers were always cheerful, however, and attended all the community affairs.

Mrs. Heller always liked to take pictures. Some of them appear in this history. Mrs. Heller belonged to the Busy Bee Sewing Club, where she took an active part. As the dry years worsened and Mr. Heller's leg got worse, they returned to Wisconsin. Marion married there, but Newman returned to Montana where he later married Jean Hagen. Arthur died not too long after returning to Wisconsin. Minnie did live long enough to return to visit, but later died. Newman is also deceased. (Submitted by Agnes Lindseth)

HOF SVANG, Charles A. (Sec 20-17-24) A family by the name of Hofsvang lived west of the Lawrence Kruger Ranch. Their children attended the Blakeslee School.

HOLLENBECK The Hollenbecks came to the Minnesota Bench from Saco, Montana, in 1912. The father had been killed shortly before, and Mrs. Hollenbeck came to file on 160 acres in the Blakeslee area, about four miles from the school.

The move entailed driving herself and three children across the frozen Missouri River in a wagon pulled by a pair of broncos.

The children either drove the hack or rode horses back and forth to school. Everett was one of the children (See also KRUGER — Blakeslee)

HOTTENSTEIN, Mary Miller Mary Miller, the daughter of Gabriel and Sarah Miller, was born October 11, 1867, in Maquoketa, Iowa. She attended schools there, and on May 26, 1886, was married to Penrose Hottenstein in Maquoketa.

They came to Moore, Montana, where they made their home until 1929.

From that time on, she lived with her daughter, Mrs. Willis Walker, wherever Mrs. Walker resided — either in the Blakeslee community or at Winnett.

Mary died in Lewistown October 30, 1949, after an illness of two years, and was buried in the Moore Cemetery beside her husband.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Penrose, and one son, Lonnie P. Hottenstein, who was killed in action in France on October 3, 1918, in World War I. Two daughters, Mrs. Willis (Laura) Walker of the Blakeslee community, and Ruth Davis of Hennessey, Oklahoma, and one son, Forrest Hottenstein of Bremerton, Washington, survived her.

HUSTED, James, Mary, William (Sec 17-17-24) James, Mary and William Husted all owned land north of the Delaney water well, where many Blakeslee families got their water. Husted children listed on the school census were Ona, Fern and Leslie.

IMSANDE, Lewis (Sec 28-17-24) The Lewis Imsandes homesteaded in 1910. They then moved to the Chippewa area. John Kelzer bought the Imsande place.

INGALLS, Albert (Sec 32-17-26) Mrs. Ingalls was a cousin of Mrs. Vern Johns.

JELINEK, John E. (Sec 27-16-24) John Jelinek owned land north of the Earl Bassett place and the land is now owned by Earl.

He was married and had one son, George, and a daughter, Margaret (See also JELINEK — Flatwillow and Petrolia).

JOHNS, Vern P. The family left the community when oil was brought in at Cat Creek. They often came back and visited the Mutch family. (See JOHNS — Winnett)

JOHNSON, John (Sec 32-17-26) John Johnson, his wife, and their son Paul, and his wife, Elsie, homesteaded about two miles east of the Welter School. Paul and Elsie had two sons, Leo and Vane. Leo attended the Welter School for a short time. The Johnsons stayed as long as the average homesteader. The elder Johnsons went back to California.

When oil was struck in Cat Creek, Paul and Elsie moved to Winnett. Paul went to work in the oil fields. Elsie died very young. Paul returned to California to be near his

parents. Paul returned for a centennial in 1964 in Winnett and renewed acquaintances and reminisced of the homesteading days. (Submitted by Agnes Lindseth)

JONES, Jesse (Sec 34-17-25) Jesse Jones homesteaded on the Finley Flat. His father, Frank Jones (Sec 25-15-27) proved up on his land. He then stayed in Lewistown and worked in the brickyard. Someone always stayed on the homestead, however.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Jones had five children — Jesse, LeRoy, Arthur, Edna, and Blanch. Arthur is the only one who ever went to school at Welter. In winter Jesse also worked in the brickyard in Lewistown. Just how long they lived on the homestead is not known. They finally all left and moved to Lewistown. Arthur often came back and visited the Mutches. The Joneses always had a car, which was "really something" in those days. Once at a celebration at the Welter School, Jesse Jones took some of the kids for a ride. Later some boys were overheard to say that they went so fast that they "couldn't see the fence posts!" That was in about 1920. (Submitted by Agnes Lindseth)

JONES, Martin, Walter, Jesse (Sec 32-17-24) Martin Jones homesteaded in 1911. Walter H. and Jesse also homesteaded on nearby property.

JOSLYN, Harold Harold Joslyn was a teacher, probably the same individual as the teacher mentioned in Warner Kruger's school memories. (See also KRUGER, Warner)

JUNKIN, Wick Wick Junkin settled near Blakeslee in 1911. The Blakeslee School was built on land given in a lifetime easement by Wick Junkin.

Myrtle Fleharty remembers a play performed there in which Junkin played the part of the blackest Negro. She remembers the play, as they used her doll for the baby.

Junkin's property was sold to Warner Kruger.

KANANEN, Charles (Sec 34-17-24) Charles Kananen owned the Freburg family homestead for a time when the Henry Freburgs retired and moved to Grassrange. Charles sold the ranch to the Ray Fleharty family in 1948.

The Kananens and two of their sons now live in Roy, Montana. A daughter lives north of Malta, Montana.

KAUFMAN, Rolly Rolly and Kari Kaufman and their family worked on the old Forbes Leslie Ranch for Ed Skibby for several years in the early 1950s. He now (1989) lives in the Malta, Montana, area.

The Kaufmans and the Roy Longs car pooled in taking their children over the ten mile road trip to the Blakeslee School — often a slippery trip in wet weather.

KELLEY, Mark (Sec 15-17-26) Mark Kelley was born in about 1876 in Nebraska. Electa Griffin was born about 1876 or 1877 near Springfield, Illinois. Mark and Electa were married in 1899. They had two children — Lucy E., born November 24, 1901, in North Bend, Washington; and George, born September 22, 1902, in Fall City, Washington.



Mark Kelley's homestead shack



Mark and George "Bud" Kelley

Mark and Electa "Lettie" came to Montana from North Bend, Washington, in 1914 and filed on a homestead. Lucy was 13 and George (known better by "Bud") was 11 at the time. They farmed about 16 miles north of Winnett. They sold out in 1928 and moved to Teigen, Montana, where they ran the little store, post office, and gas station. Mark was also the mail carrier. He met the train six days a week as it came from Lewistown and again as it returned from Winnett with mail and supplies.

Lettie died in 1935 or 1936. In 1937 Mark married Jennie Meserve. They continued running the store until Mark passed away in December 1940. Both Lettie and Mark were buried in Lewistown. Jenny left Teigen and moved to Spokane, Washington. She passed away at the age of 101 in about 1977. George Kelley passed away in 1956 and was buried in Marysville, Washington.

Lucy married Marvin Lewis in 1921. They had six children — Evelyn (Brown), Marvin, Floyd, Lester, Robert, and Shirley (Cather). Marvin Lewis died September 14, 1975. Lucy is living in Choteau, Montana, with her daughter, Evelyn Brown. (Submitted by Evelyn Brown)

KELZER, Jacob (Sec 29-17-24) Jake Kelzer came to the Minnesota Bench and homesteaded in 1910. He bought L. H. Imsande's place. He and his wife, Catherine Sullivan, lived close to the first Blakeslee post office.

He was a very hard-working farmer, and Kate was a friendly person who had cookies and refreshments for anyone who dropped in. She had the most beautifully polished cook stove one could ever find.

They retired to Lewistown where she died before Jake did. Jake spent his last days in the old St. Joseph's Hospital in Lewistown.

KLINGENBERG, Adolph (Sec 10-16-24) Adolph Klingenberg homesteaded between the Earl Bassett and Bill Lewis places. The land is now government land. He ran a little dairy.

He was married and had one daughter who married Warner Kruger in 1923.

Adolph moved in the 1920s.

KOSTORYZ, Frances Francis Kostoryz taught the 1938-1939 school term of the Welter School. A small building in the corner of the yard of the Forbes Leslie Ranch served as both teacherage and classroom. The only pupils were the two daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Forbes Leslie Jr. Mrs. Frances McDaniel was the county superintendent at that time.

KRATOCHVIL, Vaclav "Jim" (Sec 4-16-26) Jim and Mary Kratochvil came from Czechoslovakia or Bohemia to Chicago where they lived for a time until they came to Montana to homestead at Welter. The Kratochvils had no children, but a nephew of Mary's lived with them and attended high school in Winnett. His name was Eddie Cervenka. Mary's mother used to visit them. It isn't known where she came from, but her name was Mrs. Ctibor. Mary was a very good cook and always took part in community affairs.

Once a neighbor's dog came to Kratochvils and he wouldn't leave, so Jim swore at him in Bohemian. The dog left and they never saw him again! The dry years and the depression forced Jim and Mary to leave. They moved to Lewistown. Jim died many years before Mary. Mary died in a nursing home in her 90's. (Submitted by Agnes Lindseth)

When Petroleum County was in the process of withdrawing from Fergus County, Jim presented his thoughts on the subject, according to an article in the Winnett Times of 10-24-24:

"At the county division meeting at the Welter School, Jim Kratochvil, an old timer of that vicinity whom all know and respect, was called upon by his neighbors to tell about the tax situation on his land in Judith Basin County.

"Mr. Kratochvil stated that he owns 160 acres of land in Judith Basin County. Before Judith Basin County was segregated from Fergus County, he paid \$85.00 annual taxes on his quarter section; and for the last two years in Judith Basin, his taxes were only \$47.00 annually.

"Mr. Kratochvil stated that he was ready to show his tax

receipts to any doubter. That he is a strong booster for Petroleum County goes without saying."

KRUGER, Herman (Sec 34-17-24) The inundation of Minnesotans to the area in the early 1900s afforded the nickname "Minnesota Bench" to the expanse of relatively high, flat ground, lying in all directions from the present day Blakeslee School.

Two sets of Krugers represented some of those Minnesota refugees seeking the wide open spaces. William and Hilda Kruger homesteaded west of the present schoolhouse; his brother Herman and Annie Kruger, east thereof, both families in 1912.

Herman, a huge man, was an aggressive farmer and owned the first tractor in the area. He and Annie raised two sons, Clayton and Chester. All took an east wind in 1930 and set the plow down again on Ross Fork Creek, west of Lewistown, Montana. The Judith Basin soil, being far more suitable for farming, rewarded them. Herman and Annie lived at Ross Fork until they retired and moved to Lewistown.

Annie, born in March of 1891, now lives with son, Clayton, in Washington. Herman was laid in the soil in 1970.

There was a lot of excitement at the Herman Kruger home one sunny spring day. The Krugers and Freburgs were very close neighbors. Often the children, Ernest and Emil Freburg, and Clayton and Chester Kruger, played together.

On this particular day in about 1921, Ernest and Clayton decided to roam over the prairie. They had hoped to get away from their little brothers, who were about six years younger. They took a run for it, but sure enough, looking back, there came those "bratty" little kids!

The older boys increased their speed. After a time they looked back. They could only see one little boy standing by a well, and he was yelling!

Clayton and Ernest hurried back. Chester had opened the rectangular board lid of the well and probably in trying to replace it, both the boy and the lid fell into the well.



Annie, Herman and Clayton Kruger