

**BLAKESLEY, Lou** Mr. Blakesley replaced Mr. Bergerson as the head of the Homestake Lease in March of 1937. Lou and his wife, Minnie, had two girls — Betty Lou (1923) and Shirley Jean (1925). The family spent part of 1938 in Oilmont but they returned to Cat Creek and worked for Coolidge & Coolidge on the Minnesota — Flatwillow Lease. In later years the Blakesleys made their home in Cut Bank, Montana.

**BLANK, Carl** Mr. Blank owned a barbershop in Winnett before becoming the school janitor for the Cat Creek School in 1924. (See also BLANK — Winnett)

**BOSTON, Lorne Franklin** Mr. Boston ran a hotel close to the Hover-Schwartz lease location in early-day Cat Creek. In 1926 the Winnett Times reported that Franklin Boston was going into the duck business on a large scale. He had made arrangements for a water supply from Mid Northern Oil company and built a large dam. He purchased one of the largest incubators available along with 1000 duck eggs of the game variety Teal. Unfortunately the newspaper did not carry any future account of this business venture.

There were four children in the Boston family — George (1912), Alfred (1913), Bernice (1915) and Lorna (1917). Mrs. Boston was deceased. Mrs. Michaels was their housekeeper. The family left Cat Creek in July of 1930 to live in Lewistown, Montana.

**BOWEN, Dorothy** Dorothy Bowen was a teacher in the Cat Creek School in 1936 and 1937. She was the daughter of Dow and Katherine Bowen who ranched on the Musselshell River. Dorothy went to grade school at the Bowen and the Ross Schools and graduated from Winnett High School in 1934.

In 1941 Dorothy went to California where she has lived ever since. She is married to a doctor and they have four children. In 1970 Dorothy went back to college to update her credentials for teaching in California. (See also BOWEN — Musselshell and Winnett) It is very easy to confuse Dorothy with her aunt, Dorothy Bowen, who taught school in Winnett in about 1918 and held a number of other positions in the community.

**BOWERS, James Winfield** In 1925 Winfield and Leta Bowers purchased Mr. Petersen's store in Cat Creek and in 1927 they acquired the stage route from Winnett to Cat Creek. In 1928 they moved to Winnett. (See also BOWERS — Musselshell River and Winnett)

**BOYD, F. L.** F. L. (Roy) Boyd was the son of Frank and Mary Boyd, proprietors of the Teigen Hotel and store. In 1927 Roy worked as a mechanic at Cat Creek. The Winnett Times reported he had invented and patented a clutch and transmission which would make gasoline power feasible for depth drilling with standard cable tools. Roy moved to Gallup City, Montana, in the northern oil fields. (See also BOYD, Frank — Teigen)

**BOYER, H. E.** Mr. and Mrs. Boyer lived in Cat Creek in 1921 where Mr. Boyer worked in the oil field. They were parents of a baby born in December 1921.

**BRITZMAN, W. C.** Mr. Britzman hauled lumber to the Benson tract in the Cat Creek oil field in May 1921. The lumber was to be used for the erection of a brokerage office, lunch room and rooming house. Mr. Britzman was to take personal charge of the brokerage office and information bureau which he intended to establish.

**BROWN, Mervy O.** (Sec 29-15-28) Mervy Brown married M. Avis Hunter on January 6, 1920. She had graduated from high school in Orillia, Ontario, Canada, studied art in Toronto and worked in an airplane factory during World War I. Shortly after their marriage, the Browns homesteaded just north of Box Elder Creek about three miles south of Shay.

The couple left the area in 1926. According to Mrs. Brown, "When we left there we didn't have a definite plan in mind; but when we got to Billings, Montana, it was hot and the children were tired so we spent the night and have been here ever since." (W. T. 8-1-63)

In 1975 the Browns visited Winnett and the Winnett Cemetery where Mr. Brown's parents are buried. Mervy died in 1978, Avis in 1983. They had four children — Frances, Ruby, Clint and Ralph.

**BUHLER, George** According to advertisements in the Winnett Times, George Buhler was manager of the Breed Springs Water Company in 1921. Breed Springs was located about five miles south of the Frantz west camp. Water, until it was produced from artesian wells in the oil field, was at a premium in the oil camp. It was needed for the domestic use of the families and huge quantities were necessary for drilling. Homesteaders who had a team and wagon with a tank often made a little extra money hauling water to drillers.

George Buhler was elected president of the Winnett Gun Club in 1921.

**BURKE, George** George Burke was a field superintendent in Cat Creek in the 1920s. He married Catherine Guidici, a school teacher. They had two little girls. In 1929 they lived in Helena, Montana, where Mr. Burke was employed by the State Highway Commission.

**CALLAHAN** Mr. Callahan worked in the Cat Creek oil field in the early 1920s. The family returned to their former home in Illinois in 1924 due to the illness of Mr. Callahan's mother.

**CAMPBELL, Claude** Claude Campbell married Maude Morrow in Melstone, Montana, on June 9, 1915. Maude had filed a homestead on Sec 12-14-29 southwest of Jitney. The couple settled on her property. Claude went to work in the oil fields in 1920. He was production foreman for Mid Northern until they sold their holdings. He then had charge of the Homestake Oil Company.

The Campbells had three children — Dorothy (1921), Robert (1918) and William Reese (1920). Claude served seven years as a school trustee.

The family spent the winter of 1936-37 in Salem, Oregon, but returned to Montana in the spring. In June 1937 they built a home in Cut Bank, Montana, where

Claude was employed by Exxon as a production supervisor. He retired in 1956 in the Hamilton, Montana, area. Claude died in 1985 at age 93.

Claude's brother Earl was a talented wood carver. His work was displayed at the Miles City Jubilee in 1934. Another brother, Robert, also worked in the Cat Creek oil field.

**CAMPBELL, Donald** Donald Campbell was serving as a staff attorney for Mid Northern Oil company in 1924. Representing the company, he testified against the formation of a new county. This made him quite unpopular with many of the local residents. Mid Northern opposed the issue on the grounds it might increase the company's taxes. Donald was a brother of geologist Gordon Campbell.

**CAMPBELL, Gordon** Mr. Campbell was born in St. Cloud, Minnesota, and came to Montana about 1913. As a geologist he studied the Devils Basin and Cat Creek mineral structures. He was instrumental in choosing the site of the first oil well drilled in the Cat Creek field. In 1922 his efforts resulted in the discovery of oil in the north field near Cut Bank, Montana. Gordon died in 1938.

**CANADY, Edward L.** Mr. Canady held an official position with the California Oil Company in the early 1920s. He married Alice Davis, a Winnett High School graduate who was teaching at the Knapp School in 1924. (See also DAVIS — Teigen)

Edward Canady was born in Kenansville, North Carolina in 1886. He and Alice had three children — Valera (1927), Florence (1930) and Ruth (1935). Edward died in 1960. Alice was still living in Bakersfield, California, in 1985.

**CANFIELD, Orville** Mr. Canfield operated the first store and post office in Cat Creek. It was located on the Joseph Miller land a little northwest of what was to become the permanent Continental camp. Six or eight houses were located in the Miller camp.

Mr. Canfield had four children: Theodore (1902), Faye (1903), John (1906) and Orville (1910). Mrs. Canfield was not living when the family came to Cat Creek. Theodore went to college and became a well-known lawyer and business leader in Santa Barbara, California. A news release at the time of his death in 1952 stated, "It was the largest attended funeral here (Santa Barbara) in many years, attesting to the high esteem in which Mr. Canfield was held by employees of his business interests and by high city, county and state officials."

Miss Faye Canfield came to Winnett from Havre, Montana, in June 1921 and worked for the Independent Pipeline Company. John Canfield, the Winnett Times reported, went to Santa Barbara, California, in 1924. One of the Canfields married Miss Kneeland who taught the upper grades in Cat Creek in 1923-1924. She was from Nebraska.

Mr. Canfield left Cat Creek in 1926.

**CANONICA, John** (Sec 19-15-28) John Canonica was

born November 24, 1869, in Lugano, Switzerland. Elizabeth Scollick was born December 1, 1884, in Gomersal, Pennsylvania. They were married November 26, 1904. The couple had five children: Robert Earl (1906), Agnes (1908), John Everett (1912), James Howard (1915) and Ruth (1921). John Canonica passed away February 15, 1931, and Elizabeth, August 16, 1975. Both are buried in Tacoma, Washington.

The following was written by Agnes Canonica Hurley: "In the year 1915, John and Elizabeth Canonica and their three children, — Earl, Agnes and Everett — came to Winnett and took up a homestead about eight miles east of the town of Winnett. They came from Lewistown, Montana, though they have previously been in Billings, Montana, and White Sulphur Springs, Montana. (Ed. It was reported in the *Lewistown Democrat News* on August 18, 1916, that John Canonica had completed plans for a hotel for W. J. Winnett, the building to be of stone quarried east of the town of Winnett. This building was probably the present [1989] courthouse.) Their son Howard was born in Winnett. They proved up on their homestead and lived there until 1921. In that year they moved to the old Smith place where the children could be closer to school. Ruth was born that year.

"In 1922 the family moved into the town of Winnett. Two years later they left Montana and went to Washington. I will tell you as much as I can remember about our neighbors and the schools I attended.

"Adjoining us on the north was the Parker family. They had one son, Wynn, who attended the Brush Creek School. They were a Mormon family. Their place was right on the main road. Pat Quigley had a place just west of them.

"On the east of us was the Myers family and their three children — Isa, George and Pearl. None of them attended the Brush Creek School. Pearl graduated from Winnett High School. They left soon after we came. (See MYERS — Flatwillow and Kelley)

"The Hunter families came and occupied the land the Myerses had settled. They were from Iowa and stayed only a few years and went back to Iowa. Mrs. Shirk and her grown son occupied the land after that and were still



*Canonica children years later: Ruth, Howard, Agnes, Everett*

there when we left. They came from Ft. Benton, Montana.

"Across the creek to our west was the homestead of the Sykes family. They had two children and the oldest one attended the first Brush Creek School that I remember. A part of their land was rented to Mr. and Mrs. Jones who were teachers. Mrs. Jones taught at the first Brush Creek School. Adjoining them on the west were the homesteads of the Christophers and the Stages. Rozella Christopher, who is my age, always attended school in Lewistown. The Stages had three children and their oldest, Elnora, attended the Brush Creek schools.

"The first Brush Creek School that I can remember was in a cabin just south of the Pribble (Stewart) place. The man who owned it was to be gone for part of the year. When he came back it was moved to the Stages place. Mrs. Jones taught the first part of the year. I do not remember who took her place while she was gone. I was in second grade.

"The permanent Brush Creek School must have been built about 1916. It was located on the Smith place right on the main road. Mrs. Jones was the first teacher there. Mr. O. W. Lasater was the next teacher. He was there until he became principal of the Winnett High School. Miss Van Tassell was the next teacher, and she was there in 1922 when we left."

Agnes married Gerald I. Hurley and they had a daughter, Patricia Jo. Agnes lives in Tacoma, Washington.

**CARPENTER, Laurabelle** (Sec 27-15-28) Laurabelle Carpenter filed on 320 acres of land about three miles south of Shay. She and her elderly father, Sumner Clark Sr., lived there and fulfilled the requirements for ownership. (Sumner Clark Sr. was a grandfather of Archer Clark, Grassrange storekeeper, and Bob Clark, Winnett storekeeper.) Laurabelle kept a diary during the year of 1917. The following is part of a story written by Ann Teigen based on the diary. It tells of a typical winter day.

"Laurabelle shook the ashes from the cookstove and put paper and kindling in the firebox, then added bigger pieces of wood and touched a lighted match to the paper. After a brief crackling, the flame died, so she poured a little kerosene out of a can, over the wood. The fire sputtered, then roared, and soon she added more wood. She put the water bucket on the stove to melt the solid ice formed during the night.

"Her bed was in the kitchen-living room. Her father slept in the small room adjoining, so she went into his room, lighted the fire in the heater and then went back to bed to get warm.

"When the ice melted in the water bucket, Laurabelle dipped some out to warm for washing her face and hands, then put some water in a pan to cook oatmeal. The room was warm near the stove, but the floor was still very cold. Soon Mr. Clark got up, and after their meal of oatmeal with sugar and canned milk, Laurabelle went outside to get wood and take care of the chickens. She put on her high-buckle overshoes, sweater, coat, scarf and cap and took the scoop shovel, scooping a path ahead of

her as she went. The chicken coop was close to the house, but it was a struggle to get to it, with the wind whipping around her, and the snow drifted against the door.

"She had ten hens and a rooster. They were cold. They would hold one foot up under a wing, then the other, and take a few careful steps, as though not wanting to put their feet on the cold dirt floor. There was an old pan with a solid chunk of ice in it. Laurabelle took the pan back to the house and set it on the stove until the ice loosened up, then she threw the chunk of ice outside, put warm water in the pan, and took it back out to the chickens.

"The next chore was to get some more water. She took a small stew pan with a handle, and scooped up snow from a drift a short way from the house. She would bring two water pails full of packed-down snow and set them on the hot stove where they steamed and sputtered, while she sat down to rest and get warm. When the snow melted, she poured it into a wash boiler and went out to repeat the process. Finally the boiler was filled, and the buckets were full. The buckets would be for drinking and cooking, and that in the boiler for washing and dishes. The hard-earned water was precious and not to be wasted.

"That afternoon Laurabelle rested while she read a little from the paper that had come the week before; she had read it several times. She mended a worn elbow of her father's sweater and darned some of his socks. The sun gleamed weakly in the west, then surrendered to the darkness. It was only five o'clock, but Laurabelle lit the kerosene lamp, and in its tiny light she and her father ate their evening meal. She read a chapter from the Bible aloud to her father. The poetic majesty of the words were soothing and comforting. They went to bed early, while the cruel cold enfolded the house, even though the fires in the two stoves crackled and glowed through the draft opening. Twice during the night, Laurabelle got up and added wood to the fires.

"Laurabelle was 58 years old on February 4, 1917. Her father was 87. Small wonder she wrote in her diary, 'I find it hard sometimes to be "content with what you have." Father not feeling very well . . . No passing on the road today except Mr. H. hauling ice from creek. No mail. Everything very dull . . . Have done little today besides getting meals, washing dishes, carried in wood, dug snow to melt, and baked two pies, yet very tired . . . Have been sad and discouraged.'

"Conditions did not improve when summer came. June was hot and the mosquitoes terrible. Water was scarce. Neighbors brought barrels of water now and then, and when it rained, the rain barrel and every other container would be brought out to catch the runoff from the roof. On August 1, Laurabelle wrote, 'About discouraged and without faith. My oat crop almost a complete failure. Potato bugs getting my potatoes. Water low in barrel. Everything drying up, and still the cruel drying wind blows.'"

Laurabelle and her father left the homestead in Oc-

tober 1917, but they had stayed long enough to fulfill the necessary requirements to receive a deed to the land.

**CARRELL, Charles** Charles and Stella Carrell homesteaded in the Dovetail country but moved to the river camp at Cat Creek shortly after oil was discovered there. They maintained their place at Dovetail, however, and returned to plant garden, etc. The school-age children went to the Brown School.

The family left the area in the fall of 1930 and moved to Fromberg, Montana. (See also CARRELL — Dovetail)

**CARRELL, Charles Ambrose** Charles Ambrose was the oldest son of John Ambrose and Minerva Carrell. He married Annette Rostad whose parents homesteaded in the Pike Creek area. The couple had four children — Anna Ellen (1943), Charles (1944), Gladys (1945) and Kenneth (1948).

"Amby" and "Net" moved to Cat Creek in 1948. Amby worked in the oil field and Net ran the cookhouse. They made their home in Cat Creek until 1952 when they returned to Winnett. (See also CARRELL — Winnett)

**CARRELL, George** George, the son of John Ambrose and Ellen Minerva Carrell, was born in 1916 in the Dovetail area. His parents homesteaded at Dovetail but moved to Cat Creek soon after the oil boom in 1920. George went to school in Dovetail, Cat Creek and Winnett. He married Virginia Huffman on April 14, 1939.

In 1943 the couple moved to Cat Creek where George did contract trucking, well pulling and other oil field work. The family moved to Winnett in 1949 though George continued to be employed at Cat Creek. In September 1959, Al Levi and George Carrell acquired a portable well-servicing unit which they put to work servicing wells in the Cat Creek oil field as well as in the surrounding area. They named their company the Cat Creek Well Service.

George worked for Farmers Union Central Exchange (CENEX) in the 1960s and was instrumental in promoting their purchase of the Continental Oil Company's holdings in Cat Creek in 1969. George became the production foreman for CENEX, a position he held until the time of his death in 1983. He had worked in the Cat Creek oil field in one capacity or another for 40 years — some record!

George was very interested in the history of Cat Creek and he collected and saved many old items from the camp. Had he lived, he could have written a fine history of the oil field. (See also CARRELL — Winnett)

**CARRELL, John Ambrose** John Ambrose and Minerva Ellen homesteaded near Dovetail. Like many other homesteaders looking for work to help make ends meet, the Carrells moved to the oil field in the early 1920s. They lived at the river camp and their school-age children went to the Brown School.

The Carrell children were: Charles Ambrose (1909), Doris (1913), William George (1916), Altha (1920), Archie (1923), Harold (1927) and Leta (1930).

In August 1926 tragedy struck the family when their

daughter, who was fourteen years old, was severely burned and died as a result of the accident. Doris was trying to start a fire in the cookstove by using crude oil. It exploded in flames and her clothing caught fire. Archie died in 1944 after graduating from high school in 1943. Leakage of the heart caused his death.

The Carrells returned to Dovetail in 1930 and moved to Winnett in 1939. (See also CARRELL — Winnett and Dovetail)

**CARRICO, William and Elizabeth** (Sec 21,27,28-15-29) The Carricos held adjoining homesteads of 320 acres each several miles southeast of the Cat Creek oil field.

The Winnett Times reported on August 19, 1921, "Mr. and Mrs. Carrico and daughter arrived Monday from Parkerton, Wyoming, for a few days' visit with old friends. They own a valuable piece of land in the Cat Creek territory which they homesteaded several years ago. Mr. Carrico is now connected with the Mid West Refining Company in an executive position."

**CARSTENSEN, Carl** Mr. Carstensen was on the Homestake drilling crew when it drilled its first well in Cat Creek in 1920. He was on the scene in 1928 when an explosion killed two oil field workers in Oilmont. He was not injured, however.

**CARTNEY, A. W.** Mr. Cartney came to Cat Creek in 1922 and took charge of drilling for the California Oil Company when it took over the Devereaux Company. In 1924 he was transferred to the Kevin-Sunburst field as district superintendent for the California Company.

**CASSIDY, E. F.** Mr. Cassidy was transferred from Cat Creek to Gallup, New Mexico, in April 1926. He was to have charge of the construction of a 90-mile pipeline. In later years, Mr. Cassidy, his wife and son lived in the Kevin-Sunburst area.

**CHAMBERLAIN, Ralph** Mr. Chamberlain bought the Rhens Cat Creek river lease on speculation in 1921. In 1947 he incorporated the Chamberlain Oil Company which functioned until 1958. Ralph and his wife, Blanche, had four children. He died in 1960.

**CHARLES, John** (Sec 20-15-30) John Charles owned the land on which the discovery well was drilled at Cat Creek. He committed suicide at Butte, Montana, in 1926, by shooting himself through the head. Relatives stated that illness had caused him to become despondent.

Mrs. Ida May Charles and their son, John, continued to make their home at Butte.

John Charles, the son, was in the Army Transportation Corps in World War II, and attained the rank of captain.

**CLIFFORD, Guy** Guy Clifford was born in 1893 in Idaho Falls, Idaho. He and his parents lived in Great Falls and Helena, Montana, and Burlington, Wyoming, before moving to Bridger, Montana, in 1915. Guy worked on the big smoke stack in Great Falls when it was being constructed. He met Alma Ellen Foust in Bridger and she

became his wife.

Alma was born in Smithville, South Dakota, in 1895 and came by wagon to Montana in 1896. In 1975, at age 81, Alma wrote the memories of her life. The following are excerpts from the history.

"The year was 1896. We traveled in covered wagons. Five other families decided to travel with us, and they also had to travel in wagons. It was June and the weather was nice. My mother said we had what was called a 'sheet-iron' stove to cook on. It was light to lift in and out of the wagons. She would have her bread mixed and put in loaves — all ready for when they camped at noon. Dad would lift out the stove, and she would bake the bread for their dinner. The women really had to plan since they all had large families to feed. . . We were on the trail for a month and everyone seemed to make the trip without any trouble."

Alma grew up and was educated in the Bridger area. On May 15, 1918, she married Guy Clifford, and he went to work in the oil fields in Elk Basin, Wyoming. Their two children, Guy Jr. and Marjorie, were born while they lived there. In October 1932 Guy was transferred to Cat Creek.

Alma's memories continue, "Guy's job was a pumper. He had to get up real early each morning and walk around to all his wells to take the gauges . . . We played lots of cards in Cat Creek, mostly '500' and sometimes bridge. The kids would have parties the same night, so they had lots of fun, too. Most of the kids had bicycles, and one time Guy Jr. rode his to Winnett. We didn't know it until he got home!

"While in Cat Creek, Guy Jr. got a job hauling water for the school. He got six dollars a month. He hauled the water in his wagon and did very well. He bought his bicycle, a watch and some clothes. In 1936 he finished the eighth grade. Since there was no high school in Cat Creek, he had to go to Winnett. He graduated there in 1940 at age 16. He liked high school and belonged to the Winnett Boxing Club. Most of the boys were pretty good boxers, and they traveled to some pretty far places and won some nice trophies. Guy was real good and got several trophies, too. . .

"When Marjorie was 11 years old and still going to school in Cat Creek, we bought her a piano. She and some of the other girls used to play in the recitals. . . When Guy finished high school, Marjorie was ready to start. She was 14 years old. There was a fire in the dorm soon after she started, so she stayed at the Northern Hotel from then on. . .

"While Guy was still in high school, a man named Fred Story was training some of the boys to weld, and Guy was one of them taking the training. When he graduated we took him to the Billings Polytechnic School where he finished the course."

On January 30, 1942, the Winnett Times reported Guy Jr. and Fay Story went to Seattle, Washington, to look for defense jobs. They were plagued with problems on the trip — flat tires, mechanical troubles, etc. They were

forced to hock their watches and musical instruments to pay for repairs but finally arrived in the big city. They parked the car and walked to the restaurant to eat. When they came out, they could not find their car and finally had to call the police for help. The car was right where they had left it, but they had gone the wrong way to find it!!

Guy got a job "bucking" rivets for Boeing Aircraft. He was also a welder in the Bremerton Navy Yard for a time before he was called to the Army.

In August 1943 Mr. Clifford was transferred back to Wyoming by Continental Oil Company. Marjorie went to high school in Bridger, Montana, where she and her mother lived because there was no house for them in the oil field. She completed her education in Deaver, Wyoming, after the family moved into a house in Frannie, Wyoming.

Guy retired from Continental Oil Company in 1947. He and Alma bought a farm near Joliet, Montana. Guy died in 1967, Alma in 1985.

**COCHRAN, Kenneth** Kenneth Cochran married Margery Shaughnessy on April 18, 1941. Margery was the daughter of John and Leta Shaughnessy, who came to Cat Creek in 1929 (See also SHAUGHNESSY — Cat Creek). Margery was a 1940 graduate of Winnett High School and attended Billings Business College. Kenneth attended the University of Wyoming before their marriage. He worked for Continental Oil Company. The couple made their home in Cat Creek until 1949, when Kenneth was transferred to the company's Billings office.

The Cochrans have two sons, Kenneth Jr. (Pete) and John Charles. Pete made a name for himself playing American Legion baseball in Billings. In 1961 he signed a contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers for between \$40,000 and \$50,000. He had a batting average with the Billings American Legion team of well over .400.

**COLGROVE, C. W.** (W. T. 12-2-21) "C. W. Colgrove organized the Montana Independent Pipe Line Company by interesting a number of eastern capitalists in the venture. Construction was completed early in the summer at a cost of \$450,000. It is through his efforts that the operating organization of the company was perfected and the line put in shape for carrying oil."

**COLGROVE, Charles C.** Charles and Clara Colgrove lived in Cat Creek during the late 1920s where Charles worked on the Catlett lease and Clara taught school. On January 28, 1927, the Winnett Times reported: "Mrs. Colgrove, the new intermediate teacher suffered the loss of all her personal property when the cabin she occupied was destroyed by fire."

The couple had twins born in 1931 — Charles and Margaret. The couple bought a ranch near Pryor when they left Cat Creek. In 1937 they sold their Pryor property and moved to Oregon. While living in Junction City, Oregon, Charles (the son) sold a 4-H lamb for the top price of \$2175.

**COOLIDGE, E. B.** "Hardrock" Coolidge acquired his nickname working in the gold mines near Maiden and Kendall, Montana. He was born in Plattsmouth, Nebraska, in 1884 and received his higher education at the South Dakota School of Mines.

"Hardrock" formed the Montacal Oil Company. He is reported to have said the company was "California money and Montana guts"; thus, the name Montacal. Montacal brought in the seventh producing well in the Cat Creek field in November 1920. The drilling crew was made up largely of miners brought from the gold mines.

E. B. also organized the Homestake Oil Company which became widely known in Cat Creek and throughout the state. Homestake drilled four producing wells in Cat Creek in 1921. From these humble beginnings in Cat Creek, Mr. Coolidge built large oil and gas holdings statewide. He was instrumental in organizing the State Oil Conservation Board and served as its chairman in 1952.

The Homestake Oil Company sold its Cat Creek holdings to Continental Oil Company in 1938.



E. B. "Hardrock" Coolidge (second from left in front) with his crew of men in 1921. Among his men are George Wieglanda (second from left, standing), Chris Carstens (third from left, standing), Ed Dorlarque (second from right standing) and Mr. Oldham. The cookhouse is in the background.

**CORBIN, Frank** (Sec 23-15-28) Frank Corbin homesteaded at the head of Bull Springs Coulee in 1914. He was a brother of Hezatone Corbin. (See CORBIN — Petrolia) Frank passed away at the home of his sister, Mrs. M. Piatt, in Los Angeles, California, on March 18, 1939.

**CORBITT, Joseph Patrick** Mr. Corbitt was one of the first trustees of School District #198. He and his wife, Lilly, had three children — Alfred (1910), Carl (1912) and Mary (1914).

**COX, James** James Cox was the oldest child of Orlie and Lillie Cox. Even before he graduated from high school in 1923, he worked at part-time or summer full-time jobs around the oil field. The summer he was sixteen he helped lay the first oil pipeline from Cat Creek to Winnett. It was a two-inch pipe laid on top of the ground. All of the work was done with horses.

During Jimmy's last year in high school he worked for Shorty Huotte who was in the trucking business hauling equipment and supplies to Cat Creek. A regular driver made two trips a day with a White truck loaded with oil well casings, supplies, coal, etc. Jim would load the truck in the evening with three or four tons of coal — sometimes big lump coal which was tough to shovel — and at 3:00 a.m. he would get up and head for the oil field, shovel off the load and be back in Winnett in time for school — this in addition to playing basketball and football and participating in other school activities!

James married Florence Hamilton in June 1926. Florence had come to Winnett from Minnesota and worked for several years in the Eager Mercantile. The couple was charivariated with a wild ride in a two-wheel cart through the Cat Creek camp and pelted with rice and beans. Jim worked for Mid Northern and they made their home in Cat Creek until 1934.

James remembers one holiday season when there was lots of snow and the roads were blocked all over the county. Only first class mail had been delivered to Cat Creek for a number of days because only a horse could get through. Several days before Christmas, he and Art Winnett decided to try to break through with a truck from Cat Creek to Winnett to pick up a load of mail. Many people ordered gifts from mail-order catalogues and there wouldn't be much of a Christmas if the mail didn't get through. The Frantz Camp sent a couple of trucks and a bunch of fellows to help shovel and open the road as far as Jitney. They worked most of the day, and Jim and Art made it to Gorman Coulee by dark.

They stayed all night with "Turkey Red" Smith. The next morning they made it into Winnett without too much trouble. They loaded boxes and sacks on the truck as you might load bales of hay and tied the load with ropes. They headed back after noon and got to Gorman Coulee about dark. They managed to get up the hill but the wind was blowing a gale and there was a genuine ground blizzard in progress. They couldn't see where they were going or where the deep drifts were, and soon they were hopelessly stalled. They decided to walk back to the Jim Parson place to spend the night. They were able to find enough of their own truck tracks to finally make it back to his place. The next morning the wind went down and they found the truck way off the road headed in the wrong direction! They managed to get it shoveled out, however, and got to Cat Creek about 2:30 p.m. Nelle Johnson, the postmaster, was up most of the night sorting and distributing mail and packages. There was a Merry Christmas in Cat Creek!

In 1934 James and his wife moved to Cut Bank where James became production foreman for the Santa Rita Oil and Gas Company. They moved to Kevin in 1944 where James still lives (1989). Florence died in 1986.

The Coxes had two children — Marlene (1938) and James Jr. (1941). James was killed in a tragic airplane accident in 1974. He was the pilot of a plane that went down in New York. He left a wife and four children.

**COX, Orlie** (Sec 2-15-28) Orlie Cox was born in Trenton, Missouri, in 1883. He married Lillie Shay who was born in 1885 in Eldorado, Kansas. Lillie's parents came to their homestead in the Cat Creek Basin in 1910. Orlie and Lillie bought a relinquishment about two miles south of the Shay's homestead in 1917.

Orlie and his wife had six children, five of whom were born before they came to Montana: James (1904), Maxine (1906), Irene (1909), Howard (1911), Claudine (1915) and Frantz (1921). Frantz was born in Winnett shortly after oil was discovered in Cat Creek, and he was named after Mr. Frantz whose company drilled the discovery well.

Orlie went to work in the oil field shortly after oil was discovered and the family moved from the homestead to Winnett so the children could attend high school. James and Maxine both graduated from Winnett High School in 1923. Irene graduated in 1928 and Claudine in 1933. In 1934 Orlie and his wife moved to Cut Bank where Orlie was employed by the Santa Rita Oil Company. Lillie died on March 15, 1935 and was buried in the Shay (Cat Creek) Cemetery. Orlie died in 1961.

James Cox married Florence Hamilton. (See also COX, James — Cat Creek) Maxine married Joe Neil. (See also NEIL — Winnett) Irene worked in the assessor's office for a time and then was the bookkeeper for the Neil-Ingebo Garage. In 1929 she married Vern K. Doherty. (See also DOHERTY — Winnett) Howard married Virginia Parkinson in 1932 (See also Parkinson — Musselshell River). He worked for Mid Northern in Cat Creek until about 1936 when the family moved to Cut Bank. He and Virginia were divorced and he is now retired and living in Quartzsite, Arizona. Claudine married Jack Blakesley who was also an oil field worker. They make their home in Thermopolis, Wyoming.

**COXON, Henry** (Sec 30-15-27) Henry Coxon was born in Northumberland, England, in 1882. He came to the Judith Basin in 1910, and in 1913 he came to the Cat Creek Basin with a team, a sheep wagon and one cow. He struggled along on the homestead, sometimes working for other people. He worked for a couple of years in the Cat Creek oil field but is quoted as saying, "As soon as I got the money for a few dogies (cattle), I quit." He ran a school bus from the California Camp to the Follette School for a time. On November 7, 1924, the Winnett Times reported, "The children are delighted to have Henry Coxon bringing them from the California Camp with a new Ford!"

Henry lost his place for taxes in the 1930s but managed to save enough working for the WPA to buy it back. Twice he had buildings, machinery, hay and feed destroyed by fire, but he always was able to pull things together and keep going. He bought other land around his original homestead, and by 1964 he had about a thousand acres, plus leases. He sold the property to the Solf brothers before he died in 1967.

Henry's cousin, Nellie Ashley, made her home with him for a number of years. The Winnett Times reported their



*Henry Coxon and Ida Nielsen pose at the old pump when Ida returns to see the old homestead*

involvement in an accident in July 1930. "While speeding from Grassrange Monday evening, Henry Coxon, accompanied by Nellie Ashley, met with an auto accident from which they miraculously escaped serious injury. A blow-out of a front tire turned the car completely over two or three times, demolished the top and sides, tore off fenders, shoved back the radiator and made the car practically a total loss. That the occupants were not seriously injured is a miracle."

**CRAIG, Guy** Mr. Craig was the general manager for Mid Northern Oil Company in 1921 with an office in Winnett, Montana.

**CRAMER, Susan** (Sec 10,15-15-28) Susan Cramer homesteaded northeast of the Shay flat in about 1915. In 1920 after oil was struck at Cat Creek, her son George and his family came to the oil field to work. George and his wife, Martha, had four children — Oscar born in 1905, George in 1909, Grace in 1915 and Blanche in 1917. The school-age children attended the Shay, the Follette and the Cat Creek school. Oscar was the only one of the children to graduate from Winnett High School as the family moved before the others completed high school. He had the honor of being named to the All State High School football team as left halfback, and also received honorable mention as running guard for basketball. The family lived on various leases in the Cat Creek field and for a time with "Gramma Susan" on her homestead. They moved to Charlo, Montana, in June 1929, where some of their Cat Creek friends, the Snyders, had taken up residence.

Grace wrote, "When we lived on the Schaeffer lease, my mother raised McScovey ducks as we had a pond near us at that time. While feeding the ducks, she fell, broke the tip of the spine and was in St. Joseph's Hospital in Lewistown. My father was helping a friend move a building, it slipped and he was being crushed by it. Mr.

lnde got a team of horses and forced them to lunge, releasing him. He was in a cast for a long time." Such were the trials and tribulations of every day life. She continued, "We had a community hall in Cat Creek where Christmas programs and all activities were held as well as church activities and classes. We were an average family and, as children, were happy making our own entertainment. Our parents took us on picnics when they could, we played cards, played house, made doll clothes, made paper dolls from catalogues and fashioned clothes from wallpaper sample books as well as played school. My sister Blanche always wanted to be the teacher, and when she grew up, she became a teacher."

"When we were living there in 1928, one of the Shays had gotten a radio. What an occasion that was to go listen to it!! It was a long, black box-like machine and we listened by a headphone as it squawked and squeaked back to us — but it was wonderful."

"At one place we lived, we children walked a couple of miles to school or rode horseback. During winter months my mother hitched a team and took us in a sleigh. The sleigh was enclosed where we rode and covered in front with heavy blankets. We had lap robes over us and heated bricks. We were very cozy and warm as those bricks kept our feet warm. How much our parents did for us children in those days! Life was hard and everyone was struggling along and helping their friends and neighbors."

Oscar Cramer wrote of the feverish drilling activity in Cat Creek. A wild-cat rig had to have 50 feet of hole down in order to hold their lease. They were set up and ready to drill but their steam boiler had not come. The offset well next to them was being drilled so they hooked up pipe connections to the same water, oil and tanks, and to the steam engine the same as the offset rig. At noon the other drilling crew pulled their boiler over to the wild-cat rig, connected it up and had it drilling when the other crew came back from dinner. They got down the fifty feet with their neighbor's live steam boiler!

Oscar married Dorothy Shafer and they had four daughters — Doris who was born in 1928 but only lived a short time, Rosalie born in 1929, Hazel Jean born in 1932 and Shirley Mae born in 1935. In spite of many years of hard work working in the oil fields, driving truck, tending pipelines and tank farms, dressing tools and pumping oil, the Cramers had a wonderful life together. Dorothy died in 1984 and Oscar continues to live in Kalispell, Montana in 1988.

George and a friend left Cat Creek in 1928 and worked their way to California where he took sick and died on July 1, 1928.

Grace married Arnold Stoverud in 1938 in Missoula where they both worked until they retired. The couple had two sons. Bruce was killed in a hang-gliding accident in 1981. Dale is a pharmacist in Great Falls, Montana.

**CROWELL, Christian L.** (Sec 10,15-15-28) Chris Crowell homesteaded in the Cat Creek Basin in the fall of 1910. He was one of the very earliest settlers in the area.

**CULVER, John W.** (Sec 5-14-29) John W. Culver was born in Maryland in 1884 but moved to Iowa at an early age. It was in Iowa that he married Ida Sines. The couple had three children — Ray, Perry and Mildred. The family came to Montana in 1916 making their home on a homestead taken out in the name of their son, Perry.

Perry worked at the Frantz camp in Cat Creek. In 1924 the Winnett Times reported he had a new Oldsmobile which was "a peach!" In 1927 the paper reported Perry and his wife and little son were moving to Kevin, Montana. From news accounts it appears Perry became associated with a man named McGinley as drilling contractors in the late 1920s and 1930s. They drilled several wells at Cat Creek for the Continental Oil Company. They also drilled in Wyoming and northern Montana.

John Culver died in January 1934. A Masonic burial followed.

**CURTIS, Clifford** Clifford Curtis was one of ten children born to Herbert and Lillian (LaValley) Curtis of Brady, Montana. Brothers and sisters were Blanche, Ethel, Glenn, Jack, Clayton, David, Allen, Laura, and Richard.

Clifford, his wife Alice, and their three children — Dorothy (1935), Frances (1937) and Dennis (1939) — lived in the Cat Creek area when Clifford was an oil driller. The family lived for a time in Winnett and were involved in the activities of the community. Two other daughters — Edith and Evelyn — were born after the family left the area. Evelyn was not allowed the privilege of knowing her father, as Clifford was killed in an oil drilling accident May 3, 1949, before her birth.

The mother, Alice, later married Si Thibert of Cut Bank, Montana. Alice died February 28, 1986. Clifford was the brother of Mrs. Ernest (Ethel) Freburg. (See also **FREBURG — Blakeslee**)

Cliff's brother, David, also worked at Cat Creek. David is now married and lives in Great Falls, Montana.

**CUTRIGHT, William** William Cutright worked with Curley Harlan rebuilding tanks for Continental Oil Company in 1931. (See also **CUTRIGHT — Ashley**)

**DAVIES, Bud** Bud Davies received third degree burns when a torch exploded while he was working on the Gene Hunt lease in 1943. The Davies family moved to Winnett in May 1943.

**DAWSON, Arthur** Arthur and Ella Dawson lived in Cat Creek in the 1940s. They had four children — William, Frances, Theresa Irene and Annie Ruth. The youngest, Ruth, graduated from the eighth grade at Cat Creek and went to high school in Roundup, where she lived with her sister Irene who was working there. After graduation from high school, Ruth went on to a Bible college in Devil's Lake, North Dakota. She married the Reverend S. E. Dunckler in June 1951. The Dawson family left Cat Creek in 1951.



**DIXON, Alexander** Al Dixon owned land in the Blakeslee area. (See also DIXON — Blakeslee) He and his wife, Hattie, acquired property on the Musselshell River and were living in the area when School District #198 was formed. Mr. Dixon was one of the first trustees. The Dixons had one daughter, Josephine, born in 1915. Mr. Dixon suffered a serious appendectomy in 1924. The Dixons sold their river ranch to Casey Fail in 1928.

**DORLARQUE, Edgar** (Sec 19,20-15-30) Edgar and Anna Johnson Dorlarque owned 160 acres of land about a mile west of the Musselshell River on the edge of the east Cat Creek oil field. The Dorlarques had the following children: Mildred (1911), Edgar (1912), Delmar LeRoy (1914), William (1915), Alice (1917), Franklin (1920) and twins born in 1921. One of the twins died at birth and Myrtle survived. One more son, John, was born in 1926.

Ed was connected with E. B. Coolidge on the Homestake lease in west Cat Creek. He was on the drilling crew which drilled the first Homestake well. The family moved to Winnett in 1922 and to Maiden, Montana, in 1926. They left Maiden for the oil fields in Northern Montana in about 1928.

**DUFF, Alfred** Alfred (Babe) Duff was married to Ruth Nave, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Nave of Lewistown, Montana. They lived in Cat Creek during the early oil boom days. Babe worked for Mid Northern and was the head man on their pulling-machine crew. In 1927 the family moved to Lewistown, but their son John stayed to finish the school year in Cat Creek.

The Duffs were in the northern Montana oil fields in 1930 when Babe accepted a contract with Homestake to bury 25,000 feet of pipeline on the Homestake lease. The ditch was to be 4½ feet deep, and the Winnett Times reported Babe said he intended to dig 50 feet per day without a mechanical digger. In 1935 Babe was in Frannie, Wyoming, but came to Cat Creek to clean two wells for Continental Oil Company. Babe died in Powell, Wyoming, in 1953.

**DUNLAP, William F.** William "Fred" Dunlap, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dunlap, was born in Topeka, Kansas, in 1887. They settled at Loon Lake, Washington, where Fred went to school. For a time the family operated a confectionery store in Castle Rock, Washington. Fred married Nora Jahnke in 1915 in Portland, Oregon. Nora, the daughter of Fred and Mary Jahnke, was born in Johnson Creek, Wisconsin. She was raised and educated in Wisconsin, but when her father died, she and her mother moved to Portland, Oregon, where she was employed as a sales clerk.

In 1916 Fred and Nora moved to Missoula, Montana, where Fred was employed by the Washington Power Company as a lineman. He served in the Navy in World War I in the same capacity.

In April 1926 the Dunlaps came to Cat Creek and made their home on the river. Fred was manager of the Kessling Oil Company which he later bought. In 1928 Fred built a

refinery. It was homemade and built on the side of a hill overlooking the Musselshell River. It used gravity flow from crude oil storage tanks into stills where it was refined. The finished products flowed into storage tanks and from there onto the loading platform.

Farmers and other customers purchased the fuel on the spot and hauled it themselves. The still had a capacity of 390 gallons with a daily output of 100 barrels of refined fuel. The fire which ran the still heated the boiler and furnished steam for firing, pumping water and various other uses. It was the only refinery in operation in the area at the time.

The Dunlaps had four children — Edith (Fred's child by an earlier marriage) born in 1909, Clyde (1916), Mary Ann (1932) and Shirley (1935). Clyde went to the Brown School and graduated from Winnett High School. The Dunlaps moved to Winnett in 1938 and the girls attended Winnett schools. (See also DUNLAP — Winnett)

**DUNPHY, John and George** (Submitted by Carroll Manuel) "Jack" (Sec 1,12-15-28) and George (Sec 35-16-28) came from Iowa. Their older brother Jim had settled in the Denton country before they came in 1910. Jack came down here and homesteaded before George. Jack never married. Although he was a bachelor, his place was sort of a community center. He usually had a couple of hired men with one of the fellows' wives doing the cooking. My folks worked there some, as did the Guhrts.

"Jack had a nice place with a big shelter belt and good buildings by homestead standards. Part of his land was subirrigated and he had a nice alfalfa field. He raised lots of hogs, cattle and horses. He farmed quite a lot and soon bought out several homesteads. In the summer he ran a haying crew as well as three plows summer following. He had a Franklin car and a Model T truck, the first I can remember. Before he owned the truck and before the railroad came to Winnett, he had to haul his grain to Lewistown. During the winter he kept four horses shod and on the road all winter hauling wheat to Lewistown. They hauled 120 bushels at a trip and made a round trip in five days.

"When they started drilling for oil at Cat Creek he hauled freight on the back haul. After they struck oil, the Frantz Oil Company built more barn room at Jack's place and hired my dad (LeRoy Manuel) to cook for the teamsters. They would unload in the oil field and start back and stay overnight at Dunphys. Jack had a good water well and Frantz had hay and grain hauled in for their horses. They could stable forty horses at a time. The teamsters all carried their own bedrolls. They would roll them out wherever there was space to put them down. When the weather was bad, sometimes the floor was entirely taken up with sleeping men so you could hardly open the door or walk through the room.

"Jack's sister Ann used to come for the summers after the train came into Winnett, and Jack's nephews, the O'Neil's from Livingston, also used to come to spend their summers. It was a good thing Jack had a big ranch house.

Raymond O'Neil was quite a bird hunter and kept the cook supplied with sage hens and prairie chicken when he was there.

"There were many community picnics held at the Dunphy place on account of the trees. That grove of trees was really nice. They had a number of plum trees in the shelter belt that produced really well. They made good wine, too! Jack was everyone's friend and had many partnership deals on everything.

"George Dunphy's place wasn't nearly as good as Jack's. George was drafted in World War I. After he came back from the war, he didn't stay long. He turned his place over to Jack for pasture and went back to Iowa and farmed there.

"Everything was really rolling on the Dunphy place through the 1920s — wheat, cattle, horses and hogs. Jack raised corn and hauled it in wagon loads into his hog pens. In 1930 things started to fade, and 1931 was really a dry year. Annie convinced Jack to move back to Iowa and take over the old home place that they still owned. Curley Harlan rented the place for a few years, but the great depression took its toll and no one lived on the place for a couple of years. This place was always the place of my dreams, and I took over in 1939 and it sure has been good to me!"

Two articles taken from old editions of the Winnett Times are worthy of being included in the story of the Dunphy place. One dates from October 21, 1914: "The farmers of the Cat Creek basin are rejoicing over a large crop this year. The largest yield was threshed by the Dunphy Ranch, averaging 37 bushels.

The next article is dated December 5, 1930: "Jack Dunphy, the bachelor par excellent of the Cat Creek basin, was in Winnett on Wednesday to find out if any of the Rogge bachelors were married yet. Learning to the contrary, he returned to his ranch to spend the winter in peace and contentment."

**EDDY, P. L.** Mr. Eddy was the district superintendent for Mid Northern Oil Company. He took over the position from Guy Craig. P. L. married Isabelle Hillius in July 1930, and on July 22, 1930, the Mid Northern Camp held a charivari and dance for the couple. In 1931 they were transferred to the oil fields in northern Montana.

On July 17, 1942, the following article appeared in the Winnett Times. "The body of P. L. Eddy, well-known oil man in northern Wyoming and southern Montana, was found in his auto where he shot and killed himself. A note stated, 'I am sorry to do this but I have been sick for three years and can't get well so this is best for everyone.' Mr. Eddy is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Ted Jacobs of Billings, Montana, and Mrs. Earl Weimer of Powell, Wyoming."

**EDEN, Clyde** The Edens came to Montana in 1915 and to Cat Creek in 1937. The couple had two sons — Fred and Emmett. Clyde went to work for Continental Oil Company in December 1937 and retired in 1951. When the couple moved to Harlowton, Montana, they were

honored with a festive going-away party given by the Masons and the Order of Eastern Star in Winnett. Mrs. Eden died in 1969. Clyde died November 14, 1976.

Emmett married Marie Dreisbach of the Kelley community. Emmett was killed when struck by a car in the winter of 1988. (See DREISBACH — Kelley)

Fred married Violet Miller, daughter of Matt and Margaret Miller of Musselshell, in 1935. They farmed south of Musselshell until the fall of 1951, when they moved to Lewistown, Montana. Fred worked as a mechanic for various shops and last worked for Horning Implement, retiring in 1980. He has worked as grounds keeper for the Elks Country Club since then.

Students and faculty members in School District #1 in Lewistown enjoy the tasty baked goods that Vi prepares as head baker in the schools' central kitchen.

**EDMONDS, Scottie** Mr. Edmonds was the Mid Northern superintendent for a short time in the mid 1920s. He later had a pipeline installation and trucking business which was a prosperous venture.

**EIKE, Lyle** Lyle Eike was a son of Olaf and Hannah Eike. (See EIKE — Blakeslee) Lyle married Roberta Thorsheim and the couple had four children — Larry (1940), Kenneth (1942), Martin (1946) and Melvin (1947). In November 1942 the family moved from Welter to the Charles Lease at Cat Creek where Lyle was employed by Continental Oil Company. When Farmers Union bought out Continental's Cat Creek holdings in 1969, Lyle was transferred to Circle Ridge, Wyoming. He retired there in the spring of 1978 and moved to Winnett.

The Eike children all attended school in Cat Creek and high school in Winnett. Larry graduated in 1959 and married Joyce Retterer. (See EIKE — Petrolia) Kenny graduated in 1960 and, after three years in the Army, he married Marilyn Retterer. They had two children — Marsha and Lance. Kenny died in 1978. Martin graduated in 1963 and married Patsy Knerr in 1965. The couple have one daughter, Tammy. Melvin married Roxie Knerr (See EIKE — Cat Creek).

After Lyle retired in Winnett, he took it upon himself to take care of the Winnett Cemetery. He cleaned and mowed and gave the cemetery the kind of care it had never had before. When he died in 1988, memorial funds were used to rebuild the cemetery fence. After Lyle's death, Roberta moved to Lewistown, Montana. She died in the spring of 1989.

**EIKE, Melvin** Melvin was the youngest son of Lyle and Roberta Eike. He was born and raised in Cat Creek and has spent his entire life around the oil field. He did odd jobs as a boy, had part-time work as a teenager, and went to work for Farmers Union when they bought out Continental in 1969. He has been with them ever since.

Melvin married Roxie Knerr in 1968. She was the daughter of Howard and Frances Knerr. (See also KNERR — Brush Creek) Roxie took over the Cat Creek Post Office in 1972.