

tributed many valuable historic items from the oil industry to it and to the Montana Historical Society in Helena, Montana, as well.

**MERRIOT, L. G.** Mr. Merriot was the bookkeeper for the Mid Northern Oil Company in Cat Creek in the 1920s. He married Jean Shoemaker. She established a sewing club for the schoolgirls in Cat Creek and taught them to sew.

The Merriots moved to the Kevin oil field and later to Wyoming where Mr. Merriot became head of the Basin Gas Company. Mrs. Merriot still lives in Thermopolis, Wyoming (1987).

**MESERVE, Maryanna** The former Maryanna Hamilton spent most of her youth on a homestead north of Cat Creek (See also BUMP — Musselshell River) She was sworn in as postmaster of Cat Creek on October 6, 1949 and served until 1952. While living in Cat Creek, Maryanna also served as the Winnett Times correspondent. She married Jim Davis in July 1950. (See also DAVIS — Musselshell River and Winnett)

**MILLER, Clarence E.** (Sec 32-15-28) Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Miller homesteaded in 1910. They only lived in the area for five years. They had one daughter, Gladys, who died in 1930. Mr. Miller passed away in 1938 and Mrs. Miller in 1940. All were buried in Alhambra, California, where they had gone after leaving Montana. Two grandchildren survived them — Marjorie and Phillip Hunter.

**MILLER, Grace** (Sec 7-15-29) On November 11, 1912, the first school was established in the Cat Creek Basin in an abandoned log cabin which had belonged to Charlie Wortman. Grace Miller was the teacher. During the following winter she organized a literary society. Floyd Maine reported in the Winnett Times, "Many a pleasant Friday evening was spent (at the literary club meetings) in merriment when the temperature ran far below the zero line."

Grace married Henry Oran Dobson in the fall of 1914. It was the first marriage conducted in the Cat Creek Basin. The ceremony was performed by the Reverend George Maine in the Maine Cabin. The Dobsons had one son, Edward. According to the Cat Creek Cemetery records, Grace died and was buried in the Cat Creek Cemetery sometime before 1917. (See also DOBSON — Musselshell River)

**MILLSAP, T. J.** "Terry" Millsap came from the Louisiana oil fields to work for the Homestake Oil Company. He married Lorraine Cunningham of Winifred, Montana, in August 1938. They were married at the Presbyterian parsonage in Lewistown, Montana, by the Reverend Orner. A group of serenaders took them to Flatwillow for a charivari and dance to celebrate their marriage.

**MILROY, Roy** Connie Milroy submitted the following: "Roy came to work for CENEX April 1978 at the Cat Creek oil field. We live at the Mosby Dome field which

was originally all CENEX had here. They later bought West Dome from Continental Oil so Roy works both fields.

"October 11, 1979, we adopted a baby boy we named Justin William. He has attended school in Winnett from story hour, kindergarten through third grade. In 1987 he won a bronze medal for sheep riding at the Central Montana Fair in Lewistown, Montana.

"April 25, 1984, we adopted a baby girl we named Ginger Rose. She attended story hour in Winnett."

The Milroys were transferred to Casper, Wyoming, in June 1989.

**MITCHELL, Ainsley** "A. B." Mitchell was born in 1881 in Vienna, Louisiana. He was a veteran of the Spanish American War and came to Petroleum County in 1913. He acquired land on the Musselshell River near the site of the first oil well. In fact, he helped drive the location stakes for the well in 1919.

In 1926 A. B. married Anne Sommerfield. They made their home on the river until 1946. "Peggy," as she was known to everyone, ran the cookhouse for Continental for a number of years.

The Winnett Times commented in 1930, "The Mitchells have one of the best ranches on the river and are known far and wide for their hospitality." In addition to their ranching and alfalfa seed raising business, A. B. installed a small refinery on his property and refined oil for sale to local farmers. In 1931 tractor fuel sold at his refinery for 12 cents a gallon plus state tax.

In 1944 their house flooded badly during the June rains. Water was three feet deep in the house and surrounding area. They lost their garden and some household goods. They moved into the Continental cookhouse. Disaster seemed to follow them, however, because the cookhouse was destroyed by fire two years later. They managed to save most of their personal belongings but groceries and supplies stored in the kitchen and basement were a total loss. The cookhouse was a landmark in Cat Creek having been built by the Frantz Corporation in 1921.

A. B.'s name was often seen in connection with buying, selling and trading oil leases. He died in 1947. Peggy died in 1968. The couple did not have any children.

**MORELAND, Olivea** (Sec 4-15-29) Olivea Moreland was the former Olivea Fradd. She and her brother, Nels Fradd, came from Minnesota to homestead near the western edge of the Cat Creek oil field. (See also FRADD)

Olivea was a schoolteacher. She taught a term at Flatwillow in 1915 before she was married, and later taught in District #159. She was married to Fochen "Slim" Moreland. Olivea died in 1944 and was buried in Harmony, Washington.

**MORELAND, Willis P.** (Sec 26-15-28) Willis Moreland owned 320 acres on Gorman Coulee and if one is to believe what one reads in the Winnett Times, he was a cowboy as well!

"Last week ended in Winnett with wild-west exhibits

befitting an old Cheyenne carnival. 'Steamboat,' Winnett's old reliable buckner, was the first number and he carried his part of the program in the usual fashion, his rider, Bob Loomis, being unable to stay in the saddle but a few moments. Mike Russian gave an exciting exhibition of bareback riding, which was enjoyed by all. The most exciting part of the entire celebration, however, was the final number, consisting of an exhibition of riding by Willis Moreland and Jim Young. The horse briefly occupied by these daring riders, has heretofore been known as a gentle, old reliable saddle horse. But when Mr. Young got astride the horse behind Mr. Moreland, the carnival spirit seemed to effect the horse, also, and during the next few minutes the riders gave an exhibition of leather pulling heretofore unequalled in these parts. The saddle was not thrown off by the horse and luckily nobody was hurt!" (W. T. 11-4-21)

**MOUNCE, Carl B.** Mr. Mounce was a pumper for Mid Northern in the early 1920s. He was the neighborhood barber. Carl and his wife, Alice, lived in a house on the Wildschutz lease. They had a son, Everett, born in 1920. The Mounces moved to Grangeville, Idaho, in August 1930.

**NEVIN, William** William Nevin married Emma Folda on July 24, 1922. She was the daughter of Joseph and Antonia Folda, early settlers in the Lewistown, Montana, area. In 1945 the Nevins moved to Cat Creek where "Bill" was employed by Continental Oil Company. The couple lived in Cat Creek for eighteen years.

The Nevins had two children — Dolly (Grinde) and Richard — both of whom graduated from Fergus County High School. Dolly's son Larry is currently (1989) serving in the Montana legislature. Richard and his wife, Donna (Erickson), live in Billings, Montana, where Dick is a Certified Public Accountant.

**NORDAHL, Cora** Cora Nordahl taught the Brown School in District #198 in 1928 and in 1929. In March 1930 the following news item relative to her marriage appeared in the Winnett Times:

"Arthur Busby and Clara Nordahl slipped away to Lewistown on Saturday and were united in marriage, returning to Winnett on Tuesday. That night they were host and hostess in Cat Creek at a wedding dance which was attended by a big crowd of well-wishing friends.

"The bride is the popular and talented teacher of the Mitchell School in east Cat Creek and the groom is a popular youth who graduated from Winnett High School a few years ago. The happy couple plan to make their home on the Eager Ranch which Mr. Busby has under lease.

"Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Mitchell and Harry Nordahl accompanied the couple to Lewistown and aided them in the successful culmination of the great adventure." (See also NORDAHL — Musselshell River)

**NORDQUIST, Joe** Joe Nordquist was a tool dresser on the drilling crew which brought in the first Cat Creek oil well. He also owned 320 acres of land in the Mosby

Dome.

According to the *Grass Range Review* in 1920, Joe stopped in to say he thought he was 'right in line to become a millionaire!' It is believed Mr. Nordquist eventually moved to Lewistown, Montana, to make his home, where he was a rural mail carrier for many years.

**NORHEIM, Thomas** (W. T. 1-20-28) "Thomas Norheim was taken to the Attix Clinic by Dr. J. L. Alexander to receive medical attention for injuries sustained when he slipped off an ice-coated oil derrick and crashed 25 feet to the ground.

"Mr. Norheim fractured the neck of the right femur, an accident of a very serious nature, and the unfortunate victim will be incapacitated for some time."

**NORMAN, Mart** Mr. and Mrs. Norman were early residents of the Frantz oil camp. Mrs. Norman was active in the Frantz camp ladies club. Mart was transferred to Wyoming in April 1924.

**NORTON, Thomas** (Sec 3-14-29) According to the U. S. postal records, Thomas Norton was the first postmaster for the Jitney Post Office when it was established on February 26, 1916. Though very little is known of the family, apparently Mr. and Mrs. Norton had a daughter Dorothy (sometimes Dortha) who attended the Jitney School. Grandmother Norton lived with them.

**O'NEIL, John and Louis** John and Louis "Tip" O'Neil were brothers who were early-day investors and operators in the Cat Creek oil field. It was reported they sold their interests to the California Oil Company for five million dollars in 1926. The men went to the Kevin-Sunburst area after leaving Cat Creek.

John O'Neil played rugby while attending Santa Clara College and was a member of the 1924 Olympic team that won the championship.

**OWENS, Troy** Mr. and Mrs. Owens had one child listed on the 1921 school census when District #198 was formed — Mary, born in 1912.

(W.T. 9-16-21) "Mrs. Owens and daughter Mary of the Frantz camp spent a couple of days at the Montana Hotel in Winnett this week while looking for a residence in which to spend the winter in order that Miss Mary may attend the Winnett school."

**PANGBURN, Harold** Harold and Marie (Tripp) Pangburn made their home in Cat Creek during the 1940s where Harold was employed. He worked on the Chamberlain lease and in 1947 accepted a job with Spencer Drilling, later going with Continental Oil.

The Pangburns had three children — Robert (1931), Joan (1932) and Gary (1944). Robert graduated from Winnett High School in 1948. He has followed the ministry and worked with retarded children. Joan graduated from Winnett High School in 1950. She is married to Raymond Kindt, class of 1942. Gary is married and lives in Wyoming.

The Pangburns moved to Wyoming in 1950.

**PEDEN, William M.** (Sec 33-15-29) William Peden was born August 20, 1891, in Dolkeith, Scotland, and came to the United States at the age of 21. He homesteaded in the Jitney area along present Highway #200. In December 1921 he returned to Scotland to spend the winter renewing old acquaintances, but he came back to Montana in the spring and went to work in the Cat Creek oil field.

In 1923 William married Mabel V. Reed the upper-grade teacher in the Cat Creek School. Miss Reed came from Pennsylvania. The Pedens often furnished music for dances in the community. They took an active part in all the school and community affairs. The couple had two children while living in Cat Creek — Jean (1924) and William (1926) — and two more after they moved to Shelby — Jack and Robert.

Mr. Peden became an oil gauger for the U. S. government in 1922 and was promoted to the position of government engineer. It was his duty to interpret and enforce the terms of oil and gas leases and to approve drilling sites and plans. In November 1929 he was transferred to Shelby, Montana. He retired in Great Falls, Montana, in 1974 after 35 years with the U. S. Geological Service. Mr. Peden died in 1961.

**PERRIGO, Harry** Mr. Perrigo was born in Iowa in 1896. He graduated from the South Dakota School of Mines in 1925 and came to Cat Creek (to replace William Peden) in 1929 as a U. S. petroleum engineer.

Harry and his wife, Etta, had eight children — triplets, Billy, Robert and Phyllis (1920); twins, George and Helen (1922); Harry (1925); Dorothy (1927); and Jack (1931), born after they left Cat Creek.

Mr. Perrigo was transferred to Billings, Montana, as district petroleum engineer for the U. S. Geological Service. He died in 1960.

**PETERS, William T.** William Peters bought a relinquishment on the Musselshell River in 1918. (See PETERS — Musselshell River). He and his wife, Edith, had a large family.

Mr. Peters was the head man on the Harlan lease and worked in Cat Creek until 1934 when he and his family moved to Rice, Washington.

**PETERSON, Vernon** Mr. Peterson operated a store and pool hall in Cat Creek in the early 1920s. He also showed movies several times a week. The Winnett Times reported on May 23, 1924, that Vernon had a new five passenger Nash, "a real beauty!"

**PIERSON, Ira D.** Ira Pierson homesteaded in the Brush Creek area (See also PIERSON — Brush Creek) and owned a home in Winnett (See also PIERSON — Winnett). The children attended the Cat Creek School for a time. Ira's association with the Cat Creek oil field began when the field first was developed. He helped freight supplies and materials from Winnett to Cat Creek when the discovery well was being drilled. He supervised the building of the first road to the well site. Very soon after,



*Betty Mead and Betty Lou Pierson and company car*

he was employed by Continental Oil Company for whom he worked until he retired.

In 1929 Mr. Pierson succeeded Mr. Sontag as field superintendent for Continental Oil in Cat Creek. He was transferred to Lewistown, Montana, in the early 1930s and in 1936 moved to Billings. From Continental's Billings office he was promoted as assistant to the general manager of the Rocky Mountain Division of Continental Oil Company in Denver, Colorado. The family moved to Denver in June 1940. The Piersons returned to Billings in 1950 when Ira retired. He died in 1959.

**PIOTROWSKI, Walter** (Sec 10-14-29) Walter Piotrowski homesteaded about a mile and one-half south of the present Cat Creek turnoff on Highway #200. Walter was the Jitney mail carrier for many years. He was a veteran of World War I.

Mr. Piotrowski had a car tip over on the Gorman Coulee hill and the passenger who was riding with him was killed in the accident. Walter never recovered from the trauma of the accident and he spent the last years of his life in a mental institution. Otto Moore served as his guardian. He died in 1956 and was buried in the Custer Battlefield National Cemetery.

**POST, Cornelius** (Sec 8-15-29) Cornelius "Neal" Post and his brother James came from Kansas and homesteaded four miles west of the Cat Creek oil field in 1911. In about 1925, the California Oil Company drilled seven wells near the Post land — five of which were producers. One well was on Cornelius' property.

James suffered a paralytic stroke in 1924. When his brother George came from Kansas to visit, James returned with him to be near the family. He died in Bellaire, Kansas, on February 20, 1929. Because of bad roads, word of James' death did not reach Neal for over a week. He was not able to attend the funeral.

Cornelius returned to Kansas to live, but he often came back to summer on his Cat Creek property. He died January 28, 1938, at age 69 in Bellaire, Kansas.

**POTTER, David R.** David Potter was the son of Aaron and Clara Potter of Tabor, Iowa. He came to Montana in 1912 with his parents and the family settled in the Valentine area (See also POTTER — Valentine). David married Irene M. Messenger (See also MESSENGER —

Valentine) in 1928 and they ranched in the Valentine area until 1942 when David went to work for the Continental Oil Company in Cat Creek.

The Potters' four children were all born before the couple moved to Cat Creek — Alice (1930), Ida (1932), Frederick (1937) and Franklin (1941). They attended the Cat Creek School. When Franklin was five years old he suffered a "light" case of infantile paralysis. It was the first case of poliomyelitis ever reported in Petroleum County.

"Dave" worked for Continental Oil Company for 30 years. He was honored by the company with a retirement party at Meeteetse, Wyoming, in 1972. During his years in Cat Creek, Mr. Potter served on the District #159 school board and was active in many other community affairs.

Alice graduated from Winnett High School in 1950. She married Jesse Shinnick and they have three children — Gene, Jim and Cindy. They make their home in Lewistown, Montana.

Ida died in 1941. Frederick graduated from Winnett High School in 1955. He served six years in the National Guard and was discharged as Supply Sergeant. He married Joan Clark of Kirkland, Washington, in November 1958. The couple has three girls — Cathy, Julie and Terri.

Franklin graduated from Winnett High School in 1959. He married Joellen Trump, class of 1958. They have three sons — David, Raymond and Daniel.

David and Irene bought a travel trailer and traveled extensively after retirement. They made their home in Spirit Lake, Idaho, until poor health made it necessary for them to move to Great Falls, Montana. David died in 1983, Irene in 1988.

**POYNTER, Reese** Mr. Poynter worked at the West Dome and lived on the Chamberlain lease during the 1920s. He and his wife, Bessie, had three children — Delores (1919), Ruth (1920) and May (1924) at the time they lived in Cat Creek. Reese was transferred to the north field near Kevin, Montana, in November 1928.

**PULLIN, George M.** (Sec 17-15-28) According to legal records, Elinor Pullin (Sec 30,31-15-28) Charles Pullin (Sec 17-15-28) and Marcelles Pullin (Sec 32-15-28) also homesteaded nearby. The relationship of the people is not known. George moved to Winnett, however, and owned a store. (See also PULLIN — Winnett)

A Winnett Times news item of April 7, 1915, stated that George tried to stop a team that was running with a load of lumber, and was thrown to the street. Two wheels of the wagon passed over his legs, fracturing his right leg below the knee. His brother, Charles, was driving the team.

George married Gertrude Deethardt.

**QUIGLEY, Edward** (Sec 6-15-28) Ed Quigley had two brothers, Jack and Pat. All three were early homesteaders. Ed's house burned and the neighbors furnished him the things he needed to start housekeeping again.

**REED, Ralph** Ralph Reed was a brother of Buell, James, Dean and Spencer Reed who homesteaded north of Teigen. He worked for Farmers Union Central Exchange as a pumper. He had the reputation of being a willing friend and cheerful neighbor. He died in May 1947. (See also REED — Teigen)

**ROGERS, Bertha E.** Bertha Rogers operated the Curran Hotel in Cat Creek in 1923. She had a son, Albert, who was nicknamed "Shanks." It is believed she also had a daughter.

**ROGGE, Ado** (Sec 24-15-28) Ado Rogge and Frances G. Vogel were married April 20, 1904. They had three children — Mary C. (1906), Lawrence J. (1909) and Eugene (1911). The Rogge brothers (Odillo, Joseph, John, Albert and Benjamin) who came to the Cat Creek Basin in 1911 were first cousins of Ado. They had written to Ado and urged him to come to Montana. As a result, Ado and his wife's brother, Charles J. Vogel, came to Montana and filed on adjoining homesteads not far from the Rogge brothers' property.

Mary wrote of their trip to Montana: "From 1911 to 1913, my father and uncle Charles J. Vogel spent summers building our house. In the spring of 1913 my mother took us children with her to Montana on the Milwaukee rail to Melstone. My father met us and we had breakfast in a restaurant. Then we were on our way north — a two-day trip with wagon and baggage, our motor — a team of horses. The halfway point was the Hodges' house (in the Kelley community).

Mary recalls grade school at the Shay School and also going to the Follette School which was one mile east of their homestead. In the 1920s the family moved to Alaska. "We finally gave up," Mary wrote, "because of drouth, army worms and grasshoppers, and because we were haled out whenever we did have a crop." Mary went to Seattle and continued her education and became a teacher. She taught school in western Washington for ten years, then went to Fairbanks, Alaska, where she retired in 1971.

Mary's brother Lawrence married and left Fairbanks and settled in Lake Stevens, Washington. Her other brother, Eugene, stayed in Alaska.

Ado Rogge passed away in 1959 and his wife, Frances, in 1960. They are both buried in Seattle, Washington.



*The Rogge farm as it looked in 1986*

Photo by: Ralph Corbett



*Rogge barnyard with young cowboy, Pat Keith, roping a calf in 1936*

**ROGGE BROTHERS** (Sec 4,5,6,13-15-28) The Rogge Brothers were born and raised in Iowa, members of a large family. The children of Nicholas Rogge were: Mary; Theresa; Agnes; Ed; twins, Marcus and Benjamin (1884); Joseph (1881); Odillo (1891); John; and Albert. The last five mentioned came to Montana and settled in the Cat Creek Basin in 1911, each taking out a 320-acre homestead.

Their first abode was actually a cellar or cave which they lived in while building a frame house. Like others in the community, they raised grain the first few years they lived in the area. According to Floyd Maine's account of the basin history, the Rogge brothers threshed 7500 bushels of wheat in 1915.

The Rogge brothers, individually and/or together, had numerous and varied outside interests. Reportedly they had a silver (or perhaps gold) mine in the Judith Mountains which produced enough to help them financially when the drouth came. They had two small oil wells on their Cat Creek property and an investment in the Lewistown Brewery as well. They also had some truck-farm acreage near Seattle, Washington. They had a seed house in Winnett and they raised, bought and sold alfalfa seed.

In the 1930s they purchased a portion of the former Walter Winnett property on McDonald Creek for the primary purpose of raising alfalfa seed. As it turned out, the dust bowl and grasshopper years hit about that time and they considered themselves lucky to have enough hay to feed their own livestock and have some extra to sell. The large Winnett house was acquired with the land and Dill. Joe and Ben made their home there until they sold the ranch to the Ostlers in 1951.

In 1926 John Rogge went to Priest River, Idaho, to help fight fire and died while there. Albert "Bert" left the homestead in 1935. He suffered an infection from a tick bite that year and ended up marrying Miss Lethcer, a nurse from the Billings hospital where he was treated.

The Winnett Times reported they purchased the Pryor Hotel in Billings in December 1935. Later they moved to Seattle, Washington, where they both died, leaving no children.

Benjamin "Ben" was the cook and general handyman. According to Patrick Keith, a young man who spent his summers on the Rogge Ranch while growing up, Ben had suffered a heat stroke many years before and refused to work in the hot sun. Keith says of him, "Joe and Dill often castigated him for being lazy, but sometimes I think he put in more hours around there than anybody! Once, when silent pictures were still in vogue, Ben and two of the brothers motored to Hollywood in a new Dodge pickup. Because Ben was big, strong and good looking, they put him in as an extra in one of the mob scenes. It may have been in 'They Way of the Cross.'" Ben died in 1954 at age 70.

Joe Rogge, according to Patrick Keith, was the 'butter and egg man' and perhaps the front for the outfit. "He could tell stories till the cows came home," says Patrick, "and often bragged he could go anywhere in the United States and either know somebody or know somebody who knew somebody. He had been married at one time and had a boy who drowned." (This boy was the only child born to any of the members of the large Nicholas Rogge family.) Joe served as a Petroleum County commissioner from 1926-1936. He died in 1956 at age 75.

Odillo "Dill" was in World War I where he spent time on the firing line at the front. According to Patrick Keith, he was the "brains of the outfit and the money man. he wrote all of the checks . . . It was Dill who brought in the first power mower to the area. (Elmer Eager liked it so much he ordered a similar one the next day.) He built the first real flood irrigation ditches, took advantage of the first land-use procedures and sent the largest grass-fed steer (up to that time) to the Chicago Livestock Market." Dill died in 1953 at age 62.



*Ben Rogge with the largest grass-fed steer sent to the Chicago Livestock Market (1934)*

**ROSTAD, Robert** Robert Rostad was born and raised in the Flatwillow area. He was the son of Bernt and Anna Rostad. (See also ROSTAD — Flatwillow) Bob served in the CCCs in 1934 and later married Katherine Blazicevich. Shortly after their marriage, Bob went to the service where he was a parachute packer during World War II. He was stationed on the island of Tinian in the Marianna Islands when preparations were being made for the atomic attack on Hiroshima. The B-29 bomber, the Enola Gay, which carried the historic atomic bomb took off from Tinian. Bob remembers the tight security surrounding the airplane. No one was allowed close to it. There were many rumors about the attack but no one was sure of its mission until it was over.

Bob was discharged November 30, 1945. He went to work for Continental oil Company in Cat Creek in 1946.

The Rostads have three children — Theresa (1943), William (1946) and Nancy Lee (1948). The children attended elementary school in Cat Creek. Bob was transferred to Melstone, Montana, in 1961 where he continued to work for Continental Oil until his retirement.

**ROUTH, Don C.** (Sec 19-15-28) The Don C. Routh family was from Carbon, Iowa. Pearl Stewart recalls the Rouths and the James Hunters, also from Carbon, did most of their farming together. Their homestead claims bordered one another.

The Routh family had a final auction on July 25, 1930. According to the Winnett Times, "The Don C. Routh family left Saturday via automobile for Iowa, where they will visit for a while before continuing to New York state where they plan to engage in farming. Mr. Routh homesteaded in Petroleum County prior to the war. Shortly after coming from the service he sold out and returned to Iowa.

"After a year or two in Iowa, he returned to his old homestead in Montana only to leave again now with his family for New York state. The Routh family are highly respected ranchers of this county with hosts of friends who greatly regret to see them leave us. However, we are inclined to bet that the spell of Montana will bring them back again and the next time we hope to have better crops."

**RUDDY, Lester** Mr. Ruddy was superintendent of the California Oil Company in 1927. The company drilled seven wells about four miles west of the main Cat Creek oil field. Five of the seven wells were producers though none were very large. The California Oil Company was only in operation until about 1928.

**RYAN, Lucy** (Sec 11-15-28) Lucy Ryan and her two children bought a relinquishment from the Elkin brothers. Lucy was a cousin of the Rogge brothers and her mother, Mrs. Rogge, lived with her for a time.

**SABON, George** Mr. Sabon took the position of clerk in the Continental Oil Company office in December 1951. The Sabons had twin girls — Susan Vista and Sally Kay. The family moved to Frannie, Wyoming.

**SANDERSON, C. R.** C. R. "Pat" Sanderson worked for the Homestake Oil Company in the late 1930s. Pat and his wife, Mayme, had three children — Margaret (1929), Jacqueline (1932) and Mary (1937). When Continental Oil bought out the Homestake Cat Creek property in 1938, the Sandersons were transferred to the oil fields in northern Montana.

**SANDMAN, Carl** (Sec 32-15-28) Carl Sandman, son of Albert and Minnie Sandman, was born on December 29, 1920. His parents came to Winnett from Sisseton, South Dakota, in 1926, and lived in the brick Ninneman house in the Brush Creek area.

Carl's wife, Virginia May Bohn, the daughter of Albert and Hattie Bohn, was born September 1, 1921, in St. Joseph's Hospital in Lewistown, Montana. (See also BOHN — Petrolia). Virgie went to the Petrolia Bench School and graduated from Winnett High School in 1939. She and Carl were married on November 1, 1939. They lived in Winnett for three years, occupying the house where Helen Quigg now lives (1989). They also lived in the Fred Story house near the Lutheran Church.

Carl worked in Eager's Store for about two years and for the railroad for one year until they moved to the ranch. In 1945 Virgie's father, Albert Bohn, purchased the Walter Johnson place. He later sold it to Carl and Virgie. They still (1989) live on that place just north of highway #200 east of Winnett.

The Sandmans became parents of two children — Terry (1940) and Linda (1943). The children went to the Box Elder School located near Solf's home. Both attended Winnett High School.

The Sandmans have raised cattle, grain and hay. In 1959 Carl began raising sheep. He is also a fine carpenter and has remodeled many houses in the area. During the 1960s he also built and sold cattle feeders. Many of these still may be seen today along the country roads.

Sandmans enjoy using the rural delivery route for their mail. They attend the Lutheran Church.

**SANDMAN, Terry** When the school bell stopped ringing there were anxious first and second graders with a new young teacher in Winnett. Miss Helzer started teaching in the fall of 1960.

A summer wedding in 1963 united Donna May Helzer, daughter of Adam and Lena E. Helzer of Bridger, Montana, and Terry Karl Sandman, son of Carl and Virginia Sandman of Winnett.

During Donna's fourth year of teaching in Winnett, she taught her former first graders who were now fourth graders. The students had quite a time trying to remember their teacher's name had been changed!

April showers brought more than May flowers in the spring of 1964. Terry and Donna's first son, Kory, was born on May first. Donna resigned from teaching so she could stay at home and take care of the new baby. Terry kept busy with ranch work and driving truck.

In September of 1965 the Sandman's second son,

Karson, put in his appearance. That fall the family moved to Broadview, Montana. Terry began the study of raising hogs in an indoor operation. After two years of raising pigs, they moved to Two Dot, Montana. The new job entailed lambing, calving and putting up hay. There were many picnics and trips to the fishing holes, and hours spent watching nature in a beautiful setting. At times the bears caused some anxiety especially when their tracks showed up right outside the house!

December of 1969 brought the family an early Christmas present. He was named Kale. A move in January brought the Sandmans back to Winnett. After a few months work on the Nebraska Feeding Company, they moved to Mosby to work for the Rowton Brothers. Terry began a hog-raising project besides the usual ranch work. After two summers, they moved into the town of Winnett where they purchased the Gusher Bar. They operated it until a fire destroyed it in 1975. (See SANDMAN — Winnett)

Eventually the Sandmans moved their mobile home to the Carl Sandman family ranch on Box Elder Creek. Their three boys graduated from Winnett High School. Kory attended four years at Montana Tech in Butte, Montana, earning a degree in petroleum engineering. Karson attended two quarters of college at Bozeman, Montana, after getting married. He has worked on ranches, a seismograph crew and an oil rig. Then he joined the Air Force. He is furthering his education in electrical engineering and marketing.

The Sandman's youngest son, Kale, received his high school diploma in May 1988. He took on several fencing projects near Mosby and Jordan after graduation and then worked for the Blue Range Mining Company near Lewistown, Montana. Kale married Lisa Hanson of Winnett and they have a daughter, Kiena Dezere. They are presently (1989) on the Sandman Ranch.

**SAWYER, Lyle** Lyle Sawyer and his wife, Leta, lived at the Frantz Camp and Lyle worked for the Continental Oil Company during the mid 1920s. He was transferred to Wichita Falls, Texas, during the summer of 1928. The couple had at least three children — Harold (1923), Roger (1924) and Archie (1927).

Mrs. Sawyer sent the grammar school children in Cat Creek a sample of cotton stalks and bolls from Texas.

**SCHAEFFER, Robert** Robert Schaeffer was born on February 18, 1899, in Bluffton, Indiana. In 1910 his parents, John and Lillie Schaeffer and their younger children (including Robert) homesteaded southwest of Winifred. Later Robert and his mother moved to a homestead in the area between Roy and Valentine.

Robert worked in Cat Creek, first in the field and then at the Mid Northern cookhouse as a cook. He also worked as a cook and a pumper in the northern Montana oil fields at Gallup City and Cut Bank.

He married Isabelle Fail on March 18, 1952, and they made their home on the Musselshell River until 1964 when they moved to Winnett. (See also FAIL —

Musselshell River) They spent their summers on the Fail Brothers Ranch from the time school was out in the spring until it started again in the fall, however. When the Fail Ranch was sold in 1972, they lived in Winnett full time. Robert worked part time as custodian at the Winnett schools. He died in 1978. Isabelle still resides in Winnett (1989).

In 1953 one daughter, Carol Ann, was born to the couple. She attended school at Cat Creek for 5½ years. When the Cat Creek School closed, she finished grade school in Winnett and went on to graduate from Winnett High School in 1971. She enrolled in college at Montana State University, and then transferred to Eastern Montana College where she graduated in 1976.

During the summer of 1975 and through the Christmas holidays, she worked at the courthouse in Winnett. In the fall of 1976 she started work full time and became Clerk and Recorder and Clerk of the Court when Orene Barbee retired in 1977. Carol Ann married Ralph Corbett of Cascade, Montana. (See also CORBETT — Winnett)

**SCHAEFFER, Stanley** Stanley and Nelle Schaeffer lived near the Canfield store in Cat Creek. They had four boys — Robert, Bill, Joe and Calvin — and one daughter, Pat, at the time they lived in Cat Creek. Another daughter, Wanda, was born after the couple moved to Oilmont, Montana. Stanley was either a tool dresser or a driller in the oil fields.

**SCHMIDT, Carl** Carl Schmidt was the son of Emil Schmidt. (See also SCHMIDT — Winnett) It has been reported he had charge of the company car carrying supplies between Winnett and Cat Creek when the discovery well was drilled. In the 1920s he was employed by Continental Oil Company in Cat Creek and later transferred to the Kevin field. In 1932 the family returned to Winnett and Carl worked for the Catlin Garage for a short time before going to work for Continental Oil again.

Carl and his wife, Ada, had two daughters — Anna (1921) and Elenor (1924).

**SCHROCK, Dave** Dave Schrock was an Oregon seed grower who became interested in the oil activity in Petroleum County during the 1940s. He invested in oil property in both Rattlesnake Butte and the Mosby Dome. The Winnett Times reported, "Schrock-Fifer No. 4, a direct west offset to the discovery well, came in with an initial flow of 265 barrels daily. It has put the discovery well in the shade by flowing at the rate of 224 barrels daily of 51-gravity oil, with indications this flow may increase when the hole has cleaned itself of rotary mud and drilling water. (The discovery well is flowing at 185).

"This well apparently checked almost exactly the same structurally as the discovery well, that topped the Ellis at 1394. At about the same surface elevation, it got the top of the Ellis at 1391. It was drilled with rotary tools to a greater depth into the sand than any of its predecessors, with the hole bottomed at 1423 when drilling ceased, approximately 32 feet into the sand."

David Schrock and his Cat Creek oil interests were featured in the Sunday issue of "Montana Parade," a feature section of the *Great Falls Tribune* in December of 1945. The cover picture shows Schrock opening the valve on one well to show the oil gushing from the pipe. The article states, "Mr. Schrock, who has been dubbed 'the lucky pilgrim,' 'lucky farmer from Oregon,' and other more or less fitting nicknames, with his wife are taking the matter of fame and fortune in stride, apparently their natural congeniality being unaffected by all the excitement."

Mr. Schrock sold his Cat Creek oil interest to Farmers Union about 1948.

**SCHWARTZ, Harry Jr.** Harry Schwartz was born March 7, 1888, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He received his elementary education in Tennessee. After coming to Montana he studied geology at the University of Montana. He married Lena L. Phillips in Rapid City, South Dakota, and the couple had two children — Georgia and Barbara.

Mr. Schwartz was active in oil business all of his life. He and Herbert Hover were partners in the Hover-Schwartz Syndicate in the early Cat Creek oil field. They brought in a producing well, the 19th in the Cat Creek field, on February 10, 1921.

Mr. Schwartz's interest in the Cat Creek area never wavered. In 1945 he was instrumental in the location of the new discovery well which brought a revival to the oil activity in and around Cat Creek. When the Schrock-Fifer No. 4 well came in a producer, the *Winnett Times* reported, "In addition to bringing assurance of financial gain to its backer, Dave Schrock, it was also a moral victory for H. H. Schwartz Jr., a geologist-engineer who made location for the discovery well and who also made location for the three flowing Ellis sand wells that were drilled in rapid succession thereafter."

Harry Schwartz Jr. died in Lewistown, Montana, in September 1956.

**SCHWARZ, Christopher** "Chris" Schwarz owned land in the Kelley area but he and his wife, Ivy, also lived in Winnett. (See SCHWARZ — Winnett) They moved to Cat Creek in 1942 where Chris was employed by Continental Oil. Ivy often helped in the Cat Creek Post Office. The Schwarzes retired to Beaver Crossing, Nebraska.

**SCOTT, Cleve** Cleve Scott and his wife, Etna, lived on the Fifer place on the Musselshell River. Cleve worked with Stanley Schaeffer drilling wells in the early oil field days. The Scotts and the Fails were good neighbors and Isabelle Fail Schaeffer remembers evenings spent pulling taffy and playing Lotto with Jerrel, the Scotts only son. The Cleve Scotts moved to Cut Bank, Montana, in 1937.

Jerrel was born in 1911 and graduated from Winnett High School in 1932. He worked in the oil fields at Cat Creek before marrying Olive Parkinson of the class of 1931 in 1935. (See also PARKINSON — Musselshell River) Jerrel also worked in the Cut Bank oil fields before he went to the South Pacific with the Seabees from 1943-45.

He then worked for the border patrol and the immigration service.

Jerrel and Olive retired in 1975, purchased a new mobile home and moved back to Winnett. Local folks were happy to welcome these two former residents home. However, their stay in Winnett was short-lived. Jerry suffered a heart attack and passed away in May 1976. Olive, after a valiant battle with cancer, died just three weeks later.

**SCOTT, Owen J.** Owen Scott married Mona Baker in October 1925. Mona was a daughter of Perry Baker, Petroleum County sheriff. (See also BAKER — Flatwillow) The couple lived in Cat Creek in the 1930s where Owen was employed in the oil field. He was transferred to Oilmont, Montana. The couple had three children — Mona Ellise, Gerald and Steven. Later they made their home in Texas. Owen died in January 1950.

**SHANNER** (W. T. 7-1-21) "Field superintendent Shanner, of the Schaffer Oil and Refining Co. has tendered his resignation and left today for Chicago from whence he will journey to his old home in Louisiana.

"Since coming to the Cat Creek field about a year ago in the capacity of field manager for the company, he has established that concern in Cat Creek and opened up a development program for them that bids fair to make them one of the largest producing companies in the field. The large number of acquaintances he had made, both in the city and in the field, will miss the genial gentleman."

**SHAUGHNESSY, John L.** John L. "Jack" Shaughnessy farmed in the Lewistown area until 1929 when he and his wife purchased the Cat Creek dairy from William Hostetler. Jack, the son of Thomas and Anna Shaughnessy, was born in Kellerton, Iowa. He served in the Army during World War I and came to Montana in 1921. He married Leta M. Hough, daughter of O. K. Hough, early-day homesteaders. (See also HOUGH)

During the deep-snow winter of 1929-30 Jack carried the mail to and from Winnett in a Ford Model T "run-about" equipped with caterpillar treads and two runners in front instead of front wheels. The *Winnett Times* reported on January 24, 1930, that "the contraption climbs through and over drifts with little or no trouble. However, it is slow-moving and requires 3½ hours to make the 25 mile trip to the field and three hours to return to Winnett. It is the only vehicle that has been able to travel since the roads drifted in. It is even difficult for horses to break through." During the 1930s John worked for Continental Oil Company.

John and Leta had two daughters — Margery (1922) and Betty (1925). Margery graduated from Winnett High School in 1940 and married Kenneth Cochran. (See also COCHRAN). John was transferred to Riverton, Wyoming, in 1943 and later to Gebo, Wyoming. Mr. Shaughnessy retired in 1961 and moved to Billings. Leta died in July 1985, John in September of the same year.





*Margery and Betty Shaughnessy and Alvin Fail at the Brown School in 1933*

**SHAUGHNESSY, Ted** Ted Shaughnessy worked for Continental Oil Company in Cat Creek during the 1930s. He was a son of Thomas and Anna Shaughnessy. Ted was married to Doris Dudley, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Dudley of Grassrange, Montana. The couple had two daughters — Patsy Ann (1933) and a girl born in 1937. The family moved from Cat Creek to Winnett in 1936, and were transferred by Continental Oil Company to Lance Creek, Wyoming, in 1943.

**SHAUGHNESSY, Thomas R.** Thomas and Anna Shaughnessy came to Montana in 1918. T. R. was born in Troy, New York, on December 10, 1856. He and his wife were married in 1882. The couple lived in Iowa until they came to Montana. They had six children — Ted and Jack, both of whom lived in Cat Creek and worked for Continental Oil Company; Mrs. Andrew Hay; Mrs. Wayne Elkin; Mrs. M. J. Swift; and Frank.

Thomas and Anna moved to Lewistown, Montana, to make their home in about 1930. Thomas died in 1940.

**SHAVER, Tom** Tom Shaver and Rose Schleich of Powell, Wyoming, were married on January 2, 1945. Tom was a driller for B. R. Gainer and Associates. He was working for them at the time they drilled their first test well on the Mosby Dome in 1945. He later became the pumper for the Schrock wells and was a foreman for Farmers Union when CENEX purchased the Schrock property.

The Shavers had two children — Beverly (1947) and LaDonna (1945).

**SHAY, John** (Sec 8,9-15-28) John Shay was born in 1856 in Kansas and was married to Mary Ann Peller who was born in Kansas in 1859. The couple had ten children — Fred (1882), Eslie (1883), Lillie (1885), Walter (1887), Effie (1889), Roy (1891), Carrie (1893), Clarence (1896), Lennial (1898) and Pearl (1902).

In 1910 John Shay hired his son Walter to come to Montana from Oklahoma and file on a homestead. Later the same year, John and Mary Ann and eight of the remaining nine children at home followed. The eldest son, Fred, was a policeman and stayed behind in Perry, Oklahoma. Eslie, Roy and Clarence all took out homesteads near Walter's property. In 1912 Walter died. "When my brother died," Pearl recalled, "everyone said we would lose the homestead because final proof had not been made. Dad went to see a lawyer, and he said, 'No, you bury your son on that ranch and you can prove up on it.' So that's what we did. We turned a small area into a cemetery." The cemetery has been used for many years since that time.

John hauled logs from the breaks and built an eight-room two-story log house for his family, and for years the family prospered on the farm.

The Winnett Times printed an interesting article about the Shay Ranch in July 1924. "Fifteen years ago John Shay arrived in Petroleum County and located at his present site . . . All his barns, granaries and sheds as well as corrals are built of logs that were hewed and hauled the distance from the river. As the years wore on and his family grew up about him, he was ably assisted by his sons who also homesteaded next to their father giving the Shay family 800 acres of fertile Cat Creek soil in one parcel. . . They own a complete threshing rig and besides threshing their own crops, do considerable work for the neighbors. They went through the trying dry years without flinching and with bountiful crops last year as well as this year and are well on the way to making up for the lean dry years."

Esle "Shorty" Shay homesteaded (Sec 23-16-29) but went to work in the Cat Creek oil field soon after it was opened in 1921. He moved to the Kevin, Montana, oil fields in the 1930s and made his home in that area until his death in 1960. Shorty was married twice and had two daughters, Juanita and Mildred, by his first marriage and one by his second marriage.

Lillie Shay married Orlie Cox before the family came to the Cat Creek Basin to homestead. (See also COX)

Effie married Mr. Gang and made her home in Oklahoma.

Roy married Hazel Pratt in 1917. Hazel was the daughter of Charles and Mary Pratt, other local homesteaders. Roy and Hazel had three children — Cleon, Marvel and Margery. The family moved to Fairfield, Montana, in 1938, and to Lewistown, Montana, about ten years later. Roy worked for the telephone company. Hazel died in 1953, Roy in 1951.

Carrie Shay married Neal Pratt in 1914. Neal was one of the earliest young settlers in the Cat Creek Basin having come with Floyd Maine in 1910. Neal and Carrie moved

to Minnesota where they raised six sons and two daughters.

Clarence "Tuffy" Shay and his wife Josie had one daughter, Marion. Tuffy worked in the oil fields all of his life — first in Cat Creek as a tool dresser and driller and then in Kevin, Montana, where he had extensive oil interests with Rudy Preval.

Lennial made his home on his parents' homestead. He died in 1944.

Pearl Shay became acquainted with Frank Bastian when he and another carpenter came out from Winnett to build the Shay schoolhouse. The two men boarded and roomed with the Shay family. After Pearl and Frank were married, they moved to Cat Creek where Frank was employed. (See also BASTIAN — Cat Creek — Winnett)

Mary Ann Shay died in 1925, John in 1929. They were both buried in the Shay Cemetery. Lillie, who died in 1935; Len, who died in 1944; and Effie, who died in 1965, are also buried there.

**SHIRK, Garfield** (Sec 18-15-28) Garfield Shirk was one of Petroleum County's young early homesteaders. He settled northeast of Winnett. He farmed, raised a few cattle, and built a dam, enlarging it later to have a good supply of water for his stock. He raised fine vegetables in the coulee below the dam.

(W. T. — July 1921) "Mrs. M. E. Shirk arrived from Fort Benton for a three-month visit with her son, Garfield Shirk, who has a farm near this city." That same year, he also enlarged his cow barn.

**SHORT, Harry** Harry Short worked in Cat Creek in the 1930s and then moved to Kevin, Montana, for a time. He returned to the Cat Creek oil field, however, and worked on the Chamberlain lease. In 1947 he was put in charge of their operation, a position he held at the time of his death in 1950.

**SIMPSON, George** George Simpson worked in the Cat Creek, Kevin and Wyoming oil fields for many years. He died in Lewistown, Montana, in 1944. He did not have any immediate family in the area.

**SIMS, Claude** Claude Sims and Helen Redd were married June 4, 1947. (See SIMS — Musselshell River and Winnett; REDD — Flatwillow) The couple had four children — Lynn (1948), Ronnie (1950), Max (1952) and Mike (1954). Claude and Helen lived in Winnett for two years before moving to Cat Creek, where Claude was employed by Farmers Union Central Exchange for 22 years. The following was submitted by Helen "Doll" Sims.

"We had fifteen happy years in the Cat Creek community before we moved back to Winnett to send the children through high school. I remember the country dances at Dovetail, Valentine, Flatwillow and Ross. I remember crossing the Musselshell River one time to go to a dance at Ross. Ed Sult was ahead of us in his pickup, leading the way. He looked back at us and the water was up to the headlights on our new Buick station wagon! We had all

missed the crossing.

"I remember being down at Sults one time in the dead of winter for breakfast. Harry Bevis, Ed Sult and Claude decided to go hunting so it was up to me to drive Betty Bevis and her children and my children back up the 'Fail Hill.' It was ice-packed and we would get almost to the top (in the same Buick station wagon), spin out and slide backwards to the bottom of the hill! What a scary slide with all the children in the car! It took pioneering spirit to survive the weather and roads but there were such great neighbors and friends there!

"We were very fortunate to have a home-grown teacher for a number of years — Gunda Sikveland Shaw. The children loved her and she was good for them and to them.

"All the fun we had was homemade. The men built and acquired (one way or another) enough Model T's to form a club. We had races all over the state. We attracted participants from as far away as California and Nebraska for a Missoula, Montana, to Sidney, Montana, race one year. One high school reunion we had a race from Lewistown to Winnett as part of the entertainment for the 'homecoming.' I raced one of our T's. I broke down before the finish line but what a thrill to be part of the race! Bette Matovich was my co-pilot — brave lady, huh?

"We moved to Winnett and bought the Lloyd Berg home in 1963 to send the children through high school. Claude drove back and forth to Cat Creek to work until we left there in 1970, when we moved to Billings for a year and then on to Missoula, where we still reside 1988." (See also SIMS — Winnett)

**SIMS, Glen** Glen "Jiggs" Sims worked for Continental Oil Company in Cat Creek in the 1950s. Jiggs is married to Ruth Noll, 1949 Winnett High School graduate. (See also SIMS — Winnett and Musselshell River)

**SINCLAIR, Mick** Mick Sinclair, son of Robert and Della Sinclair, was born at Valentine, Montana, in 1928. (See also SINCLAIR — Dovetail) He married Frances Akenson in the spring of 1948. She was born in Roundup, Montana, and was a graduate of Montana State University. She came to Winnett to teach in 1947.

Mick worked for Farmers Union Central Exchange in Cat Creek. Later he was transferred to Thermopolis, Wyoming.

**SISSON** Mr. and Mrs. Sisson came to Cat Creek with the Clark Drilling Company in 1946. They rented the Art Winnett trailer. Mr. Sisson was a tool pusher.

**SKILES, J. E.** Etta Skiles, the six-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Skiles died from rattlesnake bites in July 1923. She was struck twice in the leg by a large rattlesnake with six rattles and a button. It is believed high water forced the snakes into the town of Cat Creek.