



Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hodges

Harry was building a chicken house when a strong wind tipped a hayrack on him, breaking ribs and puncturing his liver. The family got him into the house, and a neighbor rode horseback to Musselshell for a doctor but there seemed to be nothing that could be done. He lived in terrible misery for one week. He died Saturday, June 16, 1917. As per Harry's request, his body was laid to rest on a hill overlooking his beloved homestead. Good neighbors worked very hard on an extremely hot day to fulfill the burial request. Layers of underground rock caused them to dig in three different locations before a final site was found.

Mother Hodges and son Howard and daughter Esther, with the help of neighbors, managed to get along. Ivan and Forrest helped with the garden. Boarding teachers brought in some income. Howard also worked for neighbors.

Esther married Ellwood Gross in 1919 and they moved to Dilo, Montana, where Ellwood had a homestead. Howard married Jessie E. Moore of Winifred on July 2, 1920. She had been a school teacher at the Flannigan School. They lived on the Mackrill ranch, where Howard was employed. He also helped farm, when he could, at the Hodges homestead.

The winter of 1919 was one of the worst on record and the family truly had problems, as feed was short for both animals and family.

On Wednesday, August 11, 1920, Mother Hodges became so desperately ill that Ivan had to walk in the night to Mackrills to get Jessie and Howard to take her to the doctor. All of her own home doctoring and the neighbors' help had been to no avail. Somehow she and Ruth were taken to Winnett where her oldest son, Bill, and his wife, Gertrude, lived. Forrest and Ivan stayed home to keep the garden watered. Dr. Alexander attended her, but she was beyond help. She died in Bill's home in Winnett on her 43rd birthday, Friday, August 13, 1920.

Because there was no undertaker, services were held the day after her death in the first little white schoolhouse of Winnett. Rev. Aiton, Winnett's first Methodist minister, conducted the services. Mrs. Aiton sang "City Four Square" and "The Perfect Day." Mother Hodges was laid

to rest in the Winnett cemetery. It had been her dying wish that Howard take over the homestead and keep the children — Ivan, 13; Forrest, 10; and Ruth, 4 — together. Mr. and Mrs. Hodges had been very active in establishing the first schools and were instrumental in organizing the first Kelley Social Circle. Harry was one of the signers of the petition that created District #121 from #107, was one of the first trustees when District #138 was created from District #121, and circulated the petition that resulted in creating District #149 from District #138.

Esther eventually moved to her husband's parental home in Madison, South Dakota. Twice a Gold Star Mother, she was named Eminent Homemaker of South Dakota in 1959. The Grosses raised seven children: Emerson, Wallace, Kenneth, Gordon, Lawrence, Viola and John. Esther wrote and published her memoirs, finishing them on her 85th birthday. A copy is in the local Winnett Library, namely, *My Garden of Memories*.

Ivan graduated from eighth grade from the Sheldon School in the spring of 1922. He worked for Swan Munson of Flatwillow that summer and entered Winnett High School in the fall. He worked at different jobs throughout his high school days and graduated from Winnett High School in 1926. The fall of the year found him entering Intermountain Union College. He was chosen captain of that college's football team at the close of his freshman season. He was active also in the Intermountain Glee Club and was a member of their quartet. In 1930 he graduated with a degree in history and a minor in education. He eventually came back to his high school Alma Mater as teacher, coach and administrator. (See HODGES — Winnett)

Forrest finished eighth grade at Kelley School in 1924. He attended Winnett High School in 1925-26, then went to Great Falls High School for one year. He graduated from Winnett High School in 1929. He attended Billings Polytechnic for a time. He worked on the ranch with brother Howard and others; then he went into business with Howard in 1934, running the Mackrill ranch and, in addition, sheep of their own. Later, while working on a ranch near Harlowton, he met, and then married, Belle Skillen on October 10, 1939. Previously married and divorced, she had a daughter, Ethel. To Forrest and Belle a daughter, Ellen, was born. Forrest and Belle were later divorced. After working in the shipyards on the west coast during World War II, Forrest returned to Kelley. The family members had deeded the homestead to him, so he established a residence there in 1946. Being surrounded by large ranchers, he worked for some of them and also on his own place for nineteen years. For the greater part of that time, he was the only resident of the entire Kelley community.

Because of the sparse population in the area, there were no properly maintained roads. So in 1965 he sold his place to a broker, Bloomdahl, who in turn sold it to Floyd Hill. Forrest was the last of the original owners to leave the Kelley community. The Hodges homestead had been part of the Hodges family history for fifty years. For-

rest bought a home in Roundup and resides there as of this date in 1989. His daughter, Ellen, raised five children — Brenda, Carla, Susan, Charles E. Jr., and Michael Cornwall.

Ruth finished the eighth grade at Sheldon School in 1929. She boarded with Aasruds and at the dormitory the first year of high school. She worked for her board and room at different homes for three years and graduated from Winnett High School in 1933. Ruth helped at the Howard Hodges home that summer. In the fall she left Kelley for good and sought work in Winnett. She worked for her room and board at Waldrops and did housecleaning, ironing and baby-sitting for others until November of 1934. At that time she went to Great Falls for six months to help brother Bill's family, as they were expecting an addition to the family. Bill was working in Kalispell and wanted help and company for Gertrude.

Upon returning to Winnett in July of 1935, Ruth went to work for Ella V. Millsap in the Montana Hotel. At that time the hotel was also running a dining room; so Ruth, along with Faye Boulden, cook, and Bob Gilfeather, who was working for his board and room there, waited tables, washed dishes, made up rooms, washed and mangled hotel laundry, and baby-sat the Whitten baby, Jeri. She saved her money and also earned a working scholarship to attend Billings Polytechnic in the fall of 1937; but, she found that her very good friend, Frances Longpre, was planning on getting married to Rex Eager, and that the position of Winnett Post Office Clerk would be up for grabs. Ruth quickly applied. After all — why spend money on a college education, when you could get a job of 8 hours a day for \$65 a month, without the expense of formal training? Besides, she would be working for Ella V. Millsap, her former well-liked hotel employer who was also the postmaster. That sounded like a mint after working twelve hours a day for \$20 a month and board and room!

Ruth's brother, Ivan, was superintendent of the Winnett schools, so she lived with them, paying \$15 a month for board and room. She bought her first "car," a Montgomery Ward Hawthorne bicycle, so she could deliver the "Special Delivery" mail. Also she purchased a clarinet, and with Mrs. Harry Tripp's patient help, learned to play it and then participated in the High School — Community Orchestra. She also bought and completed a correspondence course in filing.

After five years in the post office, she took a state merit exam for a junior file clerk. She passed and was offered a job in the State Unemployment Service in Helena. It was only a temporary position, so she took it just for the experience, as she had become engaged to Ernest Freburg, and they planned to be married in June. With an eye to the future and with a little girl in her plans, she purchased a new heavy-duty portable Singer sewing machine and made her wedding dress before returning to Winnett the first of June, 1942. (See also FREBURG — Winnett)

HODGES, Howard Howard Earle Hodges was born October 22, 1899, in Wisconsin. He came with his mother and father to Montana in 1913. He was married to Jessie E. Moore (daughter of David and Ida Moore of Winifred) on July 2, 1920, in Lewistown, Montana. This was at the time of the great Lewistown flood, when Spring Creek overflowed even into the Judith Theatre.

At the time of their marriage, Howard was working for Mr. Mackrill and also helping take care of his mother and family on the family homestead. After six weeks of marriage, they became the instant "parents" of three children — Ivan, 13; Forrest, 10; and Ruth, 4 — when Mother Hodges passed away. They moved to the family homestead.

The night of May 25, 1921, their first child was hankering to be born. Although Jessie's mother was there to help, they also thought they should have the help of another midwife. Howard started out on a dark night to find his black team of horses; then he traveled about four miles east to Mrs. Carson's. Upon arriving there, he learned that she was sick and couldn't come to help. So back home he traveled and about another two miles to Mrs. Holecek's. It was with some chagrin that he approached her, as she was the mother of the girl he had courted before Jessie appeared in his life. But, of course, she said, "I'll come." Kathryn Alice arrived on the scene on May 26, 1921. Howard has always jokingly reminded her of all the trouble she caused him before she was even born. Ruth was so happy to have a real doll in the house!

A year later a tiny little girl named June Annette was born on June 10, 1922, at Grandma Moore's near Winifred. In the spring of 1923 the family moved to the Mackrill ranch and lived in the "lower" house, and Howard worked for Mr. Mackrill. That same year Howard brought his first Ford car. The family could hardly wait to see him come over the hill west of the barn.

On May 3, 1925, David Earle made his appearance. Kathryn, June and Ruth were mysteriously left at Grand-



Mr. and Mrs. Howard Hodges

ma Moore's at Winifred. When Jessie and Howard came after them, they had a baby boy with them. He was born at St. Joseph's Hospital in Lewistown, Montana. By this time Howard was in charge of the Mackrill ranch and the family was living in the very nice "upper" house. He had built a large sheep shed, and shearing and lambing were easier.

Another baby was due in the home in November, 1926, so the family moved into Winnett the first of that month; and Ruth entered school there. Bernice Stambaugh also moved in with the family to help. Dr. Alexander had just had an appendicitis operation, so Mrs. Ella Wiggins of the Rimrock Hospital was called in to deliver the baby. The little boy was stillborn and buried near his grandmother Hodges in the Winnett Cemetery. He was not named.

The spring of 1927 found the Hodges family moving again. Lunsford Miles, son-in-law of the Mackrills, decided to take over the ranch; so Howard bought the Kocer place, tore down the Hodges homestead house, and hired Tony Schwarz to build two bedrooms, a new kitchen, and a long porch onto the Kocer house. He also built a new barn.

In February of 1928 Howard purchased a brand-new Chevrolet Sedan. It was a modern miracle with windows instead of isinglass curtains.

Crops in the Kelley area were nearly all completely hailed out the year of 1930. At the Hodges' farm many fryer-size chickens were killed. Again, an addition to the family was expected that winter; and because Ruth needed a place to stay to go to high school, the whole family, with the exception of Howard, moved into the former Frank Nelson house at 101 West Wheeler Street in Winnett. On Christmas Eve, December 24, 1930, Dr. Alexander (with the assistance of Mrs. William Myers of Kelley) delivered Jessie Ann. Was it any wonder that the Campfire Girls' first stop as they went caroling that night was under the Hodges' bedroom window? Auntie Ruth saw to that! They lustily sang "There's a song in the air, there's a star in the sky, there's a mother's deep prayer, and a baby's low cry!"

In 1931-32 times were tough for the family. The whole country was hurting and money was short for everyone. Many were leaving their homesteads. Earle had started school at Sheldon in 1931. Kathryn and June graduated from the eighth grade at Sheldon in the spring of 1935. They attended Winnett High School for about six weeks that fall.

The hard years were taking their toll on Howard and his family, and in the fall of 1935 he located a 240-acre irrigated farm near Fromberg, Montana. He sold his cattle herd (not too extensive by then) — all straight — cows, calves, yearlings, heifers — for 4½ cents a pound. In October the family left Kelley. Howard had been there for 22+ years. He had mixed feelings as he closed the house door for the last time, climbed wearily into the heavily loaded horse-drawn wagon, and headed the horses toward Fromberg. He had no reason not to hold his head high, however. At 17 years of age he had followed his dy-

ing father's admonitions to "Take care of Mother and the children." Then when he was almost 21 years of age, his dying mother has asked that he "Take over the homestead and keep the younger children together." As he climbed into the wagon, if he had listened, he might have heard a voice from the grave on a hill south and west of the homestead, and echoing from Rocking Chair Butte, "Well done, my son!" He had kept a home base for his "first" family. They were all now self-sufficient. The homestead still belonged to the family. At thirty-six years of age, he started over in a land that repaid him for his efforts.

Kathryn graduated from Fromberg High School in 1939. She married Jean Keebler. They raised five children — Shirley, Howard, Stephen, JaLayne and Gregory. Kathryn and Jean now live in Fromberg.

June attended Fromberg High School, but two weeks before she would have graduated with her sister, she died of spinal meningitis, after having scarlet fever and a mastoid operation. She was buried in the Rockvale Cemetery.

Earle graduated from Fromberg High School, then served his country for three years in World War II. He married Jean Parker of Fromberg. They had four children — Kim, Kip, Kirk and Anita Kay. Earle and Jean live on a ranch at Bridger.

Ann married Don Lambrecht of Billings. They had five children — Theodore, Lynn, Lawrence, Karin and Shauna. Don and Ann were divorced. Both re-married. Ann married Nick Chandler of West Virginia. They now live in Sedona, Arizona.

Jessie, who had finished raising the three younger Harry Hodges children and had mothered four of her own, passed away May 14, 1977, at their home in Bridger. She was especially remembered by her children and grandchildren as the great chicken fryer and apple pie maker. She was laid to rest in the Bridger Cemetery.

Howard wrote of his Kelley memoirs: "My wife, Jessie E. Moore, came to our community to teach the then Flannigan School in the fall of 1917. She boarded with neighbors that school year and walked 1½ miles to school. In the winter she would arrive at school about eight a.m. then have to build a fire in the school stove to have it warm when the children arrived. She taught all grades (first to eighth) and had about ten pupils. All this for \$60 per month.

"My mother and sister became acquainted with her shortly after her arrival and both liked her a lot. They started a small match-making game to get me interested. On my eighteenth birthday, October 22, 1917, they organized a surprise birthday party for me. But, like most surprise parties, I learned of it; and as I already had a girl friend, I wasn't anxious to meet any new girls. So along with three neighbor boys (one of whom owned a Model-T), I took off for Lewistown on the morning of my birthday and didn't get back until the next day. What a lousy trick to play on my dear Mother and sister! So I didn't meet Jessie until Thanksgiving Day, 1917, when we had a

community gathering and potluck dinner at a neighbor's home. But I want to say this: after meeting her, I never wanted anyone else. We were married July 2, 1920.

"I enjoyed life and living in Petroleum County, and would never have left but for the terrible drought of 1930 to 1935. I first saw the town of Winnett on July 4, 1915."

Howard now lives in Sage Towers in Billings, Montana.

HODGES, William C. Bill did not come out to Montana from Dakota when his folks did. He was then nearly eighteen years old, and in South Dakota he had a job, which he was loathe to leave; but letters from his family stating that he could have work on the Mackrill ranch, finally convinced him, and he arrived in Melstone on the eve of his eighteenth birthday, September 18, 1913. Mr. Mackrill, accompanied by Esther Hodges, met him when the train arrived about eleven p.m. in a cool fall rain. They had a buggy with a spring seat up front and a low box behind the seat which was made into a bed for Bill. He went to sleep and when he awakened near daylight, he could see completely bare buttes of clay. He told Mr. Mackrill that he wanted to get out, walk back to town, and take the first train to the east. Mr. Mackrill told him that if he would open the gate just ahead, he could walk back if he wanted to. So Bill got out, and by the time he got the gate open his feet were each a foot wide with gumbo and buffalo grass, and he knew that he was not walking back.

Bill worked on different ranches, and then enlisted in the National Guard in the spring of 1916. He had just filed on a homestead north of his father's homestead when the Guard was called into service on the Mexican border. After serving there for five months, he was mustered out, paid with gold coins, and came back to Kelley to work. He was called into service again for World War I and was stationed for a time in Great Falls, Montana. There he met the sweetheart that he had to leave behind when he sailed to Europe to spend considerable time in the fox-holes of France. He was mustered out and returned home August 16, 1919.



Unhappy about leaving his sweetheart! Bill Hodges

He and Gertrude M. Galitzek were married December 10, 1919 in Great Falls. They built a small home in Winnett, and Bill worked for a transfer company and also on the water system in Winnett. They later worked for Mr. Eager on his homestead in the Brush Creek area in Sec. 10-15-27. Dr. Alexander delivered their first son, William, to the Eager ranch on October 12, 1920. During the spring and summer of 1922 they lived and worked on the Dean place north and east of the Hodges' family homestead.

They worked in Melstone for the winter of 1922 and then moved to Great Falls, where Bill worked as a plumber and at the smelter. He finally set up his own plumbing business. In the election of November 3, 1920, he was the successful candidate as a Representative from Cascade County to the Montana Legislature.

They had six children — William Jr., Helen, Grant, Harold, Wade and Patricia. Bill died just before his 90th birthday in September of 1985. Gertrude died in May of 1988 in Great Falls.

HOLECEK, Joseph (Sec. 34-12-28) Joseph homesteaded about the same time as his parents and brothers, but he was situated three miles south of their lands. He was the first to leave. He moved to Lewistown where he was involved in politics.

HOLECEK, Karel (Sec. 14-12-28) Karel (later called Charles) Holecek and Katrina Cervena were married in Czechoslovakia in 1886. Later, with four children — Bohumil, Joseph, James, and Helen — they immigrated to America and settled in Illinois. There Mary was born in 1895, Charles in 1896, John in 1898, George in 1901, Mildred in 1903, and Henry in 1905 at Braceville, Illinois. In the fall of 1912 the family, with the exception of Mary (who had died at the age of 8 months), filed on a homestead in the Kelley country. They also purchased some railroad land.

John, George, Mildred and Henry attended the Mackrill, Hodges, Holecek-Kocer, Rocking Chair Butte and Sheldon schools. When the Kelley Post Office opened, Bohumil was the first carrier between Musselshell and Kelley.

Mildred wrote, "Coming home from school in the spring after a thaw, and when the coulees were running full, John, George, Henry and I had to cross a coulee on a barbed wire fence. Our feet were just above the water and our hearts were in our mouths!!"

Holeceks and their neighbors, the Kocers, raised fields of poppies. Mrs. Holecek was known for her SCRUMP-TIOUS poppy-seed kolaches. If the Holecek children had them in their lunches at school, there wasn't anyone who wouldn't give their whole lunch for just one little kolache!

Front page coverage in the Winnett Times of April 18, 1924, stated: "It will surprise many residents of Winnett to learn that a Petroleum County farmer won first prize at the First National Corn Show in St. Paul for the best ten ears of corn in the year 1915, and then won second prize in 1916. The first prize, a large silver cup standing two feet high, bears the following legend: Presented by First



Karel Holecek, John, George, Bill, Henry and Mrs. Holecek

National Bank of St. Paul to Charles Holecek, Musselshell District #5 Best ten ears of corn; First National Corn Show, December 15-31, 1915.'

"Mr. Holecek, the winner of these splendid trophies has been so unassuming and quiet about the matter that nine years have rolled by before sufficient attention was attracted to the matter to give it the publicity it deserves. Many were of the opinion that it has been only during the last year or two that prize corn was grown in Petroleum County, and it comes with somewhat of a surprise to find that a Kelley man won a National Corn trophy in 1915 and 1916. During those years the Kelley country was classed in the Musselshell District. However, it is now known as one of the big corn raising districts of Petroleum County."

From their 1924 corn crop, the Holeceks shipped 1500# seed corn to the State Nursery at Helena and also filled neighbors' and others' requests for seed.

The Winnett Times also had the following announcement in the February 2, 1925, issue: "Once in a blue moon a couple slyly slip away and are married, keeping the matter a secret from their friends until such a time as they are ready to announce the fact. That was the way it was when Mildred Holecek and Arthur Wright were married at the Methodist parsonage in Idaho Falls. Mr. Wright is an employee of Montana Auto Supply Co. in Dillon, and Mrs. Wright will continue her studies at the Normal College." They had a girl, Marjorie, born May 15, 1926 in Dillon. She is now Marjorie Danahy.

George Holecek was made Petroleum County Road Engineer in 1927, at a salary of \$120 a month.

Holeceks, like their neighbors in that area of the community, were completely hauled out in 1928, and as George related, "After that, things just got worse each year." After two years of having to buy feed for their livestock, they thought that they could do better elsewhere. Consequently, in 1936, they moved to a farm near Joliet and Boyd, Montana.

Mrs. Holecek died February 11, 1946; Mr. Holecek, May 13, 1948; Henry July 23, 1959; Bohumil November 26, 1965. They were all buried in the Rockvale Cemetery. James died July 9, 1969 and was buried in Burns, Kansas.

Joseph died March 30, 1971 and is buried in Lewistown, Montana. Charles died November 16, 1971; Helen Holecek Billings, July 2, 1978; John, May 3, 1985. Mildred's first husband died September 13, 1941. They were all buried in Rockvale Cemetery. Mildred later married Cleve Durdall. He passed away September 15, 1972 and was buried in Portland Oregon. Mildred now (in 1988) lives in Spokane, Washington; and George, in Laurel, Montana.

HOVEN, Peter (Sec. 24-12-27) Mr. Hoven was noted in the 1918 *Polk Directory* as being a resident of the Kelley community. His wife was also listed as a member of Kelley Community Club in 1917. Before coming here, he was a South Dakota college friend of Ellwood Gross, who taught the first Mackrill School in 1913. The Hovens moved to Hobson, Montana, when they left Kelley.

HOWARD, George "Bogue" (Sec. 10-11-28) George was born March 13, 1885, in Bozeman, Montana. He was called "a little bogue" when born and the nickname "Bogue" followed him all his life. He had four sisters and three brothers: Laura, Alice, William, Fred, Charles Edgar, Clara, Esther and Florence.

George homesteaded in 1916. He had married Pearl Small in March of 1915. They had two children — Astle Leroy, born April 29, 1916; and Blanche, born July 14, 1917. Pearl died February 20, 1920, and George eventually moved to the Flannigan place. Besides farming, he was the Musselshell-Kelley mail carrier for many years. This trip was made with horses much of the time.

Blanche and Astle attended the Kelley School. On June 11, 1926, George married Marie Killham (born June 24, 1899), a teacher of the Sheldon School the 1925-26 school year.

In October 1926 the Howard family moved to the home which had just been vacated by the Bly Mastens. Blanche and Astle continued their attendance at the Kelley School. Alice Louise was born May 16, 1927; Ivan Edward, September 9, 1928; Thomas Crandall, August 27,



Mr. and Mrs. George (Bogue) Howard



Back: Blanche Howard; Center: Ivan and Alice Howard; Front Helen, Ruth and Tom Howard

1930; Helen Elizabeth, August 9, 1932; and Ruth Evelyn, October 29, 1933.

Marie stated: "We struggled along trying to farm until 1936. Opening the area to homesteaders was a tragic mistake. No good ever came of it — only hard work, disappointment, and dishonesty!"

They moved to Stevensville, Montana, in 1936. Dorothy Jean was born August 9, 1941. They farmed until 1955, when they moved to Missoula, Montana. George B. continued to work until he was 75 years old. He died June 28 1964, at the age of 79. He was buried in Sunset Gardens, Missoula.

Blanche graduated from Musselshell High School and was married to Edgar Campbell. They had four beautiful children. She died of bone cancer in June 1978 and was buried in Stevensville, Montana. Astle had died in February with a heart condition, after serving in the armed forces. He was buried in Weiser, Idaho.

After George B. died, Marie stated: "I've lived in apartments in Missoula. About the most worthwhile thing I've done was as a Foster Grandparent to Special Education pupils. I've been at North Valley Nursing Home in Stevensville for four years, crippled with arthritis, so I couldn't live alone. I go to the dining room by using a walker. I feel fortunate that two of my girls live in Missoula (thirty miles away) and my son, Ivan, lives just a short ways away. He has a 7-11 type of store and gasoline station."

Ivan often comes to this area to hunt and has friends in the Winnett community. He and his wife, Lois, have two daughters — Katherine Ann, who was born in Billings; and Suzanne Marie, who was born in Butte, Montana.

HOWELL, Mrs. Henry Mrs. Howell taught the Kelley School the year of 1924-25 and 1925-26. Mr. and Mrs. Howell owned a ranch in Musselshell County. Their holdings were in part of what became the Ragged Point oil field. They had many good friends in the Kelley community and came often to visit them and to attend the community club meetings. When Mr. Howell occasionally came early on Friday afternoons to get Mrs. Howell from school, he delighted in showing the pupils some of his kid games and tricks. Although the Howells were both lovers of children, they never had any of their own.

JARETT, Jesse (Sec. 28-12-29) Jesse homesteaded in the Kelley area and was listed in the 1914-1915 Polk Directory as owning 160 acres and having personal property valued at \$840. In 1916 he owned 60 acres and personal property worth \$690.

JOHNSON, Einar (Sec. 2-12-28) Einar was a bachelor neighbor of Lester and Walter Sheldon. During the horrible winter of 1919, he was a helpful friend in getting horses back on their feet when they were down.

JOHNSON, Henning (Sec. 20-12-28) The only information about Mr. Johnson was taken from school board minutes: Mr. Johnson was chosen to travel to Lewistown on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Kelley School District #138. They were seeking legal advice on the proper method of selecting sites for the Dixon and Flannigan schools, submitting plans to the State Board of Health, conducting a bond election, selling the bonds, advertising for a contractor, and then selecting one. Mr. Johnson's expense for seeking all such advice was paid from school funds.

JOHNSON, Knute (Sec. 32-13-29) Knute was a good hard working Norwegian. He married the Larsen's oldest daughter. He was also a member of the Kelley baseball team. The census showed a son, Ernest, born June 29, 1917, and Lester, born in 1921. (See also JOHNSON — Musselshell)

JORGENSEN, Nels (Sec. 30-13-29) Nels neighbored Emil Hanson to the south. He was a bachelor and had a little trouble with the English language. He is reported to have said, "It's funny, I can say 'Yorgenson' real plain, but I can't say 'yug.'"

KAUFMAN, Fred (Sec. 12-12-28) Fred Kaufman's land was below and to the east of Rocking Chair Butte. A teacher of the Rocking Chair Butte school knew that Mr. Kaufman was gone for the winter and would not be using his cabin. Since the cabin was much closer to the school than was the place she boarded, she decided to move in. She was happily abiding there when Mr. Kaufman returned earlier than expected. Being very unhappy to find his home so occupied, he promptly threw all her belongings out, and she had to return to her former boarding place.

KELLEY, W.H. (Section 30-12-28) Mr. Kelley picked out his beautifully flat land, only to find that it was 100% gumbo. He was one of the early homesteaders whose

name was put in a hat — the name drawn became the post office name. Thus, he had a place named for him, although he never lived there after proving up.

KLAUDA, Cyril (Sec. 8-12-28) Cyril was a one-man band for Kelley dances and entertainment. He played snare drum, bass drum, and accordion.



Cyril Klauda — Kelley's one-man band

KLAUDA, Martin (Sec. 8-12-28) Mrs. Martin Klauda was a sister of Mrs. Martin Kozumpleck. There is not much information on the Klaudas, but in news items of the Winnett Times, it was found that "a baby daughter arrived at their home in September of 1921"; also, "after Kozumplecks moved to Melstone, Montana, Klaudas moved into their house to be closer to a school"; "they moved into Lewistown, Montana, but returned for the winter of 1922"; "Mrs. Klauda and children went to Chicago, Illinois, to live in 1933." They had two other children — Elsie, born May 26, 1914; and Harry, born Sept. 9, 1915.

KOCER, Joseph (Sec. 11-12-28) Joseph Kocer did not homestead, but he and his family came to the Kelley community in the 1910 era. They bought the east one-half of Section 11-12-28, Northern Pacific Railroad land. They built a log house. They had two boys, George and Robert.

In April of 1915 Mr. Kocer was elected to be a trustee of Kelley School District #138. He did not hold that position long, because School District #149 (of which he was a resident) was created from part of District #138, and the former Holecek School became the Kocer School, as it was situated on the southeast corner of his land and was

now in District 149.

Mr. Kocer erected a school building of his own very near to the Rocking Chair Butte for the next year. School was held there for two years and was known as the Rocking Chair Butte School. The building, which was owned by Mr. Kocer, was then moved to the Kocer home and used as a granary.

There is no known record as to just when the Kocers left the community. In March of 1923 a Kelley news item of the Winnett Times read: "J.M. Kocer and family took a Saturday evening ride in their benzine buggy, visiting with Russell Casswell family. They were forced to return home with Russell's buckskin hay burners!"

Former residents believe that Kocers left the area in about 1924 and moved to a farm north of Winnett for a time before returning to South Dakota.

KOZUMPLECK, Martin (Sec. 14-12-28) Martin and Annie Kozumpleck were part of the settlement known as "little Bohemia" — the Holecek's, Kocer's, and Kozumpleck's lands being contiguous. Mrs. Kozumpleck was a member of the Kelley Social Club.

Howard Hodges relates a sad story about them: "To me the death of the Kozumpleck baby was very saddening. I was just 16 years old and working for Swede Nielsen. Swede had the job of breaking sod for Kozumplecks to help them prove up on their homestead. I was doing the work with Swede's mules and had been having dinner with Kozumplecks every day for about 10 days. In so doing I became very attached to the little fellow. He just suddenly became very ill and died two days later. We buried him up on the hill at the corner of their quarter section."

The school census showed children as follows: Annie, born June 7, 1910; Charles, born Feb. 28, 1912; and Adeline, born June 14, 1916.



Mr. and Mrs. Martin Kozumpleck and their children

KROETCH, Lawrence F. (Sec. 23-12-28) Lawrence F. Kroetch was born March 9, 1887, in Plainville, Kansas. He married Effie Belle Haroldson who was born in Wisconsin. Sometime around 1915, he bought ¼ of a railroad section near Kelley. The Kroetches had three children — Joseph, who was born in Plummer, Idaho, on August 2, 1911; John, who was born in Spokane on Dec. 27, 1913; and Mary, who was born in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on April 22, 1918. Joe, John and Mary all attended the Kelley School and all graduated from the eighth grade there.

The family were active community members, and all of them enjoyed singing and dancing. For one of the money-making projects at Kelley one year, an election was held to ascertain who was the laziest man in the community. Lawrence Kroetch and Howard Hodges were the chosen candidates. The one for whom the most money was collected was to be the winner. It was a very close race — a hotly contested issue — but just before the money was counted, Lawrence came up with enough money to put Howard in the winner column. The winner received a one-pound jar of Epsom salts to help him keep busy!!

The following Kelley item came from the Winnett Times of 7-18-24: "Mrs. Lawrence (Effie) Kroetch and Mrs. Russell Casswell and children were driving to town. Going down a steep hill, the tongue of the buggy came down, frightening the horses. The ladies and children jumped out of the buggy and the horses ran away. Mr. Seargent of the Lepper ranch found the horses and buggy, repaired the damages; and the occupants, with a few minor bruises, returned home."

The Kelley community was very saddened when Mrs. Effie Kroetch became suddenly ill with a thyroid condition, was taken to St. Joseph's Hospital in Lewistown, and died four days later — October 30, 1928.

In 1938 the family moved to Billings where Lawrence, along with Lun Miles, also of the Kelley country, had a meat market. In 1938, Lawrence, with the help of Ray Gotzinger, dismantled the dwelling and sheds at Kelley, and took the lumber to Billings where it was used on a home lot there. On February 15, 1939 Lawrence married Anne Gotzinger, a widow.

Joe Kroetch graduated from Winnett High School in 1929, and from the University of Montana. He also attended Gonzaga University at Spokane, Washington. Joe was in the Air Force for a time during World War II and he worked for Husky in Cut Bank, Montana. He obtained his C.P.A. rating from the University of Montana and set up his own business in Cody, Wyoming. He married Frances Mace May 19, 1951. They had one daughter, Carol. Joe died May 18, 1982 and was buried in Cody, Wyoming.

John Kroetch graduated from Winnett High School in 1935. John attended aircraft school and was a weather instructor in the Philippines. During the Korean War, he also attended the General Motors Institute. Later he managed a Texaco service station in Billings, Montana. He married Olive Williams. They had two daughters, Leslie and Cindy. John and Olive live in Billings.



Effie Haroldson just before marriage to Lawrence Kroetch

*Lawrence Kroetch
Oh, so happy that he
lost the election!*

Mary Kroetch attended Winnett High School for a time until her father left in 1938. She graduated from Billings High School in 1939, and from Townsend Beauty College in 1940. She married Rupert Potter June 22, 1946. Rupert was a career Army officer from 1939 to 1963. He served in the Canal Zone for three years and also in World War II in Germany. He helped launch the first U.S. Satellite with Doctor Wernher von Braun, while stationed at Huntsville, Alabama. His last job before retirement was with the Homestake Mine at Lead, South Dakota, as an Electronics Technician. Mary and Rupert "Red" had two daughters, Mary and Linda, and two sons, James and Russell. Mary and "Red" live in Sturgis, South Dakota.

Lawrence Kroetch died July 24, 1973, and was buried in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Anne Gotzinger Kroetch died April 4, 1977, and was buried in Spokane, Washington.

LAMPE, Martin Susie Lampe had two children — Ver-na Yahner (or Zahner), born June 13, 1903; and Elizabeth Yahner (or Zahner), born May 19, 1909. Martin and Susie Lampe had two children — Adelia, born 10-21-1915; and Bernice, born 3-12-18. They lived in Kelley School District #138 and Mr. Lampe was elected as trustee in 1919.

LARSEN, Jacob (Sec. 30-13-29) Jacob and Caroline Larsen moved from Kenmore, North Dakota, and settled about 4½ miles east of Emil Hansen's homestead. It was noted in the Winnett Times that their daughter, Anna, accepted a position as clerk in the Aristo Theatre in Winnett, June 10, 1921. Their oldest daughter, Emma, married Knute Johnson. Martha married Emil Hansen, January 3, 1922. Jacob Larsens moved back to Kenmore, North Dakota, and the Emil Hansen family moved onto their place in 1925. After Jacob Larsen's death, Caroline Larsen made her home with the Emil Hansens for some time.

LAWRENCE, W.W. (Sec. 5-13-28) Mr. Lawrence was born July 23, 1868. He and Mrs. Lawrence came to the Petroleum County area and homesteaded in 1914. They had two children — a son, D.D.; and a daughter, Katherine. Mrs. Lawrence passed away in 1919.

The following news appeared in the Winnett Times: "While Mr. Lawrence was in Winnett on April 4, 1929, his hired man burned the weeds around some of the buildings. The fire got out of control when the wind arose. Mr. Lawrence lost both his barn and granary and all the contents except for one set of harness which was removed from the granary."

In May of 1944, Mr. Lawrence was helping with lambing operations on the Cook and Iverson ranches at Dovetail. He died suddenly of a heart attack while being brought into Winnett on May 22, 1944.

LEPKE, Henry (Sec. 20-12-28) In 1925 there was another Kelley sale and farewell dance and Henry and Nina Lepke left for Michigan. Roy Miller took over their place. The Lepkes had a son, Berton Lepke, born 4-21-1918.

LLOYD, E. J. (Sec. 29-12-29) Lloyd purchased a Northern Pacific railroad section five miles northeast of the Kelley Post Office.

LOFFEL, John (Sec. 32-11-28) John was not a homesteader of Petroleum County, but, like several others, he and his family were a vital part of Kelley community affairs.

In his search for just the right place to locate, he walked from the Mosby-Sandsprings area to Musselshell. He worked for a time in a dairy near Roundup before settling on his homestead. He met and married Miriam Adams, a teacher at Westside School District #57, Musselshell County. She and her sister and two brothers were also homesteaders in the same area on Howard Coulee.

To this union five girls were born — Martha, Ruth, Sara, Lida and Jean. Legend has it that after the second daughter was born, John vowed to let his beard grow until such time as he would get a son. When he left the community in 1942, he still had his beard!

The five girls all attended Westside School. When they were ready for high school, Mrs. Loffel spent 12 or 13 years in an apartment in Musselshell during the week, and back to the ranch on weekends. They managed to send all of the girls on to college and business college, even though times were pretty hard.

Martha became a registered nurse and worked in Billings. She moved to Culbertson, Montana, in December 1950. There she was married to Wilfred Herness and had 4 children. She worked part time in the hospital in Culbertson and was working two nights a week right up to the time of her death in January 1987. She loved her work and was one of the best. She passed away when an artificial aortic valve failed.

Ruth graduated from the Billings Polytechnic Institute and went to Culbertson in the fall of 1943 to teach com-



Mr. and Mrs. John Loffel

mercial science and journalism. She married Robert Matelin and they had three children — Linda, Marion, and Milo. Ruth's husband passed away in 1962, and she still lives in Culbertson (1989).

Sara went to business college, was a secretary for the county agent, a homemaker, and more recently (the last 20 years) a classroom aide, and now a school bookkeeper. She and Arnold Thomsen had five children, with three sons still living.

Lida Kluzek was a science teacher, homemaker, lab technician, and is now retired in Arizona. They have two girls and one son.

Jean married during her college days, was a homemaker, a bridge teacher, and before her death, a school-bus driver in Lexington, Kentucky. They have three daughters and one son, and four grandchildren. In



Ruth Loffel with kitten, Martha with a pet bunny

March of 1987, Jean passed away after a valiant battle of nearly seven years with cancer.

Miriam Loffel died in Billings in August 1961 and John in July 1971.

Among Ruth's memories of Kelley were the combined Christmas programs of the Eastside, Westside, and Kelley schools — particularly the time she had to sing one verse of "We Three Kings" all by herself; also, her delightful memories of the community club gatherings as she said, "and there was always one of those huge crocks of REAL lemonade with the rinds and seeds and all in it. Ahh! DELICIOUS!!"

MACK, Myron (Sec. 32-12-29) The only information to be found on Myron Mack came from the Polk Directories. The one dated 1914-15 revealed that Myron owned 160 acres and \$1160 worth of personal property. In 1916 he owned 1640 acres and held personal property worth \$690. His land was located four miles east of the Kelley Post Office.

MACKRILL, Bertis (Sec. 24-12-28) Bertis Mackrill was one of the earliest homesteaders and settlers in the Kelley community. He encouraged homesteaders to settle near his ranch and then bought their places as soon as their land was proved up. Often, he would hire them on his ranch to give them some cash with which to operate.

He was a great horseman, and also, a horse dealer. Associates remember him as a very prudent man who believed in taking very good care of horses and equipment. As an instance — when his hired men would go to the river for cedar posts or pine wood to burn, though they returned late at night, they would have to unload the wood after they had something to eat, because it was hard on the wagons to keep them loaded overnight.

The Polk Directory of 1914-15 noted that Bert Mackrill owned 800 acres with personal property valued at \$4970. In 1916 the figures were: 1600 acres and personal property of \$7530.

Mr. and Mrs. Mackrill (Helen) had one daughter, Lisle, who attended the local grade schools and graduated from Fergus County High School of Lewistown.

Their home was the site of many large community gatherings. Mrs. Mackrill liked to sing; and many community song fests were held around their piano.

An undated article taken from the *Winnett Times* and reprinted in the *Grass Range Review* recounts a gathering at the Mackrill Ranch during World War I.

"That the true patriotic spirit awakened throughout the land by the great world war has penetrated the most remote section of Fergus County, and is not confined to the more thickly populated sections, was forcibly illustrated at the B.C. Mackrill ranch recently when neighbors for miles around gathered to do honor to the boys in that vicinity who had gone to the defense of the country. The Mackrill ranch is in the vicinity of Kelley Post Office, some thirty miles removed from Winnett and a railroad.

"The occasion was the dedication of a service flag con-



Mr. Bert Mackrill

Mrs. Helen Mackrill

taining twenty stars. Stewart McConochie was induced to make the long trip from Lewistown to make the address, and a more sympathetic audience never listened to a patriotic address. Notwithstanding the fact that the people there were far removed from railroad communication, and mail irregularity proves the rule rather than the exception, that indomitable patriotic spirit that has made America the envy of the world in its accomplishments of all its undertakings, was as much in evidence at this far removed spot as it is at patriotic demonstrations in our largest cities."

Mr. and Mrs. Mackrill were kind and thoughtful neighbors. Mr. Mackrill died in the early 1920s, and he left his ranch to the management of Howard Hodges, to run on shares. (See also MILES — Kelley)

MASTEN, Bly (Sec. 10-11-28) Mrs. Masten was the daughter of Mrs. William Small and a sister to Bogue Howard's first wife. Three of their children attended Kelley School in 1926-27. They were Goldie, Carrie and James. Mastens moved into the Blackstone house after that family left, but they were not there very long. They were believed to have moved to Gage, Montana, in 1927. Bly was a member of the Kelley baseball team.

McCOLGEN, John (Sec. 26-12-28) McColgen's place was well known around the community — not only for the goodness of the people, but because of a hill on the road north of their buildings. It was not a long hill, in fact, quite short, but very steep and of sandy soil. Its victims sometimes had to ascend it backwards. That was due to the fact that there was only gravity flow from the gas tank to the carburetor in the Model T cars. That little hill would be nothing to the cars of today; and probably about the second time the county road crew ran its grader through it, there wouldn't be a hill anymore. But it had its victims. Successful drivers were the ones who could get up enough speed and momentum to top the hill before the carburetor went dry.