



Earl and Mary Fleharty



Les Thompson, Marilyn and Lois Fleharty (baby)

In 1956 Flehartys sold their share of the ranch to Jack Beck and moved into Winnett. Earl reopened the Rimrock Theater in 1950. He was Winnett school custodian the year of 1958-1959. Mary taught in the Winnett schools from 1950 to 1959. She had previously taught in Petroleum County country schools for 16 years. In 1960 Flehartys moved to Kalispell, where Earl operated a peat business and worked at carpentry.

Earl passed away in 1970. Mary continued to teach until 1973, then retired. Mary stated, "The Winnett community will always be home to all of us, as we were there so many years, and that is where we raised our kids."

Marilyn graduated from Winnett High School in 1947. "Dimpy," as she was known, married Don Anderson. They had no children. Lois and LuAnn both graduated from Winnett High School in 1955. Lois married Joe Rose. They have three children — David, Roger and Carla. LuAnn married Harold Sharkey, and they have four

children — Ron, Carol, Gail and Rodney. The family moved from Winnett before Jim graduated from high school. He is married, and reportedly, has three children. (See also FLEHARTY — Blakeslee and Winnett)

**FLEURY, Antoine** Mrs. Elizabeth Swan, in the *Heritage Book of the Original Fergus County Area*, related some early history of the Fleurys. Her information reveals that a group of Metis settled in what was to become the Lewistown townsite in the fall of 1879. Among them were Antoine and Alex Fleury and Ernestine Wells, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wells.

The Metis, of strong Catholic faith, soon brought in Father Joseph Damiani, and the first mass was celebrated in the new settlement. At that mass, Alex Fleury was confirmed; also the first wedding was performed — that of Antoine Fleury and Ernestine Wells, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wells.

Mr. Bowes (Ed. probably Bowles) former owner of a trading post was left with a little two or three-year-old daughter, whom he gave up for adoption. Antoine and Ernestine took the child, as they had just recently lost their own firstborn. Mrs. Swan went on to say:

"They sponsored for the little girl when they had her baptized, named her Virginia, and raised her to be a very good little girl. She, in turn, helped her foster parents till she got married the year of 1902 and went away with her husband . . . Whilst living near the present N Bar Ranch, they took in a little orphan baby of ten days old. When the mother died, a relative of theirs, Mrs. Fleury, weaned her own child who was less than a year old, so she could nurse the tiny baby; they had no other means of feeding it.

"After her husband died, she again took another boy and raised him. They all respect and regard her as if she was their own mother to this day; and when they happen to come in from other places, they all still go to her. If anybody is going to heaven, she must be one of the chosen with all her charity and good deeds."

Other sources tell that the Fleurys raised at least nine children — Edward, Fred, Sam, Ernest, Gilbert, Wallace, Justine, Eva and another girl whose married name was Mrs. Lester Kelly.

The Fleurys moved to Winnett country in the early 1900s, and school was provided for the children in the W. J. Winnett home. Many members of the family worked for the Winnett family. Ed and Fred took up homesteads of their own, being at the same time top hands at working with horses for Walter Winnett. Ed was a classic and daring rider, and like his brother, Sam, was an excellent teamster. Ed died of apoplexy in December of 1921 at only 39 years of age. Another article from the *Heritage Book of the Original Fergus County Area* contained a story about Sam:

"During World War I, thirteen men were drafted from the Winnett Ranch, and Sam Fleury was one of them. Months later he was driving teams behind the lines in France, when a new shipment of horses to pull ammuni-



tion wagons arrived. When Sam saw the 05 (Walter Winnett) brand on the left thigh (it was a team he had broken to harness at the ranch months before), he threw his arms around the neck of one and cried like a baby because he was so homesick. He arrived back home months later, gassed from the war and a broken man."

The Fleury family eventually moved back to Lewistown. Mother Mary Ernestine died there in 1952. Antoine had predeceased her. At that time she was survived by eight children — Fred, Sam and Ernest of Lewistown; Gilbert of Everett, Washington; Wallace of Great Falls, Montana; Justine, who had married Ray Badger; Eva, who had married Heinie Elbert; and Mrs. Lester Kelly. Fred never married. He died in Lewistown in February of 1956.

**FREED, Amanda** (Sec 25,26-14-27) Amanda was the widow of Alex Freed.

**FREED, Elden** (Sec 24-14-27) See FREED — Winnett

**GARL, William F.** (Sec 4-14-28) William F. Garl came to this area of the country at about the turn of the century. He was one of the first early settlers on McDonald Creek. His place was about nine miles east of what became the townsite of Winnett. In about 1911, he and B. F. Lepper became business associates, and for a time their property was known as the Lepper-Garl Ranch. (See also LEPPER — Flatwillow)

**GERSHMEL, Gary** (Sec 1-14-27) After attending Montana State University for two years, where he majored in pre-veterinary medicine, Gary, son of Merlin Gershmel, returned to Winnett. He took over the management of the family ranch, as his father had accepted the position of county manager.

On the ranch he raised hay and grain and built up a herd of registered Charolais cattle. He also had a small herd of Maine-Anjou cattle, including some purebreds from France and Canada. He was very active in cattle breed associations, both on the state and national levels.

He served on several National Charolais Association committees, served for two terms as president of the American Maine-Anjou Association, and for one term as president of the World Maine-Anjou Association. These meetings took him to many points in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Gary married Linda Matovich on May 7, 1966. Linda, the daughter of Phil and Bette (Sult) Matovich, had grown up on a cattle ranch in the Musselshell River country. She graduated from Garfield County High School and attended Eastern Montana College for two years. (See also MATOVICH — Musselshell River)

Gary and Linda have six children — Lani, who married Lynn Olson August 20, 1988, and works for the SCS Office in Lewistown; Gard, Gane, Grant, Lacy and Leila.

In 1972 Gary received the Jaycee's Montana Outstanding Young Farmer award. He put in the first circle sprinkler system in the county. It worked fine until the dry years dried up McDonald Creek. Gary finally was forced to sell out due to drought, the illness and death of his

parents, and financial reverses. (See also GERSHMEL — Winnett)

**GERSHMEL, Merlin** (Sec 1-14-27) In 1931 Merlin married Hattie Bohn, who was born in Chicago, Illinois, on June 30, 1908, and who had come with her parents and family to homestead on McDonald Creek in 1912. Merlin and Hattie's marriage in Lewistown, Montana, was witnessed by Myra Bohn and Harold Gershmel. (See also BOHN)

Merlin and Hattie had two children — Myrna 'Mitzi' (1932) and Gary (1936). Merlin worked in Waldrop's store as a butcher from 1932 to 1937. In October of 1937 the family moved to Fairfield, Montana, and Merlin became proprietor of the Weaver Grocery. He built an addition to the back of the building and arranged to buy cream from the local farmers to be shipped to a Great Falls creamery. This venture did not prove to be all that they had hoped, so they returned home to Winnett in June of 1938. Merlin again worked at the Winnett Mercantile Co. In 1943 Merlin and Hattie moved to the family farm, the former Harry Bowen homestead, which his father owned. Merlin also continued to work in town. Merlin was interested in politics and government, and in the election of November 5, 1940, he won a six-year term as county commissioner. This whetted his political appetite, and in 1952 and 1954 he was elected to serve as state representative of Petroleum County in Helena.

With all this experience, he was chosen by the county commissioners in July of 1956 as Petroleum County Manager, a position he held until November of 1970, when a bout with cancer forced him to give up the work he liked so well. He died February 12, 1974.

Hattie remained active on the farm — riding, fencing and driving tractor — even though she was "retired" in the town of Winnett. She loved people, the outdoors and a good game of cards. She passed away suddenly on October 20, 1984, of a heart condition.

Mitzi graduated from Winnett High School in 1950. She married Kenneth L. Davis in 1951 in Spokane,



State Representative Merlin Gershmel, Senator Kenneth Cole, and Merry Tunnicliff, Petroleum County Director of Finance, watching Governor Hugo Aronson sign a favored bill.



Washington, where they still reside. They have three daughters.

Gary Gershmel graduated from Winnett High School in 1954. (See also GERSHMEL — Winnett)

**GERSMEHL, Oscar L.** (Sec 1-14-27) Oscar L. Gersmehl was born in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, on January 31, 1875. After attending Spencerian Business College, he changed the spelling of his last name to read Gershmel. Caroline Weinhold, born in Adell, Wisconsin, on November 9, 1879, became Oscar's bride in 1899.

In 1900 Oscar became a government mail clerk on the Milwaukee Road, stationed in Milwaukee. Two sons were born to the couple — Harold (1900) at Adell, and Merlin (1905) at Plymouth, Wisconsin.

In the early 1900s the family homesteaded in the Roundup, Montana, area, living near present-day Lake Mason for a few years before returning to Wisconsin. In 1918 Oscar purchased a farm near Winnett. Here he built up a fine ranch and home, continuing his regular railroad runs between Miles City and Butte.

Mr. Gershmel was a member of the Lutheran Church and the Masonic Lodge. He passed away in January of 1937. Rev. Oliver of the Methodist Church officiated. Mrs. Gershmel passed away November 6, 1940. She was a member of the Eastern Star. Services were in the Methodist Church with Rev. Walter Leege of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in charge.

Merlin "Butch" Gershmel attended Winnett schools until his senior year, when he quit to go to work. He worked in the mines at Butte for several winters. He and his brother, Harold, helped their parents on the farm. An article in the Winnett paper of May 9, 1930, told of one of their ventures:

"The Gershmel boys have set an egg record that all are entitled to shoot at. From September 1st to April 10th, they received \$1194 for eggs and paid out \$450 for feed. The eggs represented a 74 percent lay.

"The Gershmel Bros. have a modern chicken house built by Wm. Hayes Smith and take good care of their hens. During the winter months, the men arise early in the morning and place lighted lamps in the chicken house. Gershmels have recently received 1000 baby chicks and plan on another profitable year of chicken raising and egg selling."

Harold married Edith Donisthorpe of the Lewistown area and moved to Palmer, Alaska, in 1936. They had four children. Merlin married Hattie Bohn in 1931. (See also GERSHMEL and BOHN — Petrolia; and GERSHMEL — Winnett)

**GORSUCH, Perry** (Sec 32-14-29) Perry Gorsuch homesteaded about seven miles south of Winnett. He was married to Elizabeth "Lizzie" White, sister of Henry White, a neighboring homesteader.

Lizzie served as Winnett postmaster for 8½ years from August 25, 1917, until February 4, 1926. The school census of 1914 noted a dependent, Margaret Alexander (1905).

The family moved from here to Oilmont, Montana, where Lizzie again became involved in postal work.

**GRANTIER, Larry** While Larry and Marlene were still living on the Fraser Ranch on Flatwillow Creek, they became the owners of the Conoco bulk plant in Winnett. In 1977 they sold the business to Richard "Bud" Rabern and moved to Three Forks.

They returned to this area in 1979, and with some partners, bought the Wayne Bratten Ranch. The ranch was later sold to John Greytak, with Grantiers retaining some acreage about one mile east of town. They have their home and buildings at that location. They also retained a pasture which borders the town of Winnett on the south and East.

All four of their children graduated from Winnett High School: Dave, in 1973; Larry Gene, in 1974; Deborah "Debby," in 1977; and Lori, in 1980.

Larry Gene spent one year at home after graduation, then served in the Navy for four years. He is married and goes to college in Bozeman. Debby married Hank Olson, a rancher of Grassrange. They have three children — Laramie J. "L. J.," Tiffany, and Brittany. Lori attended Miles City College for one year after high school. She married Rex Murnion. They have two children, Barney and Kristen. (See also GRANTIER — Winnett)

**GREENE, Hammond** (Sec 21-14-27) (See GREENE — Winnett) Mr. Greene's land was leased to Pete Tuss.

**GROBE, Wesley Henry** (Sec 26-14-28) Wesley Henry Grobe, son of the Rev. William and Magdalena Grobe, was born May 16, 1886, at Silver Creek, Iowa. He grew to manhood there and later moved to Dresden, North Dakota. Leota Helen Smith was born October 10, 1888 in Benton County, Iowa.

Wesley and Leota were married in the home of Leota's parents of La Porte City, Iowa. Wesley's father, the Rev. William H. Grobe performed the ceremony. Wesley and Leota's first child, Leila, was born in Dresden, North Dakota, April 6, 1912.

Although warned by experts that a 160-acre



Wesley Grobe Sr.



Leota Grobe



homestead, or even the 320 acres offered by the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, would not support a family. Wesley and Leota filed on a homestead in 1914 in what is now the Petrolia area.

When Wesley filed for his homestead, he gave his post office address as Roundup, Montana. Their second child, Phyllis, was born August 18, 1914 in Roundup.

When William Howard was born February 10, 1916, the family home address was given as Smith. William was born at Smith, as was Raymond Wesley "Pete" (1918).

There was plenty of rain in 1915 and 1916, and the Grobes enjoyed good crops. The 1917 rainfall was scanty and was even less in 1918. Bone-dry 1919 yielded only dust.

In 1920 Wesley, in an effort to make ends meet, took a position as clerk in the Pullin Grocery Store of Winnett. The family moved into Winnett and lived in a tar paper shack near the railroad. (W. T. 4-15-21) "W. H. Grobe has resigned his position as clerk at the Pullin Grocery Store, and the vacancy has been filled by P. E. Woodard." (W. T. 9-2-21) "The latest business enterprise to open in the city is the Winnett Grocery, doing business in the building formerly occupied by the Wyoming Rooming House on Main Street. William Grobe and Ed Loveland are the new proprietors. The building has been thoroughly renovated, and fixtures installed for the operation of the new institution."

In about 1924 the Grobes returned to Iowa, where Wesley was engaged in both the restaurant and the store business. Wesley Henry died in August of 1980.

In 1978 Lella, Pete and Pete's wife, Carolyn, visited the old homestead. They also visited two former schoolmates of the former Circle Bar School — Les and Vern Thompson.

Lella was killed in a car accident in 1980. Nephew William said of her: "Lella was an inspirational person in many ways. I want my grandchildren to know what a beautiful person she was, therefore I am trying to preserve memories of her and other relatives."

In 1981 William Howard Grobe Jr., grandson of Wesley Henry, also visited the Thompsons. Bill states: "We got a real cordial welcome and a lot of help (history) from Les." William lives in Ten Sleep, Wyoming.

**GROSBOLL, Harmon** Harmon Grosboll from Atterberry, Illinois, arrived in Petroleum County in the early 1920s. He brought one son, Stanley, with him on his westward journey. He married Mrs. Ella Wiggins, widow of Volney Wiggins.

Mrs. Ella Wiggins had homesteaded east of her son, William, in the northern Kelley country. She was a local midwife. In the early years, when Winnett was still in its youth, Mrs. Wiggins operated Rimrock Hospital, which was located on 7th Avenue East in the Rimrock Addition to the town of Winnett. Many news items of the Winnett Times refer to baby births at the Rimrock Hospital. Mrs. Wiggins also cared for other patients of Dr. Alexander in her hospital.

Grosbolls moved the building which had been the Rimrock Hospital to their country home on the south side of Flatwillow Creek in the Petrolia area. It was remodeled into a fine and comfortable home. Harmon was an eloquent public speaker, and was often asked to be master of ceremonies for programs in Winnett.

During the school year of 1929-1930, Stanley boarded with the Anton Aasrud family in Winnett and attended Winnett Elementary School. Sometime in the 1930s or very early 1940s Harmon returned to his former home in the East.

In 1941 Ella bought a home in Winnett, but in May of 1943 sold it and moved to Roseville, California, near the homes of her two sons, Max and Eddy Wiggins. Later she was admitted to the Masonic Home in Helena, Montana, where she passed away in September of 1951. She was buried in the Masonic Cemetery at Helena.

**HALVERSON, Anton** (Sec 18-14-29) Anton's home area in Sweden was known as the Aasrud Farm. After immigrating to the Petrolia area, marrying and having two children, Anton legally changed the family name to Aasrud.

**HANSEN, Ernest Heinrich** (Sec 12-13-29) Ernest H. Hansen was born in Ockholm, Germany, on May 19, 1877. He lived and worked on the family farm until he was about 16 years old. He had four brothers — Pete, Emil, Herman and Edward; and one sister, Alma Hansen (Wiggins).

Since Ernest didn't wish to serve, as was mandated, in the German army, he decided to go to America. He left Germany in 1894 with \$75 in American money. He got on the train at New York bound for a German community in Iowa. He worked there for two years.

On January 2, 1889, he and Emil Nisson came to Montana by train to Custer Junction. From there they came to Flatwillow by mail stage. They stayed that night at Flatwillow. The next day Ernest and Emil walked about seven miles down the creek to B. F. Lepper's place. They worked for Lepper as ranch hands, grubbing sagebrush from the hay meadow.

In the spring of 1899 Ernest returned to Iowa for several months. There he received his citizenship papers. He worked on the railroad for a time but did not make out too well on \$1.50 per 10-hour day, so he returned to the Lepper Ranch where he worked for another one and one-half years.

In 1902 Ernest became acquainted with a Swede by the name of Christ Nelson. Together they bought the Circle Bar Ranch. They acquired a band of sheep from Mr. Lepper to run on shares. They didn't do too well financially, so Ernest sold out to Nelson.

During this time, Ernest had filed on a homestead on the Box Elder-Flatwillow bottom near the junction of the two creeks, to raise cattle. This venture, too, was beset with trials. He sold his cattle when Mr. Winnett sold his in 1907. He then went to work for Mr. Winnett, where he met Una McAllister, a sister of Mrs. Johnny Woods. Una



was working for Mrs. Winnett.

Una McAllister was born December 4, 1890, in Kentucky. When she was three years old, the family moved to Bozeman, Montana. Her father worked for the railroad. They moved from Bozeman to Lombard, then to Lewistown.

Ernest and Una were married December 27, 1908, in Lewistown. He took his bride home to a log cabin with a dirt floor and roof. Six children were born to Ernest and Una — Wesley (1910), Arnold (1911), Erma (1913), Archie (1915), Ona (1917) and Hazel (1928). Wesley was born in the log cabin; Arnold was born in Melstone; the others, with the exception of Hazel, were born at the ranch. In 1911 a new log cabin was built to hold the growing family and a frame building was added in 1916.

In 1908 Ernest had gotten back into the sheep business and was much more successful. By 1912 he had a band of his own of about 2300 head. That year there was a very cold winter, and he lost 1000 head of sheep. Brother Pete, who was herding for him, froze his feet.

There was a lot of open range at that time. In 1913 Ernest and his two brothers, Pete and Emil, entered into a partnership. They met with success, and in 1916 Ernest bought his first Model T Ford. In 1919 he bought the second one.

In 1919 a bad drought hit, and nothing grew but Russian thistle. That winter was a killer, but Ernest hung on. Many homesteaders either sold out or just gave up and left. Ernest was able to buy land for as little as 50 cents per acre.

The children attended grade school at the Circle Bar School and later at the Petrolia School, when the Circle Bar was moved and renamed. The oldest son, Wesley, married a girl from the Kelley community. Wesley was killed in a truck wreck on the divide east of Lewistown.



*Arnold "Bud" Hansen serving his country in World War II*

Arnold worked on the Fort Peck Dam in 1936. He continued to work in construction until 1942 when he went into the armed services as a Marine. After the war, in 1946, Arnold, Joe Pitman and Jim Dundom built the cold storage and meat processing plant in Winnett. In 1947 Arnold went back into construction work. He married Dorothy Goodman in Prosser, Washington, and now lives in Roundup, Montana.

Erma married Floyd Damschen of Becket, Montana, in 1932. They moved to Lewistown, where three children were born — Floyd E. (1933), Robert R. (1937) and Kenneth M. (1938).

Ona left the area after graduating from Winnett High School in 1936. She married Merle E. Boorman, and they have two children — Jeri M. Boorman Randall (1944) and Betty Boorman Haylett (1947). Ona now lives in Spokane, Washington.

Archie left Winnett and became a carpenter on the railroad. He continued in that work until his retirement. He lives in Roundup.

Ernest's grandson, Kenneth Damschen, became the manager of the Ernest Hansen Ranch in 1964. (See also DAMSCHEN)

Una passed away in November of 1963, and Ernest in 1974.

**HANSON, Emma** (Sec 19-14-29) Emma Thordarsan was born in Milwaukee in 1860. In 1875, along with her family, she moved to Chicago, Illinois, and lived there until she was united in marriage to Hannes T. Hanson. They moved to Pembina County, North Dakota, where two daughters, Esther and Florence Pearl, were born. Mr. Hanson died in 1910. In 1913 Mrs. Hanson, accompanied by Esther and Florence, moved to Montana and homesteaded at Petrolia.

Esther married Swain Myrdal, and Florence Pearl married Alvin C. Ingebo. Emma served as rural mail carrier between Winnett and Petrolia for a time. She later moved into the town of Winnett. (See HANSON — Winnett)

**HANSON, William** (Sec 12-14-28) William Hanson was a single man related to the Isaacsons. He had a place on the south side of Box Elder Creek in Section 12. When the creek flooded, his place was, no doubt, in jeopardy. He came in homestead days and left soon after proving up. His land is owned today by the Thompsons.

**HASSETT, Charles** (Sec 19-14-28) Charles and Sarah Hassett moved from Garneill to their homestead in Petrolia in 1912. Three children accompanied them — Clinton (1907), Lloyd (1908) and Anna (1909). Born here were Russell (1911), Wesley (1912), Archie (b. 1913, died 1916 and buried at Winnett) and Helen (1914).

Clinton remembers that at age seven or eight he was driving a four-horse team and plowing sod. The family lived in a one-room house with no floor at the time. Soon after they came to the homestead, a high wind came up that moved that house about twenty feet; it narrowly missed landing on a well which was being dug. No one



was hurt, everyone managing to move with the house! After that, the house was moved to a more sheltered spot near a hill.

In those days, the family didn't have machinery to put up hay, so the only accumulation of feed was the straw stacks. This helped most years but was not enough in 1919, when a hard winter killed off lots of cattle and horses. The next year's spring was very wet, and Clinton helped J. W. Brummett of Kelley with lambing. He says, "Those ewes were pretty heavy for a 13-year-old boy to lift into the wagon when they had to bring them into the shed."

The weather turned dry again, so the family moved to Forestgrove, Montana, for a couple of years. In 1924 they moved to Oregon where Mr. Hassett was killed in a logging accident. The next spring Clinton and Lloyd returned to Winnett.

In 1926 Clinton broke a leg and was hospitalized for seven weeks. He finally was able to drive a plow team for his brother that summer doing summer fallowing. He had a hard time farming for a while, but eked out a living by trapping coyotes, beaver and skunks.

**HASSETT, Clinton** (Sec 33-14-28) In 1930 Clinton moved to the place he now owns. He homesteaded 320 acres of rough land for pasture. He had built a one-room log cabin on the present place and was living in it in 1934 when Cecil Miller came to work for him. That year they burned the spines off cactus so the sheep could eat them; it made good feed.

Inez Anderson Eld and Clinton were married in 1943, and Inez, her daughter Lenora, and Clinton lived in a little shack which eventually became the chicken coop. Inez herded sheep while Clinton farmed. Inez also taught at the Pilgrim School for one year and at the Petrolia School for one year. She served as the school clerk for many years. Together they built up a fine farm with a nice house which has been recently remodeled.

A few years ago Clinton tried to cross the creek while the creek was flooding. His vehicle was swept off the bridge, and Clinton almost drowned. He was rescued by young Russell Pierce, and the Kiehls helped to resuscitate him.

The Hassetts regularly employ two men and furnish them a house and garden. Cecil and Lois Miller worked there until Cecil's retirement. Henry and Margaret Braaten and family also lived and worked there for several years. Presently, Kenneth Carrell is employed. Clinton has been a community builder and valuable citizen of Petroleum County.

He helped to get the Petrolia Reservoir started and has served many times on the Petrolia Water Users' Board.

Clinton enjoys writing poetry. In 1988 he was chosen by a panel of judges as poet of the year for his poem "Colors of the Season." He was invited to Anaheim, California, for a three-day poets' convention but declined the invitation. He was presented with a nice plaque.

#### Colors of the Season

Jack Frost has been real busy  
Yes, busy as a bee,  
Yet he has painted all the bushes  
and nearly all the trees.

There are shades of red and yellow,  
And other colors too,  
And if you look real closely  
There are some of every hue.

These colors are the proof  
That fall is here to stay  
And the colder days of winter  
Are surely on the way.

The leaves will soon be falling  
To lay upon the ground,

To protect the roots from cold  
And for mice to scurry 'round.

The colors of the seasons,  
Are all in God's great plan,  
First, bright flowers of springtime  
To brighten up the land.

Next, while busy as a beaver,  
As we do our work each day,  
We can see the pretty colors  
Of leaves along our way.

And when those leaves have fallen  
And the trees are bleak and gray,  
We will have the white of winter  
'Til spring gets here to stay.

**HASSETT, Lloyd** Lloyd Hassett and Clinton Hassett were brothers. An article taken from the Winnett Times of 4-29-1926 states: "Miss Margaret Long and Mr. Lloyd Hassett were married in Lewistown, Montana, on Wednesday, April 7th. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hassett have grown up in the Winnett community and are receiving felicitations from their many friends here. They will make their home on a farm in Petroleum County."

**HENRY, Clyde** (Sec 26-14-28) Clyde was a homesteader. He served in World War I. Thompsons acquired his land by tax deed. They later sold the land to Kenneth Welter.

**HENSCHEL, Fred** (Sec 35-14-27) Frederick Henschel was born October 20, 1878, in Poland, but was of German descent. Julianna Moltzan was born February 11, 1894, in Poland, also of German descent. They were married in Chicago, Illinois, in 1912. Frederick had been married previously to Pauline Moltzan, but she had died, leaving Fred with three children — Bertha, Otto and Freida.

Henschels homesteaded eight miles southeast of Winnett near Elk Creek in 1914. Three children were born to Fred and Julianna — Leda, Ernest and Edna.

Bertha graduated from Winnett High School in 1926. She moved to Chicago where she worked in the plastic industry, becoming vice-president of the Chicago Die and Mold Plastic Corp. She also served as chairman of the Peterson Foundation. When Bertha Henschel Matthews Lipponeur retired due to ill health, she moved to Billings, Montana, where she now resides.

Otto married Rose Beck Schwarz and moved to California. He was killed in a car-pedestrian accident.

Freida married Alex Fox in Billings, Montana, in 1930. They farmed at St. Xavier, Montana, and Park City, Montana, until moving back to Billings where they have farmed since 1945. They raised sugar beets, corn, grain and cattle. Freida and Alex had three daughters. Pauline Fox Steinmetz lives in Park City, Montana. Beverly Fox Owens lives in Billings. Arlene Fox Bailey died in 1986 in Kalispell.

Leda and Ernest both graduated from Winnett High School in 1934, and Edna, in 1937. Ernest married Frances Sharkey of Flatwillow in 1937. They moved to Fairfield in 1938 and operated a 320-acre irrigated farm, consisting of a Grade A dairy, beef cattle, hay and grain. They had one son, Ernest "Bob." Ernest Sr. died in August 1970. Leda married William Barchet. She died at 49 years of age.

Edna married Clayton Beck, who came to Winnett as a CCC enrollee. They owned and operated Beck's Heating and Supplies of Findlay, Ohio. Edna also worked 15 years for the Findlay schools as order clerk. Edna and Clayton had two children, Anita and Stephen.

Edna wrote some of her memories: "Prior to 1925, I remember my parents having a truck or touring car besides a horse and buggy or wagon to get around. My father hand made a sled that could seat six comfortably. In 1928 they bought their first new Chevy car, taking their first trip to Edmonton, Canada, in it.

"The first home we had was destroyed by fire in 1926. Later we moved a house from Winnett, adding three bedrooms to that. We had to haul all of our water, for drinking as well as washing, from a well on the Rae place (which I still own) and from the Clinton Hassett farm. Our livestock were watered by a well and also at Flatwillow Creek. We raised lots of sheep, selling both lambs and wool.

"We milked from 15-20 head of cows, selling cream and butter. Weather permitting, this was usually taken to the



Ernest, Otto, Bertha, Freida, Fred, Edna, Julianna and Leda Henschel

Lewistown Creamery. We always had hogs and all kinds of horses. My parents were noted for their early produce, such as onions, radishes and carrots which were iced down in barrels and taken to stores in Lewistown, Roundup, and Winnett.

"We always had turkeys and geese, which were butchered at Thanksgiving time, and these were taken to Lewistown to two stores. Clinton Hassett usually got in on that task. By 1940 my parents owned 2000 acres of land, besides leasing and renting other land. This land consisted of grazing and farm land.

"We all took our turn at herding sheep on account of the coyotes. Yes, how well I remember the grasshoppers in the 1930s and also the Mormon crickets! In the spring and winter my two brothers used to hunt and trap coyotes and their pups. I believe they got 50 cents for each pup and sold pelts for \$2.00.

"The winter of 1935-36 was terrible. We only lived eight miles from town, but the weather was so bad I did not see my parents for six weeks, while I was attending school and staying in the dormitory.

"At that time our family attended Lutheran Church services in the little white Winnett schoolhouse. A minister, Reverend Meyer, came from Lewistown. Services were once a month, weather permitting. Sometimes there would be only a family or two, with the collection plate only having a dollar or so in it.

"The Petrolia and Box Elder communities had summer picnics on the creeks beneath the cottonwood trees, with games and contests for all. Threshing time was something, with different neighbors helping out. Later on, we bought the first combine in the county from Elmer Eager.

"When my sister, Leda, and brother, Ernie, and I were in school, we would drive from home every day to school. Sometimes we were boarded out and later on we 'batched.' The last three years I was at the dormitory."



Mr. Shuster and Leda's daughter, Patty



Mr. Henschel died May 12, 1941, and was buried in the Lewistown City Cemetery. Mrs. Henschel married Arthur Post in Chicago in 1943. Arthur died in 1955. She passed away on January 5, 1979, at 85 years and was buried in Lewistown City Cemetery.

Otto Henschel died in 1940 and was buried in Englewood Cemetery, Los Angeles, California. Ernest died in August of 1970 and was buried in Memory Gardens, Sun River, Montana.

Much of this history was supplied by Beverly Owens, granddaughter of the Otto Henschels. She also added some of her own memories: "We three girls have a lot of memories of visiting Grandma and Grandpa Henschel. One memory is of the dresser drawer that held LOTS of rattles from the rattlesnakes they had killed. We still have a healthy respect for all snakes!

"We remember the white horse, Dolly, and the summer I spent helping Aunt Leda tend the sheep — all the beautiful wild flowers, especially the buttercups. We also have fond memories of Mr. Albert Shuster, the gentleman who worked for Grandma and Grandpa for years. He always had a kind word and time to talk to us.

"We had the pleasure of getting acquainted with one of Mom's teachers, Mrs. Alvin Ingebo, when she moved to Billings. Freida has a lot of fun memories of her school days — the miles they had to walk to school, sometimes getting there late because she and Otto would take time to check the trap lines."

The Henschels were highly respected by the local citizenry. This little incident was overheard in the post office in about 1937. Otto Moore, the sheriff, and local tease, knowing that Henschels had just purchased a new car, asked Julianna, "Well, how do you and Fred get along with that new car?" Without batting an eye Julianna quickly answered him, "Oh, yust fine! Fred, he drives, and I step mit the gas on!"

**HOYLE, Alfred** (Sec 9-14-28) Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Hoyle and their two sons, Les and Len, arrived in the Petrolia area in 1912 or 1913. Al and Les both homesteaded near the confluence of McDonald and Box Elder creeks. Al and his wife, Mary, owned and operated a small store there. On July 14, 1916, the post office of Hoyle was established. Mary Hoyle was the postmaster and served until the post office closed August 31, 1918.

Al also served as barber for the community and made scheduled trips to Winnett, where he barbered in the Log Cabin Saloon. Sometime before 1921 the Al Hoyles moved to Winnett.

In 1931 Al took over the Jitney mail route which had formerly been run by son Len and moved back to the Hoyle Ranch. He had rented his filling station in Winnett to Kenneth Cole. In 1934 he returned to Winnett. (See also HOYLE — Winnett)

**HOYLE, Len** (Sec 3-14-28) In November of 1929, Len, who had been a barber in Winnett, decided to return to the Hoyle Ranch in Petrolia. A news item in the Winnett

Times of November 1929 stated: "Mr. Hoyle plans to develop his ranch east of Winnett. He will raise rabbits and turkeys, milk wild cows, plant a garden and do his darndest to act like a farmer. He has moved his residence to his ranch at the mouth of McDonald Creek and is now comfortably domiciled therein.

"Len is taking to farming like a duck to water. Milking wild cows and cleaning out the stable reminds him of the days when he scrubbed decks on board battleships during the World War, when he served in Uncle Sam's Navy. Len says the only thing he has to guard against when shaving a customer is that he doesn't forget and think he has a wild cow in the chair." After one and one-half years of beng a farmer, he moved back to Winnett. (See also HOYLE — Winnett)

**HURST, Charles** (Sec 30-14-28) Mr. Hurst was a prominent rancher in the Flatwillow district of Petrolia for a number of years. He had large holdings there in partnership with his brother Fred.

Old-timers recall that Charles had only one arm and that he was known locally as "Wingy." He was also known as a most honorable and industrious citizen.

He died in November of 1924 and was survived by his wife, Eleanor Alexander Hurst, and two brothers, Fred and Robert, both of Stanford, Montana.

In 1925 Mrs. Eleanor Hurst moved into Winnett, planning to make a permanent residence there. With her aptitude in business organization, she was made Petroleum County's deputy clerk and recorder from 1925 to 1927.

**HURST, Fred** (Sec 29-14-28) Fred Hurst homesteaded in the Petrolia area on a section adjacent to his brother Charles. He later moved to Stanford, Montana, where he and his brother, Robert, were in partnership on a ranch.

**INGEBO, Andrew K.** (Sec 24-14-28) Andrew K. Ingebo was born in Norway on April 1, 1852, and immigrated to America in the early 1900s. He settled for a time in Iowa. Caroline Elverum was born on November 20, 1855, in Union Mills, Wisconsin. She moved to Iowa and there met and married Andrew. Eight children were born — Oliver I, Carl, Julia, Oliver II, George, Alvin, Annie and Mabel.

The homestead fever hit them, and in 1911 they all decided to head west (all, that is, except Oliver I, who had died in infancy, and Carl, who was operating a hardware store in Veblen, South Dakota).

They selected a spot in Montana and built a home on what later was to become the site of the Petrolia Post Office. Andrew eventually became the postmaster and served continuously until the office was closed in 1926. Andrew was very independent and of a somewhat cantankerous nature. When the children were all grown and in their own homes, Caroline often went to live with different members of her family. Andrew continued to live on his homestead until it was sold to his son-in-law, Anton Aasrud. He moved to Winnett and lived in a small building behind his son Alvin's house. He died March 31, 1937.





*Pearl Hanson-Alvin Ingebo outdoor wedding (1915)*

Caroline passed away in the home of Julia. Both were buried in the Lewistown City Cemetery.

Oliver was a photographer and took many fine community pictures, some of which will be found in this book. He was not in the country very long, as he died in 1912.

Julia, "Tillie," was old enough to file on her own parcel of land south of her father's homestead. She fell in love with Anton Halverson, Andrew K., though, like so many doting fathers, did not think Anton was good enough for her and refused to consent to their marriage. In 1913 Andrew returned to Norway for a visit. The two young folks took advantage of his absence and were married. When Andrew returned, there was nothing he could do but storm! (See also AASRUD)

George homesteaded in Sec 24-14-27. (See also INGEBO, George) Alvin C. homesteaded in Sec 24-14-27. He married Pearl Hanson, daughter of Emma Hanson, in a beautiful outdoor ceremony at Petrolia. Alma Hansen (Wiggins) sang and played her harp. Ingebos moved to Winnett in 1919 (See also INGEBO — Winnett).

Annie homesteaded on Box Elder Creek (Sec 12-14-28). She married Jack Birmingham, and they had one daughter, Jean, and a boy, Peter. They built a home in Winnett but lived there only a short time. The house was moved to the Sandaker place in the Petrolia area after Birmingham's moved to Missouri.

Mabel worked in Winnett at the Woods Drug Store. She met George White, a clerk in Rasmussen's store. They were married December 7, 1920, and built a home in Winnett. During the oil boom, in the early 1920s, George went to work for an oil company. The Whites moved to Lewistown in about 1924. They had two sons, John and James.

**INGEBO, George M.** (Sec 24-14-27) George, son of A. K. Ingebo, homesteaded the land which later became known as the William Welter place. George liked to operate with big machinery. He owned a threshing machine powered by a steam engine.

With this same engine, he plowed for many of his neighbors with a ten-bottom moldboard plow. It would have taken many years of horse and man-killing work to

tear up all the land with horse-drawn equipment.

He also ran a sawmill with this engine. He sawed the lumber for the Circle Bar and Pilgrim schools from cottonwood logs. He also sawed pine lumber.

George married Marie Vrchota Jelinek in 1920. Marie was a widow with two children — George "Jinks" and Margaret "Peg," both in their early teens at the time of Marie's marriage. (See also JELINEK — Flatwillow and Petrolia)

George and Marie became the parents of a son, Alvin P., on March 17, 1922. Alvin earned a master's degree in education and served six years in the Navy during World War II. He married Frances A. Young, and the couple had nine children — Denise, Valerie, Marlene, Daryl, Kenneth, Yvonne, George, Michael and Jennifer.

George M. Ingebo died August 29, 1966. Marie passed away January 6, 1931.

**ISAACSON, John** (Sec 14-14-28) John and Mary Isaacson had two children, William Leonard and Lillian. They came to the Petrolia Bench during the homestead days of 1913. John was postmaster of the Smith Post Office for several years.

Isaacsons farmed and had 100-bushel-per-acre oats one year. That had to be a wet year! The family fell on hard times in 1919 and left. Thompsons acquired their land for taxes.

William Len Isaacson married Mildred Atwood and lived in Winnett where they raised their family — Doris (Ostler), Louise (Bacon), Viola (Calvin) and William L. Jr. Lillian married Howard Gorman, and they had two children — Laverne "Buster" and Gordon "Snooky." Later Lillian married Carl Howry of Winnett. (See also GORMAN — Cat Creek; HOWRY and ISAACSON — Winnett)

**JACKSON, J. N.** (W.T. 2-16-23) "John Nevie Jackson, born at Fort Griffin, Texas, on the 22nd of December, in the year 1877, departed this life on the 9th of February in the year of 1923 at his home near Petrolia, Fergus County, Montana.

"He leaves to mourn his death, his mother, Mrs. C. A. Jackson; two sisters, Mrs. Anna Jackson, residing near



Petrolia, and Mrs. Grace Harding, residing at Winnett; and a brother, Harry Jackson, residing at Petrolia.

"Deceased was 45 years of age at the time of his demise and unmarried. He had been in poor health for some years. The funeral services were conducted at the Leader Hotel in Winnett with Rev. T. T. Fike officiating. The family deeply appreciated the loving kindness and sympathy of all friends and neighbors at this time of deep sorrow."

**JACOBI, Ignatz** Ignatz was a single man who homesteaded on land just east of the Box Elder bridge on the south side of the road. He lived there many years. He died in Palmyra, Missouri, on April 19, 1930, while with a cousin Ernest Gebhart.

### **JELINEK, George "Jinks" and Margaret "Peg"**

Peg and "Jinks" Jelinek came to the Petrolia community from the Yellow Water area when their mother, Marie Jelinek, married George M. Ingebo in 1920.

Both Peg and Jinks attended the Petrolia School and both graduated from Winnett High School — Peg in 1928 and Jinks in 1929.

For extra school money, Peg worked on the farm in the summer and cleaned the Aristo Theater during the school year. A Winnett Times news item of March 30, 1928, made note of Peg's entertaining ability: "Margaret Jelinek was adjudged the winner of the vaudeville contest at the Aristo Saturday night. Miss Jelinek delivered two humorous readings. The verdict was rendered by the clapping of the audience."

Jinks was an enterprising young man, even as a 13-year-old. An ad in the Winnett Times of 12-16-1921 read: "Lost — A FINE MINK HIDE. Finder please return to George Jelinek, as soon as possible, as he wants it before Christmas."

Peg graduated from St. Patrick's School of Nursing as a registered nurse in 1931. She worked as a registered nurse in many places and retired in 1970 in Oregon. Peg wrote in 1985, "Needless to say I am still a night person.

After twenty years of working nights, I am an owl! The last ten to thirteen years have been good to me. I feel very much that I have earned my place in the sun."

Throughout the years, Jinks has enjoyed writing and has contributed many articles of local history to the Winnett Times. Jinks was interested and participated in this history project, even until a week before his death. His last Christmas letter, written by his family, says: "George John Jelinek — May 17, 1908 to December 7, 1988. Philosopher, Humorist, Husband, Father, and Friend. This will be 'The Scribe's' last Christmas letter. He died the evening of December 7th after a normal active day.

"George expressed his cautioned optimism of the possibilities for another year, for a return to the place which stores all the memories of his youth, Winnett. We, his family, will return as surrogates to live his one last dream.

"These last few years at Oak Crest, living and associating with loving, caring people and working for the future, were of great importance to Dad. The Oak Crest 'family' has been wonderful support to Mom and the family. Their caring and compassion have greatly eased our loss.

"Several years back, Dad specified what we should do when this time came: 'Have a service (if they wish to) and a get-together at a good eating place to be conducted by son, Howard, or Ken Scally, or both. No sadness. I have had a wonderful life. I have been blessed with ability to work, play, and have had the love of a wonderful woman, my wife Madge, and the love and understanding of four wonderful super children.'

"We have tried to be true to his wishes." (Jink's family) Some of the Winnett community attest they heard a message from heaven on December 25, 1988:

"Hark, the herald angels cheer!

Jinks sparkles up our atmosphere!"

(See also JELINEK — Flatwillow)

**JENSEN, Chris** (W. T. 1-28-1917) "Most of us have heard of the famous Mexican 'arena' and the notorious bullfighters, but few of us know that there is among us a man who does not have to take off his hat to any of the famed gladiators of old. Mr. Chris Jensen, living about six miles east of Winnett, needs no introduction to our readers, but permission must be asked to substitute a large black wolf for the bull.

"One day a couple weeks ago, while casually walking across the Thompson place, the attention of Chris was drawn to two black wolves attacking a calf owned by Chris and his brother. Chris frightened the wolves away; returning the next day to the scene, he saw the wolves again and started in pursuit.

"One of the animals disappeared quickly while the other took refuge in an old barn on the place. Chris soon closed the barn doors, making a prisoner of Mr. Wolf. He then secured a large club and joined Mr. Wolf in the barn.

"Chris led with the club and the fight was on. After sparring for two full rounds, Chris pulled his coat off, deter-



George "Jinks" Jelinek (1959)



Margaret "Peg" Jelinek