

than eight years, which perhaps was the reason she wanted her children to have an education.

"In 1913 my father and mother were married in Townsend, Montana. My father was a surveyor, but had come north to Montana from Texas on a cattle drive. He was born in 1871 in Dime Box, Texas, where he grew up, married, and fathered five children. When his wife died, he left his small children in the care of his four sisters and sisters-in-law and went to South America as a surveyor on dam construction. At the time of his marriage to my mother, he was working for the Chicago, Milwaukee Railroad in charge of surveying the line into Grassrange.

"After my parents moved to the homestead, my father tried raising wheat; but those were drought years, so he also did locating and cabin building for homesteaders, and various other surveying jobs in the area. In 1915 they moved from the tar paper homestead shack into the clapboard house he built for his growing family. From this marriage there were four children — Patience, Mary, Ruth and Bill. I was five years old, the oldest child, when my father died of pneumonia in 1920.

"Our homestead neighbors, those within sight of our house, were the Bill Kindts to the east, the Reverend Beers to the northwest and the Reynolds to the north. Within a five-mile radius the Mikiches were over the hill from the Kindts to the east; and the Ralph Bowens, where mother always went to help out during the harvesting and threshing, were to the north and east. We kids always looked forward to threshing time, for there was such a lot of good food, and we had a chance to play with the Bowen boys, Basil, Virgil and Rolly.

"Pat McNurney, an Irish bachelor, was just around the hill to the south on the wagon road to the Elk Creek country, where lived the D. W. Bannons, the Joe Parks, the Fred Henschels, the August Karstedts, the Joe Rines, and a Mr. Lawrence. Also as near neighbors to the southwest on the way to the Ward Brattens and the Bratten country school, were Emma Biehl and Nick Langshausen. Although this seems to be quite a few neighbors within a comparatively small area, I don't remember any large social gatherings.



Back: Mother Sarah Erickson, Julia Erickson, Bessie Black, Cora Halversen; Front: unknown, Delia Halversen

"After the death of my father, I don't know how my mother managed to support four children on the homestead. There are so many questions I wish I had asked. I know that for a couple years, she had help from a young fellow named Henry Hout. She had a few horses, some milk cows, some chickens, turkeys, and geese. She baked bread and made butter and cottage cheese which she sold in Winnett — with weekly trips to town in the one-horse buggy.

"She also had a garden dependent on the rains of a semi-arid country. There was a cellar underneath the house, where the root vegetables were stored in dry sand; and the canning was done in a wash boiler on a coal and wood stove — in the summer a kerosene stove was used. But she couldn't have done all this without the help of my grandmother. At that time there was no aid to dependent children, but there was help in the form of a widow's pension. Mother made application for this help; but a neighbor complained that she didn't deserve it, so to my knowledge she never received it.

"The winter of 1921-1922 someone from Winnett anonymously sent her a ton of coal. She said she never did find out who sent it. But, oh, how desperately she needed and appreciated it. Relatives sent boxes of old clothing which she and Mrs. R. D. Bowen made over for us. I didn't have a 'store bought' coat until I was in the eighth grade — I'll never forget it!

"Mother remained on the homestead until 1923, when the kerosene stove exploded and the house burned. Within a period of less than three years her husband died, her mother died, and her house burned. She had to make some very urgent and weighty decisions. Her two married brothers in Minneapolis, who had no children, wanted to adopt the four of us; but mother didn't want to give us away.

"So in the fall of 1923, the Stocktons moved to the very small town of Winnett, Montana, along with a small herd of cows, a small flock of chickens, and an Airedale dog named Towser. And the homestead reverted back to the government.

"Though I was only eight years old when we left the homestead, I have many sentimental recollections of those few years when most of my world was sky and prairie. We were lucky in that a road to town from the Elk Creek country passed almost through our dooryard, and we could usually expect a visit with those going to or coming from town. My Norwegian mother and grandmother always had the coffee pot on, for a visit from anyone was a special occasion.

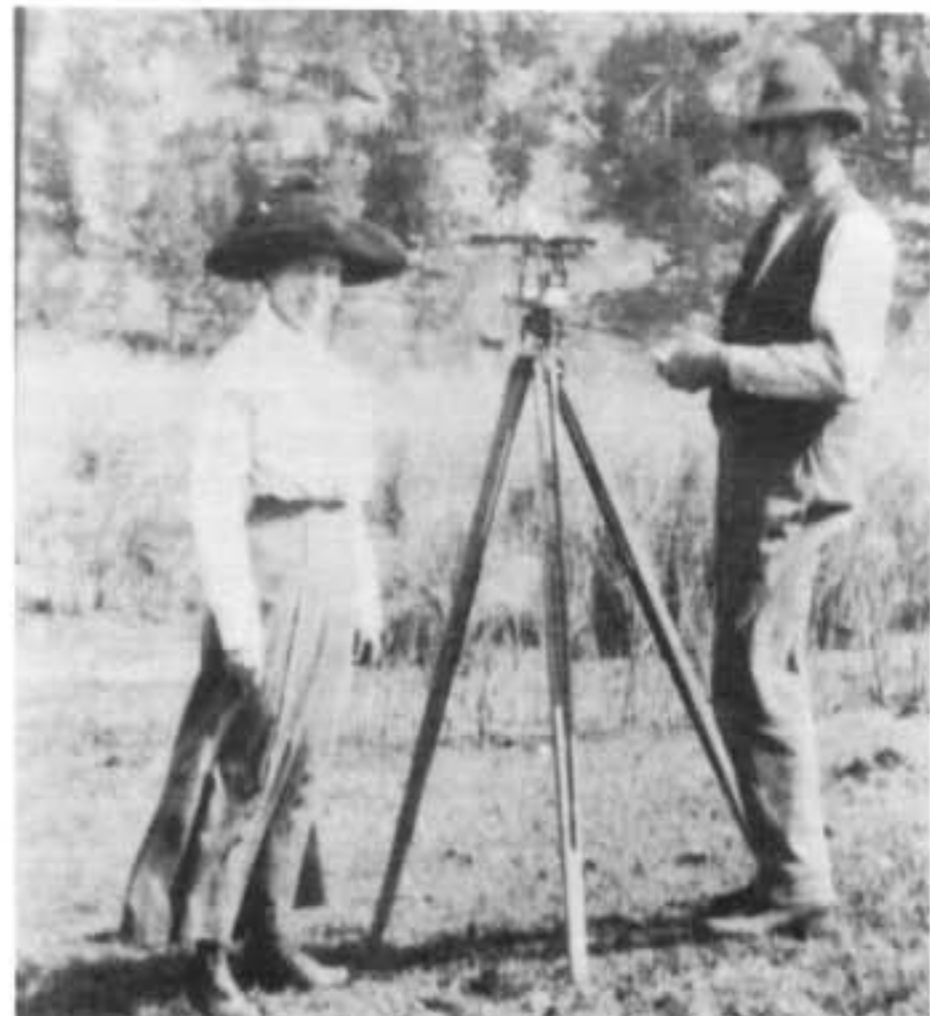
"After sixty years my most vivid memories of those days are: picking red and black potato bugs off potato plants and putting them in cans of kerosene; herding the turkeys on the prairie to keep the coyotes away; chasing geese out of the straw stacks, where they would pull the straws out one by one and finally topple the stack; 'water dogs' in the spring in the coulee; geese laying their eggs in the pond where the water seemed to magnify them to twice their normal size; touching a snake when you

reached into a hen's nest to gather the eggs; jumping into a silo storage bin in freshly threshed wheat and chewing the fresh grain into a large ball of glutinous gum."

Patience continues with more memories: "Walking over the hills to school with the neighbor kids; getting chicken mites in my hair from leaning my head into a cow's flank while milking, because someone hadn't closed the door to the chicken house; five years old and all by myself, crying on a windswept knoll in bitter cold and snow, trying to decide whether to go back home or go on to school; riding a stoneboat hanging onto a wooden barrel on the way to the spring to get water; on a hot day playing in an abandoned root cellar and smelling the cool, pungent odors of moist sand; riding the loaded wagons to the town elevator; crying over the blackened skeleton of a doll buggy after the fire; the companionship of going to a one-room country school, and at lunch trading my cake and sandwiches for boiled beans heated on a pot belly stove. They weren't 'the good old days,' but they have pleasant memories.

"Our first house in town was a three-room tar paper south of town, across the creek, in a cluster of other tar paper shacks and small houses. Our little area was linked to town by a narrow footbridge that always washed out during a spring flood. We had no electricity or running water, but I think someone in the area had a well where we pumped our drinking water. We often wished we could afford a gasoline mantle lamp that gave off much more light than a kerosene wick, but we never were able to afford that luxury.

"Our neighbors were the Ward Brattens (who came to town just for the winter so Kenny and Wayne could at-



*Julia Erickson and William Stockton, near Becket, Montana, surveying the Chicago, Milwaukee railroad into Grassrange (circa 1912)*

tend school), the Alonzo Enoses, the Wells, the Smiths, the R. L. Stewarts, and Mrs. Ella Wiggins.

"In order to support her brood, mother sold milk and cream to neighbors, washed dishes in restaurants (where bringing home the leftover food was part of her salary), changed beds and cleaned rooms in hotels, ironed clothes in a laundry, candled and packed eggs in a creamery, and worked the switchboard at the small telephone office of the Burt sisters whenever they needed a relief. I don't know what wages she received. Must have been small, for there never seemed to be enough for any extras.

"When I was nine or ten, I can remember going with her to a large, cold, drafty, warehouse-type building. It must have been in November, because she and several others were plucking turkeys and packing them into barrels to be shipped to Butte for the holidays. Your hands got so cold you could hardly bend your fingers to grasp the feathers.

"We lived across the creek for about four years; but when we became the only residents, Mother felt it was time to move. She felt, I think, that we were on the 'wrong side of the tracks.' In 1927 we moved 'uptown.' Mother bought a four-room house, with electricity, from Blanche Greene. I believe she paid \$400 for it, \$10 a month. Our neighbors were the Cottons (the father was the blacksmith; Everett was the jeweler), the Art Barneses, the Sam Coxes, and the Fred Storys.

"Mother gambled on going into business for herself when she bought 'on time' an electric, aluminum tub, Maytag, wringer-type washing machine, and took in washing. With rainfall scarce and water five cents a pail (delivered by Ole Rigg's water truck), her profit was small. However, with that income and occasional odd jobs about town, she put her two older children through Winnett High School. She was even able to buy a second-hand piano, so we could take music lessons from Hallie Tripp.



*Julia Erickson Stockton and William Stockton, taken at Forestgrove. Frank Lyons or Shaw children.*

"I can't remember ever being hungry or cold. Mother always had a cow or two and some chickens, so we had plenty of milk and eggs. But oranges and bananas were fruits only for Christmas, and hamburger was Sunday fare. One fall we were given a quarter of an elk which mother canned. What delicious gravy that made for mashed potatoes on cold winter days. We heated and cooked with coal and wood stoves and many a child's wagon load of coal we gathered and hauled from the railroad tracks, where it had been spilled in unloading.

"In 1935 Mother moved to a small ranch near Grassrange, where she grazed her few milk cows and sold bottled milk to the townspeople. She also helped to supplement her income by raising some beef cattle. But those years were drought years too. Here the two younger children, Ruth and Bill, finished school.

"I can't ever remember thinking that high school was the end of our education. Mother must have subliminally conditioned our thinking that college was just a natural continuation. There weren't any formal discussions and I never stopped to think how it could be managed financially. If I had, I'm sure I would have seen how improbable it was. But I went on, worked for my room and board and \$10 a month; and with whatever money Mother could scrape together, I received my 'higher education.' Mother remarked that there were times when she didn't have money enough for a postage stamp. President Garfield remarked that 'poverty was uncomfortable,' which I consider an extremely insensitive understatement.

"My sister Ruth died in 1936 of a brain tumor, shortly after graduation from high school. Even though she was blind part of her senior year, she graduated with honors. My brother Bill went on to college, World War II, and art school, and now lives in Grassrange, where he is a sheep rancher and artist. My sister Mary graduated from high school with a scholarship, went on to college, and now lives in El Cajon, California. She is a retiree of the El Cajon Valley School District.

"I went to Intermountain Union College in Helena, then transferred and graduated from the University of Montana in Missoula in 1937. I taught school for a few years before marrying a career Navy man and traveling these United States from border to border and coast to coast. My husband, Arnold Hillius, was also born and raised in the very small town of Winnett, Montana, and we now live in a much larger small town — Hamilton, Montana. (See also HILLIUS — Winnett)

"My mother died in 1975 at the age of 93. She had never been seriously ill or in a hospital until she broke her hip at the age of 85. All of her children had been born at home. She worked so hard all her life and her responsibilities were so many, she didn't have time to be sick. Too, her Christian Science faith of mind over matter gave her the strength to do what she had to do.

"I have often wondered how she was able to give her children that necessary feeling of security when we were

so terribly poor. In her later years, when I asked her how she ever made it, she said there were many times when she wondered if she could.

"She was a completely unselfish, courageous woman and always a lady. A pioneer in many ways. Her life reminds me of Robert Frost's lines of poetry from 'The Road Not Taken':

"The roads diverged in a wood, and I —  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.'"

**THOMPSON, Carl** (Sec 25,35-14-28) Carl Thompson, a lawyer and an uncle of Les and Vern Thompson, owned land but became indebted and lost his property to R. B. Fraser.

**THOMPSON, Leslie** (Sec 13-14-28) Leslie "Les," son of Oscar and Lela Thompson, spent most of his childhood and adult life on the ranch which his father purchased in 1908. He also worked for the county several years building roads.

Les described some of his activity: "I broke my ribs while grading in ledge rock territory. The doctor put me in a cast from my arm pits to my hipbones. It got to itching so bad, and there was no way to scratch. So I got my ramrod for cleaning rifle barrels, put a roll of cloth through the ring, and pushed it down inside the cast. What a wonderful invention!

"I quit the road work and stayed home until Uncle Sam called me to go fight for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I was in the service here for three months, then sent to England for two years. We built and completed the first American bomber base in England — Andrews Field, which was moved to Washington D. C. after the war.



*Les Thompson in World War II in Germany*



*Les and Margaret ready for Eastern Star meeting*

"I left for the service on Friday the 13th, and about four years later I got home on Saturday the 13th. I live on Section 13."

Margaret Phipps came to Winnett in the fall of 1960 as the seventh and eighth grade teacher and the instructor of music, art, and physical education.

She became involved in a home talent play, and one of the actors was Les Thompson. That was the start of something big! Cupid shot a straight arrow, and Les and Margaret were married August 14, 1965. While on their honeymoon, they ran into a charivari while visiting Mary Fleharty in Columbia Falls. Margaret continued to teach until 1967, when she retired to be with Leslie on the ranch. Les and Margaret belong to and participate in many, many organizations in Winnett and in their community.

In 1976 their ranch was incorporated and named the Petrolia Bench Ranch, Inc. Michael D. Phipps, Ellen Carrell Phipps and their children — Michael II, Rene and Cole — moved to the ranch where Mike became the manager. In November 1983 Mike died of an apparent heart attack.

Son-in-law Charles Sims, wife Barbara Joyce Phipps Sims, and daughters Shelley, Crystal and Carmen and son Jimmy had moved to the ranch as helpers in September 1983. When Mike Phipps passed away, Charles was abruptly pushed into the position of manager.

Each of the family members work on the ranch. Occasionally, Patrick Shawn, an older son, helps. Charles' two daughters, Margo and Lara, also have lived here and helped with the work.

Les is president of the Petrolia Bench Ranch, Inc., and Margaret is bookkeeper and treasurer.

When refinishing some old furniture, the Thompsons found, in an old sewing machine, a receipt for its purchase in 1906. It cost \$26.00. The machine is still owned by the Thompsons and is in working condition.

Les is the oldest continuous resident of this county. He came here in 1908 at ten months of age and has lived here since — 81 years of residence. He has seen many people come and go. He helped Ray Bohn move many families to Fairfield under the Resettlement Act. Margaret, as compiler of the Petrolia-Box Elder history, has "picked" his brain during the history project. (See also PHIPPS — Winnett)

**THOMPSON, Oscar C.** Oscar C. Thompson was born November 18, 1879, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and received a fine education there. In 1900, after graduation, he decided to go west. He bought a covered wagon, a four-horse team and a saddle horse. With two friends accompanying him, he took off in the spring of the year.

He kept a diary of his journey, and as he was an entertainer, he told of playing and singing for the Queen of Romania. He worked as he went along and finally found himself in Lewistown, Montana.

Lela Temple Beck, daughter of Amos and Mary Beck, was born in Bozeman April 5, 1887. Her family moved to Lewistown in the late 1800s. It was there that she met Oscar Thompson. They were married May 10, 1906.

Oscar and Lela first lived in a small cabin on Spring Creek just below the site of the gypsum plant at Heath, Montana. Leslie was born there July 26, 1907.



*Lela and Oscar Thompson (Wedding picture, 1906)*

In his travels as a freighter, Oscar must have heard about the Circle Bar Ranch below Winnett on Flatwillow Creek. At any rate, that is where he brought his bride and young son in June of 1908.

He got a start in raising sheep from B. F. Lepper, running them on shares, and made a living from them and the rich blue joint hay that grew on the creek bottom in those days. There were also some alfalfa fields which had been started by a former occupant. Even in the hard days of 1919, the Thompsons had hay enough for their own stock and some to sell to others who were desperate for feed for their stock. When the Cat Creek oil boom occurred, the Thompsons furnished hay for the teams of many of those working there.



*Mrs. Abner Norris, Mr. Norris, Oscar Thompson, Lela Thompson holding Elmer, Vern Thompson, Les Thompson, and Floren Baldwin, nephew of Abner Norris*



*Chris Afseth on bridge, Pat McNurney in creek. Oscar Thompson resting after the accident. Notice willow tripod for coffee.*

One time, in about 1910 or 1911, Oscar, using a four-horse team, went to Winnett for ranch supplies. Returning home, the heavily loaded wagon was crossing McDonald Creek when the bridge collapsed. Oscar was not seriously injured, but one horse was killed (a terrible loss in those days) and the supplies were dumped into the Creek. Oscar secured help from some neighbors, Chris Afseth and Pat McNurney.

Luckily, a photographer, Oliver Ingebo, was close by and took the accompanying outstanding picture. Thompsons had a battery-operated phone. The line extended to the Becks and back.

Two more sons had been born to the Thompsons — Vernon Arthur and Elmer Conrad. Vernon was born January 30, 1910. (See also THOMPSON, Vernon) Elmer Conrad was born in the homestead house on Petrolia Bench on the present home place. Mrs. John Beck helped in his birth. Elmer was never very well and passed away in 1921 at about six years of age. He is buried in the Winnett Cemetery, as is his father, Oscar C. Thompson.

Oscar died of appendicitis in 1928. He had gone to Winnett to Dr. Alexander, who sent him on to St. Joseph's Hospital in Lewistown. An operation was performed, but it was too late; the appendix had burst, and Oscar passed away. This left Les, at age 21, as man of the house.

Mrs. Thompson, Leslie and Vernon continued to operate the ranch. As land was left by other homesteaders or came up for tax sales, the Thompsons acquired more land to make up the present ranch. Lela Thompson passed away in May of 1953, leaving Les and Vern as their own homemakers and housekeepers.

**THOMPSON, Vernon A.** (Sec 13-14-28) Lela Thompson knew all the symptoms. A baby was about to be born! Who could help them? There was only one other lady in the valley in 1910 — Mrs. Sam Smith. Mrs. Smith was happy to help deliver Vernon Arthur to the Thompsons in their little two-room log house on the Circle Bar Ranch. The day was January 30, 1910.

Vern finished the eighth grade from Petrolia School. He preferred working on the farm to attending high school. He was an expert at contriving convenience items and



*Vern Thompson and his lambing wagon*

was an absolute necessity on the ranch during the years that Les was away working or serving in the Army.

Vern is a master at using a wood lathe. In the community there are many honey-drippers, tooth pick holders, candle holders, gavels and other fine pieces which he has made from 60-year-old cedar posts. He also fashioned a beautiful cross from a piece of a pine board which George Ingebo sawed many years ago.

When the Rimrock Dairy moved to the Clarence Saylor Ranch, Les and Vern used their welding expertise to construct a modern four-stall elevated milking parlor.

Vern, as well as his brother Les, holds a record in Petroleum County. Vern is the oldest living *native* resident. Others were born before him and are still alive, but they no longer reside here. Vern has spent his entire life here. Vern is vice-president of Petrolia Bench Ranch, Inc., and resides with Les and Margaret.

**TIMM, Harry** (Sec 22-14-27) Harry and Elda were married September 11, 1916, at Joliet, Illinois. They came to Winnett soon after and homesteaded about 5½ miles southeast of the town.

The Timms were active community helpers and were involved in the Masonic and Eastern Star work. When they left for Missoula, Montana, in July of 1927, Elda was an officer of Rimrock Chapter #82 O. E. S.

Although Harry left to work as a carpenter on a new State building (and then continued to follow the carpenter trade), he kept his finger in the soil here. As late as July of 1950, he and his son-in-law were returning to till his land. Harry died in 1972.

The Timms were parents of three children — Shirley, John and Ruth. Shirley went to live in Missoula in 1927 and attended Missoula schools, graduating from the high school there in 1937 and from the University of Montana in 1941. She returned to Petroleum County in the fall of 1942 to teach commercial subjects and girls' physical education in Winnett High School.

She received her master's degree from Stanford University and trained at Walter Reed Army Hospital in physical therapy. She served in the South Pacific as a captain in the Army Medical Corps. She married Jack Haberman in 1959. They had no children. She died February 2, 1976. Her sister, Ruth Blomgren of Missoula, her mother, and her brother, John, of Lebanon, Oregon, survived her. Elda, the mother, died in 1976.

**TOOMEY, Thomas** (Sec 29-14-28) Thomas Toomey homesteaded on Flatwillow Creek in 1909. He was married and had a son, Tom Jr. The family left in 1918.

Tom Jr. became a fine saddle maker and shoe repair man in Lewistown, Montana. He sold boots, belts, buckles and other tack and western wear. Tom made many of the saddles which were given as rodeo prizes locally. His store is still operating in Lewistown, although Tom has passed away.

**TRUMP, Elliott** (See TRUMP — Winnett)

**TUBBS, E. L.** (Sec 11-14-27) (W. T. 4-8-21) "E. L. Tubbs, who spent the winter with his daughter at Lewistown, has returned to his farm east of Winnett, where he will spend the summer."

(W. T. 10-14-21) "E. L. Tubbs left Friday for Utica, Montana, to make his home with his son at that place."

(W. T. 2-16-23) "The death of a well-known early settler of the Winnett country occurred February 8, when E. L. Tubbs passed away at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Florence Tubbs, at Bozeman, Montana. Death resulted from heart trouble.

"Deceased was born at Elmira, New York, October 17, 1852, and was 70 years of age at the time of his death. He homesteaded east of Winnett several years ago and conducted farming operations on his holdings. During the last few years, however, he has made his home with relatives in Michigan. He visited in Winnett a short time this fall, just prior to leaving for Bozeman.

"The body was brought to this city for burial Wednesday and short funeral services were held at the cemetery Wednesday by Rev. T. T. Fike.

"Among the relatives who were able to be present were: Mrs. Florence Tubbs, and two sons — Arthur Tubbs, of Utica, Montana, and Harry Tubbs, of Tacoma, Washington."

**TUSS, Peter** Peter was born in Birbir, Croatia, in 1856 and came to the United States in 1897. He, like many of the other Birbir Croations, was a stonemason and he quickly found work in Lewistown, Montana. He quarried the stone and directed the construction of the Power Mercantile Co. building, the Masonic Temple, the stone Methodist Church, and the first unit of the St. Joseph's Hospital, as well as many other stone buildings in Lewistown.

In 1912 Peter retired from the contracting business and purchased a farm in Petroleum County seven miles south of Winnett, where the family lived for about ten years. In 1922 he moved into Lewistown and, after his wife's death in 1935, lived with his son, Joe Tuss in south Lewistown.

Peter and his wife Katherine had the following children: Daisy (Monklin), Joseph (1903), Katherine (1905) and Donna (1907). Daisy homesteaded in Sec 20-14-27. Peter died in St. Joseph's hospital on March 18, 1940.

**TUSS, Peter Francis** Peter Francis Tuss was a nephew of the Peter Tuss in the previous story. He homesteaded near the mouth of the Musselshell before moving to the area south of Winnett. (See also TUSS — Musselshell River; MIKICH — Teigen)

**VOIGHT, Richard** Richard and Connie Voight — accompanied by their children, Scott, Monica, Katie and Lisa — moved to the Petrolia area in June of 1988. They live on the former William Welter Ranch. Scott attends Winnett High School, and Monica, Katie and Lisa attend Winnett Elementary School (1989).

**WELTER, Kenneth** (Sec 24-14-28) The following was contributed by Rosemary Welter: "Kenneth Welter and Rosemary Shields were married in March of 1963. Rosemary, Kenny and Linda (Rosemary's daughter) then lived on a ranch in the Petrolia area. The ranch was located on the old Fleharty (formerly Beck) place on Flatwillow Creek about four miles below Petrolia Dam. This place was Ken's, and it adjoined his folks' main place to the south. He was busy as he and his dad had lots of irrigated hay land, dry-land farming, and sheep to take care of.

"For the next two years, I was 'just a ranch wife' — raising gardens, cooking for hired men, taking care of my family — all those things that go with living on a farm-ranch. When I tried to raise bum lambs, I decided that, if I was going to help with the finances, I'd better do something I knew something about, so I went back to school teaching!

"The next two and one-half years were spent at the Cat Creek School. It was 18 miles from home. I drove most of the time, although sometimes I had to stay in the teacherage because of the weather. Linda went with me the first year, and I put her in kindergarten. When she started first grade, she was able to ride the school bus, so she went to Winnett to school. In January 1968 I resigned my teaching position, and in February we had a baby boy we named Kenneth "Todd" Welter.

"The fall of 1968 found me back in Winnett teaching school. I took both of the children with me — Linda was in third grade, and Todd had a baby-sitter.

"About this time Ken bought the Gusher Bar, and his sister Bonny and brother Nick operated it. He also built a pellet plant at the ranch, so he was busy hauling pellets to feedlots in Roundup, Melstone, and Park City. By the time he was two, Todd thought it was great fun to go with Dad in the big truck!

"Then Nick got married and moved to Billings, and Bonny married Chuck Allen. They didn't want to have a family life centered around the bar, so now Ken's responsibility included the bar also. He hauled pellets during the day and worked in the bar at night. His mom took shifts in the bar as well. I was certainly glad when we sold it to Terry Sandman. Our home life certainly had suffered, and everyone was working too hard.

"When I started teaching school again, I had to go to summer school to get my BA degree; otherwise my two-year certificate would be obsolete and I wouldn't be able to renew it. So, for seven summers, the children and I went to Billings for summer school. Some years we only went half the summer, but most of the time it was all summer.

"I took Margie Sinclair with me for two summers to care for the children. We came home on the weekends to try to catch up on the things at home and the garden. The year Linda graduated from the eighth grade (1974), I graduated from college. What a happy day that was!

"By this time Ken was involved in a feedlot in Roundup,

Montana, and some gold property in Virginia City. The feedlot didn't turn out too well, but he was busy with mining in both Virginia City and Ennis for quite a few years. He still has a love for mining gold. I guess when someone gets 'gold fever,' they never get over it!

"Linda's high school years were busy. She was in sports, which involved lots of traveling to ball games and track meets. Winnett had a good girls' basketball team then, so we were involved in two state basketball tournaments. Todd and I put on lots of miles going to everything. It always was rather a relief when the season finally ended! Linda graduated in 1978, and I had a two-year rest before Todd was old enough to play. Then there were another six years of ball games!

"In 1981 Ken's dad died. Bill had been ill for several years with emphysema. What a wonderful old gentleman he was. He and Ken worked side-by-side for many years. He so enjoyed this modern way of farming and spent many, many hours on his tractor or swather. He was extremely missed by his family.

"During the winter of 1982-83, I took a year's leave of absence and went back to school in Billings. Todd was a freshman by this time — it was a hard year for all of us. My dad was very ill most of that time — it just was difficult.

"The next year found me back at the Winnett School as librarian and Chapter I teacher. It certainly was different than having a regular classroom, but it was a new challenge.

"Todd's high school years went very fast, as he was involved in everything. Besides the sports program, he loved music; so we were not only consumed with football, basketball, and track, but also band and choir. They were busy years and most interesting. During Todd's senior year, Jim Reynolds lived with us, so we were doubly busy, it seemed. Todd graduated in 1986. (See also WELTER — Winnett)

**WELTER, William N.** William N. "Bill" Welter, son of Nickolas and Rachel Welter, was born in 1905 at Lewistown, Montana. His folks homesteaded in the Welter area, where they ran the Welter Post Office from 1915-1926. Bill grew up and was educated in the Welter schools. (See also WELTER — Blakeslee)

Viola Sinclair, daughter of Robert and Della Sinclair, was born in 1913 at Lewistown. She attended the Long School through the grades, then attended Winnett High School, Roy High School, and then graduated from Fergus High School. She continued to live with her family until 1932, when she met and married William "Bill" Welter. (See also SINCLAIR — Dovetail)

Bill and Viola moved to the Petrolia Bench area, where they bought the George Ingebo place and raised sheep, cattle, hogs, wheat and alfalfa.

Bill won a certificate of merit award for good farming practices. He was a school trustee for eleven years and also a member of the Petroleum County Water Board and the Soil Conservation Board.



*William Welter family: Back — Kenneth, Nickoles; Front — Dad William, Mother Viola, and Bonny (circa 1948)*

Bill and Viola had three children: Nickoles (1933) served in the Marines in Korea, died in a car accident in 1984, and is buried in the Veterans Cemetery at Laurel, Montana (See also WELTER — Winnett); Kenneth (1935) took over the management of the ranch when his father's health failed (See also WELTER, Kenneth); and Bonny (1941) (See ALLEN, Charles — Winnett)

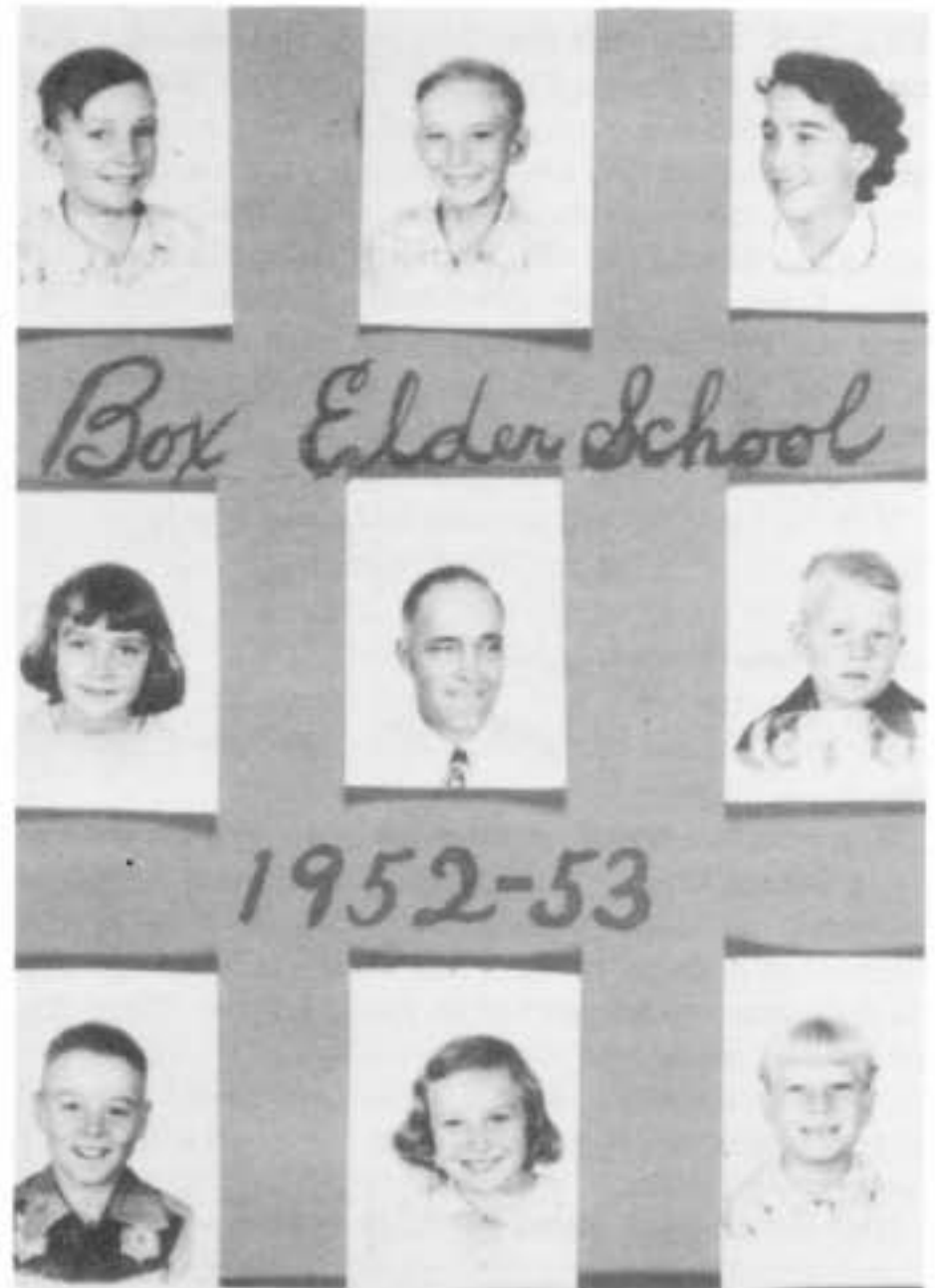
Bill and Viola lived on the ranch until Bill died in 1981. Viola continued to live on the ranch until 1985 when she moved to Winnett. Bill is buried in the Lewistown City Cemetery. (Submitted by Viola Welter)

**WHITE, Henry** (Sec 29-14-27) Henry homesteaded about four and one-half miles south of Winnett. (W. T. 4-27-28) "Word was received here Wednesday evening to the effect that Henry White was instantly killed near Oilmont by an explosion of nitroglycerin. Details have not yet been received.

"Mr. White was one of the pioneer homesteaders in Petroleum County, coming here in 1911 and filing. He returned in 1912 and continued his residence until making final proof. Many friends in this community will be shocked to hear of his untimely death.

"It is presumed that the accident occurred while in connection with his work in the oil fields. He is a brother to Mrs. Perry Gorsuch, formerly postmaster at Winnett. Friends here think that the remains will be shipped to his father's home in Madrid, Iowa, for burial."

A later report revealed that Henry was a tool dresser



*A later school: Joe Solf, Terry Sandman, Joey Trump, Clara Solf, teacher Floyd Connors, Roger Saylor, Allen Saylor, Lurene Solf and Linda Sandman*

for the Hard Rock Oil Company's well, and was killed when 80 quarts of nitroglycerin exploded. Two men were killed — White and Charles Doowittie. Search for the two men after the explosion disclosed only a few fragments of flesh scattered over the ground. The truck containing the nitro was completely demolished.

**YOUDERIAN, Bernard L.** (W. T. 11-8-29) "B. L. Youderian has rented the F. C. Bennett Ranch on Flatwillow (Sec 20-14-28). Mr. Bennett bought a house in town and brought it to the ranch for the Youderian family to reside in. The Bennett family will continue to live in their home, although Mr. Youderian will have charge of the ranch."