

Headlines

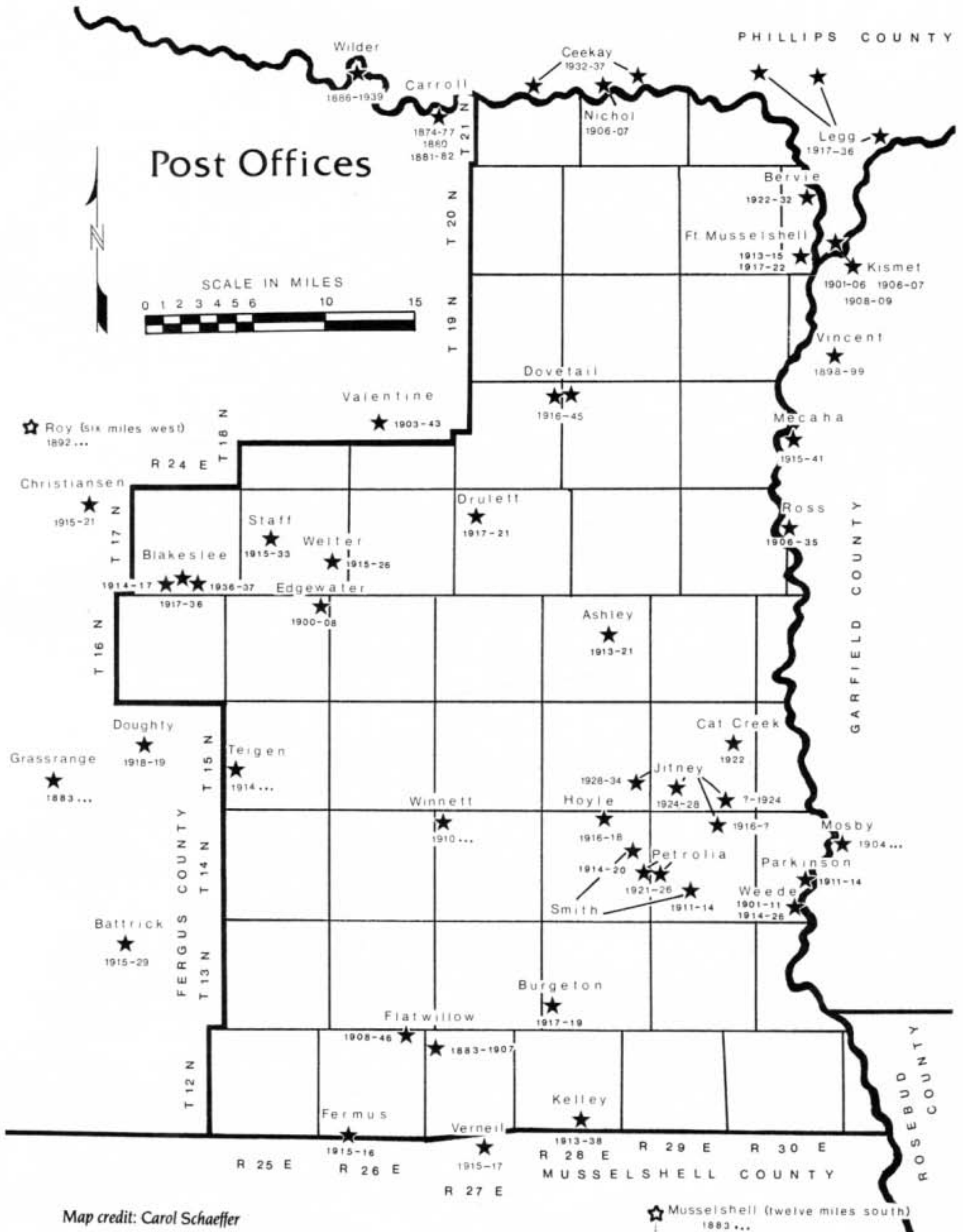
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- 1805** Lewis and Clark camp at the mouth of the "Muscle Shell" River (May 20).
 - 1833** Karl Bodmer, artist traveling with Prince Maximilian, travels past mouth of Musselshell River (July 28). Portfolio includes pen and ink sketches and water colors of "Les Mauvaises Terres" or badlands.
 - 1846** Father Nicholas Point produces lithograph of bison hunting in the "Muscle Shell mountains."
 - 1859** First steamboat passes mouth of Musselshell River.
 - 1860** Lt. John Mullins, Ferdinand Hayden and William Bridger explore area between Missouri and Yellowstone rivers. Diary account of crossing Musselshell River in southern Petroleum County (July 27-28).
 - 1861** Civil War begins.
Eastern Montana is part of Dakota territory.
 - 1862** Homestead Land Act signed by President Lincoln.
Gold rush to Bannack in western Montana.
 - 1863** Montana part of Idaho territory.
 - 1864** Eight counties (Beaverhead, Big Horn, Choteau, Dawson, Deer Lodge, Jefferson, Madison, Missoula) designated in Montana portion of Idaho territory (Jan. 16).
Montana Territory created (May 26).
 - 1865** President Lincoln assassinated (April 14).
 - 1866** Short-lived trading post known as Kerchival City established at the mouth of the Musselshell River.
 - 1869** Captain Clift surveys wagon trail from Helena to mouth of the Musselshell River, but road not developed.
 - 1873** Peter Koch builds trading post (Fort Sherman) on Spring Creek near present-day Lewistown.
 - 1874** Trading post established by Diamond R Company at Carroll on the Missouri River and trail developed to connect Carroll and Helena. Detachment of troops to protect route garrisoned at Camp Lewis on Spring Creek.
 - 1876** Colonel George A. Custer defeated by Indians on the Little Big Horn River.
 - 1877** Chief Joseph flees across central Montana toward Canada.
U. S. Desert Land Act enacted.
 - 1879** Gold discovered in the Judith Mountains
 - 1880** Fort Maginnis established.
Granville Stuart's diary documents overnight stop at Flatwillow crossing.
Northern Pacific railroad enters eastern Montana.
 - 1881** Reedsfort Post Office established near present Lewistown.
Large influx of cattle to central Montana.
 - 1882** Northern Pacific railroad reached Billings (Aug. 19).
 - 1883** Flatwillow, Grassrange and Musselshell receive official post office designation.
 - 1884** Lewistown Post Office designated.
Central Montana vigilantes operating.
 - 1885** Fergus County formed.
Flatwillow roundup gathers 46,800 cattle
 - 1886** Dry summer followed by early severe winter brings disaster to the cattle business.
 - 1887** Railroad reaches Great Falls.
Twenty-two steamboats deliver goods to Fort Benton during season.
 - 1888** Only three steamboats dock at Fort Benton during season.
 - 1889** STATE OF MONTANA admitted to union on November 8.
 - 1890** Fort Maginnis abandoned.
 - 1892** Roy Post Office designated.
 - 1898** Vincent Post Office established serving lower Musselshell area.
 - 1899** School District #26 (Flatwillow) created.
 - 1900** Edgewater Post Office established.
Billy Calder hanged for murder on lower Flatwillow Creek (Mar. 16).
 - 1901** Weede and Kismet post offices established.
 - 1903** Valentine Post Office established.
Railroad arrives at Lewistown (Oct. 30).
 - 1904** Mosby Post Office established.
 - 1905** Ross Post Office established.
 - 1907** Home school opens in Walter Winnett's residence.
 - 1908** Railroad arrives at Melstone, Musselshell and Roundup.
 - 1909** Enlarged Homestead Land Act enacted
 - 1910** Winnett Post Office designated.
 - 1911** Smith and Parkinson post offices designated.
 - 1912** Three-year Homestead Act enacted.
Sinking of Titanic (April 15).
Winnett's "little white schoolhouse" constructed.
 - 1913** Railroad arrives at Grassrange (Aug.).
Ashley, Fort Musselshell and Kelley post offices designated.
 - 1914** Teigen and Blakeslee post offices designated.
Town of Winnett platted.
First issue of *Winnett Times* (Sept. 2).
Railroad to Roy.

- Women granted right to vote in Montana.
- 1915** Staff, Welter, Mecaha and Fermus post offices designated.
First Winnett High School classes held in Moll building.
- 1916** Dovetail, Hoyle and Jitney post offices open.
Prohibition in Montana.
School District #159 (Winnett) created.
- 1917** Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad arrives in Winnett (Oct. 10).
Winnett High School held in Eager building.
Burgeton and Drulett post offices open.
U. S. enters World War I.
- 1918** Doughty Post Office designated.
World War I ends (Nov. 11).
Drought discourages homesteaders.
- 1919** Uebra Post Office designated.
9.73 inches precipitation recorded at Flatwillow for the year; 6.82 at Valentine.
Early hard winter begins in October.
Winnett Elementary School in new stucco building.
- 1920** Oil discovered at Cat Creek (Feb. 20).
- 1921** Petrolia Post Office established.
Combined Winnett elementary and high school building completed.
- 1922** Cat Creek and Bervie post offices open.
Radio coming in loud and clear in Winnett's Palm Garden restaurant.
- 1923** 103 Montana banks fail.
Population of Cat Creek estimated at 500
Basketball boys go to State tourney.
- 1924** *Winnett Times* advertisement: Ford Touring Car, \$295 F.O.B. Detroit; Demountable rim and starter, \$85 extra.
Vote to create Petroleum County 891 for, 235 against (Nov. 4).
Teigen Store burns.
- 1925** Petroleum County becomes legal entity (Feb. 24).
Postal rates: 2 cents per ounce for letters and personal postcards, 1 cent for government postcards.
Law passed restricting bulls running at large between January 1 and July 1.
- 1926** Carload of horses shipped from Winnett; carload of tractors shipped into Winnett.
Many sheep lost in devastating snowstorm in September.
First Flatwillow Hall burns.
- 1927** Annual precipitation at Flatwillow, 15.4 inches; at Valentine 14.07 inches.
32,530 gallons of cream shipped from Winnett during year.
Girls' basketball team wins first in tournament by defeating Roundup 18-11.
- 1928** Carload of turkeys shipped to market from Winnett.
1126 voters registered in Petroleum County.
- 1929** First "talkie" movies shown in Winnett (June).
New York stock market crashes (Oct. 29).
- 2000 range horses gathered and shipped from Winnett.
Annual precipitation at Flatwillow, 9.4 inches; at Valentine 9.9 inches.
439 rattlesnakes killed in three dens near Kelley.
Fire destroys entire city block in Winnett.
- 1930** Farmers and Merchants Bank of Winnett closes (Jan. 24).
Farm census figures for Petroleum County: farms, 363; horses, 6427; cattle, 9896; hogs, 960; corn produced, 6162 bushels; wheat, 129,428 bushels.
- 1931** Authorities arrest Melstone man for bringing in 22 gallons of gin, alcohol and moon, "a la medicine wagon style."
- 1932** Franklin D. Roosevelt elected president.
- 1933** Four-day bank "holiday" declared by President Roosevelt.
Prohibition repealed.
- 1934** Automobile license plate numbers assigned to countries based on population, Petroleum County #55.
State liquor store opens in Woods Drugstore in Winnett — whiskey \$1.10 a pint; gin \$1.00 a pint, \$1.50 a quart.
Yellow Water Grazing District first grazing district formed in county.
Twenty-four government aid programs listed in *Winnett Times*.
- 1935** CCC camp constructed in Winnett (Sept.)
118 students enroll for high school.
U. S. Social Security Act adopted
Construction of Fort Peck Dam begins.
- 1936** WPA program wages war on Mormon crickets and grasshoppers.
Construction commences on Yellow Water Dam
Roy Ayers elected governor.
- 1937** Resettlement program buys about 21,000 acres from destitute homesteaders, plants 3000 acres of crested wheat.
Winnett boxers win 5 of 14 state trophies!
- 1938** 1300 pounds of navy beans received by local relief office.
- 1939** 20,000 acres of tax deed land appraised and sold by county for as little as 50 cents per acre.
- 1940** Women gain right to serve on juries in Montana.
Eager Mercantile advertises Choice T-Bone Steak, 28 cents per pound.
Grassrange-Lewistown highway oiled.
- 1941** McDonald Creek bridge south of Winnett completed.
County owns 120,000 acres of land which was taken for taxes.
U. S. declares war on Japan (Dec. 7) and on Germany and Italy (Dec. 11).
- 1942** Petroleum County voters choose county manager form of government by 2-1 vote.
Livestock association recommends wages for ranch workers at \$60 per month plus board and

- room.
Under war rationing, Petroleum County allotted 3 tires, 3 tubes for January.
35-mile-per-hour wartime speed limit goes into effect.
- 1943** Office of Price Administration rations canned goods, shoes, sugar, coffee, gas, tires, meat. Eager Mercantile and Winnett Mercantile discontinue delivery service to customers.
- 1944** Over 9 inches of rain recorded in month of June!
- 1945** World War II ends — VE Day (May 7), VJ Day (Aug. 14).
Mini oil boom at Cat Creek with oil production from deeper sands.
Petroleum County farm census: 161 farms, 29,901 sheep, 14,676 cattle, 2634 horses.
- 1946** Contract signed between REA and City Light Company.
Rattlesnake Butte oil well flows.
Petrolia townsite (63.3 acres) sold for \$4.50 per acre.
- 1947** W. G. Roberts receives a record high 24 cents per lb. for 1400-pound steer.
Wiggins reports 3.15 inches of rain in a May thunderstorm.
- 1948** 8.48 inches of precipitation recorded at Flatwillow from May 1 to June 17.
REA begins service in county.
- 1949** Jan. 1 to Feb. 15 coldest six-week period ever recorded at Flatwillow weather station.
Newly completed rodeo grounds called best in state by John Tunnicliff, rodeo stock supplier.
- 1950** Petrolia Reservoir project approved.
Population of Winnett 390; of Petroleum County, 1026.
First Petroleum County ambulance put into service.
- 1951** New high school building completed.
Martha Hamilton leaves \$5000 to public library
KOOK TV of Billings first television station in eastern Montana
- 1952** 1-cent postcard becomes a thing of the past.
- 1953** Borrowers interest rate at 5 percent.
- 1954** First television set in Winnett at C. V. Allen's.
440-pound calf tops market at \$25 cwt.
State Highway Department builds 28' x 36' metal garage in Winnett.
- 1955** April snowstorm breaks all records!
- 1956** Daily railroad freight service discontinued (Jan. 14).
Soil Bank Act approved.
- 1957** State Theta Rho assembly in Winnett.
Butte Hotel on Main Street demolished.
County builds new shop 40' x 100'.
- 1958** County library opens in former SCS building.
First Winnett High School reunion held.
- 1959** \$718,051 Fred Robinson bridge completed.
Burt Sisters telephone exchange sold to Mid-Rivers Telephone Cooperative.
- Hebgen Dam earthquake rocks Petroleum County.
- 1960** Petroleum County population is 889.
Dial phone service inaugurated, local switchboard closes.
- 1961** State takes over Highway #244 from Winnett to Roundup.
40-year-old oil pipeline between Cat Creek and Winnett is removed.
Work started on Flatwillow Creek bridge between Mosby and Melstone.
- 1962** New mercury-vapor street lights installed in Winnett.
High school enrollment, 56; elementary, 82.
320 individuals take Sabin oral polio vaccine at Petroleum County courthouse.
- 1963** Farm census shows 11,765 sheep, 21,508 cattle, 871 horses in Petroleum County.
Second Winnett High School reunion.
- 1964** Montana celebrates its Montana Territorial Centennial and its Statehood Diamond Jubilee.
Winnett Times celebrates its fiftieth anniversary with a special historic edition.
- 1965** Petroleum County loses county representation in the state legislature due to reapportionment.
Winnett depot closes.
- 1966** Boys' basketball team has exceptional season — average 66.7 points per game for 28 games as opposed to 45.6 points for opponents.
First school bus route established (Petrolia).
New bridge over McDonald Creek on East Main.
- 1967** 144 Theta Rho members attend State Assembly in Winnett
Fresh juicy oranges, 8 pounds for 95 cents.
Boys' basketball team goes to State.
- 1968** First-class postage rate increases to 6 cents for regular mail, 10 cents for airmail, 5 cents for postcards.
High school enrollment 46, elementary 105.
- 1969** All school districts in county consolidated with District #159.
Moon landing — WHS graduate Ralph Tripp is project director for lunar module "Eagle."
Winnett High School reunion.
- 1970** Census reveals 630 residents in county, 249 occupied housing units, 202 with bathrooms.
- 1971** 18-year-olds win right to vote in Montana.
First story hour in Winnett library.
New post office building opens (Nov. 11).
- 1972** Montana holds Constitutional Convention to write new constitution.
Last train to Winnett (Sept. 8).
Interest at Federal Land Bank 7¼ percent
- 1973** New elementary school building and gymnasium completed.
Joint elementary-high school-public library initiated.

- 1974** Calf prices slump to 28 cents per pound for steer calves.
Ramettes basketball team takes fourth place at state tournament.
- 1975** Eight bridges on McDonald and Flatwillow creeks receive major damage from flood water in May.
All Mid-Rivers telephone lines in county to be buried.
Ramettes take third place at state basketball tourney.
- 1976** Teigen schoolhouse dedicated as pioneer school at Symmes Park in Lewistown.
Two miles of Petrolia main canal lined with concrete.
- 1977** Senior Citizen Center in basement of Petroleum County courthouse officially opened.
Jack Hansen and Bud Arthur ship out 200 live rattlesnakes.
15,673 books and media items loaned from Petroleum County Community Library in 1977.
- 1978** Flood damage in Petroleum County and town of Winnett is \$263,115 from tornado-like storm on July 2.
- 1979** Calf prices hit \$1.00 per pound.
Clear viewing for solar eclipse (Feb. 26).
- 1980** Mount St. Helen's eruption covers county with ash.
State Board of Education meets in Winnett.
New swimming pool constructed.
Musselshell and Petroleum counties declared drouth disaster area.
- 1981** New sewer lagoons constructed for town of Winnett.
Borrowing rate of interest 18 to 20 percent.
- 1982** Town of Winnett receives \$359,270 grant for water system.
Sisters sue sheriff for being evicted from bar.
- 1983** Soil Conservation Ordinance in Petroleum County passes 172-111.
Wayne Bratten leaves 1.5 million dollars in trust to Petroleum County.
- 1984** Bratten Memorial Scholarship Fund established.
Petroleum County aids in fighting Hawk Creek fire in Bull Mountains.
Interest rates 12.5 to 14 percent on farm loans.
- 1985** Local residents resent Harvard University study which lists Petroleum County as the second "hungriest" county in nation.
CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) farm bill enacted.
- 1986** Last issue of *Winnett Times* (Jan. 2); first issue of *Roundup Record-Tribune and Winnett Times* (Jan. 8).
Petroleum County receives \$9842 from state for grasshopper control.
- 1987** Mail route established in Petrolia area.
Grasshoppers strip county second year in a row.
- 1988** 8.98 inches of rain in Billings for entire year.
Yellowstone Park ravaged by fire.
- 1989** MONTANA STATE CENTENNIAL.

Pages of time . . .



Map credit: Carol Schaeffer