

Preface

For a number of years the Petroleum County Public Library has been interested in collecting and preserving local history. Past issues of the *Winnett Times* have been bound and made available to the public, and books of local and Montana history have been purchased. The Montana Historical Society microfilmed its collection of *Winnett* newspapers and gave the *Winnett* library the original editions. Rudy and Bernice Glatz generously donated their personal copies of some missing years of the *Winnett Times*. The library was thus able to complete its file of the paper from 1921 to the present. These newspapers are the core of our local history. The masthead of the early *Winnett Times* was used as a basis for the design of the title page and chapter headings of this book.

In 1979 several library volunteers began taping interviews with some of the county's older residents. It quickly became evident, however, that the library did not have the resources to pay for the transcription and typing of extensive interviews, and it was a very time-consuming project for the few volunteers. Instead of concentrating on oral interviews with a few people, it seemed more practical to try to contact a greater number of individuals through written questionnaires, and to begin to systematically collect information for family files on all of Petroleum County's residents. On October 4, 1985, the Diamond Jubilee of the *Winnett* Post Office, 1000 questionnaires were mailed to former and present residents. An excellent response was received, and permanent files were established in the library. About the same time, indexing of the early *Winnett Times* began.

When projects for Montana's 1989 centennial celebration were being considered, many people suggested a book be written about Petroleum County. In April 1987, the public library board of trustees voted to sponsor the writing of such a history book. From the beginning, it was hoped the book could be more than a collection of homestead memories. The goal of the trustees was to publish a book which would outline the entire history of the Petroleum County area and one which would become a reliable reference for factual information about the county.

Volunteers were invited to participate in collecting and recording the history of each section of the county. A number of people worked diligently on this phase of the project. It was impossible, of course, to establish exact community boundaries because of shifting population, changing schools and road improvements. The library editing committee ultimately decided to divide the county into 11 communities based primarily upon early post office locations. These communities became the 11

chapters of *Pages of Time*. (See map on following page.)

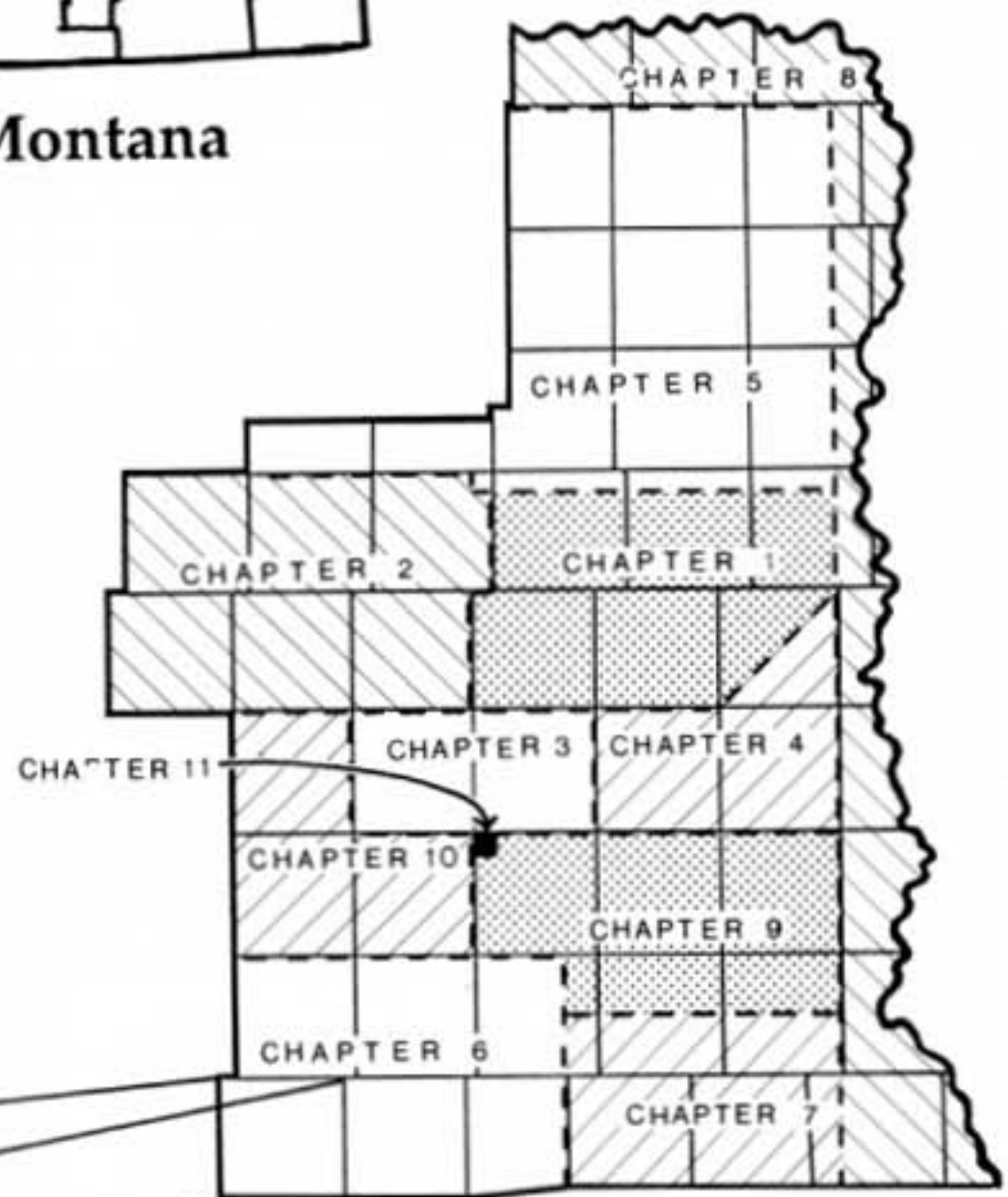
Each chapter of the book is introduced by a sectional map showing schools, post offices, streams, and present-day roads in relation to section and township lines. Schools and post offices were very often started in people's homes and were frequently moved from homestead to homestead. The most commonly remembered location is the location used on the chapter maps.

Readers need to keep in mind that there is a unique system for numbering sections within a township. A section is one square mile, a township is 36 square miles. The sections are numbered beginning with number one in the upper right hand corner of the township and progressing to the left for six sections, thus 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1; the next row begins with 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; the next 18, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13. A key to this number system can be found on the following page.

When the information was available, each early landowner was identified by section, township and range. A name in the text will read: SMITH, John (Sec 6-14-26). The reader can quickly identify the location of the landowner by looking at the chapter map and finding Section 6, Township 14 North, Range 26 East. The format and abbreviations are uniform throughout the book. In many instances, of course, people acquired additional land, moved to new locations, or abandoned their original property. The land description of the owner's first recorded deed is used in this book, and no attempt has been made to include other land acquisitions. It should be noted, the term "homesteader" is often used in a very general sense in the text. A brief description of various land acts is given in the Introduction to help the reader better understand the complicated nature of various forms of land acquisition.

The spelling of proper names presented special problems to the library's editing committee. Whenever possible, personal names are spelled as they appeared on official documents — deeds, school census, voting lists, etc. However, a man may be listed as William on a deed, Bill on a school census, and W. L. on a voting list — with many other small deviations caused by improper deciphering of poor handwriting, typographical errors and careless copying. We ask your indulgence for errors which have crept in.

It was equally difficult to determine the proper spelling of place names. Typical examples are McDonald Creek, MacDonald Creek or Macdonald Creek; Lodge Pole or Lodgepole; Grass Range of Grassrange; Ford Creek or Fords Creek. The decision was made to use the official



NUMBERING OF SECTIONS
WITHIN A TOWNSHIP

6	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36

Petroleum County

name of each post office as it was spelled when the post office was designated by the U. S. Post Office Department, and to consistently use that spelling in any reference to the community. An interesting sidelight came to the committee's attention concerning the use of two-word names for post offices. From approximately 1895 until 1908, the postal department did not sanction the use of any two-word names for post offices. This perhaps explains the reason Grassrange is one word on official post office records.

Musselshell was spelled Muscleshell or Muscle Shell by Lewis and Clark and many other early explorers. Muscleshell City at the mouth of the Musselshell River in the 1860s used the old spelling, but the later post office of Fort Musselshell at the same location used the newer spelling. On modern maps the spelling of the town near Roundup, the county, and the river is Musselshell. Note also the interesting story concerning the naming of McDonald Creek in the introduction to the Teigen chapter.

Dates can be as confusing and as controversial as spelling. Post office dates are an excellent example. Necessity often dictated that mail was picked up and delivered to certain points before an official post office was designated by the U. S. Post Office Department. In fact, according to an article in the *Winnett Times*, the official post office at Winnett in 1910 was established after a six-month count of mail delivered there. In some instances a postmaster was appointed before official sanction was given for a post office. All of the dates for post offices in this book are based upon the official U. S. government date of designation.

Dates for land transactions are likewise sometimes deceiving. In many cases, land changed hands and deeds were executed, but the deeds were not officially recorded for several years. In addition, people often lived on a property for a number of years before a former mortgage was satisfied, so legal transfer of the land was delayed.

Certain abbreviations are uniformly used throughout the book. Because the *Winnett Times* was a major source of information, reference to quotations from the newspaper take the following abbreviated form: (W.T. 6-1-21). In unabbreviated form, it would read: "Quoted from the *Winnett Times*, June 1, 1921." Birth dates and birth years

are handled in a similar manner. A date in parentheses following a name indicates year of birth, e. g., "John Smith (6-11-33)."

If a person or family lived in more than one community in Petroleum County, the individual is usually listed in each community and referred from one area to another. This method was used in order to keep individual community histories accurate and complete.

The amount of information and the number of pictures printed for a family is proportionate to the quantity and quality of information which could be garnered. In some cases little more than a person's name was available; in others it was not possible to print all of the material submitted. A name in parentheses following an article indicates the material was submitted by that person. The Petroleum County library assumes no responsibility for opinions or material submitted by private individuals.

The present library board is committed to the continuation of a project to collect, file, and store local history. Family files which were established in 1985 will be preserved and updated. Source material for this book will be permanently on file, and an obituary file will be maintained.

Pages of Time could not have been written without the cooperation and support of hundreds of people. It is impossible to list all those who volunteered both time and expertise to see this project completed.

A note of appreciation is due those who contributed money as an outright gift, as an honorarium, or as a memorial to family or friends. A list of donors and those memorialized or honored can be found following the final chapter. Our heartfelt thanks to all of you!

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Petroleum County Community Library

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SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT STATE OF MONTANA

Dist. No. 189 Name School 19 Hall Co. _____
 Date Visit 2/23/23 Teacher or Prin. Mary G. Koon
 Address Douetail, Mecaha
 Clerk _____ Address _____

BUILDING AND YARD

Log Log Standard St. Log Light OK Heating Stove
 Temperature Cool Ventilation Excellent
 Fuel Room no Teacherage no Barn no
 Extra Rooms no Paint no Repairs _____
 Playground Equip. none
 Toilets One needs repairs
 Fence no Yard OK Flag yes Flying no
B. Ware

EQUIPMENT

Adequate _____ Lacking _____
 Seats OK Type Single Size OK Position OK
 Blackboards not enuf - Height from floor yes
 Late Maps _____ Late Mont. Map no Globe _____ Suspension yes
 Primary Supplies not enuf - Library Books needs more
 ALL Text Books ordered School Laws _____
 C. of Study yes Magazines _____
 Care of Books good
 Water Supply Carried Water Cooler no
 Pencil Sharpener yes Clothes Hooks Nails
 Hot Lunch not yet Sanitation _____
 Is Scale used for Weighing Pupils? _____

TEACHER

Training H.S. grad Certificate _____
 Experience 1st school Salary _____
 Professional Reading _____ Summer School _____
 Accurate and Prompt Reports _____
 Health yes Personality yes Appearance yes
 Boarding Place yes Cooperation yes

PUPILS

Attendance 3 yes Punctuality yes
 Neatness yes Orderliness yes Cleanliness yes
 Industry yes Courtesy no Thrift yes
 Physical Examination _____