

Chapter 2

A Town Is Started - 1908

The first post office was established in Melstone on June 18, 1908, while Melstone was still part of Fergus County. Robert S. Wilson was the first postmaster. He was appointed on June 18, 1908. Robert Wilson remained in office until 1914. On August 10, 1914, George F. Streich was assigned to the office of postmaster. George Streich's assistant was Miss Vivian Joyce. George Streich was in office less than a year and Andrew Fleming became postmaster. Fleming was appointed postmaster on March 2, 1915. After a short time as postmaster, Earl H. Miller replaced Andrew Fleming. On December 20, 1916, Earle H. Miller became postmaster. After Earl Miller the first of two women postmasters was appointed. On July 15, 1935, Anna C. Jones assumed charge of the Melstone post office. On July 25, 1935, she was acting postmaster. On March 12, 1936, Leslie N. Field became the confirmed postmaster. On April 1, 1936, Leslie Field assumed charge. The second woman to assume charge of the post office was Clara Mae Spek on November 30, 1960. On December 1, 1960, she became an acting postmaster of the Melstone Post Office. On August 16, 1963 Herb Oster assumed charge. He is presently serving Melstone as postmaster.

The first issue of the *Melstone Messenger* was put into the mails on January 4, 1914, with J.H. Sarvis as editor and publisher. Mr. Sarvis, in his salutory, stated that the *Messenger* was created at the solicitation of the businessmen of Melstone and that inasmuch as former publisher of the *Melstone Graphic* ceased publishing the *Graphic* a year previous, it would be the policy of the *Messenger* to be a "booster" instead of a "knocker" as was credited to the then aim of the *Messenger* until the day it stopped publication.

Melstone was a booming town at the time the *Messenger* was created, and a big fight was on at that time for county division. The people of this section were striving to create a new county to be named Russell County, with Melstone as the county seat. This proposition failed because the citizens hereabouts did not have money to subsidize a few of the stubborn state legislators of those days.

The firms advertising in the first issue of the *Messenger* were: Antlers Hotel, C.A. Palmquist, proprietor; Wiley, Clark & Felton, bankers; Grant Hotel; Melstone Hospital, Dr. Hugh Heaton, manager; Melstone Meat Market, W.H. Herron, proprietor; Absher Land Agency; Musselshell Valley Grain Co., Ray Thurston, manager; Melstone Drug Co., J. Rex Morford, proprietor; J.W. Lumber Co., H.L. Paulston, manager; R.S. Wilson; general merchandise; W.A. Donaldson; general merchandise; Cozy Corner Saloon, Ed Connelly, proprietor; Melstone Billiard Room & Bowling Alley, A.L. Smith, proprietor; The Grill Cafe, Charles Shiffer, manager; Swaim Store at Bascom; Ralph

Hedges, M.D.; Hugh Heaton, M.D.; George F. Streich, attorney at law; A.F. Warner, U.S. Commissioner.

Dan Drake, popular railroad engineer, was the mayor at this time and L.F. Mack was the town clerk.

The first paper to be established here was the Melstone Graphic, edited by J.H. Lockridge, and after and year and a half it was suspended, leaving Melstone without a paper for about six months. The Messenger has had several editors at the helm since its creation, but W.P. Thurston is probably the best known since he was editor for the longest period of its publication. The second longest editorship was when W.M. Jones was the publisher, he took over publication on February 9, 1931.

The subscription of the *Melstone Messenger* was sold at a cost of \$2.00 a year. It was once called the *Mirror* and it had a radius of 50 miles in every direction. The *Melstone Messenger* was published every Thursday. In January of 1916, Burt Fuller was the owner of the *Melstone Messenger*. John H. Jesser had the paper in February of 1916. In 1919 the publisher and editor of the *Melstone Messenger* was Mr. W.T. Butler. In 1928 W.P. Thurston was the Melstone paper publisher. Also in December, 1928, D.T.A. Machintosh was a publisher. W.M. Jones was a publisher in March of 1931.

THE PLACE TO GO

When you drive into Melstone, you look right up the street,
And there a sign that reads "Garage" is you eyes to meet.
You keep right on a-going, and when you reach the door
There's some one there to meet you and look your motor o'er.

If it needs tires or gasoline, if it needs grease or oil,
We have them all to fix you out--don't let your auto spoil.
And if your Ford needs some repairs we're right there you can bet;
And that we haven't got in stock it won't take long to get.

You get the best of service right at the Motor Inn.
If you are flush with money, or if you wallet's thin.
We carry all the Ford repairs and every size of tire,
And we furnish cars and drives when you want auto hire.

We do welding, battery charging, and vulcanize your tire;
We guarantee your work is suit: we are not often liars.
If our work don't suit you come back here and tell us;
We try to satisfy our trade so you won't have to cuss.

So when your Ford gets balky, on the bum, won't run,
Just call the Motor Inn Garage and ask for Atkinson.

(Motor Inn Garage advertisement in the *Melstone Messenger*-1919)

The new hotel recently constructed here at a cost of \$20,000, is one of the most lovely furnished on the Milwaukee system. The home and plant of the *Melstone Messenger*, an independent eight page, five-column weekly newspaper, owned and edited by Mr. J.H. Sarvis, formerly of Wyoming, is one of the city's latest and most valued assets, and its policy is strictly in line with the city's efforts in uplift and development. In addition to the manifold advantages and attraction already possessed by this city there will be added the current year a water and light plant, for which negotiations are already pending.

Three improvement districts that will expend on grading streets and cement sidewalks, \$15,000; a Congregational church with full cement basement to cost \$3500 which, through the untiring efforts of the Rev. Joseph Pope, general missionary for southern Montana, assisted by Mayor C.W. Greening, and the liberal spirit of the Melstone contributors, will be completed within the very near future. The Twelfth legislative assembly enacted a law whereby new counties may be created from a portion or portions of the other counties by a majority of votes of residents within the proposed new county, adjoining counties cannot be reduced below \$5,000,000 assessed valuation and that the territory constituting the new county must have \$4,000,000 worth of property subject to taxation. Petitions are now being circulated by the Melstone people for the creation of Russell County, to be so name in honor of Charles M. Russell, the cowboy artist, who as a cowboy of the lonely days used to ride this range.

Claiming that by the segregation of 250 square miles from northeast Yellowstone, 750 from western Rosebud, 500 from east Musselshell, 350 from southeastern Fergus and 150 from western Dawson that the new county will contain 2000 square miles and a sufficient assessed valuation to fill all the requirements governing same. Aside from her splendid agricultural resources, by which Melstone is surrounded, and which will always be augmented by wage revenues from the number of railroad employes in the service of the Milwaukee Company, it is a generally well understood fact that there is in the northeast portion of the Bull Mountains and within 12 miles of the Melstone depot, three hundred million tons of as superior mercantile coal as is to be found within the western division of the American continent. Test of these measures by geological experts are of record. Ten sections of these lands are said to be controlled by the Republic Coal Co. and the Chicago St. Paul and alternating sections by the Northern Pacific, while some of the odd sections by residents of Helena.

STATE OF MONTANA

SS

MUSSELSHELL COUNTY.

I, Fred E. Renshaw, County Clerk and Recorder of Musselshell County, Montana, HEREBY CERTIFY:

That on the 2nd day of June, 1913, a petition signed by fifty four purported residents of Melstone, Montana, all being qualified electors in the territory involved, was filed in the office of the Clerk and Recorder, asking that the Board of County commissioners of Musselshell County, Montana, appoint a Census Taker to take a census of the territory involved, with a view to incorporate such territory into a Town.

That on the 7th day of June 1913, pursuant to petition, R.S. Hedges was duly appointed census taker, for the purpose above set forth.

That on the 6th day of August the report of said Census Taker was filed and approved by the Board.

That on the 12th day of August, 1913, a special election was ordered for the purpose of receiving a vote for and against the incorporation of the following territory into a Town: N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ and S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 30, N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$. S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 29, S. $\frac{1}{2}$ N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ and N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 31, all in Township 10 N. Range #1 E.M.P.M. Said election was called for the 20th day of September, 1913.

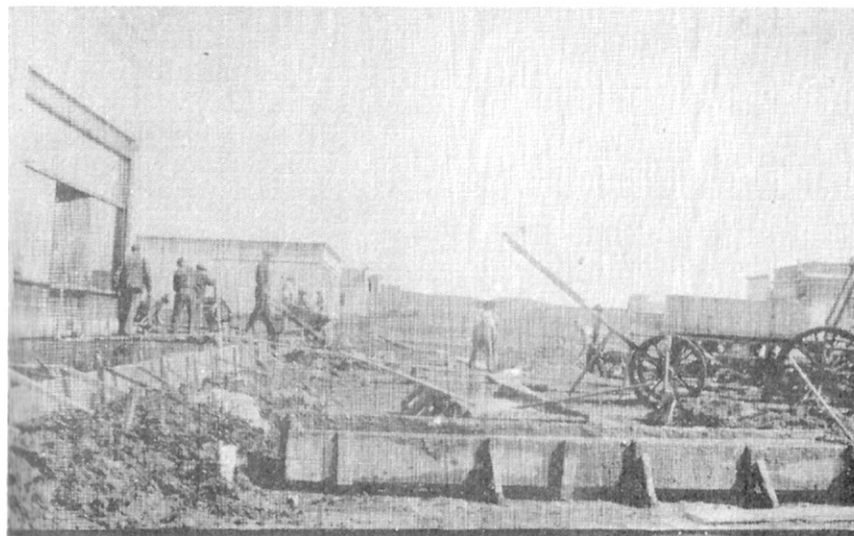
That on the 4th day of October, 1913, the returns of said election were canvassed by the Board and the vote was found to be unanimous for the incorporation of said territory into a Town and Town of Melstone was duly declared incorporated.

That on the 4th day of October, 1913, an order of the Board was made calling an election on the 8th day of November, 1913, for the purpose of electing officers of the said Town of Melstone.

That on the 11th day of November, 1913, the returns of the last mentioned election were canvassed by the Board and the following officers declared elected: C.W. Greening, Mayor, Charles H. Arnold and Al B. Smith, Aldermen for the 2nd Ward and Harvey L. Paulson and Charles F. Grant, Aldermen for the first Ward.

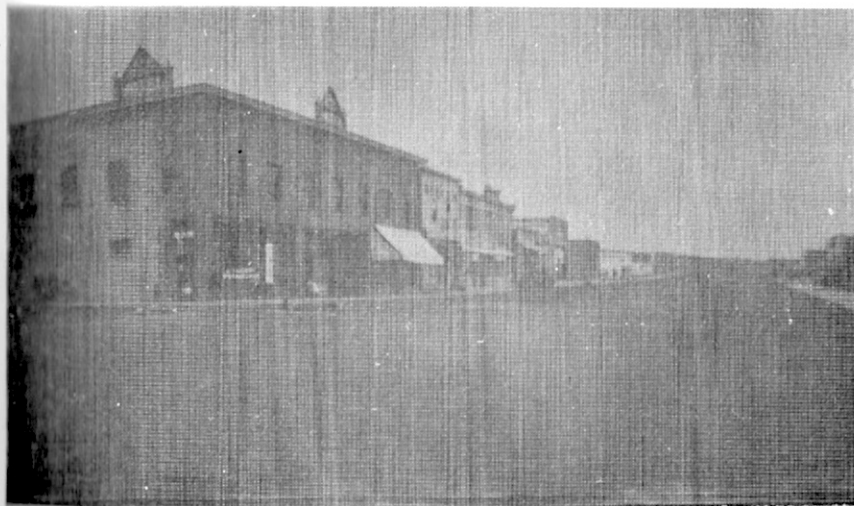
In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the County of Musselshell, Montana, this 12th day of June, 1914.

Clerk and Recorder,
Musselshell County, Montana



Building of sidewalk on west side of Main Street (above)

West side of Main Street (below)





Cosy Corner Saloon



Melstone in 1912