

Chapter 5

Businesses Supporting Melstone

ANDERSON DRUG STORE

The Anderson Drug was built in 1913 and at the present time is used as the O.K. Drug and Hardware, owned by Don and Ethel Pease.

The store was built by O.E. Anderson and was run by him as late as 1929 (by record).

In 1928 a soda fountain was put in the drug store and is still in use today.

The present day hardware store, first a pool hall was built by Skinny Dreese in 1920. There was a bar in front and bowling alley in the rear of the building. In between was a card room where they played poker, pinochle, cribbage and any other game they could think of.

Jessie Peltzer was the last owner of the Billiard Hall until it closed in 1935. Don Pease bought the store from Phil Hoffman in 1958 and at the same time purchased the unused Billiard Hall to make his hardware store.

ANTLERS BAR

The Antlers Bar was built in 1912. At the time, Clyde Brewer Sr. was a paper boy in Melstone the bar was robbed.

The back bar was put in in 1923. Before that it was in Red Lodge. It was also in a movie. It is a small copy of one that is in Lewistown.

Betty Miller has owned the Antlers Bar since January, 1968.

W.A. DONALDSON STORE

W.A. Donaldson had his store in 1912. While he was waiting for it to be built, he rented half a building for his store. When it was completed, it was a grocery, furniture dry goods, men's furnishings, and clothing store. The store sold about everything except fresh meat because they didn't have a walk-in cooler.

W.A. Donaldson and his first wife were married in 1902. She died in 1916. His new wife, Mildreth, came to Melstone in 1918. In 1958 Donaldson retired and sold the store to Jessie Peltzer. It is now the Sportsman Bar and Cafe run by Jessie Peltzer.

MELSTONE OPERA HOUSE

The Melstone Opera House, right beside the Wilson Hotel was used as a theater and dance hall. There were movies shown every Wednesday and Saturday for ten and twenty cents.

HERRON'S MEAT MARKET

Herron's Meat Market was run by Butch Herron. Leo Bowers helped him in the store. His market was southeast of Newman's trailer house.

Later Butch Herron moved across the street and started a grocery store by the Wilson Hotel.

Then he moved to where the post office is today and started a grocery store there.

SHERIFF

In 1919, the sheriff was George W. Thompson. He became sheriff on January 1, 1917. He resigned on January 16, 1919.

BLACKSMITH SHOP

Peter Larson owned the blacksmith shop. The blacksmith shop was located opposite the elevator in Melstone. In addition to blacksmith work, Larson also did wood work.

BANK

In 1912, the first bank was started. The first banker was a man by the name of Robert Craig. The name of the bank was Wiley, Clark & Felton. In July of 1914, the Wiley, Clark & Felton went out of existence and in its place came the Yellowstone State Bank.

The stockholders elected the following directors of the Melstone State Bank: H.B. Wiley, E.B. Clark, L.T. Neace, and J.K. Holmes. The officers elected were H.B. Wiley, President; E.B. Clark, Vice-President; C.W. Greening, Cashier.

ICE HOUSES

The Ice House, which sat across from the Diamond M, east of the depot, was supplied by the railroad. The ice was bought by refrigerator cars from Clear Lake, Minnesota. The run-off water from the ice was kept for drinking water because the men, working on the railroad, wouldn't drink Melstone water. There were two other ice houses in Melstone, one on Main Street owned by R.S. Wilson. The other west of the old Congregational Church, owned by W.H. Herron.

In the fall of 1932, Melstone like the rest of the country, was suffering the effects of the depression. Franklin D. Roosevelt was campaigning for president against Herbert Hoover and was promising a series of new programs which were designed to provide jobs and hopefully put an end to the depression. Banks throughout the country were experiencing difficulties and many of them were forced to close. Depositors of many banks lost their money or at least a portion of it. In the farming regions of the country the farmers were trying to get by on half of their normal income. Many families were forced to sell their land if they could find a buyer in time. Others had their land taken away by their creditors because they were unable to meet

mortgage payments. Melstone was no exception. Young men were unable to find jobs because the businesses of the area were not hiring anyone. Farmers were unable to keep hired men because of the low prices they were receiving for their crops. Therefore, when Roosevelt was elected and started his New Deal programs everyone felt a little relieved.

The first of the New Deal programs, which was later to affect the economy of Melstone, was put into effect in 1933. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration was established to cooperate with the states to relieve those areas which were hardest hit by unemployment and drought. Later the Civil Works Administration was established to provide money to local governments for any work relief projects which could be started on such short notice.

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration gave hope to the farmers and ranchers in the Musselshell Valley. Drought had plagued the area off and on throughout the 1920's and 1930's and had caused much discussion and planning for an irrigation project which would help alleviate the threat of a more serious drought. With new federal assistance a renewed drive was started to make the Dead Man's Basin water control project a reality.

County and local civic leaders and interested citizens joined together to form the Musselshell County Development Association to do further study and planning. This association met during the later part of 1933 and the early months of 1934 working out details and making arrangements for the start of the Dead Man's Basin Reservoir, 20 miles west of Roundup, would begin as soon as right-of-way easements for several miles of the course could be arranged. It was necessary to raise money locally as well as to obtain money from the county and state to get the project started. Once work was underway, it was possible to get federal funding to keep the project going until completion. The Civil Works Administration was the program which saw to providing the financing for the project. Relief labor for the project was furnished by Musselshell, Golden Valley, and Wheatland Counties. The relief projects provided jobs for the unemployed as well as to get public projects completed which were a benefit to everyone. The huge reservoir, as planned would impound 80,000 acre feet of water and was designed to assure a steady flow of water in the Musselshell River at all seasons of the year. Actual work on the Dead Man's Basin project started July 10, 1934, with a force of 100 men and plans were in the making to increase to 300 men and 40 teams by August.

In 1935 more New Deal legislation was passed by Congress with the establishment of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The WPA was established to take the place of both the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Civil Works Administration, which were considered as not being satisfactory. The WPA was provided with funds to administer Federal relief programs, which were intended to be of a long range benefit to the county. Musselshell Valley farmers and ranchers were in luck once again

because the Dead Man's Basin project would most certainly be of a long-range benefit to everyone along the Musselshell River and were therefore assured of continued financial support by the Federal Government.

In February of 1936 it was announced that in addition to the \$150,000 originally allotted to the Dead Man's Basin project another \$34,000 was to be set aside for the early completion of the water conservation project. Plans were outlined to erect a permanent camp at the works that would house 300 men. Plans were also made to work in three shifts with each shift employing 250 men. In order to get enough men to complete the project rapidly, other work relief project that was stopped was the graveling of the north road out of Melstone. The men who had worked on the graveling crews were moved to the Dead Man's Basin project if they were willing to go, otherwise, they were out of a job unless they could find work at some other work relief project. All WPA workers were getting the uniform rate of 75 cents per hour which was pretty good money compared to the pay received on some other types of jobs.

The completion of the Dead Man's Basin project in 1941 assured the farmers and ranchers of the Musselshell Valley that the chances of other disastrous droughts like those of the 1920's and 1930's would be minimized. The reservoir when completed had a capacity of 52,500 acre feet of usable water and had a surface area of 1890 acres. This was by far the largest work relief project in Musselshell County. The irrigation project is now maintained by the Deadman's Water Users Association and local Ditch Boards made up of farmers and ranchers who use the project.

Other work relief projects were also employing local young men, although not entailing as large of an undertaking. Donaldson's Dam was one of several other projects which was completed with the help of Federal assistance and WPA workers. Donaldson's Dam is a small local irrigation project which employed 10 to 20 men during its construction. Projects such as building and graveling roads and building bridges were also undertaken, thanks to the New Deal legislation. The 1930's were hard times for everyone trying to recover from the depression, but many worthwhile projects were completed during this time which would have taken many additional years otherwise.

PHARMACISTS

In the town of Melstone there were six different pharmacists.

One of the first pharmacist was Martin Michaelson. He came to Melstone in 1908, to make his business as a pharmacist.

The second pharmacist to come to Melstone was Rae Morford. He started his career here in 1913 and continued to 1916.

James Hawkins was the third pharmacist in Melstone. He came here in 1917, to start his pharmacy up.

Some other pharmacists are: O.E. Anderson; his pharmacy was located in the O.E. Anderson Drug Store. M.M. Hedges was another pharmacist. He was also one of the first.

Phil Hoffman was the last pharmacist in Melstone. He took over the Drug Store on Main Street and started up his own pharmacy. His pharmacy was known as Phil's Pharmacy.

ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW

Frederick V. Watts was the first attorney and counselor at law. Frederick V. Watts began his career in 1912 and ended it in 1928 in Melstone. His office was located by the *Melstone Messenger* office, the first door north.

Peter P. Healey was the second attorney and counselor at law. In 1915 Peter P. Healey started his career in Melstone. His office was located on Main street. His office burned down when the town died.

Streich and Sorenson were attorneys at law. Streich and Sorenson practiced before all courts in Melstone and Ingomar.

DENTIST

M.M. Hedges was the first dentist and pharmacist. He held his office in the M.M. Hedges Drug Store from 1908 to 1915.

In 1915 Dr. Paulson became the next dentist.

Dr. Stocker was the fourth dentist in Melstone. Harvey Fearn was another dentist. He held his office hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

DOCTORS AROUND AND IN MELSTONE

The doctor in Melstone was Dr. A.T. Gilhains.

Hugh Heaton was a physician and surgeon. Dr. Heaton held his office over the post office.

L.C. Melvin was another surgeon and physician. His office was in the O.E. Anderson Drug Store. Night calls could be answered in room 18 of the Wilson Hotel.

Adolph T. Guiles, physician and surgeon, held his office in the M.M. Hedges Drug Store. He held office hours from 10 to 12 a.m. and from 2 to 4 p.m. Calls could be answered at Res. Phone Central 22.

One of the mine doctors was Dr. M.T. Varnholt. On March 15, 1928, a farewell party was given for Dr. Varnholt and his nurse, Ruby V. Gaither, who were leaving for new fields.

Doctors at Carpenter Creek were Dr. Washburn and Dr. Johnson.

Dr. Hamilton took only maternity cases in Melstone.

Dr. S.A. Crouse was the last doctor in Melstone. Dr. Crouse was a self-made man by working many trades. Dr. Crouse came to Montana in 1918. He practiced 8 years in Melstone and then moved to Roundup. Ethel Hamilton helped Dr. Crouse out at his office. Calls could be answered day and night. Office hours were held from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. Dr. Crouse had a

private home for maternity cases. In 1951 the school annual dedicated its annual to Dr. Crouse. Dr. Crouse lived north of the new Congregational Church.

NURSE

Mrs. Lena Goals was a general nurse in Melstone. Engagements were to be arranged.



Dr. Crouse

