

## Chapter 8

### Excitement Plus

#### COLORFUL MELSTONE TRAPPER AND HERDER

Charley Boutillier, known as French, of Melstone was born near Fort Wayne, Indiana on February 4, 1874. At the age of eleven he left home and came West, spending some time in the Dakotas among the Sioux Indians. Here he learned to hunt and trap which was to be his principle life work.

In the early spring of 1888, French arrived in the Billings area and worked as a sheep herder for a short while north of Billings. Later he turned to trapping and proved to be a most valuable friend of the early day stockman as he worked at the job of helping to reduce the number of predators. Before the year was over he moved to Melstone.



"Frenchy" Charley Boutillier.

Frenchy has lived in the Melstone area since he was fourteen years of age. He used to sit on the butte north of Melstone, where the city water tower is located now, and watch his band of sheep graze along the wide fertile valley of the Musselshell River, before the first signs of a town appeared. He was a particularly colorful part of the vanishing West. A sheep herder monument he built still stands on the H & H Ranch twenty miles north of Melstone.

#### MAN DIES

In 1914 there was a man in Melstone who died. Elisha E. Hinsaw of Melstone had a homestead eighteen miles south of town. Mr. Hinsaw hitched three wild mules to his disc and tried to plow. The mules ran away and Hinsaw was plowed over by the disc. Hinsaw was taken to the doctor but later died. Hinsaw's wife had died the year before. He left a small son, Andrew.

#### FLU EPIDEMIC HITS MELSTONE

In October of 1918, the flu epidemic hit Melstone. The community thought the epidemic had passed by in November, but it flared up again and many people died. There were over one-hundred and fifty cases of the flu in Melstone. After it passed Melstone, it went on to Carpenter Creek and there were over sixty cases by November 15, 1918.

Some of the people who died were Butch Herron's wife, Walter Noble, Roy Babbit, and the baby of Frank Manard.

The schools, churches, and even the saloons were closed down from the epidemic on November 28, 1918. They later opened up when the flu passed.

#### MAN TAKES LIFE

On January 30, 1919, Mr. Joseph Honar jumped from a moving train. It is believed he was temporarily demented. Joseph Honar, a rancher from Clarkston, jumped through the window of train No. 17 as it was entering Melstone. Honar was returning home from South Dakota where he had suffered an attack of the flu. During his ride he had acted in a peculiar manner, but had not aroused any suspicion and it was not until he leaped through the two panes of the window glass that it was realized that he was in any way demented. At this time the train was traveling thirty miles per hour. On Friday, January 31, the body of Joseph Honar was found by Merle Hammond two miles north of Melstone. He had committed suicide by hanging himself to a fence post.

Honar had taken his life shortly after jumping from the train. Few bruises on one hand were the only marks Honar had bore from the fall.

From his brother it was learned that Honar suffered spells of melancholia and had threatened suicide at different times.

#### BOYS HURT IN CAVE-IN

On March 22, 1919, two boys were injured while playing along the river. Phillip Hoffman and Harry Arlin were injured in a cave-in of an over-hanging bank.

#### MELSTONE BANK ROBBERY

The Melstone Bank was held up in October of 1920. D.J. Dundas was the assistant director at the time of the robbery. N.L. Jackson, the bank robber, lived here six years.

On a scorching Saturday, Jackson entered the bank with a six shooter. The time was the noon hour, and everyone was out for dinner except for Dundas, as he was watching the bank. Jackson entered, pulled down shades, and forced Dundas to start putting the money in the sack he was carrying. Jackson was in such a hurry that he overlooked six-thousand dollars in the vault. Before he left, he locked Dundas in the vault along with a boy who happened to come in.

Jackson escaped on horseback. A year later Jackson was caught, following a hold up of a bank in Roy, Montana. There Jackson killed a member of the posse that was chasing him. Jackson got a life sentence for the murder and was later sentenced to 10 to 20 years. Jackson was freed after seven to eight years.

### MARKET DAYS

Market Days was a time every summer when each family or person could suggest their opinions or changes for the community's benefit. After all suggestions were made, the families gathered for a picnic and a play day with prizes for the winners of the games. In the evening there was a dance.

The play day had an assorted variety of games for all ages. There were potato spearing contests and hat trimming contests for the men, and whittling and husband calling for the women. There was a fat man's and fat woman's race. A foot race for boys and girls under fifteen years of age. A prize was also given to the families that came farthest to the gathering. The games were started in the afternoon so the people had plenty of time to shop before noon as all the businesses had special prices on their merchandise for the market celebration.

Market Days became an annual event with more humorous contests added each year. When the effects of the depression hit Melstone in 1929, a seriousness of just making a living caused the well known annual celebration of Market Days to be more or less forgotten about and finally cancelled in 1931.

Hard times during the following years were responsible for not having Market Days again until 1934. In April of 1934 things were looking better for the businesses and farmers of the area so the leading citizens again got together to plan another Market Day. The Market Day celebration never regained its former air of excitement and enthusiasm. It was discontinued the following year.

### DRUG STORE ROBBED

On May 15, 1936, the local drug store was robbed. The store was owned by Phil Hoffman. The safe was robbed of nearly three hundred dollars. The hold up took place during the graduation services.