Dear Ivan, and all others—about

It is snowing! It may snow
round and about—but snow in
our part of Montana is not so cheerful.

"Keeping supper is not a fun thing."

Rick is out. With Fred gone—
Rick gets pretty lonely. Once when I
spoke of missing Fred in here—at the
house in town—Rick said "Well—I
miss him at the ranch. He had a
story to tell about every "pot-hole
and fence post."

We have a "beautiful artificial"
Christmas tree. Gone are the days when we
had the "guys"—"Go get a tree." The
rules and regulations have made
it—"just not worth it."

My "artificial" tree is a sight. It is
loaded with old ornaments saved
from my childhood days. It is very
interesting. There are real candles
which are not lit — The strings of electric lights add an inner glow and safe enough tucked in a twist of artificial fir boughs.

Later: Today is beautiful. At 6:00 AM I was peering through the slats of the Venetian blind at the snow, but by 9:00 the snow was gone.

So nice to hear from you. I have been wallowing in nostalgia —

One of my girls got me a large very nice pictorial history of Flathead Valley — with pages of my school days! — the cars! — the clothes! — the houses! — But enough is enough.

I should have just sent a card — nice neat and readable

Affectuately

Theresa

"I wish you could see our house..."
Dear Ivan,

The word is that this awful weather is coming straight out of Seattle! This opening line has been mentally tucked into my mind for the letter I have been wanting to get off to you. As it happens--today is beautiful---with blue skies as only rural Montana can achieve----dry, bright and cold!

In the role of a tiresome, elderly woman----"I remember------"

I remember how annoyed my father was when he took us all (a family group of six!). There were three little girls, my mother. his sister---all of us) off to California as a treat---about 1922---to escape the cold winter in Flathead valley---in Montana. We all learned that damp cold weather was cold! We all learned---(the Flathead had just had a dry year) that damp cold is really cold. My father really noticed the cold in Long Beach---in the early '20's.

He had come from Ireland and picked by the N P railroad as a section boss. He was placed at Winston, Mont and the railroad company had a terrible time with the way the tracks were laid out. He drove the hand car for his "fix it" crew. He could handle a dry cold winter----but enough of this!

Rick puts in a long day--goes to bed early---unless he stops in at the bar with a tale or two that gathers a crowd. I should not be too annoyed at this--but I am sometimes. This is where Rick misses Fred. He always came right home when Fred was here--he had a good audience for his day--someone who had been there.

"Mamma, who had cooked all dry---dinner rolls, beef stew, salad---couldn't come up with anything to add out of her day---except an occasional "humph". Down at the bar---story for story had a match---and everyone had a great time.

As I wait at home--and dinner congeals--I can only remember the stories in the Great Falls Tribune---the accidents---the drunk driving!!!!! I know that a fellow with no brothers---and four sisters does indeed miss his Father.
I am switching the theme:

Your friend, Susie, is in the midst of this weather. She is over there in really tough country--the Judith Basin. I just tried to call her but just got a busy signal. With five big boys who have chosen the world of computers, etc--sitting out a Montana cold spell in a sizable area of wheat acres--not good--crop-wise--is not too great.

On one of my searches for historic homes for the historical association--I found Susan's area disappointing: the oldest ranch homes were so tacky, they were a disappointment. There was no particular style of architecture. They were tacky, cheap and built on to--as the need was there--room for a bigger family etc. Judith Basin was and is farm country. Susan has one of the more impressive ranch homes--no cattle-king mansions. Susan has just redone her house--and landscaped it--including an avenue of tall trees. From the highway--this is eyecatching. The boys are all gone--except the youngest--who is into sports and that of course is basket ball--and night games all over the area. John is at Cape Cod--studying the ocean sea bottom at that area, Mike is somewhere in Utah,--or close to Washington/ James is out there too. He is close to the west coast. Bill has just moved to Fort Benton--which is coming alive and not depending on river travel which made it important in our history. Pat is into basket ball and of course is on the highway hither and yon--and involves blizzards, truck-drivers who drink and skiers--no less!. I called Susie one night with some concern about the weather. There was a basket ball game in Great Falls."I can see quite a stretch of highway--and can see if the car-lights are off the road".---Susan said pleasantly.

And so affairs go--in this "cow country". Charlie Russell would not have too much to inspire him at this point---no hold-ups--cattle rustlers hangings or powwows.

I have a "Victorian Christmas tree--with all the old ornaments saved from long ago--candles in candle holders and strings of popcorn. I would like to have a picture taken of it. It has got to go--and this is the end of the page.
Merry Christmas---Again!

There is nothing like keeping in touch. I can't remember if I told you about Lee Rostad's new book!---I think I mentioned it but it was no rave notice! I had not read it!

It is called --Mountains of Gold and Hills of Grass----and that is a neat name. It is the history of Meagher county. Lee is a real historian--and has read absolutely everything on this area---and what is new---she includes--of course--the area of Lennep --well, she has everything--Rademacher turned his files over to her. The usual criticism--there are a lot of mistakes--was used. She copied everything ever written in that old building on Main Street--so the mistakes were not her fault. The book is big and beautifully put together--pictures and more pictures--hard back and the price--$50.00 I bought a copy for each of my children! I think the price will discourage some people. I would hate to worry about getting the bills!--and the money to pay for it.

I think it is a neat book to have--a reference book--quite. I do wonder what kind of reviews the book will get. Of course we local history fans will be impressed---some of the darnedest things have happened here--and she has a line about all of it--from Thomas Francis Meagher tumbling into the Missouri river to the life and times of Bill Schaffarziek (sp)

Again--Merry Christmas

[Signature]
Dear Carol and Ivan,

I am so pleased to be remembered by you people. How the creative literary world is booming in this little valley—I always think that you started it—but Ah! don't forget "Smith River Valley in Verse" and R.N. Sutherland almost one hundred years ago!!!

"Of the curative waters of those white sulphur springs,
Promulgated by the printing press that broadcast flings
A story of the hundreds, aye of the thousands, healed here---"

I don't think he would hit the best seller list today—even in his own time he lacked something. I wonder if his own newspaper world would have published any reviews around the state.

Lee Rostad—there is one who is going to be heard or know the reason why. Lee has a new book out—$50.00 a copy—the history of Smith River Valley—She has a good title—Mountains of Gold, Hills of Grass "--------She is having an autograph party at the bank—which is very timely. Christmas gift shoppers are getting desperate. Can you see an aura of green around these sentences?

Perhaps you are in touch and I will be repeating most of what you have heard. The Coburns had a sale of historic items which attracted an impressive gathering of historically minded people. A little pamphlet that we have had among our books—(it was put out by the bank—and gave a run-down of the business houses, tax-payers ranchers ---etc---brought hundreds of dollars!!!! We have our grand-uncle's --Luppold's--brand book—the first put out by the Stock-growers in 1886!!! Gertrude says we should put this stuff in the bank box instead of the securities—Thank you for the Christmas card.

P.S. You probably know that Fred died the 9th of April—so, we are a forlorn group here this Christmas.
Dear Carol and Ivan,

I have just finished *Heart Earth*. Susan gave the book to me for my birthday on Oct. 23rd. You might be thinking in that stretch of time I must have become hopelessly lost in a ring of Ringers from Ringling, so I must tell you that I mislaid my copy in one of the typical ways elderly ladies have.

Holding the book in my hand at the breakfast table, I announced that I was not going to do another thing but read Ivan's book. At this point someone asked for something from the linen closet. Opening the door I laid the book on the shelf, picked up what I wanted and left the book on the shelf. Firmly closing the door, I walked away.

From then on such a hunt we had, but who would think to look in a linen closet for a book? A lot of good things did come about during the hunt. Beds were stripped and remade, cushions lifted out of chairs that had not been removed for months, and shelves in the book room were searched title by title—with even a little top dusting done. Eventually, someone opened the linen closet looking for something reasonably expected to be there—and viola! there lay the book!

*Heart Earth* is such a sad story—all through it I could see your round solemn little face—watchful of the expressions on the grown-up's faces. I read a bit fearfully about the housing for the help on the ranches, expecting the awful house at the Luppold to be listed. Something was eventually done but too late, too late to accommodate the shy young girls who found even the simple task of breathing—exhausting. Also Bobby Donohoe, a very shy and gentle person, told Gertrude that the ranch company had trouble keeping help at the Luppold because of the living quarters. Not wanting to wait for a local carpenter, Gertrude sent for a prefab house. This one was not too successful—poorly built, expensive, but served the purpose. Our Patty and Jack Knight live
there now and with a lawn and trees it looks definitely suburban. The little house hums with a variety of motors--dishwasher, washing machine, T-V and cars full of high school "kids" coming and going. With word same processors instead of fountain pens there is no longer the out-pouring of feelings. A telephone conversation can't be folded away for years, but I must not forget the tapes! What is left is the curlews' call from beyond the creek-side willows. We do love our Montana--don't we!

Thank you for naming me in your list of acknowledgements/ I was so surprised and pleased to be so counted.

The little booklet enclosed is for Carol. I think it is cute. I thought you would find the historic bits colorfu l and interesting. I am not too enchanted with my verse--I didn't think it would stand out so. My girl's comment was--"What have you been doing, Mom, reading Christopher Robin?"

Theresa Buckingham
So glad to hear from you!

I think it is time to put an annex on "This House". You would not believe of it is the changes on Main St. All done with complete disregard of anything meaningful in our history. As you come in from the east—checkerd board, etc—you will see the same scatter of little houses flanked by the usual vintage cars—but then!—in all its glory big-time advertising has taken over with a large pinkish-red sign with a "you can't miss it" picture of a girl. CASINO, THE SIGN SAYS. It is a huge place—shops, truckstop type eating place—with beer ads in the window—All this is in a grove of gigantic gas pumps—enough to serve all the traffic from here to Chicago.

Down at the corner of the next block toward our poor little stores and gas stations is a real monstrosity—It is supposed to look like a barn—American Gothic type—colorfully painted with pictures of a farmer, chickens etc! The sign says "Antiques! Adjoining this lovely thing, following the same structural design is another business—proclaiming "Mom's Bible Books"!!!! Shades of the Bucket of Blood. Enough of this.

Everyone is writing a book. Mr Rademacher has put out one on the Centennial Cattle Drive he went on of that year. I had read so much about these new style cattle drives that are offered at tourists' hangout, I was very tempted to try to record some of Fred's experiences moving cattle—no singing, no hot lunches,—a real hassle to get feed for the herd—and few places at the end of the day where one was welcome to "turn in"—the most welcome words to both man and beast on the road. I was going to send it in to that publication (new) put out at Missoula—I think it's the Montana Journal. They are always asking for real ranch experiences. I'm glad I didn't try to do Fred's stories—I couldn't have done it justice. I feel that I am at the end of the page—I'll stuff in some newspaper clippings

affectuoslly, 

Duck
One more item:

Lee Kostad (Lennep) has written the story of Charlie Bair. I think it's called (I loaned my copy—something about green apples). I thought it was something that should be done and she has Alberta's "ear"—and has loads of really good pictures of Alberta and Margarete. What is really touching about it is—that they were really very plain people. I think that is something that should be known. Alberta is the patron of everything we have here—the clinic, the Castle, the Library—and fantastic scholarships—but do you know people still tell and retell stories of their penny-pinching ways—and there is always someone in the group that will snicker about it—so I thought Lee had a real mission there—history and inside stories.

But I don't think it is going very well. I wonder what your friends Kitteridge etc think of it. They seem to have the last word—What I am trying to say is—I have not seen any reviews. Alberta just gave The Castle $1500 again—for Christmas—just last week. I mentioned it my good old column—what I said was—that she had given us a munificent check—not the amount. The proof reader at the paper changed the word to "magnificent". I was mad—(at home) for a couple of days. I was not writing a bout a sunset!! After reading through this page of typing—I am sure you are thinking—with all the crossouts and typing over—Theresa must be turn ing in—proof reading it wo uld be a tough job.

Affectionately

Theresa

Fred is not doing very well—I'm so sad about him. Something should be done but—we are all either so old or so busy. We just hope someday he'll say—"Hey, I feel better!" but he never does.
Dear Carol and Ivan

So glad you broke the long quiet spell—or filled in the gap—what ever it took to keep in touch.

Today is a beautiful day—so much so that I get confused about what time of year it is. I used to have trouble with the days of the week—and was grateful when Patty's little third grader, Susie would stop in for a cookie break and set me straight.

Your friend--Susan is taking off for Christmas—to Cuba—of all places. Susan has six boys who are all doing exciting things. Joe, who is a Navy Intruder pilot and is just getting back from the Gulf. He is with the aircraft carrier, Eisenhower which has been cruising (that sounds so leisurely) and will be at Cuba! at Christmas time—"Peace on Earth"

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will towards men." St. Luke 2:14

Barbara plans to come for Christmas and then is to go on a cruise (for real) to the Caribbean (sp). This will be nice. Why did my girls (Sarb and Susan) chose to marry ranchers and live in that "Judith" country. There is always somebody out in a storm that needs prayers.

I know you and the May the Peace and Joy of McCaskills like Christmas be with you through all the Year

that country. Ivan, you have certainly been doing well. Gertrude has a friend from Kalispell—has a place at Rollins—who loves "Mariah" and is so grateful to Gertrude for telling her about it. Rollins is rather remote and Ann (the friend) is quite old which would explain why she missed all the publicity.

May this next year bring you continued success

Fred and Theresa Buckingham
Monday

Dear Ivan:

Wasn't that the strangest Happening!!! To think of all the worthwhile worries I could have picked up and worked on— I even considered calling and asking if my name could be left out. As someone wisely said—probably Ben Franklin—"Taxes are high but our pride costs us more."

It does take a certain amount of sophistication I am sure to handle an interview. One does get carried away with a little attention. Anyway—I have always been a firm believer in prayer. God must get awfully bored with me—but my petitions are better than no prayer at all.

Now I shall turn my attentions to our Gulf problems. I have just been reading—*Mrs Wheeler Goes to Washington*—the political scene when Burton K Wheeler represented Montana in Washington. That is part of my era—so I am struck with the fact that history repeats itself. Old F.D.R. —in spite of his neutrality acts and various ploys got us into war to ease the unemployment and depression at home.
again
I am out beyond my depth just as I was in discussing
literature with the Seattle reporter. Enuf of that!

I want to thank you—and I am sure you are the one—for getting us the invitation to the Awards Ceremony.
I leave the invitation around in prominent spots in the
living room—I am that proud!

I have a dental appointment at one o'clock and it is
creeping up

Back again—no cavities

************
About your next book. This I remember—and I don't
what significance would be there. When we were all at the
old Luppold that summer—I was impressed that your mom and dad
went to several funerals—and I don't think they were all
family and close friends. They always drove the car down to
the creek crossing and your father washed it in preparation.
Perhaps the funerals were for men that had worked for your
father—When I would ask who died—I never knew the persons
and they were usually men, but your mother always went. Maybe it
was indicative of your mother's awareness that death was not
an unknown horror but something one considered quietly and
accepted.

I grew up with a very old aunt as part of the family. People did that in pre-retirement home days. She was Irish and never missed a funeral or a wedding that was held at our Catholic church. It was of course an opportunity to go to Mass on a week day. I used to ask whose funeral or wedding she had attended—her reply was always the same for both events—"I'm sure I don't know—but oh! it was lovely!" It was an accepted part of life for her.

*******

Your picture is still in Great Falls at the Brighten-up shop. I told them I'd be in and pick it up—but my little driver Patty—Peggy's twin, has been so busy going to basketball games—and the weather so mean—until these last two days—I didn't get it. It is a neat picture.

Thank you for including my—or our name in the list for invitations

Theresa
Dear Theresa—

Your literary fairy godmother must be watching over you. Yesterday I got a letter from Carolyn Cunningham at MONTANA MAGAZINE saying she's decided not to run the Seattle-retread article, in which you and I star, in the January issue as she'd planned. Said she'd decided it didn't really fit with an issue whose theme is Montana as a mecca for writers who live there--which, given my absence from the state for the past 30 years, seems to me a rather slow dawning on her part. Anyway, you're safe from quotation for awhile; I'd think she'll have to wait some time now before running another "writerly" article, and I wouldn't be surprised if she eventually has to decide that the Seattle-retread piece is simply too out-of-date to use. I am, in fact, going to suggest a substitute article to her later this year--a profile of me that a more competent freelance is doing for the Northwestern U. alumni magazine. I don't think you're quoted in that one, but...

Carol and I are coming to Helena for the Guv's Award by way of Phoenix, which surely must be grounds for having our heads examined. We're going to spend a couple of months in Arizona this winter, partly snowbirding, partly retracing my folks' life that winter (1944-45) they spent in Arizona before my the summer my mother died. My next book will be a bit House-of-Sky-like but trying to look at my mother's life, so if you have any thoughts about her you'd like to share, I'd sure welcome them. I utterly promise not to quote you by name!

Trying to remember which Buckingham girl I saw in Denver last fall--Peggy, right? I hope they're all thriving. Somebody else I met, some bookstore: a couple who told me they'd passed through WSS, gone up to the Castle, been scandalized that no picture of me was in evidence, loudly said so...and I guess you know the rest of that episode!

all best,
January 8, 1991

Ivan Doig  
17021 Tenth Ave, NW  
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Ivan,

I wanted to let you know that I decided not to try to juxtaposition the Ben Groff piece with our "Montana as writers' mecca" feature. When I really looked at the larger story, it focused on writers who have decided to live here, and why they made that decision; it became difficult to try to squeeze Groff's profile of you into that topic.

I'm hanging onto Ben's article because it can easily stand by itself; but I know that you were counting on seeing it in Jan/Feb, so here's a bit of advance notice so that I don't lose my credibility with you and Ben.

Thanks for your help on updating the material.

Cordially,

Carolyn Cunningham  
Editor

CC/jm
January 4th 1991

Dear Carol and Ivan

I am—at this late date—acknowledging all the cards and notes that came at Christmas. Not having a pretty picture to accompany my note requires a little more news—something. I find myself pretty busy thinking up items of interest to take the place of the Alleluias and spikey holly leaves. If I don't check in with my far-away friends they will be putting a R.I.P. behind my name in their address books. Somehow this has seemed like the most "unhandy" Christmas. It didn't even fit right in the week. The weather was terrible—40 below—after such a dry fall that it seemed almost fool-hardy to go out and bring in a tree that was so close to self-destruction. Tradition and our German background won out and Patti rebuilt the tree, and we got out all the antique ornaments. It was beautiful.

Not the least unsettling was the note on your Christmas card—that said that AWFUL write-up in the Seattle paper is going to show up again! I am going to die! At first I decided to call Caroline Cunningham and ask her to delete my name—but I don't think she would have done anything about it.
I tried to find it—it is here somewhere—but by some divine direction the copy I had is not to be found. I read it again last summer and felt like hiding for a week.

Your picture is still over in Great Falls. I sent it there to be framed. I thought surely someone would be over there during the Christmas shopping days and pick it up—but no one went shopping. The roads have been terrible, but if you were in Seattle about that time you know all about bad weather.

Congratulations on the Governor's Award. I still like English Creek the best—I can identify (as people like to say) with so much in there from the brown lace on the fried egg to anything about "haying".

Best wishes for another twenty-five years of happiness and success. That 50th comes so quickly—you feel like saying "Lauk a-mercy—this can't be I!"

With so many felicitations—the Award, the Silver wedding anniversary and the New Year—the margins of this paper should be illuminated like an important manuscript.

Affectionately,

Theresa Buckingham
Thursday

Dear Carol and Ivan,

I hope "flu" germs don't survive very long on paper. This page is an incubator of germs—if they do. I have had whatever "has been going around". I am finally beginning to pick up the few little threads that make up my life—one being to thank you for the neat picture. It came and has been lying in its packet on the desk for days. Now I am wondering if this thank you note will ever catch up with you—if you are off on another jum'ket of autographing. (I am just going to keep on with this letter and not even try to cover the mistakes.

I must tell you that yesterday I went out (socially) to a club meeting—I have belonged to this club for at least 50 years. We were having to elect some new members (3)—one having died, another had a stroke—another has simply quit. We had to have 15 members there to vote—I considered briefly sending my written ballot with my signature notarized. This is serious business. I decided to go to put in my vote and display the first of the "famous people of Meagher county"—your picture. When I got to the meeting I was sticke'n to discover I had forgotten the picture AND my hearing aids!! Everyone was curious about your new book—and after the voting was accomplished wanted a review. I told them how pleased you had been with the turn-outs—I really appreciated your having written about that—I was certainly not in form to give a critique at time. Pat was there and said it wasn't too bad—only I did give them impression that I was really a close friend of yours—Welllll

Affectionately

[Signature]
Sunday

Dear Ivan and Carol,

Your picture arrived. It is an excellent one. I plan to send it to be matted and framed.—then the hanging will take place.—barring last minute reprieves.

Would you believe! Both Fred and I landed in the local hospital—our rooms side by side. I had "stomach flu" and Fred got a touch of it along with his eternal pain in his side and back which a bout with shingles left to him. What a miserable pair we were. I came home last night and Fred was turned loose this morning.

This is probably the most trite statement one can make—but—You never appreciate your normal feeling of well-being enough. An upset stomach sound like a childhood ailment—but I wonder how many wars were lost in history, how many poor decisions were made because someone had a stomach-ache.

Should I cool my disapproval of your flagrant use of four letter words? In an news magazine story on the secret tapes of Kruecheff (Sp)—the Russian—I noted one. Have I come to that—looking for dirty words?

Thank you again for the picture. I am hoping this will set-off some better arrangements with our "stuff". We got some great things—but so poorly arranged.

Hope to keep in touch

[Signature]
September 13th 1990

Dear Ivan:

The following request has somewhat of a "post-mortem" ring to it:

The Historical (local) association should have a picture of you in the Castle. This was pointed out this summer when some people I was having on tour mentioned it. That is putting it mildly. They were really astonished.

I am hoping to get to Helena on Saturday—but my plans do not always work out. Do you have someone in your advertising staff who could get us a print. We could get the framing done—mailing anything with frames and glass is such a risk. Actually what I was thinking was—a poster-type picture as a background for a copy of This House of Sky. We do have some local writers—Taylor Gordon, Art Watson—Lee Rostad’s book on Grace Stone Coates and is there—Legends of the Smith River by Sutherland. We have a copy of Cook’s Journal (in Manuscript) and his picture—also the unpublished manuscript of Trail Dust—the story of Billy Woods—Charlie Sherman’s half brother. It ran as serial in the Lewistown paper some time ago. It is more like
a handbook on how to be a top-hand with a rope. It probably lacks distinction because it is written by Billy Woods' son, as he remembers what his father told him—I don't know—only we do know that it never came out as a book—lack of funds maybe. Ever since my infamous interview by telephone and covered so thoroughly in a big Seattle paper I am making no summery of anything. Do you know—I still have the paper! I die everytime I look at it.

I have been so taken up with the dead Alex and that ghastly Leona—I am back into English Greek. I have supplied "Mariah" copies for may several children. Peggy—one of the twins—who lives in Denver hears that you will be down there and is going to stop in to get your autograph. Susan got her own copy, but didn't get into Great Falls when you were there. Susan has six tall sons doing wonderful things that only a grandmother can do justice to the telling—that is the ultimate—I would say. They have supplied M.S.U. for years—the McCaskill goal—one got his masters in math last June Col. and is now at Boulder working on his doctorate. Susan has no daughters—no house help, hates to cook, likes to read. They were harvesting—no wonder she didn't get to town—between 1:00 and 2:00 Friday.

Affectionately

Theresa Buckingham

Spokes-person for the Buckinghamhs

Hi Carol—we really want a picture
Cattle Women's Column

by Lee Rostad

Fall is here! One of the favorite seasons of the cattlemen and women. Actually, the black birds were gathering up in the middle of August. Their raucous speeches of assembly and departure filled the air for days. Then we had a slight frost and drifted into our Indian Summer.

The country looks good. The hay is up, hay corrals fenced, and the grain has been harvested. The hay crop was good, but the rains that made the hay and grass good, came at the wrong time to make a good grain crop. As the fellow says, "We takes what we gets/"

It's a more laid back time...the cattle need to be brought in from the mountains. Calves and yearlings need to be shipped, and the prices are good this year. Things couldn't look better, but yet...

We have our troops in the Persian Gulf, the price of oil is going up and up, world trade talks are

The last balanced budget was in 1969. The national debt now stands at more than $3 trillion. I don't even know how many zeros it takes to write that out. Everyone's share of the interest on the national debt is $600...that's just the interest.

The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget balancing law says this country could run a $64 billion deficit this year. The law says when Congress fails to hit the deficit target, arbitrary across-the-board cuts must occur. Incredibly, 75 percent of the budget is exempt from the mandatory cuts. Agriculture is one budget sector that is not exempt.

The crisis in the Persian Gulf may make all this moot. The law also provides for suspension in time of war or inflation.

Anyway, it makes it a little harder to walk out on a fall, crisp morning, and enjoy it completely.
Writers gather at Rostad home near Lennep Sunday

A meeting of an informal group of writers from the Billings area was hosted by Lee Rostad at the Phil Rostad ranch at Lennep on Sunday. The afternoon was devoted to "shop talk" about Montana books and writers.

Don Baker was present. His recent book, "The Montana Railroad," published by Pruett of Boulder, Colorado, is of local interest. It is the story of the "Jawbone" railroad which wound its perilous route through our area, finally threatened to extinction by winter blizzards and financial woes.

There was much interest in Ivan Doig's latest book, "Miriah Montana," and there was some speculation on his next writings which may bring the scene back to our area. It is said that he plans the central theme around the life of his mother. It is interesting that an opinion was expressed that few except for Ivan Doig recognize the potential White Sulphur Springs has in history and color available to Montana writers.

Following an early dinner, the group drove to the Bair Company ranch near Martinsdale where they had been invited for a tour of the mansion. Alberta Bair conducted the tour adding anecdotes and details thoroughly enjoyed by the writers.

Theresa Buckingham who some time ago co-published with Lee Rostad a book of ranch stories was among the guests. Megan and George Knight, local high school students, accompanied their grandmother.

**FIRST CHOICE**

**Wilcoxson's**

**ICE CREAM**
Saturday

Dear Carol and Ivan,

That was such a nice surprise—to get your card! I was really taking a chance that my note could arrive at the right store, the right hour and the right day. I could just see it trundling around the state after you. I enjoyed your quip about being hung in White Sulphur Springs. Lee Rostad and I are really wanting to set up a book-nook (that's a cute-sy title) which would probably be just an old store counter. We have learned from past experience what strong sunlight does to old papers.

I am enclosing a clipping about a party Lee Rostad gave. You could have been "lionized" had you come over. We discussed you and your books thoroughly. I think I was asked because I might come forth with "I knew him when" details—which I did not offer. One does learn—sometimes it takes 80 years—not to be so eager to get into the act. Sherry Doig was asked to the party too but went to an anti-abortion rally in Billings instead. Sherry has become a Catholic now—did you know. She is very intense about it. Sherry was to give me a ride to the party. Fred will not go anywhere—much less drive. We were the only two locals invited—but I finally got Pat's Megan (who just got her drivers permit) and George (a year younger) to go with me. Seeing the Bair house was quite a sight for them! There lies challenging material for a book for you—faded elegance on the Musselshell.

Your "I knew him When" friend

Theresa Buckingham
Dear Theresa--

Desperately seeking a mug shot of me, huh? Here's one that's even fairly recent (not of poster size--my publisher evidently doesn't see me in such proportions) and if it's any help, a recent newspaper profile (literally).

I trust, Theresa, that the Meagher Historical Association practices utmost honesty in hanging its localites on the walls of the Castle and thus I'll be there with my true moniker, next to Dirk Niewoehner.

Carol and I have been home about 48 hours now from the ten-store booksigning tour for Mariah Montana in MT, Jackson/Wyoming and Spokane, and are just now catching our breath a little. This book evidently is going to outsell any of my previous ones; gangs of people came out at all the signings, and when I did a reading in Spokane there was a throng of hundreds, in space for about a hundred. So, it's getting to be fun. Wish we could've seen you, but the WSS country simply isn't on major publishing routes, sad to say. I was glad to have the update on sundry Buckinghams--tell Susan hi for me, and I'll look forward to seeing Peggy at the Tattered Cover Bookstore in Denver, huh?

Loved your letter. You're the one who should've been writing these McCaskill books.

much affection,
Fred and Theresa

Merry Christmas

American Gothic ?
Dear Ivan and Carol,

I am sending this picture of the old ranch house—which I am sure Ivan would scarcely remember, but I think the logs look so neat. The other picture is of Fred and me on our 54th wedding anniversary. For two people who will never see 80 again we don't look so bad. The obvious age of the old cottonwood behind us probably gives us a more youthful look—maybe. The tree was planted I sometime after 1873—maybe should say are awaiting planting!!! Not too funny. Fred has been miserable for two years—ever since he went to Billings for a check-up and came back with Shingles. He has constant pain from damaged nerve endings—they say. This is really beginning to show—actually destroying his spirit, his health—that shows in the porch picture.

I have thought of you, Ivan, so much through all the fires—all the places you have written about were in the news. Personally I was glad to see the Forest service get all the blame that was doled out to them. Those people in Augusta were upset. The Forest can be really unreasonable—we ranchers know how unreasonable they can be.

I have been thinking of all the new developments that are surfacing—the outfitters—the environmentalists—the church groups buying up old ranches—the Japanese—the McCaskills have their work cut out for them—there is no end to material

Affectionately

Theresa
Dear Ivan and Carol,

So nice to be remembered. Christmas is getting a short shift at our house. I have had a hip replacement—which was sort of bungled and had to be done over—which—in turn takes forever to heal. Every note I have attempted to write these last few days has turned into a clinical report on my "HIP." I will say no more. "Who wants to hear about that. Fred just had a gall bladder infection and had to have that taken out. What a sorry lot we are—but we are all home—and beat the snow getting here.

We had a real historical row going here. We had one faction who wanted a carriage house built directly beside the old Castle—(this to be made from cinder blocks). The cost was out of sight—you have probably heard some details. I was against the whole thing—but lost out. Our present chief, Dale MacAffee was against it too. Probably we both are lacking in vision. The row occupied a lot of my energy and time—I wish I had been doing more thinking about my hip. I think the Centennial year, the hip and the row over the carriage house has completely disenchanted me.

Come and see us if you are this way.

Hersa — Fred — Gertrud

P.S. I spent some time in our local Convalescent home—because they would not let me go home until I could take care of myself—put on anklets without bending over!!! I used to wheel in to Bud Ringer's room across the hall in the evening—and watch T.V. with him. I would come away very humbled and ashamed of myself for complaining.
November 18th 1937

Dear Carol and Ivan,

If you are thinking that it has taken me all this while to gather enough composure to face you and the world after my debut with the "media" you may be partly right—but what has really kept me out of circulation is the siege of illness which has struck our household. Fred has had a terrible bout with "shingles" which I was never acquainted with before but vaguely classed it with something people get who don't get orange juice or maybe aren't very clean. It is a form of nerve damage caused by a virus, and the pain is intense—a sort of neuralgia. Fred has had this ever since the first of February—and has not been without the pain day or night. He was 80 in August but was so in control of everything—he moved and thought like a person much younger. Everyday he gets weaker. He has had every kind of a medication—but that has served no purpose—because the medications seem to be for skin rashes etc—and his illness is a nerve disorder. This has been a bad time because—we have had so many failures—no one seems to know what to do. We were thinking neurosurgery—where they cut the root of the nerve—but this is very tricky and probably no one in the state has had much success with it. They say we should go to a University Hospital where there are people who have had more experience with this. We have wasted so much time by now that Fred is uneasy about travelling anywhere.

I'm not through with my tale of woe yet.....

On the sixth of August Gertrude fell and broke her hip. That was calamitous. She had always been very active—and found life fairly tolerable if she could keep busy and purposful. Finding herself helpless so suddenly in the 85th year of her life—when her activities were pretty well pared down to what she was physically able to do anyway didn't give her much to go on. She spent quite a bit of time in the hospital in Helena, but was able to come over here and stay in our nursing home. At least her timing was good. Alberta Bair had been funding our hospital for some time—and even the nursing home is one of the cleanest most pleasant places as far as nursing homes go. It really was nice. She had so many callers, flowers and attentions of all kinds. The staff seemed to bend over backwards to keep her satisfied—We all appreciated the attention she got—compared to St Peter's in Helena. Coming home to the house
did not measure up so well. Gert is a very valiant person and she is now walking indoors and out (the snow yesteryay bodes no particular good for the outdoors). Running a mini-nursing home is not my cup of tea--but for one who claims the longest childhood on record--I guess it's time I did a bit of something for somebody else.

About the piece in the paper!!!! I think I might have died--only had more serious things to think about right here at home. That is if the article did not slow up the sales of your book.

I had really not realized the impact that haphazard telephone conversation last summer would carry. I must have forgotten that you had mentioned that I would be called. With Fred being sick--what little wits I had were pretty well scattered. After the phone call I spent a time stewing about it--and then moved on to new areas of concern--THEN in the mail came TWO, not one but TWO copies of the Book review section of the Seattle paper. One was from young Charles Donahue and another from a man who used to live here but is now in the state of Washington. Then came your nice letter and another copy. Someone in Great Falls told Susan's husband that he was saving a copy for me--just the other night a woman from Townsend—who works here as a public health nurse but I don't know her—called to say she would bring her copy up to the house if I had not seen it. I am indeed well supplied.

Isn't it awful--how one's own words and the image they make don't seem to belong to you at all! Like the old woman in the fairy tale—"Lauk'amercy! This can't be I!!"

I was certainly at odds with your idea of your childhood—I can just see you cringing! "Poor lost little boy"—Where do I come up with that soupy bit? I didn't know you in the days of your ramble about the country—but certainly you were the envy of all your cousins and any kids you knew—you had the best of both worlds—being both the only little one in the family—and treated like an adult—never had to keep regular bedtime hours and ate all your meals in restaurants—What fun! It is true that when your mother died—I was full of pity for you—I remember thinking—the poor little guy—you were so little and solemn—but that phase did not last very long—not much beyond your fourth year—from then on you were I can imagine a very cocky little character—and I do apologize for such a heart-rending description of you. Then—I cringed to read the description of your father—How did I come up with such a combination—both genial and opinionated! Strange
When Fred read the article his first comment was--"How come you called the Luppold the Buckingham ranch?" To him the Only Buckingham ranch is down at the canyon---no matter who lives there. The only change made is to "the old Buckingham ranch". When the reporter asked me "What ranch?", Fred said I should have said --"Luppold" and let it go at that. I have had a run at that before with more confusion. It comes off "Loophole" which sounds like "Hole-in-the-Wall or some robbers' roost.---Well, certainly it was a misrepresentation--Charlie Doig's hay-contract was not with us. By last summer's interview--Rick had had the ranch for several years--and I was making a wild grab at anything short of giving the whole history--"My grand-uncle willed it to my grandmother who willed it to my mother, who willed it to Gertrude--who has been selling it to Rick--this has been going on since the cattle were first turned in May 6th 1873. I think it's kind of neat to have the exact date. It was part of a sworn testimony in a water court fight--and was on the records in Diamond City.

I apologize for this lengthy letter. Gertrude says Eisenhower said if you can't get a letter on one page--you had better think it over some more.

Rick is flying today with his sister Susan--to Pensicola Florida to attend a ceremony for her second son Joe who is finishing some officer's training. Susan was going to have to go alone because Jerry had another meeting--but he now will meet them in Minneapolis this noon. We all think it is really exciting. Joe is finishing as a subcommander in his group. I am so glad Rick is getting a break--even if it only four or five days. Joe graduated in civil engineering at MSU last year, and is really sharp. He told his mother he does not get "to holler" --(bark orders) but leads in the sword maneuvers or whatever it's called. With six sons--Susan will surely get her share of this sort of thing.

I bought "Dancing--" and have not had time to open it--that is one of the first times that has happened to me!!----Affectionately

[Signature]
Saturday

Dear Carol and Ivan, I loved your scenario! Was that for real—"Dancing at the Rascal Fair"? It sounds good—a title like that makes one very curious. What could it be—an article, a novel?

I am so very proud of being remembered by you two, that when your card came in the mail—I left it out in the living room obviously placed to catch the eye of the most incurious of visitors. Gertrude was having two tables of bridge and I was hoping the bright green of your stationary would draw attention.

The year is all but gone! 1986—I sort of liked the ring of it, and had thought all along that something special might happen—but I did not want a repeat of the hard winter of 1886. Looking back at it nothing special did happen—Fred and I are GREATgrand parents. Ann, Barbara's daughter had a baby boy called Nickolas. When our Patty heard me say I thought

Jolly Holidays!
Barbara as a grandmother was boring, she decided that great.
I was not taking grandmotherhood in very good grace.
It's not easy. Who ever heard of a "youngish great grandmother". The title brings up nothing but the image of old, old age.

Grand daughter Mary, who graduated from Carroll last year is being married on the 27th of December. She is marrying a boy from Helena--and the wedding is to be at St Leo's in Lewistown--with three priests officiating!!! I hope they concentrate their prayers on good weather. That Lewistown country scares me in winter. The boy's father as a teacher at Carroll and so several guests will be coming from Helena. I think it is going to be very nice.

The old Potter carriage house was almost burned --well, it did burn, the other day! Dude Potter had a great collection of everything--record, books, letters of early White Sulphur Springs--I hate to think of what could be lost. We never got much for the Castle from them. They weren't ones to share.
Hope love and joy
are all around you!

Happy Holidays

Fred and family

Theresa

Gertrude

not alphabetized
Sunday

Dear Carol and Ivan,

That was what I would call a flying trip. I have always known that we move at a slower tempo than you cosmopolites—but I really thought I would catch up with you, Ivan, before you left town. I was so overcome with well-deserved embarrassment about my house keeping I forgot to show you a piece that I got from Susan—She had copies made of some records kept by Susan's father-in-law who is now dead. He worked as a brand inspector and deputy sheriff in the Judith Basin in the early '30s. The whole thing reads more like a page out of Wallace Coburn's pulp stories than a report to be filed. There are about 16 pages—some embellished with Susan's own sketches.

Henry Evans was quite a story teller. I thought you might like to look at this—It would be—I keep wanting to say inspirational—but that sounds like something with organ music for a background.

Comes a late thought—the timing is bad. Henry's story would have been good research material for English Creek. This was in the '30s that Henry rode all the country in the breaks of the Missouri—land that is now under Fort Peck dam. He made his rounds by saddle horse and pack horse—no detail was too small that he would not make a note of it. He uses all the real names—admits to getting his suspects drunk so they would talk. It's a really tough piece. I can hardly believe that files like that would be kept—officially that is.

For your third book—of the trilogy—the big thing is the battle with the recreation people and the environmentalists which of course you have already known. In small ranch communities sports are everything—rancher's wives who have their credentials in order teach. You don't often find a ranch wife who does not have a job. Driving 30 or 40 miles does not bother them—the small baby goes to town too to the baby sitter. I am probably being very naive—offering this as if it might be news to you. Wish we could have talked more—Carol should have come—but I am still glad she did not see my house.

P.S. You will tell her though—that's the worst of it.
14 Feb. '36

Dear Theresa—

Maybe it shows what I know about housekeeping, but I thought your house looked the way a place ought to look. And I'll never breathe a word to Carol, honest.

Sorry I scootied through town in such a hurry, but with only one Northwest flight into and out of Helena these days, mine had to be either a 2-day trip or a 3- or 4- one—no such thing any more as leisurely getting home by noon of the 3rd day. Anyway, many thanks for your letter, which is a great help toward my centennial novel—pass along ideas whenever you feel like it. And indeed I'd like to see Susan's pe-in-law account sometime. Carol sends her best; it'll likely be '37 now before we hit Mont. again.

all affection
Merry Christmas! '85

Dear Carol and Ivan,

I did some P.R. work for you this morning. Every Mon.
morning the newspaper calls me for news—which usually
consists of tips on which grandchild has stopped by on journeys
in the Home for the Holiday category—& being well situated
for a break for lunch or high tea. Two weeks ago we seemed
to be the only ones who saw that our Lennep country school
had made Time magazine. This week I gave them the news
about English Creek. I hope that was alright that I did
this. They certainly didn't know until I told them.

As I have told you before—I love English Creek and Alix!
I think Alix sparked some long dormant feeling in these
old grandmotherly bones—the bones are grandmotherly—not the
feeling. I think Alix reminded me of some long ago unattainable
rodeo person who set my dumb little teenaged heart aflutter. I loved rodeos but
must admit I never left my seat in the grandstand and went right home after the show.
My mother who came out here about 1895 as a young girl never got over her low
opinion of cowboys—even as they peaked in glamor during the '20s.

My little piece of recognition which should not be mentioned on the same page
with yours—actually it is almost funny: The Alumnae magazine for St Catherine's,
the women's college I went to in Minnesota (which, I should say, is one of the larger
girls schools which is still a girls school)—and it is very lovely,—is reprinting the little Christmas story from my ONE and ONLY publication. They
called and asked my permission and asked for a picture and some comments on the
present agricultural crisis! Me! I am still waiting for the issue to arrive—
They publish four times a year. Although it's almost posthumus—I am still
excited to be thought of at all. It has come to the front lately because the person
from the Alumnae office said there was a copy of the book in the Alumnae office and
some of the staff had been reading it—finding things to their liking!

This summer the Magazine of Western History had a piece—grandly titled—
The Era of Ease and Elegance—about White Sulphur Springs and its efforts to
become a spa. Certainly it took an opposite view than This House of Sky
presented, and I thought they were certainly missed a point when they left out the old Auditorium. I had
a nice picture of it taken before its collapse, I sent a letter with the picture.
It seems so long ago. With this weather anything relating to summer seems beyond
memory. The other day the winter edition of the magazine came and there was
the picture and my letter. That was fun! I thought of the cute young girl who was in Lewistown with you from the magazine—the assistant editor—and how nice it was to
meet her. It was a nice thought that she may have remembered me.

Between being a pretty inaccurate typist, depending very much on the
wonders of erasable typing paper—and wanting to cram in a lot of stuff before
I run off the page—this is a mess.

Having lunch with Susan's third son who is a physics major at M.S.U.—very
tall, blue eyed but in lots of ways a lot like Susan—much taken with his own
thoughts—we had fun telling him about the election when Truman beat Dewey. Susan
was firm in her belief that Truman would win—though no one else in the country
thought so—the class at school had voted Truman in and that was final—She was right
and rested on those laurels for many years. We listened to Susan quite a bit after
that. Were you in that very occult group?

Affectionately

The Buckingham

and Gertrude
Dear Carol and Ivan,

I do hope I get to see you when you come this way. I have got myself convinced that I should go to my 50th reunion at St. Catherine's! I leave on the 12th of June and I really don't want to stay very long so I may be back. I am taking Barbara and her two big girls with me. Barbara and Susan both went to St. Catherine's—which is a Catholic woman's college in St. Paul—and Mary, Barbara's oldest daughter who will be a senior in high school next year is sort of interested. Since Ann is only a year behind her we thought she should come too. I am not just really looking forward to it—after all—the 50th! You can sort of guess where the ones are who don't show up. My two best friends while I was there are both dead. Connie, one of them, lived not far from St. Paul and when my girls went there, Connie was like a surrogate mother. Barbara was wanting to go down to visit Connie's boys even though both Connie and her husband are dead—but they called the other day to say that they are all going "up north." As soon as summer comes to Minnesota that is all one ever heard—Up north.

I am so relieved that I don't have to go to Saribault—
Connie's home—they have the Faribault Woolen Mills there. Everyone is gone—except the stepmother (Connie's) who is over ninety and lives in the big house and is, as Connie's son, Pete put it, a real challenge. Just because I am taking such a dim view of the whole venture, it may turn out to be really great.

We are having the most beautiful May that I can remember—all misty and delicate green. The last couple of days we have had floods but not here. Pat and I drove right into a disaster area before we knew it, going to Helena. We never got there. We were going in a pickup to pick out some carpeting for Pat's addition to their house at the ranch. We were so busy talking about colors and carpet that we got quite a ways into a road barrier before we knew what it was. A very redfaced and angry man in sheriff's car was finally able to get our attention—I thought he was going to have a stroke. Thank heavens Pat was driving—she backs up with expertise. Had I been left to it I would have succeeded in knocking down what barrier they had up. We are so unused to disaster that we sat for a while trying to figure out what was going on—that is after we got out of the way. Prickly Pear creek had jumped its banks—it looked like the Missouri river. It was really very bad. We still were considering
options on how we could still get around the mess and on into Helena. Had we succeeded we would have been stranded there—Helena was having a terrible flood and we just didn't appreciate it. We finally decided—with some reluctance—to go home. When I was telling Fred about it that evening—I thought it was quite a little adventure we had just missed—we had finally turned on the radio on the way home and found out what was going on, ——Fred was so mad he couldn't even listen. All he could say was—"What in Hell did you think you were doing?" True indeed, what did we think—carpets and colors.

Please overlook this typing—I should redo it but that is a lot of trouble to take for just a few little mistakes.

Susan

Sunday

Gertrude will be here and love to take you to the ranch even if I don't get back.
This is a second try at getting this delivered. I had the wrong house number on the envelope.
Dear Carol and Ivan,

I haven't seen Inside This House. I heard there is a picture of the ex-church at Ringling and the deserted R.R. station at White Sulphur Springs—it sounds moody. The mood has been a bit bleak here lately—the mill was sold! A variety of people have had a rug of sorts pulled out from under their feet! The Dog's Plant had a fire which does not show at all from the outside—but any fire is bad news.

I am looking forward to the Valier book—that period I would know and understand.

Fred has been carrying on a bout with prostate cancer. We spent 7 weeks in Billings last summer when he took radiation treatments. His last report was good. I think he looks well. (They were calling him Burt Reynolds at a party we were at last night.) He is working at a mustache. I think he feels better. When we were in Billings the hotels and motels were charging a bed tax which has since been outlawed. The word is that if you have your receipts you could get the $2.00 a night back. He is working on that too.

Susan had her 6th son last January—no girls. Her 2 older boys are in M.S.U.? Patty named her new daughter Susan because there should always be a Susan Buckingham somewhere in the family for several generations. Affectionately,
October 28th 1984

Dear Carol and Ivan,

I can still think of nothing but your swing through Montana on the high tide of English Creek! Wasn't that Yago Inn crowd something?—a sell-out for a 7:00 A.M. breakfast!!! The shit-chat din in the lobby —like the peak of a Labor Day Rodeo cocktail party—and this on a workday morning. Your weather-watch trip through central Montana was worth the wear and tear for all the acclaim you got. I just finished reading about you, Ivan, in the M.S.U. Alumnae Magazine—your honorary Doctor's degree. Congratulations!

I am so mad at myself for believing those awful weather reports—we left about the time you did—and except for a big blow lifting the wheat fields at Barbara's—a quiet trip home—no arctic front, drifting snow. I had planned on a nice trip with mild weather. Except for the breakfast and a chance to see you, Fred did not want to get into too much "Conference" and so I just got tickets for myself—taking a chance on a ticket for him at the door for the breakfast. Wrong there. I thought Reed would enjoy lobby-visiting—he is good at that—driving out to Barbie's and back while I absorbed some history was a thought. I should get out more often—I was so disorganized. I missed the oral history meetings because we stayed too long at Barbie's on the way in. They haven't sold their calves yet and that calls for lots of discussion on who is paying what—who sold and to what buyer. A lot of second guessing has to go on about the market. When we got to the hotel, they gave us the wrong key! It is a funny feeling to open a door expecting a room to be shipshape and find it steamy from someone's recent shower—and strange luggage open on the floor. A nice outcome was that since there were no more medium priced rooms left, the kind we had reserved—we got a deluxe model for the same price. We didn't make the tours to the museums—another mistake. Things looked up when I met up with you, Carol, and I finally got my schedules and tickets—but I didn't read them and stumbled into a lecture on Campbell's dryland farming—while right next door or down the hall Richard Roeder was having some thing—one of the few people I knew! Then when I saw him—he didn't even remember me! I had forgotten that all my dealings with him had been by letter. Time has laid a heavy hand on me since last we met—or else I am not the "unforgettable"
character" I was beginning to think I was—after that cute girl—the assitant editor of
the prestigious Montana, Magazine of History, you introduced me to, Carol, remembered
my name and remembered a letter I wrote to the magazine. That was such fun, Carol,
to meet such a friendly attractive—and, of course, important person.

Monday

I have just finished reading the story about you two in the Great Falls Tribune—Perhaps you picked one up in your travels. It describes all your friends coming in
from White Sulphur Springs, Choteau etc—like a "homecoming"—your meeting with Susan,
I went right to the phone and called her. She was just described briefly as "a woman",
no name
but what fun to be news worthy. She said there was a picture of their cattle in color
in the Sunday paper—"Cattle in good grass near Geyser" but no credit line for them there
either. Susan and I are both so pleased that the McCaskills will go on. I am so let down
when I have really enjoyed a book—and it ends. If the McCasills are to stay in Gros Ventre
Susan says—don't overlook the small town basketball—especially if you involve an Indian
town—it has everything, drama, humor, heartbreak, social problems, suspense. A McCaskill
has to be on the team—the life of a small town revolves around its basketball team. Indians
as you probably know, live for basketball. Lately they have been encouraged to dramatize
their ethnic difference, instead of being apologetic or trying to be tougher and meaner.
They come out on the floor in elegant warbonnets—warmup outfits that look like fringed
buckskin—I love it. We go to the tournaments if Susan's boys get to play or Barbie's
boy—even Barbie's girls as cheerleaders draw us out. They dim the lights and the war drum
beats the age old rhythm and then the war chant begins—not by school kids—but "elders"
that have come along—For tournaments they come in caravans! They asked for equal time
with The Star Spangle Banner—but the Montana Highschool Ass'n has decided against that.
Just mean!

I have run on so. Apparently only the end of the paper will stop me. It was
so much fun seeing you, and I am so happy for you about English Creek. I felt disloyal
thinking that it is better than This House. The story of the McCaskills is so poignant—
touching—the way the family "got" one another. I had a school girl crush on Alex and
wished he didn't have to die—but I guess that was the only way to stay forever young.
Thank you again, Carol, for taking time to visit with me. You have a way of making a
person feel better about themselves. Affectionately

Buckinghams
Theresa, your letter was terrific!
I have tucked away the Indian basketball love you describe, and will try to use it in a McCaskill book. All is well with us. English Creek has sold well in Montana & here; indeed has out-sold House of Sky. We hope to land in Helena about mid-June for a few weeks; if you possibly can, I'd much like to have you talk into my tape recorder for a while. Not for anything I'm writing, particularly; for posterity's (I) sake. Okay?
Carol sends her best. She was so pleased she got to see you at Lewistown.

I love you. I love your gift. I love the carrot cake. I love the silly bird. I love the little bed. I love the cows. I love the sun. I love the world. I love you. I love you. I love you.
Dear Ivan,

Your book arrived last week. It really is a guiding hand. I wish—sort of—that I had read it before. It doesn't make self-publishing sound second class at all. Indeed, it sort of approves of it—not having to split your profits so many ways. All this while I have felt apologetic for having a do it yourself job. Your book even made me feel better about the size and appearance of the Old Party. I had been feeling badly about my book because I really had wanted Susan to do the drawings. She makes such cute little animals, but I couldn't say to Lee—"Thanks for the idea of making a book out of this stuff—but I really want Susan's drawings—not yours!! We had the same situation with the printer. Mr. Radmacher had set himself up as a printer and since he had put the articles I wrote in his paper in the first place, Lee and I thought we should go along with him. Your book praises the conventional size book, and also notes that the more art work you put in it the greater the cost. I don't understand a thing when the book talks about type—I never notice letters.

Thank you so much for loaning the book. I wish Lee could see it. I promise to get it back. She has one of my favorite art books and has been wanting to get it back. I can get it when I go for yours—when I do give it to her—which I am only thinking about.

Just when I thought my flash in the pan acclaim had flickered out—a columnist who writes for the Montana Standard and the Helena paper had this!! When I am out of town I have a habit of quietly browsing thru the book stores where my book is to see what it looks like. It was beginning to be delegated to a back shelf. Last week I was in Helena at The Little Professor Book store and noticed that it is out in front again, and I got an order from Butte—all on the strength of the column.

Unhappy is the memory of going with a friend to a friend's (her) art shop. He (the owner) was having an open house and a special showing of pictures. My friend thought he would be happy to have a copy of The Old Party just on display. He turned us down. He said with some pity in his voice—"You can't afford to go around distributing the book this way. You must hire a distributor." I felt as if I were standing there with
brown paper bag of home made potholders I was trying to peddle. Awful. It is wonderful that there are books like the one you loaned me. There is so much to learn.

Thank you so much.

We got a cute card from your nice friends after they left here. I surely enjoyed them. How long ago that seems.

Affectionately

(Teresa Buckingham)
Dear Ivan,

Here, at last is your book. I finally got it back from Lee Rostad. I have fretted over my doing such a thing, one of the reasons for my sharing the book with her, besides being sure she would find it full of things she wants to know, I have to admit I used it as a plow to get my art book back from her. She had picked that up and promised to get it back 'way last July. It did not work—my bit of conniving. Lee's daughter-in-law brought your book in this morning, but not mine. Drat the luck.

Thank you again for loaning the book. I took great comfort out of learning that publishing one's own stuff was not so second class. I now have a great desire to do a sort of guide book to our Castle museum that would incorporate the history and human interest stories as a background for the different articles we have. I want Susan to do sketches of various pieces—architectural details. I think such a book would sell to tourists—providing the supply of tourists holds out. I have had the idea for some time, but was sort of waiting for some of the pieces and rooms to get more settled. I think time will run out on me—and I should not have it as much a guide book—such as "in the parlor you will find—etc etc". Actually locating the items will be bad—can't keep up with that. The various curators keep switching things.

We are having a crisp, bright fall day today, after some overcast days. We always have to pay the price for this sort of day—it is always preceded by a killer frost.

Affectionately,

I should redo this—but I am so anxious to get the book

Theresa

Hi, Carol
October 5th 1981

Dear Ivan and Carol,

I suppose you already have the enclosed, but since Gertrude and I each voted and we have the two copies what better thing to do than to send this on to you.

I think that this is really nice! Exciting. Gertrude and I sent in our votes—and found it rather difficult to pick just five because the instructions for voting said one could pick any book about Montana since the beginning of time and they could be in any field—poetry, history, fiction, what ever. I only got two of the first five—the two "Skies". I did have Stay Away Joe which made the list, but did not get much support for O'malley's A Mile High: A Mile Deep. When I read that I cried. The other I picked I knew would be a loser but I did like it was Mildred Walker's The Curlew's Cry. It had some very real things in it and covered a period I lived in—partly.

I hope you got your book back. I got my art book back too so all is well.

Affectionately,

Theresa
Dear Theresa—

A quick note of thanks. I'd heard Harry Fritz was making some sort of books poll, but didn't really know what he was up to, and hadn't heard the results. Of course, I'm much pleased. I'd agree with you that Mildred Walker ought to have been in the top 5; I'd have voted for her Winter Wheat, which I think is wonderfully evocative of the generation of Susan and me, though it's set a bit earlier.


Signed here next page.
December 29, 1980

Dear Carol and Ivan,

Here I come with my little collection of reviews—no Time magazine—no Los Angeles Times but cherished no less. You will note that the copy machine has been at work—that is what my dear sister did—took the clippings down to the courthouse and had them run through and now I am fiendishly—if not somewhat belatedly—sending off my version of the mimeographed Christmas letter which just an awful lot of people turn out or on their friends every year—"Betsy is taking ballet" (when your Betsy doesn't know the meaning of the word) "We had a fun time in the Caribbean in November" (which has never got off the pages of the National Geographic for us)—I am stuffing copies of the reviews into my Christmas cards and trying to think up cool off-hand statements like—"as you can see, I have been busy"

We were on T.V.—Norma Ashby—only Vic Miller who grew up here and now has something to do with state-wide T.V. had us on the big circuit—fortunately because the reception was very poor here but did they ever get us in Terry Mont., Stevensville and such. We think of you so often. I have been lionized to the point that I was asked to speak to the highschool English classes. (I think I told you this) so I gave them a talk on the advantages
of reading letters and journals instead of just fiction and I used your Winter Brothers as an example. Last night I was at a local Christmas party—very big, and the grand daughter of the host, passing hors d'oeuvres (had to look it up) told me that she remembered what I had said—about writing about simple things. She said she wrote about a garbage can—and got an A!!! I have not lived in vain.

Affectionately yours,

Theresa

"The Old Party"
Dear Theresa--

Your reviews are splendid; any author would be proud. The one in the GF Trib is by my Valier classmate and close friend, Wayne Arnst. I'd like to say I primed him into praising the book, but plainly I didn't have to.

Thanks so much for troubling to sign the Xmas book for Carol. She opened it Christmas Day in Monterey, California, in bright sunshine; we combined a holiday trip with some research I had to do in the U. of California library at Berkeley. But I should tell you the tale of your gift. Since Carol didn't know your book had been published yet, I figured well, ho ho, I'll just have Theresa mail me a copy and since I'm always alone here in the house when the mail arrives, its arrival will be a secret. Comes a Saturday and comes Carol striding in from the mailbox brightly asking, what's this you've got from Theresa? Never mind, I mumble and snatch it away. Now comes the day we are packing from California and I have secreted the wrapped book somewhere in the suitcase... Carol instantly unearths it and demands, what's this? Never mind, I mumble... Anyway, in spite of the fates and/or my wife, we did manage to surprise her, ultimately.

All is well here. I'm back at work on the novel I've begun, and Carol is back at teaching three classes back-to-back (to-back, I guess). We are looking forward to Montana, and Montana friends, sometime this summer. We hope you and Fred and Gertrude winter well, and again, our congratulations on The Old Party.

all best
Friday

Dear Doigs,

I have just come in the house for a short second and decided that it was so nice and cool in here I would not just collapse on the floor as I thought I was going to do—even though I feel like I have noodles for arms—I am going to send off an answer to your letter. I don't think I have the strength to push a pen, but I can still hit the typewriter keys—in my own fashion.

I have been out in the "yard". I can't glorify it by calling it a garden or grounds. This is my annual attempt at gardening. I get so discouraged I will not return to it again until the first lovely spring day of 1981 rolls around—if we are still here by then. Heavens! the news today is bad. I feel so sorry for Carter—at least at this time. I suppose in time I will learn that it was a politically inspired impulse. It's been another one of those "times to try men's souls" or something.

I am so pleased you are coming over to "hite Sulphur Springs. I have been planning on going to the library meeting—but so often when the time comes I chicken out—the weather or a conflict.

If it is convenient for you, if it suits your time for arrival, can you plan on dinner here with us?
I should tell you in advance that Lee Rostad and I have a literary project going. I am warning you because I can imagine that you have reached the point in your career, when aspiring writers seek you out for advice, secrets for success etc. The invitation to dinner does not hinge on any such plot. When you were here before there was something going on and except for the afternoon you were up here making a tape with Fred we never got much time to visit.

This:

Our project is Lee and I are putting together some of the things I have written over the three or more years I have been doing a column for the local paper. I was supposed to be pushing beef and beef recipes for the Cowbelles (distaff branch of Stockgrowers). I wandered off into country-life sketches, which were much more fun. Lee said she'd do the illustrating and we were going to get it done this winter. She took off for a vacation in Spain—it really was not a long one, but somehow we let things drift and it's only now getting together. The News office is doing it for us—and I feel the whole thing hanging very heavy. I keep hearing, in the wee hours of the night, the coffee cup critics saying—"But the woman has nothing to say!"

I think I have my strength again so back to the yard. Let me know about dinner—maybe I can get Sherri
and Gordon to join us.

They are building a very exciting looking house. I hope to get the tour one of these days. I drove around the outside of it once. There is a hard beaten track. I think it is the show place of the town.

Sincerely yours

[Handwritten Signature]

The Buckinghams
Dear Theresa--

Carol and I would be more than happy to come by for supper on Wednesday the 7th. Please go to as little fuss as possible. We'd just like to see you and yes, hear about your literary project.

We're going to be staying with Gordon and Sherri at her mother's place. Sherri called the other day about our plans for dinner that night, and I said we had the general invite from you, so perhaps you can relay any necessary information to her. I'm not sure what time we'll pull into WSS, but likely not before mid-afternoon. Will call you whenever we get to town.

Looking forward to it all.
Monday

Dear Ivan and Carol,

I didn't make it to Great Falls to the dinner, and was very sad about it. Fred was not too well when you were here and then he got worse. I sent my tickets to Susan in the hope that she would have time to find someone to go with her. She and her husband did plan to go in—it is only about fifty miles to Great Falls—but they branded that day—400 calves in two and one half hours! There was a big crew and so there went my tickets again. There is nothing new about my story. This is the sort of thing that happens to me all the time. I think it was about the first of the year that our librarian told me that you were going to be at this meeting and I vowed I would be there—all the while knowing that I wouldn't. I did regret the waste of the tickets. I should have given them to someone here.

Yesterday, Rick and I and one of the granddaughters—five year old Megan went to Susan's for her oldest boy's graduation. I hadn't been to a highschool graduation
since the last of our group featured in one. I had forgotten how important the occasion is. The gym of the little school was packed—only the Christmas program draws a bigger crowd Susan's husband said. Such gifts! People were streaming in with big cardboard boxes heaped with gifts—giftwrapped and beribboned. There will be no slump in the gift market until after the graduations—and then the June weddings will keep it bolstered a while longer. I must tell you about a gift John (the 8th grader) got—they had both the grade school and high school at the same time. They also coupled the Baccalaureate with graduation which I thought was smart. John is known as a Reader. He lives with his bespectacled nose in a book. For graduation some family friends gave him This House of Sky with a nifty bookmark in the page where his mother's name was mentioned! I think that was a very dear thing to do. Those people in that country are not particularly given to buying books—so it was quite a choice to make. This was to be John's own copy and they knew it would be very special.

We enjoyed our visit with you and the T.V. appearance and the article in the Tribune—but sorry about the dinner.
Monday

Dear Ivan, I mailed out The Old Party duly inscribed this morning. I do hope it gets there. I have been waiting to hear from Peggy in Denver all week. I sent her a copy plus the very nice review Kathryn Wright of the Billings Gazette wrote. I was so eager to get Peggy's comments that I finally called yesterday and she said—"What book?" The mails—the mails! I had such a flurry of mail orders for the book after the Gazette—from all over eastern Montana. I do hope those books I sent to Peggy mailed out arrived. What I really mourn is the possible loss of the clipping—the first and maybe the only newspaper review—a priceless keepsake! I feel silly coming in with my book talk. Like Swan, I am "running a little late in life" with such aspirations to the literary world.

I have been reading Winter Brothers and feeling the moist seaspray-ed air so real that I almost expect it outside—instead of the steady dry wind of this landlocked valley. I am going to take it to school tomorrow where I have been asked again to talk about books to the 7th and 8th grade English class. The teacher keeps hoping my enthusiasm for books will rub off on them. I haven't finished Winter Brothers yet, but I want to read some descriptions to them—some they will understand—the blue herons "stilting along"—I liked the part about the lighthouse.

My friend you met was Dorothy Sabo in Bozeman. She went to school with me at St Catherine's in St Paul. Her husband is a doctor there and she is very big in Symphony—the Museum etc and etc. I must write and thank her and I thank you for the really super compliment of your giving "The Old Party" to Carol. I simply am overwhelmed. You are so nice!

The Cowbelles had a Style Show Saturday and we had The Old Party there—we sold 63!!!! It is, I should point out, a collection of Cowbelle Columns so what more fertile field could I find. Fred says he thinks the Old Party has peaked—the market will be downhill from here on.

Affectionately

Theresa Buckingham
Dear Carol and Ivan,

I can get so much more said and do it quickly by typing so here I go—proper or not! Good! You are going to do another Montana book. I think that is your forte—even people who don't live in Montana like This House of Sky the best of them all. I know that I or any of the sort of people I know are certainly not the sharpest of critics and I have not read the SeaRunners yet—so I should not be having anything to say. The library here has The Sea Runners but when I asked for it, it was out.

Today I wrote my last Cowbelle Column and feel as if I left a part of me somewhere. I had it for so long and succumbed to flattery each time a new Cowbelle president went into office and asked me if I would just continue on. It was fun and actually I do think that the instant publishing without reject slips was a rare opportunity and quite irresistible. If my old typewriter hadn't needed a new ribbon and I couldn't get out of town to buy one, I would probably still hung on. Now that I have a new ribbon, I hope I get inspire to do something.

Had I written to you when Spike VanCleve died? That broke my heart. He liked me! He wrote me the nicest letters and then, darn it, he died. I met him at a party at TwoDot. He asked Lee Rostad to send him one of our books which he read and apparently really enjoyed. He was working on his last book which was published after he died. He said "People think writing is easy, that you can just turn 'er on—but sometimes the ditch rider comes along and shuts 'er off tight." I guess he got awfully tired of the last book and probably pushed himself too much. Anyway I felt as if I had lost a front man, a paver of the way and an inspiration to go on.

I am wondering if I told you that I entered a contest for members of the MIA winning articles. The winners were to be published in the Quarterly and the prizes awarded at the annual meeting in Billings in June. I didn't go—as usual, and since we don't take the Billings paper and the event was not newsworthy enough for the state papers I never heard how it all came out. I won the second prize and got word finally that my piece was to be in the fall Quarterly—but before that came about I got word that the quarterly had
folded! Darn! That was a poor contest anyway. The staff or whoever was running the contest sent all place winners the judge's critique. It was tough. I guess a great many entries were instantly discarded for just plain poor writing—structure trouble—says I, rambling along and punctuating with dashes. I wrote about my Aunt Kate and although I was given second prize the judge was not overwhelmed by my talent. The comment: "good descriptive parts, colorful character. The winning was not something to set me to start chilling a bottle of champagne to celebrate!"

Everyone is holding the fort—it takes all of us. We are getting so ancient. Like Abou Ben Adam (spelling) my tribe is increasing. Patti has new baby girl—whom she named Susan, for her sister who has no daughters. She hit upon Ellen for the second name which comes out SueEllen if you don't watch it. If you are not familiar with the T.V. evening soaps you probably don't know Dallas—but Sue Ellen I wouldn't want. Rick has sort of averted disaster by calling this dear little baby Miss Elly. I think it's neat.

The surprise in the family that was greeted with mixed feelings was that Susan, that poor mother of five boys and no daughters has now announced that she is pregnant! I don't need to mention to you how old she is and you can see why we are concerned. Being happy little Susan she is cheerful as can be and sees nothing to be concerned about. Her baby, which just could be a girl and she will demand her name back is to arrive in January. I was fussing over the phone at her—she had just been on jury duty. The jury went out at four in the afternoon and carried on into early morning hours before reaching a verdict. She is also chairman of their school board and takes off for meetings to learn how to negotiate with teachers on salaries, and she is up to her ears in battles with their parish priest about running the church. Yesterday afternoon I was out at Doggett's ranch and saw a madonna Susan had made, glazed and fired about six years ago. She gave it to me for our church Christmas bazaar and Mary Doggett bought it. It was so beautiful—I could have cried—so different and original—the madonna with arms outstretched to the Boy Jesus and his arms out to her. The figures were so graceful—so different like they were playing a game. I guess at that time I thought Susan would be turning stuff out like that all the time. Her two oldest boys are at MSU one a junior and one a freshman—three are home. Who has time to turn out Madonnas? Merry Christmas. [Signature]
Tuesday

Dear Ivan and Carol,

I have been trying for days to get a letter off to you to thank you for the story on H'way 89 and the book which I am so happy to have. I can't tell you how excited I am about your story in the New York paper. (I gave it to the local paper—I hope you do not mind. When they called Monday morning, as they always do, for news, I was telling about this. They wanted it, and promised to return it by Wednesday, because we would be seeing Bobbie and Charles at that time.) Bobbie is looking forward to seeing you in Seattle. I told her you were planning to look her up. I will give her your card and let her read the paper tomorrow.

I just love to read books like the one you gave me. I have one of his called "Beyond the Doorstep". It is very restful and pleasant to read. I keep a book like that by my bed. I like to read just sort of picking here and there and then I fall asleep.

To get to your writing—You are so good!!!! I wish I had the paper now—so I could pick out and comment—darn! Of course I loved the description of Ringling—the two old churches against the skyline—and in what should be the heart of the town—a few sheep grazing in a little hollow—how true. But there was another part that was so good—now I can't remember what it was! I will write another letter. This

Continued on Thursday:

I got back the clipping from the News office. Bobby took it to Lucile Logan's, where she is staying to finish reading it—then I will get it back. The News office is not printing it in full—lack of space, and so now it is in great demand. Everyone wants to read our copy. Bobby and her husband were very impressed. Dr Cole has been published, and last night I learned
that his sister, who worked at McMillan (sp) Publishing Co. at the
time was the one who discovered Margaret Michell's *Gone With the Wind*!!

Her boss, however took all the credit, and partly because of this she
later left the company. She, the sister, has had several things published
herself. Charlie Cole is so interesting to talk to. I know you will
both really enjoy knowing him. The sister was sent by Macmillan to their
house in Atlanta. There she became acquainted with Margaret Mitchell,
who was a very shy lady, and confided to Charlie's sister that she had been
working for years on a lengthy novel about the Civil War period in the
South. Mitchell let the sister read what she had, and from then on they
worked quite closely on it. I think Charlie said the lady had over 30
versions of the opening chapter!!

I have now remembered the other part of your Highway 89 piece—
How true about the Plains Indian museum! I couldn't believe it—they had
crochet work and afgans and such on display. I am not an afgan fan or I
suppose I would realize that—why not—it is only another facet of hand-
craft. I would rather look at an old worn Hudson Bay blanket coat—I did
enjoy prowling and peeking in at Bob Scriver's studio. We weren't staying
long enough to make it worth the admission fee—but I peeked in the door
from shop part of the studio and saw him working on a great figure of
Charlie Russell†. Srivner has really rocketted to heights since he put his
Lewis and Clark statue on the levee at Fort Benton. That is an unforgettable
sight.

It is very quiet in the house this morning. Our grand daughter Mary
left Monday evening—Barbara and her Brigid came over to get her. I really
miss her. She is a lovely thirteen year old. There was a time when I might
have said, "Are there any?" She is from a family of five, and she thoroughly
enjoyed the experience of being alone in a household. I gathered that they
are quite competitive among themselves as to who gets to do what when they go
to "White Sulphur". They have been taking turns all summer—and it keeps me
hopping to see that each has something special to brag about. Mary got

\underline{\text{while she was here}}

\underline{\text{got to take tennis lessons from a friend of Barbara's who was a P.E. teacher.}}

Thank you again for the book, and for sending the place from the
New York Times. Do come by again. I shall keep a sharp eye out for your
writings. Years ago I came across one in that cute little magazine called
Yankee. I should say Barbara found it. One of her husband's family lives
in up-state New York, and had sent as a Christmas gift a subscription to
Yankee. I don't think one sees it very often out here.

Affectionately

the Buckinghams and Gertrude Mc
Dear Ivan,

How nice of you to remember us in your moment of success. We are so proud of you! Bobby Cole had sent us a piece out of Seattle paper earlier in the summer—it must have been when you turned your manuscript in—or signed the contract. She said, at the time, that she would send us a copy when the book came out. I am writing today to Hart-Albin’s bookstore in Billings for my copy. We have not heard from Bobby since she went on a short trip to Ireland with her sister.

I can imagine what you went through, thinking this all out and getting it down. If it is as sad as I remember the actual happening—it will be a hard thing to read and shake off. You and Susan seemed so young—but I guess you were six.

I suppose the sad or would you say the thing you want to tell is not your mother’s death which was the deus ex machina—it was how your father handled his life after the death. I am only thinking of how sad it was that a little boy, and such
a patient, quiet little boy, had to lose his mother, and how she must have hated to leave the two of you. One thing I remembered about them, Charlie and your mother. They were so good about going to funerals. They would drive the car—it was white, I think, down to the creek and wash it, and polish it—and then drive in to a funeral. I think they lived with death so eminent that they didn't think of funerals as a duty. something one would wish to get out of. They were on terms of some sort with death—and had great sympathy for the people who were left. Your mother's funeral was large partly from the poignancy of the situation but a great deal was due to the fact that the Doigs were there on hand when others had had losses.

Another local boy Dirk Neiwöhener, or Benedict as he is know is enjoying success in T.V. On the 17th he will open with a new series—sort of like Star Wars. An interview he gave was in the Great Falls Tribune! You wouldn't believe the picture he gave of W.S.S! He was a friend of Ricks and spent a lot of time at our house. He told the reporters that we had out houses and kerosene lamps here. No movie
or T.V. He learned to cuss and chew at the age of ten from ranch hands, and that he owned a ranch in Montana!! What a disaster that interview was! It was not well received in his own home town. As his ex-den-mother I am objecting. and as his best friend's mother, I object. He spent a lot of time in his early years in front of our T.V.

This summer I was urged to enter a short story contest sponsored by the Montana Cowbelles. It had to be a true account of a Montana ranch woman who had done something to promote the beef industry. With a peripheral that tight—plus 1500 word limit—it was too hard. I wanted to tell about my grandmother. I got so many things going about her, and did so poorly trying to thin it out—it was more like a historical novel instead of a short human interest story. You have not chosen an easy way to make it—but you have done it. I can't tell you how proud we all are.

The Buckelhams

P.S. I didn't finish the grandmother story—it bothers me to do that—too—leave it all unwritten.
Dear Dogs -

Since I had the temerity to review your book in my Cowbillie Column I may as well blunder on and make sure you see it.

As you can see I really liked your book. I have to date bought 4 copies - sending them to my girls. Susan got the first, spare I got after...
the one from Bobbi — at least I am assuming she sent it. There was no name — plain brown paper wrapping — no, not really — I think it said University Press.

Our friend, Susan Eaker, who has the book shop in Helena was in a stew on Wednesday — she had not got the copies she ordered. "And everyone is talking about the book," she said.

We were so excited to be quoted (me) and
have Susan mentioned as your friend in school - I called her and read it over the phone to her - I am anxious to get her comments on the book. I'll probably hear from her tomorrow.

I must have mentioned before our other celebrity - T.V. Dirk Benedick of Polectica — only when he got public acclaim he really put down W.S.S. — no plumbing, no lights, no movies. No TV, we were all curious — we really didn't expect him to say "I owe it all to my 3rd grade teacher who gave me my first stellar
role in the Grade School Xmas Pageant," — but I can't see what he gained by those ridiculous statements — about how deprived we were — in his time!

I hope my comments on the book were in the right direction — I can miss a point very easily. Sorry about The House — instead of This House of Sky. I never keep a copy so never know when the mistake popped up.

Congratulations on your beautiful book — I could fill pages commenting on your descriptions.

-Theresa Buckeagh-
Dear Theresa--

Not only did you have the temerity to review my book, you went right out and did one of the most perceptive and moving reviews it has received. The only other review to date which has shown the same "feel" for what I was writing about my dad is the enclosed one from the Los Angeles Times, by one of the most eminent critics in the country.

So, yes, I am more than pleased that you liked the book well enough to write about it, and considerably relieved that WSS people seem to be taking the book well. It's a very touchy thing to write about one's hometown--and for the homeowners to be written about!--and while I tried hard to treat WSS folks with some delicacy, by omitting names where they didn't seem absolutely necessary and changing a few where I thought there was any chance of embarrassment to surviving families, I wasn't sure how well it had worked.

One piece of detective work I can't resist asking about, in confidence, to see whether you and Gertrude deciphered it: did you recognize, in the incident on p. 37 of my dad and Angus being squired around Chicago, that their host-guide was Johnny Kirshbaum? My father loved to tell that story, and I've always wished I had known that older generation in the valley, such as Mr. Kirshbaum and Tommy Meixsell and Henry Lingshire and the like.

You seem to be creating a one-woman book-buying boom for House of Sky, and it's somewhat belated for me to tell you that as soon as I receive my complimentary copies, I'll send an autographed one for you and Fred and Gertrude. Those copies are held up either in the mail or at the publisher's warehouse, but I hope within the next couple of weeks I can be sending them to the people who helped me with the book. Meanwhile, my best to all the family, and particularly Susan, who deserved more of a portrait than the brief one I managed in the book. Her kindness to me was a fine and remarkable gesture at a time I badly needed it, and I know full well where that trait of kindness in her derives from.

all the best

p.s. The publisher and I are keeping each other apprised of reviews, so this morning yours goes off to New York with one from the Bozeman Chronicle, one from a weekly paper here in Seattle, etc.
Sunday

Dear Ivan,

You can't imagine what you did for my ego with your call to the News office and your nice letter to me! Actually, I almost gobbled the book when I read it, and after I sent in my "critique!!!" to the paper, I had a lot of misgivings—what if I had the wrong slant on it? ——what if I had been away off beam? The when Susan said her first reaction was of anger against your father—I called her when I thought she had been given enough time to read it—after that I thought—I should have taken more time to get the right feel—however—after Sue thought about it a while—she lost her anger.

Ivan! Gertrude said she thought of Uncle John right away—but I breezed through page 37 and never gave it a thought! I am so sad that we were never closer to uncle John—just think of the stories—I could write a book then—Our father did not like Uncle John at all—he was our mother's only brother. It has taken me a lifetime to put him in his proper perspective, and he's not there yet. He was a legend in his time—a legend of foolishness, I guess. Our parents didn't think there was anything funny or worthwhile about him at all. The stories about him made them sad. Just look what we missed. One morning when I was in high school he arrived at our house in Kalispell before breakfast, having driven all the way from Missoula by cab! After breakfast our Dad took him into his office (today's interior designers would call it a den or library) and I could hear our Dad's voice very loud and angry—he was probably busy rolling his Bull Durham cigarette, and squinting through a haze of blue smoke, waiting out the storm.
How nice of you to send us an autographed copy. Susan said she heard you were to be in Billings this month to autograph books and I thought of all the Lewistown copies that I rushed out and bought--Barbara, Susan, Peggy (in Denver) and of course Patricia's and ours here.

Not many people have been able to get hold of your book. I am not loaning ours. I remember when Art Watson got his book out, and Gertrude bought a copy--he very frankly told her--"Now, don't go loaning that to people. Make 'em buy one".

Thank you again for your praise--which I shall indeed cherish.

Affectionately

Theresa Buckingham

Do you know any other Uncle John stories?

Who was the drunken owner of the Moss Agate, and all the drunk pall bearers?

Rick Ringling?

Wasn't the L.A. review something! Lengthy and learned -- isn't that exciting! I was relieved to see this thoughts were similar to mine in so many places. I'll never sail into a book report so high-handed again! I was scared.
Dear Ivan

I don't know if you got the W.S.S. paper but if not, I thought you might like Mother's column. The second way to a mother's heart is to say something nice about her child and you have won my mother's heart. I also am very pleased to be mentioned in your book. My hope thought it was pretty neat to see their mother's name in print. This has been quite a time for W.S.S. with both you and Dick Wieschna in the Time magazine and Dick Hershey going to be in the first issue of Life. Wish I could get to Billings while you are there but probably won't make it. Anyway, I wish you the best of luck with your book and of you ever happen to be going through Guerne please stop by.

Susan Buckingham Ams
P.S. I just realized I hadn't said how much I enjoyed your book. I am reading it again to pick up what I missed the first time.

Sue
October 12, 1978

Dear Ivan,

The autographed book arrived. I love leaving it around—casually—making sure no one misses seeing it. Even considered leaving it on the kitchen counter a few times so as not to miss kitchen callers—even delivery boys. It's not everyday one gets a really autographed book—not just an autograph party signature. Thank you so much. You had already given us that beautiful Hal Borland book which is pure therapy to read. I love to just turn the pages and read in bits. I got a lovely one this summer—The Diary of An Eewardian Lady—I can't resist them.

A lot of people are more every day are talking about your book. I don't know if the newspaper office has had their supply in yet. My neighbor brought over the Lewistown paper review and I have a paper from Bozeman called The High Country which had a review—if you don't have them I'll try to preserve them, but you probably have a clipping service.

Lee Rostad of Lennep and Lavonne Rice, both artists, are doing a sketch book of Meagher county. Lee stopped in this morning to say that the publishing date is set for within a couple of weeks. I think it will sell quite well—away from here the history people might take to it. Some Helena women did a similar one in a sketch book they called Historic Helena Homes. I liked it so much I got them to order some for our Castle—we sell some books—but I was so disappointed. The Helena one was very slow to sell. One never knows.

The days are so beautiful—but I keep thinking it won't last. I so dislike winter. Our Peggy and her family flew in Saturday afternoon from Denver. It was so much fun watching them coming in across the beautiful blue sky. There was a man who had flown in to attend the grand opening of
our new bank. He came over to where I was standing and asked for a lift into town—White Sulphur Springs does not have very much in the way of cab service from our landing field. However when he watched me run up to the plane and the stream of occupants pour out—first the poodle Midi, then three little girls, then Peggy AND then two men!!!—I think he wondered how they got off the ground to start with. When we rejoined the man he said he had found the telephone did work and he was being picked up.

Thank you again for the special autographed copy. As I said that will be out on a coffee table with a bookmarker on the page for some time.

Susan comes tomorrow. Her husband is in the White Tail grazing Ass'n and their trucks will be coming tomorrow to pick up their cattle which they keep here for summer grazing. She said she sent her book back down to Hart Albina for you to autograph when you are there. I hope it gets done and she gets it back.

Affectionately

[Signature]
To the Doigs—a very happy holiday!

We are so happy over your book being chosen for the Book of the Month! I used to think about it every time I got their publication about their new books—but then I would think of all the books—and how in the world do they pick them!

I had a call from a girl in Missoula the other day who said she got my name from you as some one to contact for information about this country. She is with some people looking for a location for a film—a homestead setting and she was thinking of Tierney Basin or the Sixteen country. I told her it was really bad out there this time of year for just cruising around looking for a remote and desolate piece of scenery. She said they might come through the next day but they never came or maybe they are bagged down in Potter Basin. We have had a MEAN winter so far like the one in '48 that you had in your book.

Our Patti has been taking a Mont. Hist. course from an instructor who drives over from Bozeman every week. He talks about your book a lot—very impressed.

Buckingham & Gertrude
The Old Party in the Feather Shawl

by Theresa Buckingham

illustrated by Lee Rostad
The Old Party in the Feather Shawl

by Theresa Buckingham

illustrated by Lee Rostad

To Carol—who is the nicest girl.

That canny Scotsman knew that,
your husband paid $5.00 for this tract.
I would never had the nerve to
send it otherwise—and it should have been a "pot-latches"

Affectionately

Theresa McS. Buckingham

who knew Ivan Doig when

and doesn't let anyone forget it.

THE MEAGHER COUNTY NEWS
White Sulphur Springs, Montana

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Theresa Buckingham
Acknowledgement

To the Meagher County CowBelles,* one of the county-level distaff organizations of the Montana Stockgrowers Association, I wish to express my appreciation for their giving me a column to write for the local weekly newspaper during these last three or four years. I acknowledge their tolerance toward my ranging far afield at times from the true purpose of the column. That is to promote beef through the sharing of beef recipes and CowBelle news items. Slipping in bits of local history, a book review or two and human interest stories were fun to do, varied the fare and I hope, in its small way, fostered a clearer understanding between the consumer and the stockgrower.

To Lee Rostad, who is a ranch wife in the truest sense, working shoulder to shoulder with her husband and who is also an artist, potter and historian—to her—my gratitude for proposing that we put together this book. With the column material and Lee’s sketches, we offer this dimension of ranch living filled with the little things we accept so lightly, but regard with affection in Montana’s cow country.

*The Meagher County CowBelles is a productive unit, having sent from its ranks several state presidents and state officials. It is the home range this year, 1980, of the president of the National CowBelles, Connie Townsend.
Foreword

by Gayle Berg

There's a confidential bit of philosophy whispered among ranch women generation upon generation. That first fact of life is, "Never admit to knowing how to milk a cow...or you'll get the job." I enjoy elaborating on that a bit to include, "In a small community refrain from showing too much enthusiasm and talent toward any task or one risks added responsibilities and leadership positions." Theresa Buckingham has broken all the rules! I guess it's about time we gave recognition to her for the fine job she does with the CowBelle column, and also a tribute to Theresa the mother, the ranch wife, the friend, the lady.

Theresa's story is a quiet one—interesting in its simplicity and certainly full as the past and present have somehow become bridged through her many writings.

Mrs. Fred Buckingham was born Theresa McStravick in Kalispell, Montana and grew up in that small western town. She graduated from the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul in 1931. She had a major in English and wrote for the college literary magazine called the "Ariston." She was also the editor of the yearbook and had several pieces published in Catholic magazines. Theresa minored in education and took numerous art courses.

Following graduation, she and her sister, Gertrude, went on a three month trip through the Mediterranean and Europe. After the trip they returned to their Meagher County ranch. Theresa had met a young rancher, Fred Buckingham, months before at a Fr. Logan dance. She later married him. They lived at the Luppold Ranch for six or seven years until their first daughter went to school. They then bought a house in town where time was devoted to rearing their family of four girls and one boy. But certainly ranch life was not in any way behind them.

"Dad likes to tease Mom about the lunches on cattle trips. He said they were kind of skimpy till the boy was old enough to come along. Then there was a plethora of everything. She does pack some mighty good lunches. Getting these lunches to the riders was not always easy. Dad gives very vague directions. ('After you cross Birch Creek, follow the road till you see three rocks piled up and then go left till you hit section 30 line and wait till you see us.) She was always glad when one of the girls went with her to share the blame.' (Leave it to Patti.)

Many of us can understand and sympathize with such experiences! It's great that Theresa has enjoyed all aspects of ranch life and is able to see both the humor and beauty of it all. She and her husband, Fred, must've done something right as far as instilling that attitude and love for country life in their children. Four of their five children live on ranches today—and there are 15 grandchildren to carry on the heritage!

Theresa the writer—In this country, that pretty much speaks for itself. There is a difference, however, between being sensitive to common experiences and being able to write about them. This lady has a talent for making everyday ordinary things seem entertaining. She has written the CowBelle column now for the past three or four years. Theresa also occasionally writes a "Ghost in the Castle" article for the Historical Society. History seems to be one of her great loves. And what could be more fitting than to bring everything together in a book?

"The Old Party in the Feathered Shawl" contains collections of Theresa's columns, shared anecdotes interspersed between her writings of CowBelle events and projects, and insights into the beef industry and rural life. Illustrated by another local artist, Lee Rostad, this book promises to be both entertaining and thought provoking.

Theresa Buckingham, we applaud you—your spunk and vitality, that vibrant personality, the prose and poetry, but most of all for sharing yourself with all of us. Thanks for all your efforts... Thanks for milking the cow!!!
The Old Party in the Feather Shawl

You wonder why egg production has all but vanished from the ranches, to become an indoor factory type operation that just could be classified as non-agricultural. You also may have tired of those white eggs thus produced, identical in size and shape as capsules in a pill box, and you have taken a fancy for the brown, country breakfast egg gathered by yourself from their nests of straw. So, you decide to get some hens, and then, ah then, you will find yourself launched in a business fraught with setbacks and hazards.

Hens live dangerously at our place. It is sort of understood that the last man out should shut the hen house door. The chickens are in but far from safe. No Alamo, no Foreign Legion garrisoned in the desert has been more beleaguered than our hen house. Along the brush, where the willows plait a basket over the creek, the hungry ones, the skunk, the weasel, the fox and racoon watch with beady eyes and they plan attacks. They strike at night and only a drift of soft feathers in the grass tells of the death struggle. These Indian warfare tactics eventually wipe out the post. We do have one party that survived many a siege—the Old Red Hen. We attribute her escapes from the raiders as plain dumb luck. Only the uncertainty surrounding her age spares her from an inglorious finish in the stew-pot.

When, in her single state, she holds down the fort, she obediently shuffles in at lockup time. Shaking the dust from her tacky feather shawl, she tucks in her crooked old legs and settles for the night. Her days, she spends companionably with anyone at work around the ranch shop, crooning hen talk to herself. At times she has made a few tries at being accepted by the dog. She races with him to meet the pickup as it comes in the gate, bobbing along on her stumpy bowlegs. When the pickup comes to a halt, and the dog and the boss meet in a noisy welcome, the old hen, excluded, pretends indifference and turns away into the tall grass, as if searching for something she lost yesterday.

Each spring we usually get a few chicks from the hatchery. These are joyous times for the old hen. She worries the brood around the yard, and busy with claw and beak, she provides for them as best she can. The chick groups come and go. Like a house mother in a sorority, she plays a surrogate role.

One winter she shared her solitude with an unlikely pair, two peacocks, a gift from Dean Thorson. Like captive royalty held for ransom, they huddled in the gray dust of the empty roosts. The peacocks met the old party with all the scorn and disdain they could muster. Thereafter she kept a humble, apologetic distance.

On the first day that the two prisoners were allowed out in the thin winter sunshine, the peahen, her crown a bit dusty on her small elegant head, stepped daintily out, then called to the peacock to join her. He sulked and stayed in. A companionship between the two hens could have developed at this point, but didn’t. Then one day, during a sudden and wild snowstorm, the
cock, all to himself, came to some poorly devised conclusions, threw off his apathy and flung himself out the door into the gray, swift-moving sky. He was never seen again. It was only after this that the peahen seemed to draw closer to the red hen. They walked about together through the ranch yard every day, the old hen stout and comforting to the once elegant peahen so down in her luck.

Spring came at last and birds called across the meadow. Maybe she heard a peacock call, or perhaps her grief and desolation became more than she could bear. She slipped quietly away across the brush in the creek bottom with all its hidden dangers.

The old party is alone once more. Later there will be chicks and the hen house will have to be freshened for them with clean straw. For our steadfast friend there is work to be done, and as she shuffles about in her dusty old shawl she seems to say, "Well, you win some, and you lose some." That is sort of the way it goes on a ranch.
Valentine’s Day at the Graves Hotel

“If I were you, I’d just go—now.” We were discussing the “traveller’s advisory” with the desk clerk who has always been solicitous about our comings and goings. The road report was—“Clear to Harlowton. Light snow falling in the White Sulphur Springs area.” We went. There was bitter cold in the wind and the wet streets of Billings were rapidly glazing over with ice.

At Lavina, in a friendly little cafe where everyone meets, we stopped for coffee. Mrs. Rabe and Mrs. Bodle from White Sulphur Springs were there on their way to Billings for the day. They laughed at all my apprehensions. They had the confidence of youth and experience; one had driven a school bus, the other often drives the fuel truck for Rabe’s service station. Fred Buckingham had probably driven in more storms in his lifetime, but has a couple of strict guidelines—one, “Don’t go into anything you can’t get out of by yourself”—and “4-wheel drive is for getting yourself out of trouble—not for driving in.”
The air seemed warmer and our spirits better as we left the cafe and pointed up the Musselshell. Then, suddenly, we were in a frighteningly opaque world. The wind was coming in fast from "out north," as Lavina people call it. Shrouds of the storm hung at the hood of the car. The road was gone. The only periphery was the edge of brown grass visible on my side. We moved slowly watching the grass line. The clock on the dash said 11:05, and we had thought we'd be home by noon! We crawled, dreading having to meet a car or having one behind us. Ryegate, Shawmut—only 16 miles to Harlow—then what? We turned down to the hotel, crossed the wide porch, lined with lawn chairs half buried in the snow, and pushed against the wind to reach the door. Inside, the lobby was warm and quiet.

The Graves Hotel is one of a few of its kind left. It had changed hands and now has a well-cared-for look. A sturdy stone building of 70 years, with big open verandas, it overlooks the Musselshell and the aging Milwaukee railroad yards, the life-line of the town. We were not the first refugees in from the road. Mr. and Mrs. Trask of Utica had come in ahead of us. We discussed the storm. They had already decided to stay and had a room. We looked out of the windows and hoped for a let up. Someone came in and reported on the mail truck. Everyone speculated about what time it would come. "They turned it loose at White Sulphur." It was nice to be in. Mrs. Trask talked about their ranch, a landmark on the South Fork of the Judith. Charlie Russell lived there with the mountain man, Jake Hoover. Mr. Trask had rebuilt the old rotting cabin where Russell lived. A local wag came in, glanced at the Trasks and us and said, "The picnic has been called off for the day, kids—glad I didn’t make my potato salad."

More people came in. A goodlooking young man from Winifred who heads the grazing association in the breaks of the Missouri, the PN Cattle Company, was rugged in a sheepskin lined jacket and black silk neckerchief. Slapping his gloves against his well-trousered leg he said that he had just tried to go through to the Gap. The patrolman had said, "Okay, but the road is closed. If you want to pay your fine now, I’ll take your $25.00." "If that road isn’t open tomorrow," the young-man-in-a-hurry said, "I’ll have to call home and get someone to bring my plane." Then he added, smiling, "I’m just a cowboy pilot."

A wintertime guest at the hotel, and sort of co-ordinator of the lobby social life is "Shep" Sayre, a longtime rancher and cowboy in his salad days. Our talking point started when he reminded me of how we lost "Uncle Tom" Pierce’s buckskin pants at the Castle museum here. Tom Pierce was an early-day cowpuncher who came up here from Texas with the cattle drives. Mr. Sayre said he used to listen to the stories those people told,—Pierce, Ned Orr, (Mrs. Bob Lyng’s father), Abb and Tom Porter—of the hard life they had, the storms, the night herding, short grass. Tom Pierce would always say, "But we wouldn’t want it any other way." Mrs. Porter of Renton, Washington, had given the well-worn buckskins to the museum but we lost track of them. Thanks to her diligence in keeping after us, they were found and well worth the having.

Mr. Sayre talked of his own cowboy days at the old Dogie Ranch when Pat Kinney was foreman and "Shep’s" boon companions were the brothers Knight, Jack and Dode. "Why do you always have to raise so much hell?" Mr. Kinney would say. One of the boys said, "Well, Mr. Kinney, they say there’s a feller back in New York that wrote a book on the habits of cowboys. Mbbe you better read it." Mr. Kinney said, "Now let me tell you fellas something. There’s nothin’ in that book or any place else that can tell me anything I don’t already know about cowboys. Now get out and get to work."

It was Valentine’s Day and the bar and dining room were filling up. Marvin Berg, one of the owners of the hotel was on hand, and so was Marie wearing a corsage of fresh flowers. Families and couples were having little celebrations, travellers and locals all were visiting. Mr. Sayre spoke a little of the changing life styles through his years. "You know," he said, "I don’t think any young people could ever have had as much fun as my sister and her friends. She was pretty and
had lots of beaux. They had good horses and visited from ranch to ranch. There was not the kind of drinking there is today. The girls were great flirts in those days and," the old cowboy added softly, "there were lots of broken hearts." Suddenly the room that had seen so much of life on the Musselshell seemed full of hearts and flowers, red satin ribbons and forgotten romance.

Mrs. Rabe and Mrs. Bodle arrived, much to our relief and, I think, theirs. A little family was brought in by the patrolman off the Judith Gap road where their car had been wrecked. The little boy was wearing out-sized pajamas from the hospital where he had been taken for stitches. His brother was excited about what he could say in "Show and Tell" at school in Billings.

The dinner hour lingered late, and so did the storm, and we climbed the old polished stairway to our big high-ceilinged room with its large old-fashioned bathroom and Olympic sized bathtub. The radiators sizzled comfortably.

The next day was back to the ordinary. The excitement was over. The sun might shine and the wind was down. After breakfast with our new friends we all went our separate ways, but we will remember for some time and with pleasure Valentine's Day at the Graves Hotel.
The Seed Catalogue

January—and the first seed catalogue has arrived. When I took it out of the mail box, I think I saw a hundred daffodils spill out with it! It is as welcome as the county snowplow heading down your road. Making out an order from a seed catalogue in January is like going into the supermarket an hour before dinner. You are so receptive—cheese cake—Polish sausage—everything appeals. Everything in the seed catalogue appeals in January. **"Why not try egg plant this year,"** you say from your chair by the fire, book in hand. The planting directions say **"warm, rich soil,"** but how we forget! Under all that purity of snow east of the house lies not **"Warm, rich soil"** but a sort of clay that bakes like a brick under the hot Montana sun. There is a lot of that in this mile high valley.

Most tempting to the novice is the part that tells you what you can do with the results of your labors. **"Make your own spaghetti sauce from those bushels of red juicy tomatoes and save"**—but when did I ever raise a tomato to adulthood? **"How to keep your onions through the winter"** and the picture with it shows great bunches of onions hanging from a low beam in the kitchen—great decor, not to mention being right handy to the soup kettle. They extol the joys of picking your own salad greens, crisped in the early morning dew, the fragrance of raspberries warmed in the noonday sun and spilled gently into a bowl, dusted with powdered sugar and splashed with thick cream. To these visions of delight you react by throwing discretion to the winds.

A short memory spares me the painful thoughts of the cold war waged between my household and a rude robin over the strawberries. Without a building permit she settled in the cutleaf birch that has a wonderful view of the strawberry patch. The plants produced well as did the robin, her brood nurtured on our berries. On this January day, I look at the colored pictures of Birney’s jumbo-sized berries, **“Spring Giant,”** twelve sturdy plants, high yielding, $3.95, and I only remember the robin’s song.
La Femme de Charge — Annadammer

Spring has come to the valley. She is a timid, inept performer at best, boldly taking the stage, front and center, then darting back into the wings. She misses her cues and loses her lines but usually comes in on the grand finale of birdsong with a brilliant backdrop of wild flowers. The crocuses are out, but are not poking their delicate heads much above the wooly blanket of their leaves. A bush full of blackbirds is singing antiphonal arrangements with other birds clustered in the top branches of the cottonwoods. The blue herons are nesting up the creek, their crazy jack-straw housing looking like something on a page of a Dr. Suess book. In the wetlands the sandhill cranes are nodding and bowing in their bird talk, paired off like sedate married couples. A swan stopped briefly last week and took up with a little brown duck, the two of them appearing for all the world to be a beautiful transatlantic liner being escorted upriver to pier 90 by a small brown tug boat.

The cat, Annadammer, has exchanged her favorite snooze-site under the wood heater in the cabin for a sun-warmed top corral pole. Annadammer is a cat of real presence and total cool. She may have been born a barn cat but she at once set about to work up to the house cat bracket. This she did by simply taking up her station at the cabin door and registering an "I would make an awfully cute house cat" look. Rick named her Anna—Anna the housekeeper. The role suits her well. She is usually the only one in the cabin during the day, and she greets you at the door with quiet dignity. She will accompany you on the rounds, a deferential pace or two to the rear, as you check the refrigerator, the bread box and pick up the laundry.

Anna does not like children, as some housekeepers do not. They interrupt her schedule. When the children take after her, she reacts with the reflexes of a pro quarterback and dodges out through the first open escape hatch. In the hinterland of the outdoors she hides in the sheds, the woodpile, even the brush, and keeps the cabin and all the comings and goings under surveillance. When all is clear she calmly and quietly returns to her post.

Anna-damn'er has earned the tacked on expletive but she is still a cat of great heart. Much has been said of the steadfast love of a dog for his master, but at our ranch this Anna, during the February calving—this Anna never missed a nocturnal round with Rick as he checked the cows. This is a watch that goes on through the night every few hours, checking the sheds and corrals. If there is trouble, and there very often is, Anna waits in the shadows, like a shawled old woman, keeping a vigil until the calf is born and all is well. That takes Heart.
After the Winter of '79

With the long, hard winter behind us, the country looks like a battleground. The decaying snow and mud banks give the appearance of fortifications hastily thrown up for combat. Some feed grounds in the valley are tramped to the roots. Our cattle came through the winter in good shape and every day more little calves are showing up in the patches of brown grasses in the snowy meadows. With their new price tags, they should be lying on crushed velvet like the jewels they are instead of the bare ground.

Becky, age seven and the youngest of the Colorado grandchildren, has cut out and mailed us a picture of a raccoon to be nailed to the chicken house wall, like the escaped convict pictures in the post office. She worries that after a winter of security safe in the hen house they will not recognize their enemies. The hen house group only survived the tough winter by being incarcerated in the poultry yard. Their joy with spring and being released knows no bounds. The old red hen is with us yet, and is running silly and giddy with a clique of young hens.

One hen bravely and thoughtlessly has hatched out a clutch of baby chicks. I would advise a heat lamp, but the mother hen has her own down quilt for her babies. One word from her and they are in, under, and out of the cold. No energy shortage there. Watching a mother hen at feeding time, seemingly pecking away greedily while her young ones skitter mindlessly about her
feet, I have thought, ‘‘Why, you old biddy, don’t you know you should feed your little ones first? You should wait.’’ I did not know that she was not eating, but picking up the grains and throwing them down to this one and that one. It is a distribution process and each gets a fair share.

At the cabin, Annadammer, the housekeeping cat, has been displaced. Somehow, in those dark winter days, a young upstart kitten, Floyd by name, has connived to get indoors. Floyd is an audacious rascal given to clowning and lolling about. No longer does Anna watch quietly from the window with paws neatly folded, nor does she greet you at the door with that housekeeper look—a severe housekeeper, ‘‘Just what is it you want?’’ look. Only Floyd is there, sleeping the day away by the stove. Anna was not dismissed. She had just decided the whole situation was beneath her dignity.

I saw her the other day crossing from the creek to the shop. Her tail, which always had an odd forward slant and gave her such a purposeful air, is almost gone—severe frost bite. With this defect, her authority seems to have gone. This happens. Sometimes those who take their superiority too seriously are often humbled by a very minor thing—like a piece of spinach stuck on a tooth or a slipping petticoat.
There's Still No Instant Shearing

This last week, A. C. Gonzalez with his Mexican crew out of Texas had worked his way through the sheep ranches of Wyoming and had arrived at the Bair Company ranch outside of Martinsdale. Someone said this may well be the last of such a crew coming through here, and one shouldn’t miss the chance to see them. We went. Past the storybook setting of the main Bair Company ranch house, we turned into a gate to a lovely meadow circled by great old cottonwood trees. Against the blue wash of the March sky the branches looked like the rough strokes of a charcoal pencil.

At the far end of the meadow stood the big shearing shed and from the looks of the vehicles parked about we decided this was where the action was.

Inside, the vast shadows of the shed were slit by electric lights strung over the center aisle. The workers were taking a break and some of the men were crouched around a whirling grindstone sharpening the tiny blades of their clippers by holding them to the grindstone under the flat palm of their hand. Lucky that they were working with wool—lanolin is so healing—just in case—.

One of the side aisles was bobbing to the brim with unshorn sheep. The other side was for the shorn ones. They say that sheep live every day of their lives in a state of panic. Surely some of these had been through the shearing process many times, but the only one showing any presence of mind was the bell wether which stood aloof from the melee, self possessed and responsible. A dab of red paint on its nose for identification was a symbol worn as proudly as a school monitor carries the “Stop” sign when directing a traffic crossing. In the opposite aisle there was less crowding as they emerged individually from being sheared. Feeling strange and weightless, they did not recognize themselves or anyone else and tottered off in a bewildered fashion through a maze of panel-lined alleys and eventually reached the outdoors.

Nine shearers worked steadily after the roaring engine that powered their machinery started up. Beams from the electric bulbs highlighted their dark gleaming faces and the brightly colored headbands many of them wore. One older man had a small gold crucifix on a chain around his neck, and he made the sign of the cross quickly over each sheep as he started to work on it. Two men bundled fleeces neatly so that none came apart. The wool sack was held in a device shaped like an iron lung. The sack lay lengthwise in it and the open end was stretched wide on a hoop. A slim young man with very long hair was tossing in the fleeces which were then tamped down with a hydraulic plunger.

Jerry Torres told us he was twenty years old and had worked on the crew a couple of years. He would be back home in May. His was not the best of lives, but he was young enough to play a prank now and then on the older man next to him, the one wearing the cross, by pulling the
switch on the man’s electric clippers. The “manana” philosophy of his race probably eases his way. The sleeping quarters were in the shed wherever they wished to set up cots. The crew boarded themselves. The cook house was an old bus in peeling blue paint. The cook was the only woman we saw. With her abundant black hair and dark complexion, a fresh cigarette in her mouth showed up gleaming white and immaculate by contrast.

As we all know, on the first afternoon that has a hint of spring to it, there is something very special about being out in it. We leaned against the sheep pen nearest the open shed door. Talk was slow-paced when the motors shut down and we could talk. The friendly ranch foreman, Charlie Pierce, told us how the herder had brought in the sheep from the Brock (ranch) about the middle of February. He had fed with a team and sled almost all the time he was there. Talk turned to coyotes. “They’ll never get rid of them,” Pierce said. “They are too smart. Helicopters and snow machines can’t touch them. They hit for the brush. You can’t poison them until you take a course in how to use the stuff.” Someone said that about 80 coyotes had been killed around that area this winter.

Phil Rostad recalled stories he heard of shearing in the early days. The Smith brothers brought in a big steam engine by ox team from Ogden, Utah, and pulled it to their camp at the head of Sixteen, he said. As with everything else, methods do improve, but there is still no instant shearing. It’s a back-breaking job, and scares the wits out of the sheep. One died of heart failure while we were there, but only one had cuts bad enough to need suturing. In the whole show, the sheepherder’s dog still holds the stellar role.
Memorial Day

May is gone. Lovely May, the vertex of spring, and she left on a cold note which brings some truth to some old English observations:

"Shear your sheep in May, 
Shear them all away."

"Who doffs his coat on a winter's day 
Will gladly put it on in May."

This is a busy month of piano recitals, track meets, graduations, class reunions and, conventions. It is a month of greening hills touching the snowline, and herds being moved out of winter pasture. It closes on Memorial Day, the holiday the least spoiled by changing customs, or so it would seem in rural communities.

The small military groups still gather with their colors at the cemetery flag pole. The echo of the bugle falls across the quiet graves. There is a prayer, a recollection, and then the people move away slowly across the grass. Under the old trees lies so much of the history, the real history of the valley, but the books are closed, and we can only put together the fragments left behind. We place our flowers—tight little bouquets of wild flowers, branches of flowering shrubs and the plastic posies of brilliant hue. There is the greeting and the visiting but most of all the remembering.

In the remembering, our children had their favorite stops among the graves and ran ahead of us as we crossed the grass flowered with tiny wild violets. They sought out the very old family graves sunken under a ragged ancient pine or a tombstone tilting up through a neglected lilac bush still bravely claiming "Gone but not forgotten." They liked the little children's graves with the white marble lambs. Sometimes these carried only a single name "Baby" or "Precious" or just a date numbered by days. The quality of Family seems to have changed much today—the unborn or the barely born regarded so lightly.
The Day of the Style Show

I am convinced that there are some things that cannot be avoided, no matter how hard one tries—like running out of thread in your bobbin just as you are top-stitching around the corner of a collar. On the day you leave the milk carton on the table during lunch, the very one you wanted to impress with your gracious living walks in. The list can get long. I will move along to the present complaint. Why, when there are 31 days in the month of May does our local CowBelle Style Show always falls on the day we brand. On most ranches this coincident would probably not cause much of a ripple, but the cows and I have always lived in two different worlds, and on this day our worlds collide.

On occasions of such outside activity I do my cooking at the house in town, which is a holdover from our children’s schooldays. On this day—with the usual branding-style show combo our kitchen gets very full of people—people polishing silver teapots, spreading sandwich filler and packing cookies. This is plus the preparation of a full-scale portable meal for a branding crew. I transport the food in the passenger car, and if you have ever moved food in this way you will be aware that there are only two level spaces on which to place a hot bubbling casserole. My casseroles
are still doing a rolling boil as I cross the bridge at the west end of Main Street. One space is back of the driver's seat if the driver is short and keeps the seat well to the fore. The other is in front to the right of the driver. Don't ask what is wrong with the trunk. That is for overshoes and don't remove them. You will forget to put them back. You know that as well as I do.

As I left, the kitchen was still smoldering. I was rolling along nicely and planned to make good time on the surfaced road between the bridge and our gravel pit, but was surprised at the uncommon amount of travel. There was also a new speed restriction sign and several cars parked along the way—the annual Bikeathon. There were several horse trailers too—the kids' rodeo scheduled for the afternoon! In the maze of wobbly bicycles I thought I saw familiar faces. It was a disquieting thought when I remembered that I had seen them when I signed promissory notes to pay prize money for the winners. Those I passed looked robust, unfagged and ready to push through to the finish line. Lunch was served on my arrival.

I never know what to expect in the way of a branding crew. For years our son's friends at school included our branding in their extracurricular activities. It took on the characteristics of a Sigma Chi "Spring Party"—which title is far too innocuous to be apt. This branding was somewhat low-keyed having been postponed several times on account of rain, and only "locals" were present. I noted that the mayor of White Sulphur Springs who was also the laboratory technician at the local hospital was doing the vaccinating—a sort of a busman's holiday.

There were complications. This was the Mothers' Day Weekend and for the occasion we had daughters, granddaughters and one grandson. The lone grandson could not quite take the style show as afternoon entertainment so a car had been dispatched to the branding with him, but unfortunately it was also the car that had been loaded with the tea table supplies—and it had no instructions to return. The CowBelles, being ranchwomen all, were used to making allowances for happenings such as this, and we were assured that the tea table would not be in short supply. We found seats, enjoyed a bountiful tea, wistfully admired the couturiers' selections from Helena and vowed to start on a diet next week.
Water Rights

If you asked a Montana rancher what is the prettiest sight he ever saw, he might say—a spunky little calf getting up out of a snowbank, trying out his wobbly legs—after he was given up for dead; or he might say, a steak with a side order of hash browns; or he might say—his favorite barrel racer coming down the homestretch in winning time. If he ran the thought by again he probably would say—a ditch full of water and a shovel to send it wherever he wished. The worst thing to have to watch is a ditch full of water going past you to be measured at someone else’s headgate.

Traditionally, only ranchers eyed each other covetously as the water slipped along. They fought in and out of court and it is not entirely legendary that some of the battles at the water holes were fought to the death. Today the states are casting speculative glances at our Montana rivers and looking for some kind of redistribution. Water is the key strand that holds the fabric of earthly existence together. Powered by the sun’s rays, regulated by natural law, water moves in perpetual rhythm. It also tends to be available in the wrong places at the wrong time with the wrong quality. The maldistribution of water has troubled people for six thousand years, when the Sumerians first plugged the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers with earth fill.

Here in our high valley, the mountains are slow to give up their snow water. It is often well into June and “Old Baldy” and the crevasses of the Twin Sisters high above the Birch Creek basin are still white with snow. The water trickles gradually from under the melting glacier-like patches and from the quaggy marshes. Spring comes and flowers bloom on the edges of ancient snow crusts. This process is more efficient and less costly than government dams. That sort of water management is beyond me. I prefer to wrestle with a more immediate and local water problem.

There is an outfit on the North Fork above us that has no decreed water right. Their idea of water management is entirely in conflict with my favorite rancher, Fred Buckingham, who, if given a ditch full of water can cover a field with no water loss. He has irrigation worked out to the last detail. He also becomes very angry when he finds that these characters above us will work all night if need be to undo the irrigating that has been done. Being a nonviolent man, he has not approached them with a gun, though the thought has crossed his mind. One time he did have a chance to grab one of the fellows, restrain him in the back of the pickup and transport him out of the meadow to another part of the river. There, laying on him with a couple of whacks from a willow switch, he turned him loose. By this time the miscreant was so confused he missed the river bank and headed out across the dry land. If you want to see something silly, it’s a beaver shambling off through the sage brush and dry grass. ——Ah! You did guess it. You knew all
along that it was a beaver, and you are probably saying, "'The poor beaver! He was only using the water as it is best for his way of life. After all he has to build the dams to store up his water that will provide him with his winter food supply.'"

Well, it's all a matter of opinion. We'd have to take it to court.

A Sequel

The following comment came from an unexpected quarter. After the disclosure of the account of the latest in water fights at our place, I had expected from my family the raised eyebrow if not downright displeasure. We had been on the docket too many times and too much money had been spent in defense of our water rights to treat the subject with levity. The letter from a friend picks up the mood of the story and must go along with it.

"'———Someone is sure to contradict your statement, however, that your neighbors upstream have no decreed water right. They are going to tell you that they have a right decreed by the Supreme Command and that by the laws of men, the first beneficial use tends to justify priority.

I hope you realize that you have exposed Fred Buckingham to the risk of a variety of class action suits by do-gooders and bleeding hearts. After all, your longhared neighbors would be considered a minority and have publicly testified that he has denied them their civil rights, and even assaulted and humiliated them. Perhaps he can plead innocent by reason of insanity—since he has persisted in being a rancher for so long.'"

—Jim Fuller
A Flag, A Laurelwood Root and a Spoon

This story was told by a woman who lived on a small mountain ranch at the foot of the Twin Sisters. The story loses a lot in the retelling. You cannot see the woman’s strong weathered face or hear her choice of words, nor did you, on a summer afternoon, stop by her house where the alders and birch trees line the creek.

On the open shelves along the kitchen wall there was a collection of simple household wares, some very old and well worn, and some with stories to be told. “I had a china pitcher,” she said, “that they brought in the wagon from Kansas. I kept it on the top shelf, out of harm’s way. One winter the ridge pole slipped—maybe it was the weight of the snow—and the beam holding the roof rested square on top of my good pitcher! I left it that way for a while. I tried several times to pry up the pole, but finally I had to break the pitcher to get it out.” There were things on the shelf that would stir the acquisitive desires of even a moderate collector—a syrup pitcher with a hinged pewter lid, a water tumbler of Vaseline glass, its creamy fernleaf pattern glowing in the deeper shadows of the top shelf—a wooden coffee grinder. We talked about heirlooms and treasures. It was then she told me about the flag.

The woman, Nita, said that the first Walters family came to America in a sailing vessel. For the next several generations they moved with the everchanging frontier, from Virginia to Ohio, to Illinois and west to Kansas and Nebraska. In the years of the Civil War, William Walters was with the Union army and taken prisoner to the Libby prison, ill-famed for the horror of its living conditions. William’s wife did not know where he was and concluded that he was dead. She took her son John and walked to Nebraska where she hoped she might find relatives.

War can probably be made more tolerable by a general feeling of righteous anger, or with a fear for one’s life, or by reward or profit. This was a war with a clouded purpose—supposedly to free the blacks, but Lincoln had said “if tolerating slavery would end the war, I am for that.” Those who were conscripted for one side or the other, depending on the map lines of their farms, had little spirit for it. “We were a split family,” Nita said. “Some were on one side and some on the other.” In the war years, the women kinfolk made a flag—a split family flag. They used a piece of wool and arranged the stars and stripes so that one symbol was for the north and one for the south. They flew the flag every day. Each time one of the men left for the battlefield, they carried the flag along the road until he was out of sight.

When the war was over and the prisoners at Libby prison who had survived were released, William was one of them. He eventually found his family. All he brought with him to his family was a piece of a root of a myrtlewood tree and his prison spoon. The spoon was the only tool he had. He used it for eating, scraping and digging. He had held to the hope that someday he might be able to scrape and dig his way out of prison with his spoon. The myrtlewood root, he told his family, had kept him from losing his mind as he sat shackled to a post in the abandoned tobacco warehouse which was part of the prison. He had dug up the root with his spoon and day after day he worked at cleaning and rubbing and polishing it until it glowed darkly like a piece of waxed precious wood. These two things, the root and the spoon, he passed on to his son John, the little boy who walked by his mother’s side through Kansas.

John married and he and his wife Sarah Elizabeth Kenyon had ten children. He worked for ten years in Nebraska raising hogs to pay for an outfit and supplies for a move to Montana. He had an uncle Pellick Kenyon who had settled in Montana who had asked him to join him. In 1888 John and his family moved out across the plains to one more frontier and settled here in the Smith River valley. Roy, who later married Nita, was 18 months old when they arrived. His brother Burr was born after they reached Montana.
The first world war broke out and Roy was called into service. Nita got out the flag and mounted it on the wagon. They drove to White Sulphur Springs. Nita watched while Roy boarded the train, then turning the team around she went back to the ranch alone. She knew he was anxious and sad. There was no band playing, and no flags were flying except the "old campaigner" on the wagon, the "split family" flag. When Roy came back and the war was over the old flag was put away.

There was the second world war and Roy's two sons were called up. The flag was brought out again and it fluttered from the car as it rattled down the mountain road to the little town and the train. They, too, returned after surviving illnesses and injuries. The flag was taken down once more and put away.

The local Legion Post had acquired a meeting hall and proudly installed a showcase for souvenirs from the wars. The Walters family brought in their valued keepsakes—the flag, the root and the spoon. They were pleased to have a proper place for them. Unfortunately, the little hall was vandalized and the irreplaceable collections were lost or destroyed. The culprits were never caught. Here the story ended—elegant in the framework of the mountain woman's words. There was no placing of the blame, no tears over disrespect shown, no claims to patriotism, and no belaboring the point that here was a nonmilitant family that for generations had lives disrupted by wars they could not understand.
The Duchess Said "Lace"

About the sixteenth century, somewhere along the Loire, there was a duchess who entertained lavishly at jousts, tourneys and banquets. At the banquets she programmed the table conversation along strict lines. She chose the subjects to be discussed and announced them by striking her goblet a resounding whack with her spoon. She changed the subject by striking her goblet again and announcing the next subject. If, for example, her seated guests were discussing a scandal at the court and she wished it changed, she might call out, "The subject will be lace!" and everyone would turn to a partner on the other hand and begin discussing with contrived animation the subject, "lace," until the duchess desired that to be changed. I have often wished I could do that. The subject at our table has for a long time been economics—that and water rights.

In trying to find a whipping boy for ranch problems, we have vented our ire on vegetarians because they won't eat beef, vowed never to buy a can of imported beef, or be lured to a steakhouse advertising bargain prices in steak and lobster. Someone had told us that is imported meat. We have put a hex on the humanitarians who can't bring themselves to eat grain-fattened cattle as long as the Cambodians are starving. Their favorite food is rice not grain. Someone said they feed the grain to their poultry when they get it. The medical profession periodically makes announcements about heart attacks and strokes which set back the red meat industry on its heels—then someone as equally impressive comes out with statements to refute the scare tactics. Everyone talks knowingly about cholesterol. It reminds me of when the advertisers first came up with the word "halitosis." It sounded very professional. Someone must have searched books on medical phraseology a long time to come up with that one.

Today if I were the duchess I would change the subject to "Why do show cattle 'groomers' favor the new tail-do?" It appears that they backcomb the end of the cow's tail into a round knob and then spray it. It is not reasonable. As a flyswatter nothing is more effective than a slap from the long strands of hair at the end of the tail. A clean, well-brushed tail is a graceful appendage. Here is another conversation opener. Has anyone who has said, "Whoa, bos," to a milk cow wondered about what he is saying? Bos is the Latin word for cow and goes 'way back to early Roman times. I never questioned why the milk cow was called "Bossy." I would have guessed it had something to do with her disposition. I never did hear a range cow called "Bossy"—just "blankety-blank." I think I hear the duchess rapping with her spoon.
This House of Sky

We have all been to gatherings where the presence of an out-of-town visitor or house guest has prompted the telling of local tales and yarns. Everyone has a great time and someone always says at the end—'Y'know, somebody ought to write a book.' Well, he has. Ivan Doig has written a beautiful book, not intended to be a story of a valley or a town, but a story of his father. In clear decisive strokes on a backdrop of extraordinary imagery he has drawn his characters—his father and those who touched his life. In the honesty of his style and thinking he even gives the real names of these people. It is a sincere book, a 'tell it the way it is' book, yet so skillfully handled neither the beauty of the valley nor relationships of the people are lost. As the quote on the back of the book jacket said, 'It is a landscape where there is still enough open space to preserve basic humanity.'

It is the sort of book you can't hurry through. You will want to find someone in the house to whom you can read bits and phrases, and you keep finding more and more places in the pages that you want to read to someone. Sometimes you can't read—your throat gets too tight with the sadness, but the story is saved from being too sadly haunting by the quotes of the father and his friends, quotes with such honest humor.

Briefly, it is the saga of Charlie Doig, the ranch hand, who always wanted a 'little place' of his own, but he had to battle the elements, disappointments, economic conditions, and most of all, his personal grief, the loss of his young wife. This grief he carried with him and refused to relegate to a memory. With his little boy, Ivan, who had his mother's eyes, the pair crisscrossed the valley and the town, dealing with their problems in their own stalwart independent way.

'Write 'er out—what ye think I have comin' to me. I'm headin' for town.'—a proud, indomitable man. A supportive grandmother later joined them in their moving about, tucking her boxes under a daybed or couch where she slept in the thin little houses they called home.

This is a gift for the 'aficionados' of White Sulphur Springs and there are many. They will be pleased to read about Mulligan John, Jap Stewart, the nine bars and their comparable scale of social status, Pete McCabe and of course—Charlie Doig.

As always, time rubs dim our memory of friends of the past, but in this book I saw again Charlie Doig, the tilt of the brim of his hat, the easy laugh, the Scotch voice. It is the best of memorials—'I'm right here ta tell ye.'
Bake Sales and Quilt Raffles

Archeologists searching out ancient civilizations examine pictographs, carvings from long buried temples, urns and parchments—all evidence of a culture of long ago. Some day we may all be blown into the Beyond by the long threatened nuke blast. Another civilization will flourish on top of our ruins, and scientists will be piecing together the remnants to get our story. One clue very likely to turn up because of the quantity will be pieces of posters advertising bake sales and quilt raffles.

I can see the graybeards of this follow-up period lecturing to classes. "The people of this age had a rite or ceremony that they performed quite frequently. It was called 'Bake Sale.' This ceremony took place following occasions of trouble—fires, floods and catastrophic illness. It may also have some religious significance because the dates often corresponded with religious feast days of Christmas and Easter. The baked goods were not, however, sacrificed to the gods but passed around in exchange for coins. Similar to this is another custom recently studied, and using the symbols of what was their alphabet, this looks to be 'Quilt Raffle.' There is evidence that the people took several pieces of cloth which sewn together made a large cover for warmth. They were dependent on another planet, which they called Sun, for heat. Sun, in certain seasons, turned away from them and they suffered from cold. They covered themselves with pieces of cloth and skins."

One could carry on with this speculative nonsense and go into the history of the quilt raffle, but enough. As it is established in the small rural areas bake sales and the raffle are honored institutions. Wherever there is a need for a quick response with funds whether it is a cash gift to a family striken by a terrible disease, a home lost in fire or flood or maybe just to help buy new uniforms for the Peewee baseball team—the machinery goes into motion. It is more efficient than the big organized charities because all the money goes for the cause. There is no overhead. It brings in more than money. There is a feeling of support. It is a statement of friendly concern.

Just when we are certain that there is not one linen closet or bed in the valley without a quilt won in a raffle, there will be another on the way. Each is more novel than the one before. The CowBelles had a quilt to raffle. The making of it was a group effort. The squares were to be made of denim from old overalls. Each CowBelle was instructed to make a ten-inch square and decorate it with the family brands, using any method—fabric paint, embroidery or applique. The colors were restricted to black, red and white. If there would be nothing else good about the project at least it forced one to get out the box of used overalls that is stored in every bunkhouse and do something with it. It is no easy thing to get a ten-inch square on the straight of the material out of an old pair of Levis. You do a lot of slashing and snipping but you do reduce the garment to a pile of scraps that you can then toss out with not a twinge of conscience.

I read somewhere that the first denim came from France, shipped to the gold camps of California. It was a large shipment to be used in construction work, but was found to be light weight. An enterprising tailor bought the lot and earned fame and fortune by making it up into pants—the first Levis.

On examining a worn pair of Levis you pause to wonder. Was it worn by an adagio dancer caught in a barbwire gate—or somebody treed by a sabertooth tiger. No ten-inch square there.
The knees, of course, are gone. They spend a lot of time on their knees, not necessarily in prayer—but that will come. One wide piece is the seat, but it is always badly worn. I would never infer that this is from sitting a lot, although you might think it. They keep nails and staples in the back pockets and that takes care of that. Battery acid holes riddle the front side.

Finished, the brand quilt looked mighty sharp, but it was nothing that I would grab up in case of a sudden chill. It was won by a woman who lived in Billings and I have often wondered what she did with it. Had it stayed in the country I can see it as a wall hanging and it would be quite a conversation piece. Even as a source of reference it could be useful.

Someone comes to report a stray. "What's the brand?"
"Looks like a mitten on the right rib."

Okay, look at the quilt. Mitten RR—Chuck Lucas—there it is right on the wall.

Reading a brand can be very tricky. The smallest curl or dot can change the story. The little squiggle on the Johnston's S doesn't mean the branding iron slipped. That is the Flying S. Would you believe that Burt Hurwitz's brand is read "The Lazy B. H." and most inappropriately. A brand we have had for years is called Rafter A. Not long ago when one of the cows went to market with the Rafter A the brand inspector called it the "Broken Diamond" which could be descriptively correct and how much more interesting than Rafter A. I think Zane Gray would have liked that. Maybe you have a choice. Fred Buckingham in moments of frustration has been heard to call it the Flying Outhouse.

I like brands like the Mitten, the Wine Glass, the Saddlehorn that are graphic enough to recognize. I also like the Plug Hat. This was a horse brand owned by a Frenchman who lived up on Sheep Creek. It was a quarter circle with a bar below. Quite unaware of the comic implication, the Frenchman, when looking for a strayed horse, would ask "'ave you seen a horse weeth a plug 'at on?"
A Love Affair with Railroads

At one point in all the Milwaukee Road hearings, a spokesman for them said, "It is high time Montanans got over their love affair with railroads." He was referring to those of us who profess to "love" railroads, but continue to use our cars on family trips about the country. Expecting rural Montanans to go back to rail travel is like asking us to use a Chinese abacus in place of those neat little computers. It's awkward. The Montana wheat and cattle rancher however, is very anxious that freight cars be available. There has not been that much change in their operation, but bringing back the passenger service as some of us remember it is indeed like an old love affair—only to be remembered wistfully. For the price of a Pullman ticket on the great transcontinental trains of 60 years ago, the average middleclass person enjoyed such courteous service, and in the dining car for what would now be a reasonable price, such elegance as seldom experienced in his lifestyle.

Each summer, until about 1917, our mother took us, three small daughters, to visit our grandmother. We travelled days and nights, and it was an education in itself. Where else, for example, would I have encountered finger bowls except in a railroad dining car? We boarded our sleeper at the mainline station, Columbia Falls, at night after the berths had been made up. The atmosphere was hushed with the thick carpets, the lights turned low. Heavy green curtains that buttoned across the berth space swayed gently as the long train wound through the dark mountains bordering Glacier Park. Our mother was a nervous traveller when she journeyed without our father. She started her worrying well in advance and therefore no mishap great or small ever caught her unprepared—a trait our father greatly admired—being prepared. On the
train she repeatedly went through the contents of her purse—to satisfy herself that her tickets and trunk check were still there. She had a great fear that sometime or other the men in the baggage car might put her trunk off at the wrong stop. She always watched the baggage trucks closely as they passed under our window, and now and then would gasp, "Oh, my goodness girls, look! Isn't that our trunk going by?" We three would lay down our cards, (we played a lot of Hearts and Seven Up on trips), and we would gravely peer through the window, but we were never quite sure what our trunks looked like. The porter was a great help at times.

Besides playing cards, one of our games was trying to remember and spell the names on the Pullman cars—beautiful Indian names like Menominee, Waushawk, printed in gold on each car. The porter plumped pillows into immaculate white cases and tucked them into the seat corners for comfortable lolling. Meals in the diner were haut cuisine of the "haut-est"—stiff white napery, gleaming silver covers on all the serving dishes. Even the lowly oatmeal was more delectable with its own fat silver pitcher of thick cream. I could pour all I wanted into my cereal bowl with no admonishments from the side.

Disembarking from the train was an experience. There was no anxiety about whether the train was going to stop at our station or not. The porter came in good time to tell us. He gathered up all the luggage, helped us into our coats, and then got out his little whiskbroom and everyone of us got a thorough brushing from hat to shoes—even I, the littlest one, got my flowered bonnet whisked. He was waiting, footstool in place on the depot platform when we got off and handed us down, bowing and wishing us well, more like an old family retainer than a public employee. Never did we consider that under his porter jacket the blackman's heart might be full of frustration and despair that this was his lot in life and that the pay was meager and the gratuities skimpy. I never knew that the maker of the Pullman cars owned the whole town where the cars were made and the factory people paid dearly for everything. The bloody Pullman strikes are now history, as is the servile black porter. The luxuries we then enjoyed can only be afforded now by the owners of private cars. We can do without that—but do leave us the freight cars.
The seasons in Montana ranch country are said to be nine months of winter and three months of houseguests. Since our summer company consists mainly of the family home for a leisurely summer visit, the nine months of winter are the time for storing up things to be shared with the visitors—what’s new since the last time, things to laugh about, opinions asked and always a stockpile of things laid aside and labeled “For Peggy to fix.” The friction lies not with our guests, but with the pets that come with them. The two that clash most frequently are a Siamese cat and a poodle.

The incumbent pet is a calculating cat upon whom has been bestowed a series of ill-fitting names, Misty, Foxy Lady, Wanda, none of which strike the right note. She really has little use for a name because so far she has never heeded a call. She is simply known as “the cat.”

The poodle is city-bred with the stern and watchful eye of a Spanish duena. Her standards of propriety are that of a British nanny. She has a consuming, fanatical devotion to her charges, granddaughters, Joan, Patty and Becky. She is not a French poodle, to use the generic term but, because her name is Midi, she brings to mind that part of southern France, the Midi, and seems to
have characteristics for which the people there are known—shrewd, suspicious and indefatigable. But that is enough of that!

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Now the gingham dog and the calico cat,
Side by side on the mantle sat.''
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That may be a likely story and required reading in the nursery, but our cat and poodle find it trying beyond their endurance to occupy the same room, not to mention a mantle. Aside from the inbred hostilities, the trouble lies in that the two of them are trying to be something they are not—ladies of quality—and that is snobbery of the worst kind.

Midi is a past master at getting by "No Pets" signs. She is city-wise. Where the ranch dog will stand back and follow the heels of the last one in and often gets the door closed on his nose, Midi has a trick of coming in the middle of a group. She flashes in and out among the children's ankles and she is in before you know it. She is a professional gate-breaker.

There is never a hospitable greeting from her, if anyone comes to the door. Rags, the English sheep dog amiably gets to his feet and wagging his rump, in lieu of a tail, welcomes all. Midi's voice is sharp and questioning. "Who are you? State your business and move along." Midi challenges anyone who dares try to remove her from the counterpane of the girls' beds. "I am only doing my duty," she seems to say. "I know my place."

The Siamese is beautiful and knows it, but we have been told that she is not pure Siamese. Her background is in question. This last year of good living has given her class, and like the Shavian heroine in "My Fair Lady," she looks like quality, so what more do you want? She spends her days following the sun through the rooms of the house, getting her needed rest after coming in at disgracefully early morning hours. She gains access to the house by crossing from the weeping birch to the roof and scratching on the screen of an open bedroom window. Such behavior does not meet with the approval of Midi. Midi suspected her of being a street cat from the start. Sometimes they have to pass on the stairs. Midi, following her group of little girls gives no recognition to the beautiful Siamese. The Siamese with blazing blue eyes glares back at the stumpy retreating form of Midi as if to say, "Just don't mess with me—that's all I've got to say. Just watch it!"

The atmosphere is tense. As long as they can succeed in keeping up the front of gentility, there will be no incident. But if something turns up, real or imagined, that triggers them off—there will be the biggest cat and dog row that ever was.
The Bunkhouse

The old bunkhouse at the ranch should have been cited by the O. S. H. A. as that agency's original raison d'etre and would have kept them busy with legal paperwork for years and years. This worthy but dilapidated building had sheltered a real honest-to-goodness outlaw or two, characters who changed their names as often as they changed their socks, and generations of cowboys and hay hands. With all the building's derelict semblance and just plain tackiness, it commands a certain respect. It is not for the quality of life it provided, but for just managing to survive and hold together.

The bunkhouse consists of two rooms with a connecting door and two outside doors which opened onto what was once a long wooden porch. This has been sinking slowly into the ground for years and is overgrown with grass and weeds that push up through cracks in the boards. There are windows in each room but no one has ever been seen attempting to open them, even if it were possible to lift them out of the accumulation of dust and flies. Rags, pieces of cardboard, newspapers and lids of coffee cans have been inserted, tamped in and layered over the cracks and broken panes to block any passage of air. A large pot-bellied stove provides heat for a depth of about fifteen inches below the ceiling and also within a small radius of the stove. Storage space is represented by a row of nails on the wall. A wash basin and bucket, benched near the stove,
passed as a facility for washing up. The towel, a salt sack, hung within a groping reach. A fragment of a mirror was usually tilted against the windowpane for any last minute scrutinies.

A bunkhouse, says John Upton Terrill in his book, "Bunkhouse Papers," is not just a shelter, a deposit of possessions, "It is a forum. It is a fountain of ideas and conceptions, a news agency and a harbor of dreams. In it one heard vulgarities of every conceivable kind, stories of great tragedies, drama and stories of revolting degeneracy and of transcending beauty."

There should have been a cornerstone laid with informative inscriptions. When was it built and who built it? I can only guess it could be more than 90 years old, working from the date our grandmother came to keep house for her brother—1889. The occupants of the bunkhouse were often in her stories. Grandma's memories came back and blossomed again in her relaxed but never idle moments on a summer morning, shelling peas on the narrow porch of the ranch house, or in the quiet intervals of afternoon in the kitchen when the heart beat of the great wood range barely pulsed. We would all pull out chairs from the "men's table," and while grandma worked with scouring powder and a rag on her kitchen knives, talk would turn to "early days."

Grandma came from Germany as a young girl and had a pretty sketchy idea of the military history of this country. To Grandma's knowledge there were only two officers in the Civil War—Grant and Lee. We would not discredit the factual quality of grandma's stories. Just a lot of the colorful detail that clung to these recitals could have come from our own very lively, young imaginations. However, take it or leave it, we have always held fast to the idea that a nephew of General Robert E. Lee died in our bunkhouse.

A young man, a soldier, came to the ranch to work. He threw his gear under his bunk, but before anyone could learn anything at all about him, he died—right there in his bunk. In those days one never questioned into a man's past too closely. The young man's death for this reason was not only sad, it was awkward. There was nothing to do but to go through his possessions for names, addresses and information. This, grandma did and a letter was written to the man's home which was somewhere in the South. In the meantime the body had to be buried and this was arranged by grandma and her brother in the local cemetery. In due time a letter came from the man's family and included money for any expenses and instructions for a headstone. Grandma's impression was that they were "nice people" and were in the military. Whatever else she had learned she kept to herself and she was convinced that the boy was the nephew of Robert E. Lee. In later years my children and I noticed an old headstone near our grandmother's grave. It is a simple stone shaft topped by a soldier's forage cap. The date is 1889, which seemed right. The inscription does not say "Here lies the Nephew of General Robert E. Lee"—but then it would not have had to. The children and I are not any less impressed. We stop and we remember that a young man died in our bunkhouse long ago and so far from home, at the age of "32 years, 6 months and 2 days" as so inscribed on the stone. He will always be the nephew of General Robert E. Lee. It really does not matter what anyone else says.

There is hardly a novice ranch wife who, in her first enthusiasm of being part of the operation, has not tried to do something about the bunkhouse. My attempts were usually cosmetic changes that did little for the real problem and they were received with no comment. I soon lost interest. Hank Reeder and his dog-about-town, Oop, headquartered at our place. Work is not the word to use because Hank was temperamental, but there was much about him that made his moods and his unpredictable comings and goings tolerable. There was the time that Hank confronted intruders one night. They were loading up the contents of the freezer when Hank stopped them. There were the times Hank had a good fire going and a pot of coffee for those who had been out feeding in the snow-filled wind. There was Hank, the woodsman with the long, easy strokes of his ax, and there was Hank, the builder. He built a cabin at the ranch that was sound, stout and strong and so much to his liking that he decided to move in, but "...if the
Missus comes with the windy curtins, I’m leavin’. ‘‘I did come with the windy curtains, wouldn’t you know it? Hank moved out—for a spell.

Hank left a legacy of wonderful expressions which we cherish, such as, ‘‘a badland fit,’’ meaning—someone is upset about something. ‘‘Larrupping’’ was the super in compliments in cooking. Hank trapped a little at the ranch and said he ‘‘Dealt direct with the mink.’’ This has been put to use when we want to say ‘‘getting to the source.’’ One time I picked up a scrap of paper, a sort of tally card, off the floor after a card game in the bunkhouse. The heading on it was ‘‘Them’’ and ‘‘Us.’’ I have adapted that too and use it when I am keeping score sometimes—a sort of salute in Hank’s direction where he just might be feeding hay to a heavenly herd of cows in a roundup in the sky.
The Range Cow
When the cattle were coming down from their summer pastures, you may have met her along the valley roads. She is turning back, head up, swinging along at a gait she has set for herself to cover the most ground and save the most strength. You probably said, "There is somebody's cow that has strayed." She hadn't. She is a range cow going back in search of her calf, and she knows exactly where she is going. The calf probably slipped through the wires of a roadside fence and couldn't find another hole for slipping out again.

The cow travelling ahead didn't miss her little one for a while. When she did she stopped in the road and let the rest of the herd go by, but he wasn't there. She called but there was no answer in the voice she wanted to hear. She turned back. A rider quickly cut across her path. She dodged. The dog rushed her and she lowered her head and feinted a charge. Pushing past the dog, she continued her original tack. The rider let her go. The cow knew it was a long trail back, and that the herd had trampled the roadside grass, muddied the water holes, and she knew the dog could catch her if the rider set him on her. She had only one aim—to find her calf; then with him by her side, only then, would she continue her journey with the others to the winter feed grounds.

Sometimes even little communities erect statues in their parks. Somewhere near the Pryor mountains, a little town has a statue of a wild mustang. It is probably a Centennial project. Jim Bridger stands sculpt on a street in another town. On the old levee at Fort Benton, the gigantic bronzed group of the Lewis and Clark explorers will continue through the years to scan the waters of the big Missouri. This is probably a fanciful idea, but if, in our little town we ever considered the idea of a statue, I would vote for the range cow—head up like a deer—watchful, with her little calf by her side.

She has had a great part in our economy here and brought lots of money to the community. She herself needs no expense account. Hay pitched by hand tastes just as good as that packaged by a $10,000 baler. Her bed in the willows needs no heat. Transportation she does not want. She prefers to walk. She will never sue you. If modern people-mothers had just a part of her vigilance and sense of responsibility, the welfare offices would have to cut their staff and the juvenile courts would be out of business.

The worst thing she can do to you is lie down and die—and we all will do that—sooner or later.
Teakwood, Tapestry and Tiffany Lamps

Once Main Street was a part of the old Carroll Trail, a meandering military road which started from the Carroll Landing on the Missouri. Crossing the ranges and valleys, it carried freighters and the military as they moved warily from fort to fort. The two great houses stand at the west end of Main Street. They have been landmarks for years.

The tall brick house on the one side of the road has a narrow front veranda, a length of stained glass window on the stairwell wall and a strip of lawn behind a tidy picket fence. It belonged to an early-day banking and merchant family, the Spencers, and it was richly furnished in spite of problems in frontier transportation which would stagger most people. Typically Victorian in style with arched brick facades above the windows facing the street, the house appears to be raising its elegant eyebrows in reserved appraisal of the house across the way.

The house across the way, built by Dr. Parberry, was a frame structure, ample in proportions and maverick in style. It is many gabled and porched at its several entrances. The doctor, a southerner who came to Diamond City after the Civil War, was also a promoter with a particular interest in the nearby mineral springs. This little-known thermal area had given its name, White Sulphur Springs, to the town. The occupants of both houses were the leading citizens and they were old friends.

About 1910 one of the seven Ringling brothers of circus fame, John, became interested in Montana ranchland. After buying up all the available land in the valley, he found that transportation was going to be one of his problems, so he got a railroad built. It was about twenty miles in length and connected the main line of the Milwaukee. It was called the White Sulphur Springs and Yellowstone Park Railroad. With the branch completed, John Ringling could bring
his private railroad car, the Jomar, into the “Springs.” Since the Parberry house was in the vicinity of the railroad and the depot, he bought that, too. He probably never stayed there, preferring to use his private car, switched to a siding, for business and entertaining. The ranchland investment was called the Smith River Development Company. With a world war coming closer to involving the country and with the rising commodity prices, the company expanded rapidly. Richard Ringling, a nephew, was sent to Montana to establish a permanent office and run it.

Handsome, likeable and the most flamboyant of all the Ringling nephews, he settled easily into the ranch community and married the daughter of the local attorney. From here on into the early ’30s, when Richard Ringling died, the little cowtown in the back country was to feel the impact economically and socially of having in its midst, people from another world, the glamor and glitter of show business.

After a modest start of setting up housekeeping in a small frame house in town, the Richard Ringlings moved into the Parberry house where carpenters had been at work. A complex was designed which must have reminded the Wisconsin-born Ringling men of the affluent stock farms of the middle west. The house was impressive with its wide lawn and spreading shade trees. There was a gazebo. Pansy beds, yellow roses (Mrs. Ringling’s favorite), and banks of peonies brightened the grounds. Beyond the river, a distance from the house, an enormous dairy barn with its silos, pens and graneries was an alien sight in this Montana ranch country, where sagebrush and lonely arid hills come boldly close.

One of the developments of the Smith River Development Company was a registered dairy herd. Prizes were won at the stock shows. At one time there was a Holstein bull that for size broke all records. A creamery was built by the railroad. Butter, trade-named “Castle Gold,” was made there and marketed in Butte and nearby Montana towns. Feed for the dairy herd was grown on an extensive alfalfa bar at the Birch Creek ranch and hauled in. Sunflowers were grown at the dairy ranch and the seeds used in silage.
The surprising and innovative programs launched by Richard Ringling kept the valley in a state of wonderment. The spic-and-span, fresh-painted look of all the Ringling cattle ranches left the old-timers with their log houses and pole corrals skeptical of what was to come of all this. The townspeople stood back—but only briefly. No one had to peek over the back fence at the garden party where Richard Ringling was. He was inclusive with his invitations. Easy-going and fun-loving, he had a talent for mixing his eastern friends with his western neighbors and everyone had fun. His advisors, his help and his drinking companions came from the local people as much as from the show business and dude ranch circles. One of his productions was the Bozeman Roundup. The dude ranchers, in a business which was then at its peak, welcomed him.

Fortunately, Richard’s wife, Aubrey, small, elegant, practical and direct, was endowed with managerial talents of one “to the manor born.” Her domain was large. There were imbroglios but she controlled them. The house was staffed with a cook who could handle any number of guests. There was a maid, a nurse for the children and a boy to care for the grounds. The boy also was to milk a cow, separate from the dairy herd, which supplied the milk for the children. He also took two outsized silver pitchers to the creamery every day to be filled with cream for cooking and for the table.

With the family’s easy relationship with the community, the staff was often stretched to include the townspeople. It was not unusual, for example, to hear, “Aunt Carrie Zehntner is going to Florida with the Ringlings. She is to help with the children on the train.” “Ringlings are taking Bill Hensley to Sarasota for the winter. They have some work there they want him to do.” The local vet worked for them on a full-time basis with the stock and also at large dog kennels. Just about everyone at some time or other worked at the ranches. Most high school boys could brag that they had played pool in the basement recreation room, even though none of the children in the family were then at that age. It was a common sight along a country road to meet the children in their pony cart loaded with small friends they had picked up along the way. Aubrey, trim and suntanned in ranch clothes, silver Indian jewelry and custom-made boots, always took time for an unhurried chat with old friends or ranch hands sunning themselves on the “sheepherders’ side” of Main Street. She never forgot a name or a face or a ranch. “Give me a horse, and I can take you there blindfolded,” she would say. Her charities were prompted because she knew when people were in need. When she sold the ranches, she sold only to local people.

The house, now on a truly grand scale, was furnished with massive mahogany, teakwood, tapestries and Tiffany lamps. A large Tiffany lamp hanging over the dining room had a bullet hole in it. There were as many tales about how the bullet hole got there as there are colors in Tiffany glass.

The cellar, they say, was stocked on schedule, by bootleggers arriving in three big open touring cars (black Cadillacs). The liquor bottles were not in cases, but individually wrapped in burlap and tied in sacks. If Federal agents should give chase after the cars crossed the Canadian border on their way down Bootlegger Trail, the cargo could be tossed out, with a fair chance of being retrieved later.

Big flashy cars moved regularly along the dusty Main Street. Everyone looked important and probably everyone was. They say the poker games were legendary. “They say,” — “They say.” Everyone had a story embellished according to the creativity of the teller. For some time after the Ringling properties were sold, owners of the older stores in Bozeman and Great Falls would inquire wistfully, “What became of the Ringlings? — My, they were great people!” They were a boon for the businesses of the whole area and White Sulphur Springs revolved in the limelight while it lasted.

After these many years the big dairy barn has burned down, as have many of the buildings on
their other ranches. John Ringling’s railroad is in disrepair. A section of it is being used for a tourist attraction with a steam-engine-powered train.

A reporter in search of a human interest story about the area was asking recently, “Did the circus animals ever winter at Ringling, Montana?” Surely not, everyone thought, but no one seemed to know definitely. The circus never really came to town, we know that—not prancing horses with tossing plumes and spangles. There was no brass band really here yet it was indeed a spectacular time for a little western town.

The two great houses still guard the old Carroll Trail which had been paved into a main street. The tall brick Spencer house still looks with raised eyebrows at the house across the way where screen doors slam, cars drive in and out and children play under the trees, but it’s a different time and era. On a summer night the tree branches brush the high gabled windows and seem to whisper softly, “They say, they say,” but there is no one around who really knows.

Note: The Gerrit VanOmmen’s and their two children now live in the house. Marga VanOmmen’s parents, the Robert W. Johnson’s, bought the house from the late Aubrey Ringling Haley. Marga lived there through most of her childhood. The Spencer house has changed owners many times. It is presently occupied by Eddie Celander.
Wanted: Experienced Cook for Haying Season

Mid-July is haying season in Montana. Regardless of the size of your outfit, the tempo is stepped up. There is a shift in the gears and an upheaval that starts in the shop where the decision-making group holds forth. This ripples on over to the kitchen where it rumbles with mutterings and sputterings for the ensuing weeks. Years ago, just the threat of haying spoiled my delight in summer. It meant the finding and settling in of a seasonal cook.

What's wrong with having a cook? It meant readying my casually run kitchen to withstand the critical eye of "another woman." It meant cupboards had to be tidied, cooking equipment checked, (where did all the big kettles go, leaving their lids behind them?) It meant laying in what I had determined were basic supplies, but would it suit anyone else? There seemed to be a correlation between the cook with the least qualifications being the most critical of the kitchen. Also, the one with the most insistent claims to cleanliness was the one leaving the place in a state of confusion. Sometimes visitors at the ranch have been puzzled by the duplication in articles like rolling pins, potato mashers, strainers. The stockpile we have in the storeroom represents the replacements we have made when such articles failed to turn up after we desperately had searched where logically or illogically one would expect to find the said articles. As everyone knows, as soon as you go to the store and buy a replacement, the original article turns up.

I don't know whether it was the intrusion or the exclusion that bothered me the most. Gone were the early morning breakfasts for two with the current baby enjoying her six o'clock bottle while the "Boss" turned out one of his perfect frypan breakfasts while I watched the toast. Gone the lingering dinner table conversations, or the carefree "let's eat dinner in town" occasions. It was tricky picking the right time to sterilize twelve Even-Flo baby bottles and make formula for the twins. The cook was usually elderly with tired feet and like the cook in "Alice in Wonderland" the temper was peppery. There never seemed to be a right time for me and my bottle sterilizer in the kitchen.

The big machines and the high cost of labor has changed the pattern of haying these later years. When the old college friend you haven't heard from since Christmas '64 suddenly writes or calls or says she has a grandson who is "just dying" to spend a summer on a ranch, you don't feel compelled to answer quickly with a ring of hospitality in your voice—"Send him out. We will find something for him to do." Whenever possible the regulars or members of the family are the only ones you have, the only ones you feel you can trust with the new equipment. With smaller hay crews, there is not so much discussion about getting a cook for haying. With social security the older woman no longer has to fit herself into strange households and adjust to new ways to make a little money. As with the passing of any era, the change is met with a tinge of regret. We all learn from our encounters. All the cooks I knew have gone to their reward. I think if I could see the one who used to say "I wish you had my feet."—I'd like to say, "I got 'em." It would bring a smile of satisfaction to her tired face.
Music Hath Charms — or did have

It all started on the night herd, so they say,—all that western music, country western, country love songs, and all the Dolly Partons and all the Kenny Rogers, and even, heaven forbid, the country rock. Besides being an outlet for pent-up emotions the music was said to have a quieting effect on stampede-prone cattle. The musical material, they said, was organized without reference to key or to tone center, and the rhythm was picked up from the gait of the horse. Some songs had no words and they were called Texas Lullabies.

What could be loosely catalogued as western music can still be structurally so identified. In both periods the music was themed by loneliness. Perhaps the only difference is the amount of noise made in expressing these laments and pent-up feelings. As for the sedative effect on cattle, the modern cow is so immune to noise and intrusions of every kind, I would wonder if there have been many good rousing stampedes in the last four centuries. The ranch boys, fixing fence out in the hills, turn their pickup radios to high volume and leave it so, as they work their way down the fence line. They don’t miss a beat. The cattle, taking their ease in the willow shade by the spring, join in by chewing their cud in a syncopated swing.

My uncle, Johnnie Kirschbaum, who learned his music night-herding on the big roundups along the Musselshell, was great on the mouth harp. Cupped in his hand, he breathed tunes into it as soft as the wind in the sage. Today’s ballads are beat out in slamming power-chords on the guitar. What is lost is the solitude. Maybe the heartbreak and anguish of “You Took a Fine Time to Leave Me, Lucille” can come through the backup of a noisy bar, but that would have been too much for Uncle Johnnie’s rendition of “There’s an Empty Cot in the Bunkhouse Tonight.” The obligato for Uncle Johnnie’s songs was in the emptiness of the Milk River country and cloud shadow across the breaks of the Missouri.

Through the winter months “live music” in small towns is hard to come by, but come summer and the traffic with moving horse trailers begins to stream along the roads the little country music bands start to line up one night stands—tourist season is on. One little group here offers original ballads by Vicky Anderson (a local boy who “comes with guitar.” Typically the old western ballad usually told a long tale of lament with some exception of rough humor as in “Mollie Had a Wooden Leg.” In verse after verse Vicky Anderson has his tale of woe about the little one night stand music makers and their difficulty in getting in tune and in spirit for the opening number in a half empty dance hall. This could match the woes of “The Old Chisholm Trail” for length and distress—“No chaps—no slicker, and it’s pourin’ down rain.” Vic sings:

My “amp” won’t work, guitar strings broke
Throat is sore—’stead of singing, I croak.
The bass player’s sick—probably the flu.
The bar is full, we’ll have to muddle through.

This has possibilities of going on and on which the original piece does and could go even
further enlarging upon the troubles on the road—‘car broke down—ran out of gas.’ The only thing that brought the early day western song to a final verse was when the next watch came on, and the weary night herder went back to camp and got out his bed roll.
The Middleman

Making a whipping boy out of the middleman in the beef industry seems to be a favorite subject for discussion over the coffee cups. As long as we have the present preferences in table-ready meat, and all the laws and regulations in the handling of it, which is for our own protection, the gap between the price the rancher gets and the consumer pays will be very wide. The middleman is here. We set him up. The little old lady in tennis shoes standing at the meat counter has a lot to do with the costs in beef. If she thought the cubed steak she had just purchased had come in the morning on the bed of a farm truck—a blood smeared haunch stuck with gravel and straw—she would close her account.

When Theodore Roosevelt’s French friend, the Marquis de Mores, set up his abattoir on the Little Missouri in the 1880’s, he had a wonderful plan to cut the costs in getting meat to the packers in Chicago, and that was to build his own packing plant in Medora, North Dakota. He was to run his cattle on the Badlands, bring them in, process the meat, load it on the railroad cars and hit the market in Chicago. With inherited wealth and influential friends in Washington, D.C., as well as prestige with the top officials of the Northern Pacific Railroad, he entered the business with full privileges. But he lost his silk shirt.

Many argue that his plan was brilliantly far-sighted. His idea of refrigerated box cars was amazing for the times. Low cost meat for the working classes of Chicago displayed a social consciousness that was rare among the wealthy on the frontier. Some say the collapse of his business was caused by the hard winter of 1886. Others say the beef trust broke him. His cheap meat was too much of a threat.

De Mores’ meat sold well on the wholesale market, but buyers of prime steak could not have been his customers. Certainly when Diamond Jim Brady dined at Delmonico’s it was not on de Mores’ beef. We know it takes a long time—summer and fall—to put even grass fat on beef. Grass is a seasonal crop. There must have been months when his packing house was idle. I think he needed a middleman.

His Chateau in Medora is a gray clapboard house of considerable size edged by narrow wooden verandas. Inside is a wonderful collection of French furnishings with the elegance of the Faubourg St. Germain, mingled with rough hand hewn furniture, buffalo rugs and hunting trophies. The marquis and his beautiful wife, Medora, left everything behind, just as they had last used it—even the clothes were left hanging in the closets, and the delicate rare china (Sevres and Limoges) was left in the dining room. It was as if some enchantment, a spell by a wicked fairy, had been laid upon the whole place—or maybe someone got out just ahead of the bill collector.
The Trail Boss

The trail boss has been romanticized in song, story and art. As long as we have cows to "punch" the image will live on. Here in our valley, we did not always have a rodeo arena, but if we knew the shipping date for the Dogie calves we could take in a good show put on by Tom and Tony Hunault, Harold Britton, Bill Smith and others trailing the calves in. I asked Dorothy Britton about it one day. "Oh, my, yes," she said. "The day the calves went, we all got into it." They were trailed in from the ranch, which meant starting from the corral with a whoop and there was no let up until they reached the stockyards. If one or two turned back, they all turned like rolling marbles, and of course the further one had to go, the tougher it got. Fred Buckingham said, "When brother Joe and I threw open the gate at Spring Creek, we had a couple of dogs and a string of tin cans to spook the calves—a hell of a trip. The dogs were all in."

Then in 1935, Henry Straugh got a stock truck—probably nothing eased the life of the ranch operator more—unless it was the treated fence post. Tom Adams on Sheep Creek was Henry’s first customer, and things went smoothly. He had a good road. There followed, however, many a crisis-ridden situation as business progressed. Asked about it, Henry, a quiet soft-spoken man said, "Well, by golly, yes, we did have quite a time. We sure did. You see, there was no way to load stock at the ranches, so we had to build a loading chute, put it on wheels and pull it behind the truck." The roads and bridges were not built to accommodate a big truck, but Henry went wherever he was called. "We'll give it a try" should have been his slogan.

Henry's trucking headquarters were at his service station which was on Main Street between the present drug store and Peterson's. This was also a hangout for a new breed of macho young men—not cowboys. They had tremendous endurance, and a truck motor for a heart. Henry, at first, did his own trucking putting in long driving hours, then his brother Marion helped him and
there were the ready and willing boys at the service station, Charlie Chambers, Bob Staley, Pete Johnson, Gib and Jack Musgrove. "All good boys," Henry said. For them this beat ranch work, but through the years Henry found he himself never got quite away from "cowboy ing." He often had to help round up the cattle he had come to haul. One time, at Dorse y, he said, there was no way to hold the cattle they were to load. There was a shell of a house standing nearby, so Henry backed the truck up to the gaping open door, then ran the cattle through another open door and held them in the rooms while they counted them through the chure. He had the biggest truck in the county, but never big enough. He was loading lambs out of Mud Gulch about nine o'clock one night. (Delays at one place followed through and plagued his schedule.) The double decks did not hold all the lambs so they made a third level with planks, built up the side and were off to Cascade. Later they heard that "vandals" had ripped out about three miles of telephone lines in the area. "I guess that was us," Henry said with a quick smile. "We got in about 2:00 a.m. Couldn't see very well." One of his roughest winter trips was between Big Timber and Billings—six hours in a blinding blizzard.

When there was a demand for fuel oil, Henry started trucking that—also logs, hay, wool—even houses, and once a wrecked plane. Gib Musgrove crash-landed a plane out by the dump. "Dick Allred had a picture of that load. That was something," Henry said.

Henry was always accommodating. When coming out of Roundup with drums of fuel oil, he picked up a milk cow that Fred Coburn was expecting. He found six feet of floor space to fit her in and headed home. Overloads were hard on the bridges, such as they were. Bob Staley said he went through a county bridge hauling cattle for Walter Buckingham out of the old Havey ranch, (Grazing Association). He had to make a new route which turned out to be better than old county road. When the county commissioners ordered the bridge repair work done, they switched the road to Bob's trail.

There is a shortage in the state now of cattle trucks and drivers. Henry, in his seventies, no longer has his service station, but he has kept out one truck and still keeps busy. As we talked the other night he said he was going to Great Falls in the morning with a load. It was raining then and it would certainly turn to black ice. I hoped he'd make it. "Well," he said, "we'll give it a try."—Henry Straugh, Trail Boss for forty-five years.
Country Sounds

Some years there is a bonus for living in rural Montana. It's no governor's Homestead Act and no bill is passed by legislature. It just happens—Indian Summer. Some people might understate it by just saying, "We've had a nice fall." While Los Angeles chokes in its fog and Denver loses sight of the Front Range in a layer of yellow gasses, we are in a world of intense light. We look up at the Belts and the Castles as if through a telescopic lens—everything is clear and precise. The valley is full of prism light that almost sings.

I like the sound of late afternoon in September. Not a leaf stirs in the old cottonwoods. A little flock of sheep which has lumped together in the shade of a shed is coming out, pushing their lengthening shadow ahead of them. Their little bells tinkle as they move across the pasture. A lone hen, out foraging, picks among the dying vines of the kitchen garden—like an old woman at a bargain counter, handling each article, rejecting it and moving on.

A mournful call from a calf comes from behind the barn. The saddlehorse munches on some grasses near the garden fence and snuffles and blows at the pollen. A momentary hysteria breaks out at the hen house, interpellated by a low raspy comment from "the widower," the duck. His mate went off house-hunting in June and never returned. The duck is like an elderly indigent male living with relatives. No one stops to listen to him. I make this observation to little granddaughter Megan, who considers it gravely for a moment, then says, "No, Grandma, that is Donnie Duck and he only says 'Quack!'" Five year old Megan has an orderly mind, and she is very firm about the facts she has gathered thus far.

A screen door slams somewhere from the house and a voice calls, "The children should have their sweaters"—and suddenly there is a chill in the air.
The Wyoming Cap

Labor Day is here again, gnawing away at the last shred of summer. Locally it means rodeo, parades, supper parties, breakfast parties, Coca-Cola cowboys and more cowboys. There is no mistaking the scene—it is a small, back country cow town ready to lay it all out—for one big weekend. This has been going on for years. There are changes to be expected naturally. It is not the time or the place or the events or the apres-rodeo entertainment—it is the sad realization that fewer and fewer men are wearing the traditional western hat! The image of the western man is being threatened. With the demise of the beloved John Wayne, to whom do we look? Fashion has given our Levis to the world, truck drivers wear the cowboy boots, rock groups have usurped the guitar—and the hat—the cowboy has abandoned the hat. It will soon become as obsolete as the cavalier's big plumed hat of the 17th century. The cowboy was cavalier. The sweep and roll of his hat brim gave the most staid of fellows a bit of dash. "His hat cost more than mine" sang Dale Evans in the hey-day of Roy Rogers—and it did.

The new headgear is called the "Wyoming cap," so named in the Rocky Mountain magazine. This magazine is in its first year of publication and comes out of Colorado. It is not about the flora or the fauna, or much about ghost towns, but is very knowing about how to be rowdy in the Rockies—it is very "Vail," very "Robert Redford." For this unbecoming, multicolored cap, decorated with logos for John Deere tractors or Copenhagen snooze—for this unprepossessing insignificant scrap of head cover the western man has forsaken the Stetson!

People in Wyoming caps always have something to say—and they say it as if they knew it all along, and lucky you—that you are here to listen. The man in the big hat gives his mood away by the way he wears his hat. Pulled down over his eyes in the style of Clint Eastwood—if he is sitting next to you in the grandstand, you can bet he is not going to talk. If it is pushed to the back of his head, and if you don't want to talk then you had better find another seat.

A man in a Wyoming cap told us that the reason the roping and bull-dogging stock were so big was that the Mexicans were asking so much
for this year's cattle the rodeo stock suppliers were using their last year's animals. I think the man might have been a dude. That is the sort of information they gather to tell when they get home.

What do people do with their programs after the rodeo—the people who carefully write down all the scores, the barrel racers' time, and call half the length of the row of seats you're in to check numbers—"Did he say 56 on that last one?" They are so serious about the whole thing. Do they go home and compare this year's score with figures compiled last year. Maybe they keep it all in their heads to bring out later when there is a lull in the conversation at the bar—"Well, I see the Dupea girls made better time today than they did last year in Augusta."

There is always one bull in the lot that gets the big play. Do you suppose the clown whispers in his ear before he goes into the chute. "It's your turn today, Pinky. Run 'em to the fence. I give you seven minutes. Go out there, Baby, and look mean!"

You are over the hill if you look for a seat in the grandstand instead of on the top rail.
The Saddest Day

In a moment of contemplation on life’s sorrows, our children once said, “D’you know which is the saddest day in the whole world?” A quick survey of national and worldwide tragedies did not come up with the answer—“It’s the day after the Labor Day Rodeo.” On that day the sky seemed to lower just above the rooftops and usually there were frequent spells of wind and rain. Nature contrived to point up all one’s shortcomings—emotional, physical and financial. To the children it meant school was now about to start in earnest, the horses and ponies would be put to a back pasture, the fun was over and ‘gone, gone, was Summer, the lovely—Like a jewelled fish from the hand.’ In those days horse trailers were not so common, and it was up to the children to get their pony cart, still trailing colored paper streamers and parade stuff, down the country road to the ranch. Even the horses were dejected. Three days in town on the hard roads left them footsore and weary.

Rodeo time among ranch families cannot be ignored. It is more than a physical thing. It is a state of mind, and it would be a very obtuse individual who could ignore the vibes. There is a concentrated effort to get the work finished up so that everyone can go to town, if nothing else.

White Sulphur Springs made a name for itself in the sport of rodeo in the days when the Manger-Rankin wild horse herd was running free. The horses were rounded up from the Clear Range and Rock Creek and brought in for the show. There were often savage contests between man and beast, and the smart contestant soon learned that he could not risk his season’s points on the unpredictable, the unknown quantity—the wild horse.

There are some who can remember the rodeos of the twenties. The spectator ran into as much danger as the contestant. There was no grandstand. The performance was put together out on the flat near the stockyards. The arena was marked off with cars, planks, rope, anything that could turn a horse. There were no chutes. The bronc was snubbed up to another horse, eared down, blindfolded, anything to hold him until he was mounted. No one had been counting points and anyone could ride who was feeling macho enough to climb aboard. The ranch boys were on the lookout all summer for any good buckers they encountered in their work and they ran them in.

Sometimes the best performances took place outside the barricades, as with one legendary figure, Gilky. Gilky reached his finest hour as a bronc rider that way. At the very beginning the horse took off on a wild race around and around the enclosure. Something then caught his eye, a flash of light or a movement in between the cars. He veered and he swerved then lunged over the top of the car and out into the open prairie where there were no people, no judges and no pick-up men. Away went Gilky and away went the horse—a mad dash, a shuddering stop, a tooth-jarring jolt, and twist and turn then off again. Those who recovered from their astonishment caught up horses and took off in a clamorous pursuit, but the pair disappeared into the Limestone Hills.

The story is always broken off there—for the dramatic effect—as if that might be the end and a ghostly Gilky and his horse still ride the Limestone Hills.

“But did Gilky never return?” someone always asks.

“Yeah, walked in the next day—lost the horse and the saddle.’’

That was something of a letdown for Gilky, but his ride and return has taken a place in local history, even though it was another one of “the saddest days in the whole wide world.’’
The Return of the Native

There is a lot to be said for the long fence-lines of Central Montana, the mighty grain fields, the haystacks along the river bottoms and the herds of beef. I have been back to the Flathead, and there is no question that you are beautiful, Fabulous Flathead, and no wonder that artists stay to paint you, but there are parts of you for which I mourn.

I had forgotten how in the fall the tamarack turns to a creamy gold and laces through the heavy green timber, as if a painter had taken a dry brush and pulled the creamy color through the dark green. I had forgotten how long the black moss grows. Squaws hair, we used to call it, and I would shudder imagining a young Indian girl running blindly from some terrible danger and catching her flying hair in the trees. The nuns in the grade school used to tell us the story of David’s son, Absalom, who turned against his father and joined the enemy. Fleeing in defeat, Absalom was caught up from his horse by an overhanging branch and hanged by his own hair, and David, instead of being angry at his worthless son, cried, “Absalom, my son, Absalom, would God had let me die instead”—a terrible cry of desolation. The moss looks like the dry, coarse hair of a Salem witch, so I will gather a handful and make a witch for the grandchildren for Hallowe’en.

The hills in the Flathead are ablaze with color and above the timberline the bare, ancient bones of the Rockies lay unchanged against the blue October sky, but on the floor of the valley where once the little country roads crisscrossed through the farms there is change. The roads are lined with eating places, motels and there is even a roadside zoo. At the lake where Merrifield’s orchard once lay in a cup of land that gently sloped to the shoreline, there are terraces of rooftops—like an Italian village clinging to the Mediterranean coastline—only they are not villas covered with bougainvillea but little houses flanked by carports and decks.

In Central Montana wealth and success are measured by wheat, and cattle, but in the Flathead the measure of your status is taken from the biggest house on the most private and enviable piece of land with a view. I am sad for the little hillside farms that have disappeared into housing developments. In their day they produced food enough for the family—vegetables, fruit and dairy products. That is a lot more than the fertile soil of the Flathead now under the cement of private tennis courts can ever produce again.
The Missouri River Breaks

The day was in October, bright, warm and windless. We drove to the breaks of the Missouri—our destination, a ride on the ferry at the P N landing. It turned out to be a sort of a seminar on land use, flood control and historic preservation. The men, ranchers all, had different opinions. One was a sportsman and a card-carrying member of the Lewistown Rod and Gun Club, a group that had taken on as adversaries those who either wanted to flood these popular hunting grounds for energy resource, or bring in tourists with an assortment of motels and gas stations. One was born on the ranch which he operates and he let his Irish blood speak for him. “A man’s land is his own, and he should be able to do what he wants with it. They should leave these people alone.” Another was a retired rancher, retired on paper only, not in the head, heart and hand way. He looked up at the craggy hills and decided that it was poor grass country and tough to fence. “Better to flood this, and not be so hard on the coal beds.” The rest of us were history buffs and could almost see a thin line of smoke drifting skywards from a hidden outlaw camp,—the upriver steamboat from St. Louis pulling in at the P N landing while the “woodhawks” replenished their fuel supply. We could almost hear the hoof-beats of Granville Stuart’s “stranglers” as they relentlessly pursued the horse thieves into the heart of this Missouri river frontier.

We planned to have a picnic lunch across the river on the clean and sandy shore. We waited under the cottonwoods on the bank for the ancient ferry. It’s heavy engine chugged and fumed, and the old structure listed to one side with the weight. Each year is threatened to be the last for the old landmark. A bridge is to replace it. The operator, like Charon on the river Styx, was a morose sort in his worn overalls and a battered hat. He was not a smooth conversationalist, but did offer once, “Shoulda been here yesterday. They swum a bunch of cattle across—helluva time.”—then lapsed into silent contemplation—maybe on what he saw yesterday—or maybe he was listening to the heartbeat of his capricious engine.

In faded letters on the ferry was its name, “Lohse.” I later learned that it was the family name of my neighbor’s mother. Had we gone beyond the river crossing, we could have seen the home of my friend’s great grandfather. It is now quite hidden in a grove of great old trees. The old pioneer’s grave is on the ranch, marked by a stone that was cut and carved by his son. These people came up to Montana from Texas when the big cattle drives were being made. Generations of the family have lived on this ranch.

After our picnic we walked along the hard-baked mud banks where tiny bird tracks, perfect in detail, were cast in the plaster-like clay. Leaves from the cottonwoods drifted down the quiet
river. Perhaps at this very crossing, Kid Curry and his gang had stopped to water their horses on their way to Rocky Point. We seemed to be far from anywhere. It was more than the chill in the air after the early sundown. It was the loneliness of the breaks that gave us a sudden urge to get back to people. We stopped at Winifred, a tiny town in the middle of great emptiness, but it helped very much to break the spell and mood from the lonely river.

The town was celebrating a two day harvest festival. The popular bar in town was crowded to the back-bar mirror, with standing room only. Here was the place to see the people who had been in our minds off and on through the day. The man who swam the cattle across the river was there—heavyset, and in well fitted clothes. He always brings his cattle home from the Big Sandy country this way, he said. The newspapers send their photographers out to take pictures of this colorful bit of the old west that is still ‘for real.’

The milk cow’s calf failed them this time, he told us. The night before the cattle are to swim the river, the milk cow’s calf is ferried across and staked out on the bank. It’s hungry bawl gets an immediate response from it’s mother, who plunges into the river and swims straight across the water to her offspring. The rest of the herd plunge in right behind her and the crossing is completed.

This time the lure did not work—perhaps the cow had some liberation notions of some sort, this being the year. She had no interest in reaching her calf, and the cattle milled about on the bank while dogs barked, riders cursed and cajoled in turn, and hours slipped by. “Why I brought a pot of beans for the lunch,” a woman next to us said, “I only planned to stay an hour or so. I was there all day!”

In the middle of the room a tall and very erect elderly man was being congratulated. It was his eighty-first birthday. He was a man of considerable means. He had always run his cattle in the breaks—probably his father before him had done this. No reason to change. Last winter was tough. Helicopters had to go in and locate the cattle. When they finally got them rounded up and into trucks, they took them to the stockyards where they had feed. Many however, were “down” and died. The talk was that this winter would be worse. Will he do things differently this winter? Probably not—can’t change at eighty-one. This country could be tough on cows.

The bartender was a brooding sort in a bright red cotton cap—sort of a feed store cap. He probably puts it on in the morning and wears it all day. He pushed the drinks across the bar without looking up. This has probably been his busiest day of the year.

Two ladies at the end of the bar were having a great visit over their drinks, except for harassment from their children who wanted to go home. Finally a little one dejectedly started for the door, calling back in a tired, resigned voice, “Well, don’t be too long.” About then we remembered with guilt the children we had left in the station wagon, bribed with Cokes and bar peanuts. We hurried off. On the way home we wondered if the little kid in the bar ever got a bath and a warm supper. Probably not. This country can be hard on kids, too.
In Grandmother’s Cellar

The nose must have nerve endings that connect directly to memory areas of the brain. Nothing does better as a time machine to take one to another place, another period than a fragrance, an aroma, a whiff. It does not have to be the romantic perfume of rose petals. There is no need of musk, ambergris or civet. The cooking smells of what was once a working man’s fare, corned beef, can take me back to a ranch kitchen of long ago, a kitchen run expertly by my grandmother.

Back in the pre-Montana Power days, corned beef was no rare dish. It was a standby when the supply of fresh beef was limited by the lack of electric refrigeration. Besides the corned beef, the menu was varied with smoked ham, chicken, trout, young mutton and an occasional sage hen treat when a covey was stirred up and routed by the mowers. Smaller carcasses could be kept in the ice house where blocks of hand-cut ice from the South Fork were layered with sawdust.

There is little fat on corn beef, and the broth is not greasy. When the meat was cooked, quarters of a cabbage so crisp it squeaked, were wedged into the pot, along with chubby bright carrots and little pearls of onions. Boiled potatoes went with this. The meat was served on a thick white ironstone platter, tuck in curls of cabbage, with a scattering of carrots and onions under a sprinkle of snipped parsley. There was always a pot of grandmother’s homemade mustard, dark brown and so strong that if you came upon it unguarded, you were brought to your feet, convinced that your taste buds were impaired for life. Never would you trowel it across a hamburger as we do today with the commercial brands. The mustard was a fixture on the table in a fat blue flowered pot with a dear little wooden serving spoon that I yearned to have for my own. From years of constant emersion in the stout mustard concoction it had acquired a rich walnut patina.

The term “corned beef” goes back to the original process which was a dry cure in “corns” of coarse salt. Brining, or pickling, took precedence over the dry cure. I never questioned how it was done. I only knew it came out of grandma’s cellar, which opened off from the dining room behind three foot walls and double doors. It was in those days like a cool dark cave, and the odor was predominately earthy, in spite of the alchemy going on within. Everything in there was going through a conversion—in kegs, crocks, and cobwebbed casks. All this brewing and aging took a great deal of our grandmother’s time and attention. Between the cellar, the garden and the preparation of food in the kitchen, the hours of her day were used up. For generations her skills and endeavors will be memorable, which is more than the cook with the microwave oven can expect. The cost of the labor involved in checking the brines, the moulds on the vinegar barrel, the cloth-covered kraut crock, the bottling of currant wine, the sprouting of potatoes, the making of sausage, and all the innumerable chores was considered ——zero!

Today, the cellar is still there, but is a catchall for the odds and ends. We have learned not to put anything in there that might mould. The strange Merlin-like forces are still at work there—but the crocks are empty.
The Christmas Tree

Every year at the beginning of the Christmas season there is a rumble from organized atheists protesting religion in the schools. I suppose it starts with an objection to the time spent practicing for the annual Christmas program. This year from the middlewest comes some question on the suitability of children singing Christmas carols—"Silent Night." We have picked up so many derivatives in customs for the celebration of Christmas that the ecstasy of the birth of Christianity in the Judean hill country is all but gone. At least let the children sing!

In our family we seem to have placed great emphasis on the Christmas tree. When our grandmother came to Montana in 1889 to make her home with her brother at the ranch, she brought—of all unlikely things—a box of Christmas tree trimmings! Considering the long transcontinental journey by rail from Boston, that was an extraordinary thing to do. The last lap of the journey by stage must have called for some great care in packing. Grandmother, a German by birth, came from Bavaria. That would explain a lot. When our mother married, she fell heir to the Christmas box. We still have two heavy glass balls that we call the Boston balls, and they are treated with great reverence. To our mother, the tree, its choosing and decorating—these were all serious matters. Our father, from his impoverished youth in Ireland, had known nothing like it, but each year he patiently made the trip out to some timbered property he had and searched for a tree that would pass inspection.
My earliest recollection of Christmas is the vigil I kept on a Christmas morning waiting outside the folding doors between the dining room and the sitting room. I knew that behind those doors was a beautiful Christmas tree and a small but carefully chosen array of gifts. I also knew that I could not so much as peek until those who had gone to early Mass had returned home. After breakfast the doors were rolled back and we little girls with the greatest of awe approached the tree, shimmering in the morning sun. We were like little pagan worshippers before an idol in a temple.

All day we stayed by the tree, leaving only for dinner. The bright winter sunlight glinted brilliantly on the long icicles outside the window panes. It streamed through the Nottingham lace curtain and flung filigreed patterns across the flowered carpet. It spread through the tree and struck with opal-fire the ropes of tinsel. Even the waxy evergreen needles picked up the highlights. The warmth of the radiators diffused the resin from the tree and the fragrance of the woods filled the room. Beyond the sitting room the rest of the house seemed shadowed and lonely.

It was just as well that the December days darkened early, because the lighting of the tree was the high point of the day. Our mother trusted no one to help decorate the tree for a very good reason. At the tip of each branch was a little painted metal candle holder with a bright red candle. Great care had to be taken that nothing was hung above the flame of the candle, especially not the paper cones trimmed with lace that held small hard candies. Aunt Kate stood prayerfully by with a pitcher full of water, just in case. She was well aware that our mother would beat the flames out with her bare hands rather than have the tree or the carpet beneath drenched. Even dear pious Aunt Kate must have had some misgivings that prayers alone could save us. After the brief and wonderfully fearful lighting of the tree, we reluctantly trudged up to bed.

The day was gone. The tree still stood in the dark, silent sitting room, but never again would it hold that same inner glow it had today. Feeling a sense of loss and inadequacy, I stood at the window of my room. Across the sky above the mountain range where remote and ice-clad lay the wilderness of Glacier Park—Piegan country—there was a star—the Christmas star! It was then and for the first time that day, I remembered all the things the nuns had told us about Christmas—and I promised, as I had done so many times before and since—'Next year, God, I will pray more on Christmas. I really will.'
To a Little Ranch Child at Christmas

All the confusion of Christmas is not in the gifting and the card lists. There is the perennial conflict in the celebration of Christmas between the shopping center Santa Claus and the real Christmas story. It is here, my little country mouse, that you come closer to the Christmas story than the city mouse.

The Christ child was born in a stable. He could have been born in a teeming souk amid the cries of beggars and the jangle of shopkeepers. He could have been born in a crowded inn, where the camels bawled in the courtyard and the drivers quarreled and cursed around their smoking campfires. He could have been born in an olive grove in the folds of a Judean hillside, but he chose a stable. You, little ranch child, know all about a stable.

It is a place of happy surprises, where you found the new kittens, and where, deep in the hay, the old red hen quietly hid her nest of brown eggs and sat out her time in the ageless process of bringing forth the young. The stable is a place of birthing. It is where you were the first to discover the milk cow’s beautiful velvet calf. It was in the gentle half-light of the stable that the long awaited broom-tail colt was ushered into the world.

The stable is cool in summer and in the winter it is a sheltered spot, banked with the sweet potpourri of dried clover blossom and blue flax. It is quiet there, but never lonely. The saddlehorse nuzzles the last crumbs from his oat box, a mouse rustles away on a busy errand in the hay, and there are always hens crooning and clucking in the sunlit door. The stable is a wonderful place, and you, little ranch child, know all about it. It is there that you come very close to the real Christmas.
Montana Ranch Beef

A Christmas gift suggestion from the Montana ranch country: a few cans of Montana Ranch Beef, flanked by a bottle of chokecherry pancake syrup, a glass of wild gooseberry jelly and a sample of home baking.

Montana Ranch Beef is something fairly new and is particularly exciting because some ranch wives with imagination, enterprise, and a positive attitude hit upon this idea as a solution to a quite common problem, one that comes and goes—a market for their beef. The year was 1978. What they did probably did not make a dint in the economic picture because by the time they got the show on the road the crisis had passed and the price of beef began to soar, but every time I look at a can of Montana Ranch Beef I feel proud.

The ladies were from the Lewistown area. They perfected a recipe for beef cooked in its own juices. A Butte firm processed the product. It is attractively packaged in 12 ounce cans with a brown and white label. The beef is chunk size with only salt for seasoning and this makes for a variety of ways it can be used. With nutrition experts warning against grain fattened meat, which they can be counted upon to do on occasion, the ladies decided that they had just the product in
surplus. If the feeders weren’t getting enough for their corn and grain fattened cattle then why not take the grass fat cattle and make stew meat out of them? Also, there is always a demand for quick foods. I thought I would buy a can as a keepsake—a talisman for remembrance of how a few women handled a tough situation.

I kept it a few days, but then came a day when we stayed too long in town and got home to find everyone in on time for supper with an extra name or two in the pot. Yesterday’s roast and matching gravy looked a bit skimpy so there was only one way to go—stew! The can of Ranch Beef was sacrificed to stretch the makings. I mentally apologized to grandson Patrick Hickey for mixing his very special 4-H beef with an inferior brand—but the result was an excellent stew. The chunks of beef settled right into the pot and snuggled under a blanket of dumplings laced with freshly chopped parsley.

Montana Ranch Beef is not just a flash in the pan, it is here to stay. Put it on your shelf—emergency shelf—that is—beside the Band-aids and the fire extinguisher. You’ll need it.
Book studies ranch life

By JANET S. ALLISON

I drifted along through the hot, sunny outdoor art show, respectfully admiring, wishing I had $1,000 instead of only $5. Then I saw something that called the $5 right out of my purse.

I don’t draw or paint or sculpt, I only make sentences. And here was one of my own kind, meek and unassuming amid paintings and photographs, sculpture and pottery, the book, “The Old Party in the Feather Shawl” by Theresa Buckingham of White Sulphur Springs. It was at the show with its illustrator, Lee Rostad, the potter. Lee said, “The book is a collection of Theresa’s CowBelle columns,” and away like magic went my $5.

Not many will read “The Old Party in the Feather Shawl” quite as I did, for there are not many here in Montana who have written CowBelle columns. In her acknowledgment Theresa describes a Montana CowBelle column as a beef promotion tool.

So it is, but I have always believed and she has demonstrated in “The Old Party in the Feather Shawl” that the soft sell is as effective and much more interesting that the hard sell. As I read, I felt vindicated.

My mother wrote the weekly CowBelle column for the papers in Blaine, Hill and northern Chouteau counties for three years. I wrote it for eight. I remember once beef news was thin and boring as well, so that week’s column was a tall tale about mosquitos from the time the Great Northern track was laid.

My neighbor, a power in CowBelles, reproved majestically, “You are supposed to write about beef, not mosquitos.”

I even had an editor complain I was supposed to write about agriculture, not life, and I’ve been uneasy ever since wondering if agriculture is a fly in amber, just a curiosity. I feel better now. Theresa Buckingham, on behalf of the CowBelle columnists here in Montana, thank you for “The Old Party in the Feather Shawl.”

You needn’t be a CowBelle columnist nor a resident of Meagher County nor a rancher to value “The Old Party in the Feather Shawl.” Where else in 60 pages can you find a readable, authentic, illustrated view of a year of Montana ranch life?

John Steinbeck, the Nobel Prize winner, prefaced “Cannery Row” with the explanation that the book’s story was fragile, comparing it with a marine organism that can be collected by the biologist only if it can ease of its own accord onto the biologist’s collecting blade.

This little book is much that way. The story is delicate, but when you finish you’ve read a story, perhaps the best kind, an evocative story and, for all its deceptively easy flow through 31 episodes, a strong one.

I think I’ll write a fan letter to Theresa Buckingham, Box 332, White Sulphur Springs, 59645. I don’t know her, but I’m captivated by the mind glimpsed through the words. I admire her style. I applaud her honesty in showing ranch life the way it is because it’s tempting to dress it up a little, show things better or worse than they really are.

I like the way she mixes past into present to hint at the future for herself, her family, her community. Maybe for humanity, if that’s not too purple a way to put it.

I think this thin, 8½- x 11-inch book will make a fine Montana present for certain far-away friends and relatives. “The Old Party in the Feather Shawl” is so written that you need not know the people or the place to enjoy it, even to read and reread it as I have. Lee Rostad’s drawings add the finishing touch.

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By JOYCE GOUGER
Enterprise staff writer

Sometimes it pays to be daring. In what she called taking a "little journey into my own mind," Theresa Buckingham sat down and wrote an unusual column for the Meagher County CowBelles which wasn't what she felt was the "run of the mill."

She called it "The Old Party in the Feather Shawl." It has since become the title for a book.

Taking an ordinary activity such as raising hens, she wove a colorful tale about an old red hen who survives many a siege on the hen house by "the hungry ones," who "strike at night and only a drift of soft feathers in the grass tells of the death struggle."

Mrs. Buckingham had been doing all the "typical things" for the column, she said, including beef recipes, how to cut beef and cookoffs. "I got kind of tired of it," she said.

A resident of White Sulphur Springs, she began writing the CowBelles column for the Meagher County CowBelles about four or five years ago.

After publication of that first column, interested persons phoned her, asking for more of the same. And so, she said, "I sprinkled those little tales all the way through."

In February of last year, Lee Rostad, a fellow ranch wife, also of Meagher County, suggested that they combine efforts and produce a book. Mrs. Rostad is a published artist, having done the "Meagher County Sketchbook."

"Well," Mrs. Buckingham said, "we were so slow about it." But despite vacations, and other interruptions, including calving time, the book was compiled and published in October.

The book contains selected stories from her columns, all pertaining to ranch life, and includes events, animals, the seasons, the country itself and special occasions such as Christmas.

Humor can be found throughout the different stories, such as in "A Love Affair with Railroads." She writes: "Expecting rural Montanans to go back to rail travel is like asking us to use a Chinese abacus in place of those neat little computers. It's awkward."

Her stories also show a warmth and enthusiasm for ranch life, such as in a Christmas story she wrote called, "To a Little Ranch Child at Christmas." She wrote: "The stable is a wonderful place, and you, little ranch child, know all about it. It is there that you come very close to the real Christmas."

Each story is illustrated by Mrs. Rostad, who is a political science graduate from the University of Montana in Missoula. Mrs. Buckingham is a graduate of St. Catherine's in St. Paul, Minn., where she majored in English.

Both Mrs. Rostad and Mrs. Buckingham are scheduled to appear on Norma Ashby's television program, "Today in Montana," on Dec. 19.

The book is available in a paperback edition for $6 or in hardback for $10. Some copies were placed in Sax and Fryer in Livingston, and are also available through Mrs. Buckingham, White Sulphur Springs, or through Mrs. Rostad, Martinsdale.
Ranch life recalled in a touching, illustrated book

By KATHRYN WRIGHT
For The Gazette

“No Alamo, no Foreign Legion garrisoned in the desert has been more beleaguered than our hen house.” So says Theresa Buckingham of White Sulpher Springs in her book, “The Old Party in the Feather Shawl.”

The book, illustrated by Lee Rostad, artist and ranch wife at Martinsdale, is an ancient red hen that has survived sieges on the Buckingham hen house by skunks, weasles, fox, racoon. In the spring, when the Buckinhams get chicks from the hatchery, the old red hen has a joyous time acting like a house mother in a sorority.

Other chapters, all with humor and insight, include The Seed Catalog, La Femme de Charge-Annadammer, Wanted: Experienced Cook for Haying Season and The Christmas Tree.

The seed catalog arrives in January, extolling the joys of growing your own salad greens and berries. Looking at the pictures, Mrs. Buckingham doesn’t remember last year’s war waged with a robin over the strawberries. “I only remember the robin’s song.”

Annadammer, born a barn cat, worked her way up to house cat status but in February calving she made the nocturnal rounds with the member of the Buckingham family checking cows. If there’s trouble, Annadammer waits, crouched in the shadow until the calf is born and all’s well. that, says Mrs. Buckingham, takes heart.

Readers on ranches and those who learned about ranch life vicariously will find this book touches their hearts. It’s available in paperback for $5 and hardcover for $10 form Mrs. Buckingham, White Sulpher Springs, Mt., and Mrs. Rostad, Martinsdale, Mt.
White Sulphur columnist’s little book may just be your cup of tea

By WAYNE ARNST, Tribune Staff Writer

If you’ve ever been bored by stories about bake sales and quilt raffles, chickens, railroads, icy roads, seed catalogs, style shows, family military history, range cows, circus tycoons, cooks, caps, cellars and Christmas trees — then “The Old Party in the Feather Shawl” by Theresa Buckingham, White Sulphur Springs, may be just the short book to “unbore” you.

Having enjoyed all aspects of ranch life and being able to see both the humor and beauty of it, Buckingham has put together a collection of columns she has written for The Meagher County Cowbelles and which appeared in the Meagher County News over the past four years.

She shares anecdotes and insights into the beef industry and rural life in the book, which is illustrated by Lee Rostad.

From her observations on the art of changing the subject in “The Duchess Said Lace” to a plea for the Milwaukee Railroad to “leave us the freight cars,” Buckingham gives the reader a quantity of grassroots insight that is pleasant, humorous reading blended with a heaping of common-sense information.

The book is well written and easily read from the standpoint of descriptive English. The reader may start anywhere in the book and read a column without having to loose continuity. Her ability to take a common subject, such as a prideful housecat, and weave it into an interesting story gives Buckingham the ability to hold the reader’s interest and have him turning the page to find out if the next story is as well done. A long evening is enough to read the little book.

Buckingham was born and raised in Kalispell and graduated with an English degree from the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minn., in 1931. She later married Fred Buckingham and they have ranched since then in the White Sulphur Springs area.

“The Old Party in the Feather Shawl” (60 pages) is available in hardcover ($10) or paperback ($5) plus 50 cents for postage from The Meagher County News, 13 East Main, White Sulphur Springs, Mont. 59645.

Parberry (Ringling) house, an ‘Old Party’ subject
(Lee Rostad drawing)
December 30th

Dear Carol and Ivan,

We were so pleased to hear from you. I did get some beautiful Christmas cards—but somehow never got them sent. I started to send them out after Christmas, but just as I am doing now, I took up so much space explaining why I was late, I had defaced the beautiful card. I decided to put them away and just write a letter.

To think that a year ago I was writing to my friends telling them about This House of Sky and here you are with another ready to go! Our Library board got the word that you were to be at the State Lib. meeting in the Spring. We are definitely planning on being there. You will have to come on over. Your cousins, the Gordon Doigs are building a sensational house outside of town with a view of everything—and I think they even catch the Brigers. It is said to be really something.

I had a pleasant surprise yesterday. A local (more or less) history or collection of family histories of Meagher and Cascade counties is just out. Shirley Fogland brought a copy up for me to see, but the price—$25.00 seemed
a lot. So many of those are paper backs and not too expensive. I enjoy collecting them. This one is hard-back and really big. In it I found the story I wrote—The Survival of Steve Toks. It had been in the paper here. The people doing the book got it from there. I was indeed surprised to see my name in print!

Steve Toks was a rugged individual living down in the Rock Creek country. (This particular book covers mainly that part of Meagher Co. and not this part up here. Steve was shot and left for dead, but a doctor in Great Falls, using every trick he knew—mostly untried before, built his face up and he lived to eat and talk. Last summer the Doctor, who spends his summers in the Flathead, but lives in California sent word that he had saved all his papers on how he put Steve together, and wondered if our museum would like them. It was a very unusual bequest, but we accepted the papers, and picture of Steve—so in one way Steve had a second survival—actually his life was one series of near misses. Fred had told me his story, and he had always interested me—as everything in the Rock Creek country has a special wild quality—So piecing together the old stories of Steve that had been circulating by word of mouth for years, plus the doctor's story—I had quite a piece, and now it is really in hard print! The doctor had written that he surely
didn't want to just toss out his papers. He said it really should have been published in a medical journal, but he was young and working hard at his new practice and just didn't take the time.

I should add that although I think $25.00 is a lot for the book, after finding my story in there, I am definitely buying.

We, Fred and I, got colds that left us coughing our heads off—which was one reason for not keeping up with the rigors of my Christmas schedule. The weather has been beautiful here but the colds seem to go their merry way anyway.

Van Cleve's daughter spent one winter here when her husband taught here. I got to know her and although it was some time ago, we always get a Christmas card from her—Carroccia is her name. I have never met Spike. Does he ever swear! When Susan Eaker in Helena had an autograph party for him and his book, she put signs up all through the store—"Who th' hell is Spike Van Cleve?" I thought that was cute. Van Cleves bought some sections out at Battle Creek from my grand uncle Billy Luppold—and when they came to make the deal, they had quite a party. Which is typical.

Happy New Year and what are we going to call the '80s

The Bucknighams
Thursday

Dear Ivan and Carol,

I got this letter last winter—I'm cleaning out my desk and didn't know whether to send it on to you or not—. It's not a bad idea just to say "Hi" now and then and to get my full worth of stamp money, I'll just throw this in. I should have saved the first letter this person wrote. The gist of it was that she was fascinated by Meagher County and wanted to know all about it. In reply I sent a copy of the Beef Edition which always includes several histories of ranch families. I thought it was as good a cross section of the populace as any. I also asked her why she was so intrigued and her answer is that your "House of Sky" really appealed to her.

The Beef Edition which I had in the house to mail to her was the one that had the old Luppold history written up so that is why there is so much comment about my family, in her letter.

One thing about putting out a book—my gracious! the people one does hear from. It is sort of fun! I could hardly wait for the mail to be put out—especially the letters with the checks—no, I think hearing from people I had not heard of in years—some of them—outclassed the checks.

Will you be coming out this way this summer? You should see Sherry and Gordon's house now! It is so elegant. They say it is to be written up in one of those elegant magazines. I don't think I could relax in such a formal atmosphere and around such delicate fabrics but it's fun to be asked in.

Theresa
May 19, '81

Dear Theresa—

Thanks for your letter. It was nicely timed, as I'm trying to put together a Montana trip for us this summer. The way things now look, Carol and I should be in the WSS country June 18-20. We'll have with us Seattle friends, John and Jean Roden, who are making a cross-country trip this summer. They've been to WSS once on their own, and found the Castle, talked to Gert Atkins, but this time I'd like to show them the valley a bit; if it's convenient, I'll give you a call to see whether we could look in at the Luppold house. Would you mind?

All is well here, though hectic. Both Carol and I get a bit frazzled this time of year, which is the end of a considerable siege of work for both of us. I'm about halfway through the novel I'm at work on. This one has an Alaska-Northwest Coast setting, and I think won't be of much interest to Montanans. The next one I intend, though, is to have a Montana setting.

I've touted your book to Sue Mathews, who teaches a "women and the West" course at Eastern Montana College in Billings. Now that you're a veteran book-writer, I trust that you're going to go on and write the Luppold-McMurrick-Buckingham saga? Seriously.

Looking forward to seeing you in June.
There is something wistful and very "young" about this.

Dear Mrs. Buckingham, I don't know any thing about her but what she says.

Thank you so much for your response to my letter. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the ranch histories in the Beef Edition of the Meagher County News. You have a very interesting family history. I wish my own family had been able to keep track of itself--we've had an Indian fighter, a few gold miners and many railroad men in our family, but, unfortunately, we know very little of our past history. (And our only family legend is the legend of all Irishmen—that every Irishman is, of course, descended from kings.)

Why do I find Meagher County and the Smith River Valley unique? Well, I'm a poet-playwright and I find the valley a very inspiring place. Indeed, I find the whole of Montana inspiring, but I'm especially drawn to this particular valley.

I think it's because of the way the people of the valley tell stories of themselves and their valley home. In his book, Mr. Doig gives vivid descriptions of a beautiful place. There are touches of glamour, romance and adventure in "This House Of Sky," but the reader is also made keenly aware of the trials and hardships of a rough country and the work which is done in it. And the reader is also made aware of people who were, and are, determined to hold out against a country that was, and is, equally determined to hold out against them. ("This House Of Sky" can make some people feel mighty small.)

Then, too, I'm attracted to the valley because I've always loved nature. I used to spend the summers with my grandparents, deep in the Michigan woods. They live in a tiny town (about 300 people) called Irons. It's a very friendly little town. But, it's in a rather dense part of Michigan--and I like places that have a bit of everything--mountains, forests, plains, rivers and lakes. Montana has them all (along with the usual tax collectors and other such things), and Meagher County seems to have many of them.
I can say that cities are mighty interesting, but I heartily dislike living in them, full-time. Joliet is a factory town, highly polluted. Its' other industries include a host of McDonald's, Burger King and Taco Bell eating places. There is also the interesting, but rather grisly, history of Joliet Prison.

We live in Joliet because it's near Lewis University, where my father teaches speech and theatre, but my parents and I have another home in Evanston, Illinois, where we spend every weekend, holiday and the whole of the summers. Our Evanston residence is close to Northwestern University, which Mr. Doig attended.

By the way, can you give me the name of the publisher of "Devil Man With A Grin," also, the year of its' publication? The library at my father's university borrows books from other U.S. college and university libraries. I'm about to descend upon the Lewis library with a list of books for them to find and borrow, and I would like to add Mr. Watson's book to the list, for good measure. Given the name of the publisher or the date of publication, the library can find the book more quickly. (Yes, I'm eager to read it.)

Thank you again for answering my letter-- I enjoyed hearing from a real old-time-settler ranch family. And, if you should happen to have some more histories and legends, please do send me a few. I'm all ears-- or rather, eyes.

Most sincerely,
Michelle Sullivan
COWBOYS branding a steer on the open range. Men with the steer are unidentified, but the man on the horse is identified as Charles M. Russell, famed cowboy artist. Time and place are unknown, but this early photo gives us a nostalgic glance into the past into the days of the open range cattle industry. (Photo courtesy First National Bank.)

BICENTENNIAL

BEEF EDITION

by Verle L. Rademacher

As we celebrate the Bicentennial of our country's birth, let us go back in time to look at some of the ways it was done "back then." In the pages of our second annual Beef Edition, we have collected a number of stories of interest. Some are concerned with Colonial farming, cattle raising and haymaking. Items of later interest are histories and pictures of early Meagher County ranches and ranch life. Some stories are as modern as today. Come enjoy with us this bicentennial Beef Edition.
Luppold Ranch History

by Theresa McS. Buckingham

1866
He must have walked with a cane beside the oxen as the wagon train moved out of Iowa to Montana. He had been wounded in both knees only the year before in Tennessee. Eighty-six of his regiment had been injured and taken prisoner, but he had been left for dead in the field until a comrade came between the lines and carried him away. He was taken to the Union batteries, but then left, lying in an ambulance wagon for three days without food or water. He was only twenty-five then, our mother’s uncle, and an almost patriarchal figure in our lives, William Luppold.

He had come to America with a companion, and, after a brief stay with relatives in Boston, the two friends headed west to Iowa. They learned a trade there. They were cooperers. They made kegs and barrels and mended wheels. The companion left to fight in the Sioux Indian war. Later, January 4, 1864, Luppold who had been trained in the military as a school boy, which was the German way, volunteered to serve in Company F of the Second Iowa Cavalry. While recovering from bullet wounds in both knees, he helped with hospital duties and then was given honorable discharge. The next spring he had fitted out a wagon and an ox team, joined a Captain Bailey’s wagon train out of Iowa and headed for Montana. August 4, 1866 found him still crippled and with little money, looking down the single, long, dusty street of Diamond City. As I read the account in Progressive Men of Montana, I wondered that he did not long for the deep green forests of his native Bavaria, and the close bonds of his many brothers and sisters. Most likely he did, but there was a friendly German element in Diamond City, he had a good claim, and he worked in his spare time as a butcher. When others went on prospecting, he started a search for land, and found it in the nearby unsettled Smith River valley. His choice was where the North and the South forks of the river join.

1873
The year 1873 was the beginning of the realization of his ambitions. He sold his claim in Cement Gulch, went to the Gallatin and bought cattle, moved into his small cabin on his land, and he married. One finds only stark records of these events. Progressive Men gives the date of his marriage to Kate Kuath of Switzerland in 1873. A tumbled down tombstone, one of the few left in the Old Fort Logan cemetery, gives the date of her death, August 1875. Lost in time are the graphics of the human emotions, the anticipations, gratifications, and the anguish. Luppold never married again, but from then on, for the next one hundred years, his piece of river bottom, the cluster of low as “Smith River Valley, Shields River, and Sixteen Mile Creek.” Later barb wire restricted him somewhat. He was also a partner in the Martinsdale Sheep Company, which took him to the Musselshell. Other records show he was on the first school board and one of the first directors in the bank. One family legend that persists is that once, (in the days before the Federal Reserve), when there was a threatened run on the bank, Luppold drove his team and buggy alone to Hershfield’s bank in Helena and brought back the money to meet the crisis.

After building the present ranch house, Luppold sent to Germany for one of his sisters, Theresa, to keep house for him. This arrangement was short-lived. She met and married Christian Kencck of Helena, who was also from their home in Bavaria. In later years, Great-Uncle Chris was genial, bald and bespectacled. He wore the flat broad-brimmed, old-style cattle man’s hat, the frock coat, heavy gold watch chain and always smoked a good cigar. We little girls remembered him for the ribberboned boxes of chocolates he brought to us, the flushed face cups, paper lace, sprinklings of Jordan Almonds and even the small longs for dainty serving. We hoarded the boxes long after the chocolates were gone. In Historic Helena, a centennial publication in 1964, Kencck was mentioned as being on the first board of aldermen in Helena. One of his family, Charles Kencck, was scalped by the Nez Percis Indians.

William Luppold

weathered buildings in the tall cottonwoods, corral poles and rooftops silvered with age has been a homestead of sorts to many. Each inheritor has been told, “Whatever else you do, don’t sell this.”

From recorded testimony given by Luppold in an early water right suit, (he filed for water, while the County Seat was still at Diamond City), he tells that he turned his cattle into his fields in May 1873. He also dug ditches with the help of his friend, Frank Gaugler, who had an Indian fur-trading post on the Musselshell, and who brought along his team of oxen. Also, mentioned, was how he traded with some Cree Indians for a horse, which horse the Indians later stole. Luppold went after it and got it back. From the First Edition of the Montana Stockgrowers Brand Book published in 1886, Luppold’s range was listed.

$500.00
REWARD

Five Hundred Dollars Reward will be paid for information or evidence resulting in the arrest and conviction of any person or persons stealing or wilfully and maliciously killing or maiming livestock owned by or under the control of a member in good standing of the Meagher County Livestock Association.

KNUTE HEREIM, President

This reward offer is under and subject to Association bylaws.

GRANDMOTHER SERAPHINA, in front of the Luppold house about 1910. The girl with her is Florence Wight Anderson. The Wight’s were early day residents with mining interests in Neihart. Their home, now remodeled, is the Wes Skeritt home. (Photo courtesy Gertrude McStravick.)
in 1877, while on an expedition to Yellowstone Park. His widow moved his uneasy corpse three times before it came to its final rest in the Catholic cemetery in Helena.

1890-1916

The next sister to come out west to keep house for Loppuld was our grand-mother, Seraphina, who came from Boston with her husband and two young children. In later years, Seraphina was a beloved grand-mother, excellent cook, round and jolly and lived in an ample apron, but her life had its share of drama. She must have been a comely young woman with her wide-set eyes and small firm chin. Seraphina's husband refused to stay in the west and begged her to return to Boston with him. According to family legend, when he first entered Loppuld's ranch house, he laid his hand on the rough wall covered with tightly stretched muslin and declared, "It's a robber's roost!" After a brief unhappy time, he left for Boston alone and never saw his wife or son again. Our father and mother visited him years later in Boston where he lived, alone. Seraphina had preferred the challenge and the opportunity her brother had to offer to share.

One of the stories, greatly relished, was how Seraphina helped an outlaw escape. Many rough characters worked for Loppuld. This one was an outlaw with the highly questionable name of Kingly Perris. He rode into the ranch from Battle Creek, one late afternoon, to get what pay he had coming and to report that he was leaving. Our mother was alone at the ranch, a thoroughly frightened girl at the sight of the strange, lone rider. She explained that she had no way to get the money for him. He could not risk waiting around any longer, he said, because the sheriff was after him. He demanded that the money be left under a rock at the gate at the head of the lane. He would come back in the night and pick it up. By the time the sheriff's posse had trailed him from Battle Creek to the ranch, the money was already in place under the rock. Loppuld was not one to let a man leave without "settling up" no matter what his status.

The lawmen announced on their arrival that their plan was to take over the house and ambush the outlaw when he rode in as they had expected. He was wanted in Wyoming and was dangerous, they said. It is difficult to reconstruct the thinking in the household at this point, but in any case, Seraphina served a good dinner to everyone, and with her family, retired for the night. The armed posse moved into the south bedroom from where they could watch the road. About midnight, Seraphina heard a tapping on her window, and was astonished to see the outlaw crouching beneath it. "Where is the money?" he demanded in a hoarse whisper. "It's at the gate where you said to put it. Go back and look again," she said. "It's not," he insisted, "and I've got to have it." By now, Seraphina was not frightened but impatient, as with a child who cannot seem to bring the right jar of preserves up from the cellar. "You go back. It's there," Then, reaching for her shawl, she said, "Alright, I'll show you." She slipped out of the house, keeping to the shadows, and the outlaw took the sleeping household, which included the posse. She gratefully slipped into her bed and lost no further sleep over the fine distinctions of right and wrong.

The home made by this stalwart brother and sister, was orderly, clean and hospitable. Just a pleasant afternoon buggy ride from town, there were many friends coming and going. There were also relatives from Boston, some coming for fun and some for solace. When I pass the old bunk house it stands today. I sometimes think of the unfortunate Eugene Loppuld, who, the story goes, was expected to fulfill his mother's dream of having her son be a concert pianist. He was kept to a rigid schedule, in Boston, of practice hours behind locked doors, and he was an alcoholic. His family sent him west to his uncle with the curious conviction that this would help him. Desperate for a piano, because he had agreed to give a concert in the Auditorium, he spent lonely winter evenings in the bunkhouse, building a wooden model of a piano keyboard on which to exercise his fingers. His alcoholism was not cured. The concert was a success.

There was a niece, Gertrude Loppuld, who came out from Boston several times to visit. She was greatly admired by her uncle and aunt and had made many friends in town. Arecilia Smith, who knew her said that she had a talent and was popular at parties. The story of an incident on her wedding trip to the ranch was always told with great hilarity. Her husband, an easterner, wanted very much to go on a roundup. The men were getting ready to leave from the ranch. It was unheard of for a lady to go on such an expedition, and Gertrude was determined that if she could not go, her husband could not go, either. He had every intention of not missing this chance. In the darkness of the early fall morning, he quietly left the ranch house and secured a ride on the chuckwagon with the cook, in the driver's seat, hopeful that they would be off before he would be missed. In the confusion of orders being shouted and riders saddling up, Gertrude awoke. In troussseau lace and ribbons, hair flying, she ran out into the lane beseeching her husband not to leave her. He, clutching his bowler hat more firmly to his head, begged the driver to whip up the horses and be off, and off they went with such a clatter of pots and pans banging and with the walling bride running a losing second in the race, there was a fresh out break of bucking broncos and cursing cowboys. I suppose a buggy was dispatched in a day or so to bring back the errant bridegroom. That would have been to everyone's relief.

1916

The summer of 1916 was the last of our summer vacations at the ranch, the summer Loppuld died. Our father came from Kalispell for the funeral, an alien figure among the ranch people in his gray business suit and fedora hat. He assumed a new importance to me because he had come across the Flathead reservation in a motor car with a hired driver in record time—Forty miles an hour. The funeral was very large and held in the I00P hall. What

(Next Page Please)
Lippold Ranch
(From Preceding Page)

I remember most about the week of the funeral, before we children were sent back to Kalispell, was the Chinese funeral piece. It had been given for Lippold's grave by the Chinese who lived in town and who had been friends of Lippold's from mining camp days. It was a symbol of great respect. It had been hung, for safe-keeping, suspended from the ceiling of the room where we slept. I will always remember the hundreds of tiny fuschia-colored paper blossoms and intricate little birds and butterflies thickly clustered on a great wire frame. Against all offered advice, Seraphina took it to her brother's grave and laid it on the freshly turned sod, like a lovely fallen bird. One late summer thunder shower ruined it.

The rest of the summer was troubled, legal battles over the will. Seraphina trying to supervise a large hay crew and fend off the L. W. W's who made trouble among the working men, and their was the war. The cattle were all sold. Seraphina refused to stay on at the ranch, although legally, it was her home as long as she lived. She went to her son's ranch for a short send interim and died in the flu epidemic. Never again was there the warmth, vibrancy and security of the old days at the ranch. Our mother was an absentee owner, as was her daughter and heir, Gertrude McStravick, during her school years. The place was leased to large cattle companies, as an outpost for winter feeding. The Castle Mountain Company lease ran for thirty years. Gertrude kept the house, but the outlaying buildings soon lost their character from disuse — the shop, the ice house, the granary, all seemed to serve as sheds.

1940
The Buckingham children made an island of activity out of the big yard and house during those next years. There were birthday parties, school picnics and finally, the many outdoor wedding receptions. It is a place beloved by children and grandchildren.

RIck BUCKINGHAM, nephew of Gertrude McStravick and presently leasing the ranch, with bale loader.
(Photograph courtesy Gertrude McStravick.)

This year, for the first time in a half a century, the ranch is leased by someone in the family, Rick Buckingham, who has ranches on his adjoining places. His bachelor's quarters are a stone's throw from the old house. Backhoe dragline clean the ditches once dug by oxen. The continuity of one hundred years goes on.

BUNKHOUSE at the Lippold, still in use.
(Photograph courtesy Gertrude McStravick.)
Early Haymaking Was a Tough Time-Consuming Task on Farm

A vignette of early haymaking illustrates the advancements that have characterized the historical march of American agriculture.

Haymaking was controlled by the weather and largely performed by the calendar in June or July. Early Saxon calendars listed July as “Hemmonath,” or hay-month.

Early farmers vigorously debated the best time to cut hay. Some said it was best when the grasses were in flower and others advocated waiting until the grasses went to seed. They didn’t have studies to tell them that haying should begin with the early bud stage to take advantage of top nutritive qualities.

The most skilled of the haymakers were the mowers. Each was armed with his own scythe, suit for his personal height and stature. They set out at early dawn when the dew was thick on the grass.

Their movement through a field was governed by the way the grass leaned or was blown by the wind. The grass should always lean away from the mower.

A good mower averaged about an acre a day, depending on the type of crop. He was instructed to cut as close to the ground as possible since the greatest weight of the stem was nearest the ground. Farmers had no research to tell them that the leaves, particularly in clovers, contained the most nutrition.

But even early farmers recognized the importance of drying the hay quickly and thoroughly. Shortly after the hay was cut, it was shaken out and tedded manually once or twice the first day. Towards evening, rakers armed with crude, wood implements gathered the hay in long narrow wind-rows. Then, before nightfall, it was placed in small heaps for protection against dew or rain.

On the second day, as soon as the dew was off the grass, the hay was shaken and tedded again. In the afternoon the rakers returned again and put it in larger heaps for the second night.

This process continued each day until the hay was dried enough for placing in stacks.

Usually, five other people were needed to work the hay cut by a mower. These included tedders, rakers, loaders, pitchers and stackers. A superintendent directed their work from field to field, often racing against gathering storm clouds.

Compare these pastoral, but impractical haying scenes with the modern methods of today.

Now, one man equipped with a Haybine mower-conditioner can cut, condition and place hay in a windrow or swath all in a single operation.

Later, that same man can operate an efficient baler to package the hay that is dried in a fraction of the time it once took. A bale thrower can make his baler even more efficient by throwing the finished bales into a trailing wagon.

Or, an automatic bale wagon, again operated by one man, can move through field after field picking up, loading, hauling and stacking bales for storage.

If large round bales are desired, modern machinery equipped with rugged conveyor chains can roll the hay into large cylinders suitable for outside storage.

In early days, the farmer had few alternatives concerning haying. He was completely at the mercy of the weather and the number of good strong workers he could find.

Today, a variety of efficient, modern machinery eliminates the labor problem and has taken a lot of worry out of the concern about the weather.

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**BINDER** was a great improvement over cutting grain with a cradle. Scene above brings back many memories to old-timers. (Photo courtesy Marshall Hanson.)

**Beef Barbecue Time**

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**Hesston** **John Deere** **New Holland**

Sales and Service

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**Strong and Bradley**

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by Barbara Teague

Montanans pioneers and early settlers came from every direction. They were seeking a new or better life, but at the same time were eager to have many of the things they left behind as soon as they were able. One of these things was establishing a school system.

The earliest recorded school district in Meagher county was set up in November of 1876. Funds from county taxes were set aside for and placed to the credit of school district No. 8 in White Sulphur Springs. The amount of this levy was $212.50. The trustees for this district were William Upold, Eli Strode and I. O. Proctor and the board clerk was Almond Spencer.

On May 5, 1879, Henry Foster was hired as the first teacher. He received $70 a month and he was to teach a three month term.

Since there was now a board of trustees and a teacher the next step was a school house. Twenty-eight voters, which was a majority of the registered voters, signed a petition on October 11, 1879, for the erection of a school building. A bid of $1045 was accepted and the contract for the school went to Samuel Scott and James Kien. The school building was a frame building measuring 24 feet by 36 feet. Land for the school was donated by White Sulphur Springs.

In 1884 the school was growing and by 1888 the school census was 60 students. They had outgrown the existing building and space for classes was rented from Dr. William Parbery.

An election for a $14,000 bond for a new two story brick school building was held in November of 1884. As with all recorded issues for schools over a period and for about 40 years following, it passed with a large majority. 106 in favor and 25 against. Land was donated by Aaron Haschfield, president of the White Sulphur Springs Association for the school and a bond of $12,300 from Mr. C. T. Abbott was accepted in June of 1886.

In 1913 a vote of 163 yes to 18 no made possible a second brick school building. This smaller building, erected 28 years after the first brick one, cost $16,000 and was built by Blessing and Edwards.

Today we send our children to school. However, in the early 1880's the schools came to the children. As people settled in areas where there was no school nearby for their children to attend a school census was taken. Then the heads of households signed a petition requesting a school district be formed in their area. In 1883 there were 20 school districts in Meagher county. At that time the county was a great deal larger than it is today and included the west side of the Big Belt Mountains in the Confederate Gulch, York, Deep Creek and Townsend areas. In 1890 it was extended to Judith Gap and the Musselshell region.

These school districts changed yearly with new districts forming and old ones being split. In 1885 the number of school districts in the county had grown to 24, and there were 28 schools. The only school with separate classes for each grade was district 6 in White Sulphur Springs. A list of the school buildings for the county at that time included 4 frame buildings and 13 log. That leaves us to imagine that the other 11 schools must have been holding classes in some other place, probably a home. There were 10 men and 21 women teaching the 781 children attending these schools. Students went to school for an average of 190 days a year at that time.

Records of a high school in White Sulphur Springs are quite incomplete. In August of 1902 an election was held to consider the establishment of a free high school. The results of that election are not recorded, but shortly thereafter salaries for high school teachers are listed in the board meeting minutes.

Possibly some type of private high school was held before this. I have found a printed dance program which reads as follows, "White Sulphur Springs High School, Class of 1901." The members of the class were Julia Sherman, Eldon Anderson, Estella Bees, Eva Hartfield, Grace O'Mara, Leona Gies, Emma Badger, Grace Heitman, and Herbert Harris.

The oldest graduation program I have been able to find is 1904. There were five members of the class, Violet Hughes, Edward R. Teague, Rose B Gordon, J. Austin Blessing, and Cyrus Allen. The graduation exercises includes several musical selections, either vocal or piano, and an oration by each graduate.

Civil rights, both in race discrimination and the teacher hiring policies have changed great deal since the early Montana school days.

A special meeting of the school trustees was called on January 2, 1882, to determine what action was to be taken relating to the appearance of John Murphy, a colored boy, at school. The trustees ask the child's guardian, Mr. Ross, to withdraw the boy from school until a full meeting of the board could decide what should be done. They also wrote to the territorial school superintendent, R. H. Howie, asking for written interpretation of the law concerning colored children of African descent attending school with white children.

On January 28, 1882, the parents and guardians of the colored boy failed and refused to meet the terms of schooling set up by the board and the services of a teacher for him was discontinued. The teacher was instructed positively not to admit colored children of African descent into the class with white children.

From this date on the only reference to colored children in the remaining school records are in the school census lists, where the colored children are noted as such.

Altho there is no written record of a change of policy, we know there was one within the next ten years. A school picture of the early 1890's shows Robert Gordon as a class member. In 1896 there are at least four colored students in the school picture. Rose Gordon was a member of the class of 1904 and her oration at the graduation exercises was "The Progress of the Negro Race."

Bargaining between teachers and trustees seemed to be pretty much a case of the trustees

(Teague School, taken about 1920. Kids in picture are Neil Teague, Helen Glasser and the two Stahl Children.)
Colonial Farm Methods Criticized by British

The productivity of America's farmers has made this nation the marvel of the world when it comes to food. Not only does the United States enjoy the lowest percentage of income spent for food of any nation, but the variety and availability is the best to be found anywhere.

It is hard to realize that the low esteem in which American farming practices were held by the British was one of the factors that led England lower her guard in the belief that the colonies could ever succeed on their own.

Agriculture was written about extensively in England, and the regard with which the British looked across the sea at the colonists was tainted by this reporting of our farming practices. Indeed, the British disdain for our agriculture rubbed off on just about everything American. As a result, few thought the colonies capable of independence.

But, the melting pot that American was, would quickly dispel lack of confidence in our agriculture once the new nation was on her own. The rotation practices of the Amish in Pennsylvania; irrigation by diverting streams in hilly regions; new varieties of vegetables and grasses—all these would come into play as the nation moved westward.

Farming became an important subject in newspapers and other journals. The establishment of land grant colleges propelled the development of modern farming practices and new machinery and methods increased productivity.

But, in the early days when Americans were laying the groundwork for their independence, their lack of concern about farming was really an asset. The image created in England by our farmers took British eyes off the growth of our trades. And this was a very serious mistake.

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Good Cooking, Bicentennial, And Father's Day Go Together

Think about it for just one moment. A good number of American traditions revolve around the kitchen and meals produced therein. Example: serving beef for Father's Day.

And no wonder. In pioneer homes the kitchen was the hub of family life. You cooked there, ate there, spent the evenings there before a roaring fire and, more often than not, even bathed there. It was the one spot in the home that could be counted on to be warm and comfortable.

America has a rich collection of delightful food traditions, many of which involve beef. Beef has always been part of the American menu and in the last twenty-five years has become America's most consumed food. It is versatile, easy to prepare and because of the wide variety of cuts fits into any budget.

The "Bicentennial Beef Cookbook" offers 100 of the greatest beef dishes to grace America's tables in the past 200 years. Like America, the selection is an ethnic grab-bag. Richly illustrated with full-color photographs and jam-packed with helpful tips on buying, storing, preparing and serving beef as well as historical facts of interest, the book is not only useful but entertaining.

As Father's Day, June 20, draws near — a traditional day to serve beef — the cookbook should prove an ideal source for meal ideas featuring America's finest — beef. In fact, throughout the year the "Bicentennial Beef Cookbook" would surely be put to use time and time again as Americans strive to bring the real "flavor" of the Bicentennial into their homes.


Father's Day Breakfast

From hearty pioneers to author and wit Mark Twain, Americans have always enjoyed a thick steak for their morning meal. Today a tempting broiling top round steak is more apt to come to the dinner table, and wouldn't it be a grand treat for dad on Father's Day. And it couldn't be more appropriate.

The Father's Day Council, Inc., has declared beef to be the official entree for Father's Day.

"Trail Blazer Top Round Steak"

1 beef top round steak, cut 11/2 to 1 3/4 inch thick
1/4 cup catsup
1/4 cup soy sauce
1/4 cup vinegar
1/4 cup oil
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon salt
Combine catsup, soy sauce, vinegar, oil, sugar, chili powder and salt. Place steak and marinade in utility dish or plastic bag, turning to coat all sides. Cover dish or tie bag securely and place in pan; marinate in refrigerator 6 to 8 hours or overnight, turning steak at least once. Remove steak from marinade; reserve marinade and place steak on rack in broiler pan so surface of meat is 5 inches from heat. Broil 25 to 40 minutes to desired degree of doneness — rare or medium, turning once and brushing with marinade. Carve diagonally across the grain in thin slices.

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Farmers Made Sport Of Their Work, Life

Life and work on farms before and after the Revolution was tedious, time-consuming and often back-breaking.

To relieve the monotony of this labor, early farmers often made sport of their tasks, particularly at harvest time.

Even into the mid-1800’s, cradling was still the general method of grain harvesting. A skilled cradler averaged about 2 to 2½ acres a day. But a champion Pennsylvania cradler was put to the test. From sunup to sunset one day, he cradled 12½ acres, harvesting 4,380 sheaves of wheat. When he failed, it yielded 262 bushels of grain. The one man kept four other men busy binding the sheaves behind him.

Some large farmers used horses to thresh grain. On one farm, 24 horses were hitched in four spans of six each and were trotted over wheat sheaves in a circle 400 feet in circumference. A total of 416 bushels of wheat were so threshed in a single day. It seems the threshing overseer had a bet with a neighboring farmer.

Sickles were used in the 1700’s to cut wheat. Upwards of 100 people might be found working in a single field. One day, 20 acres of wheat were cut and sheaved by noon.

Rum or “schnapps” — pure rye whiskey — was served as refreshment throughout a harvesting day. One farmer accustomed to the tradition made a bet in a Philadelphia tavern that he could drink a gallon of Cyder Royal within an hour and a half. He did and after exclaiming, “I finished it,” fell down and expired.

While most early livestock was seriously neglected, a fat cattle craze developed between 1790 and 1830. Animals were force fed year-round with Indian corn meal, ground oats, potatoes, pumpkins and hay just to see how large a specimen could be raised. About 1800, one farmer exhibited an ox six feet high weighing more than 3,000 pounds. Another had a six-year-old steer weighing 2,387 pounds.

After metal plows became perfected, contests were held. One noteworthy accomplishment was the “ploughing” of three-sixteenths of an acre of hard and timely with seven inches deep in 24 minutes.

Even the size of family gatherings became somewhat competitive. Large families were practical to provide the labor needed on a farm and families of 16 to 18 children were common. Some gatherings included 150 children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

One farmer proclaimed his good fortune to have his wife have twins, his cow two calves and his ewe two lambs all in one night in the month of March.

He devised a simple method of guarding his sheep.

In each flock on pasture, he’d put a few cows with nursing calves. With them, he also placed a few two or three-year-old steers.

Taking a leashed, gentle dog into the flock, he’d set the dog on the sheep. Immediately, the cows, trying to protect their calves, advanced on the dog. The steers soon followed the example of the cows and also attacked the dog.

Steers, reaching four years old, were removed from the flock and placed on separate pasture for fattening for the yoke. New steers were brought in and soon learned their duties.

Thus, a resourceful farmer trained steers to guard his flocks of sheep from killer dogs.
The Mayn ranch, located thirteen miles southwest of White Sulphur Springs, in Meagher County, is one of the homesteads that has remained in the family for four generations. It is owned now by Walter Fred Mayn, Jr. (Known by most as Jack). His grandfather, Fred Mayn, was one of the first settlers in Meagher County. He came to this country from Germany with his two brothers Charles and Henry and owned land at Diamond City as early as 1866, just after the civil war.

The Mayn brothers operated a wagon freight line between Castle and Diamond City for some years. Henry was killed on one of the trips by a runaway team. Charles Mayn was a large landowner in Meagher County, but his property did not remain in the family. The land that is now the Mayn Cemetery was donated to White Sulphur Springs, By Louisa Mayn, the widow of Henry Mayn.

The first land patent on the Mayn ranch homestead was filed in 1891, but Fred Mayn lived on the ranch under "Squatter's Rights" for many years before the deed was filed. Fred Mayn married Josephine Planet in St. Louis, Missouri. Records of this marriage were not available, but Fred Mayn was in his forties when he was married. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Mayn then returned to the ranch and lived the rest of their lives there. Three children were born to Fred and Johanna, one boy died in infancy. One girl, Norma Mayn (Allen) and Walter Fred Mayn, Sr. The children lived on the ranch all their lives, except for some schooling in St. Louis, Missouri. Walter Fred Mayn, Sr. (better known as "Slete") took over the ranch operation with his father. Norma Mayn married Cy Allen, and they had a homestead on Newlan Creek. Norma owned the Mayn house in White Sulphur Springs in later years. This is now owned by the Mc Ayas.

Walter Fred Mayn, Sr. married Rosabelle Bonine in 1917. The Bonines owned the land on Sheep Creek that is now the Forest Green Resort. Walter and Rosabelle lived on the ranch with the older boys until the time of Fred Mayn's death in 1929. Johanna Mayn died in 1934. Walter and Rosabelle had two children. Dorothy Jean Mayn, who married Ray Wallace and lived in Townsend, Montana until her death in 1967, and Walter Fred Mayn, Jr. (Jack), who has lived his entire life on the ranch.

EARLY PICTURE of the Mayn Cemetery. Tall monument was erected by the Sherman family and later toppled over and had to be replaced. Note the absence of any trees. The number of horses and buggies indicate that it was either a Memorial Day service or a very large funeral. (Pictures from Meagher County Historical Association.)
Improving Cattle Stocks
Encounter Many Pitfalls

Early efforts at improving cattle breeding stocks after the Revolution encountered many problems and pitfalls.

Only the most wealthy landowners could afford to import the animals from England and Europe. But their role in promoting better livestock lines was noteworthy.

One farming chronicle in New York State in the early 1820's states:

"The enterprize of men of wealth, stimulated by a zeal for improvement, has done much to improve our farm livestock, by the introduction of the choicest breeds of animals to be found in Europe."

But the long ocean voyage took its toll.

On the voyage of the ship, Hendrick Hudson, a Hereford bull and a short horn cow died due to severe gales. But another short horn cow and a bull calf survived.

A noteworthy import in 1824 was a bull of the "Improved Durham Short Horned" breed. Of excellent English breeding stock, he was named "Washington."

His owner offered the bull for service to neighbors and even made gifts of bull calves. But farmers were hesitant to accept the bull and an ageless economic principle was applied to promote his services.

"The bull was suffered to stand from year to year at the farm, unnoticed and almost unknown, for six years. As soon as a charge was made for his service, his value, all at once, seemed to be appreciated, and cows were sent from all directions."

One farmer drove his cow a distance of 90 miles to be bred in Washington.

Rivalry between breeds soon evolved and farmers took pride in the accomplishments of their particular favorite.

A farmer who bred one of his cows to Washington explained:

"My bull calf from Washington surpasses any of the native or mixed breeds I have seen in the United States. Compared to Hereford and the Devons, the short horn renders the most money in the shortest period of time. The calf is the best we have ever had and is worth nearly twice as much to the butcher as six other bull calves of different breeds."

American Beef—
The World's Finest!

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FRED AND JOHANNA MAYN (Photos courtesy of Meagher County Historical Association.)

WALTER L. MAYN JR., COLE MAYN AND JOHN MAYN

FRED MAYN and Jack Mayn, 1½ years old. (Photo courtesy Jack Mayn.)

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Unique Disciples Spread Farming Over New Land

The history of the advance of U.S. agriculture from the Atlantic to the Pacific is sprinkled with the efforts of unusual disciples. One of them was a man who devoted almost a lifetime to planting frontier orchards. For more than a half-century, John Chapman planted apple trees during his wanderings through the pioneer wilderness.

Chapman would visit cider presses in Pennsylvania and wash seeds out of the pomace. He carried the seeds by canoe down the Ohio River and on his back into the rugged sections of Ohio and Indiana.

Often his planting treks took him hundreds of miles on foot. Coming to a clearing, he'd plant the seeds and return in later years to check his budding wilderness orchards.

He became a familiar visitor at the isolated homes of many early settlers. Often, they'd give him a few pennies or old clothes in support of his planting pilgrimages. To the Indians, he became known as a medicine man.

In the mid-1800's, Wendelin Grimm decided to emigrate from Baden, Germany. His most prized possession was a few pounds of alfalfa seeds, which he planted in Carver County, Minn.

By saving those seeds that survived the cold Minnesota winters, Grimm gradually developed a hardy strain of alfalfa as a byproduct of raising hay for his cattle. Being a good farmer, he gave some of the seeds to neighbors. Thus, one farmer made a permanent contribution to the historical development of better forage plants in the U.S. Some of the farming disciples remain unknown.

The first settlers in Pennsylvania were likely surprised when they found wild peaches to vary their meager diets. The only explanation is that Indians brought the peaches from original Spanish plantings a century earlier in St. Augustine, Fla.

At the time of the Revolution, the hessian fly was plaguing wheat crops in New York and Pennsylvania. Many efforts were made to find a resistant variety of wheat. Finally, a friend of a New York farmer was on naval duty in the Mediterranean and obtained some late-seeding wheat. Its use soon spread throughout the Colonies.

Other important events in American history were linked to the spread of agriculture. Among the "Forty-Niners" were many farmers who journeyed to California during the days of the gold rush to seek their fortune in another way from the soil. As they sailed to California by way of Cape Horn, some of them picked up seeds of Chilean alfalfa. Many of these farmers never found the gold they sought in California, but they introduced a new and better crop to the West Coast.

Countless other disciples in countless other unusual ways helped the spread of U.S. agriculture from its colonial beginnings to its unparalleled level of production of today. Many of them were practical tillers of the soil only interested in better ways of farming.

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Fat Horses Not The Best

Two Montana State University professors spoke about horse feeding problems at the recent Montana Nutrition Conference at MSU.

Jack Catlin, researcher with the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station and veterinarian with the Montana Veterinary Research Laboratory, talked about teeth and parasites as related to nutrition, and Sandy Gagnon, professor of Animal and Range Science discussed horse feeding practices.

Catlin said, "When I see a horse that's not doing well, the first thing I think about is nutrition, the second, parasites, and the third, teeth. They can be inter-related."

Catlin said sometimes nature takes care of lots of horse problems.

"Horses did well without us for years and years and we don't always handle them in a natural manner," he said.

He said teeth problems result when the horses' teeth fail to wear by rubbing against each other. Then the horse may have mechanical problems eating. He said symptoms include eating slowly, losing weight, shaking the head and swaddling in the mouth area.

Catlin said horses on pasture have fewer teeth problems than those in stalls because the environment is more natural.

"The most important consideration in teeth is that they meet closely. The upper teeth always are wider than the lower and as the horse ages, he may develop points on the teeth where they don't meet. This can be remedied by floating the teeth, or grinding off points in them as they develop."

The veterinarian said the points will be on the inside of the lower teeth and outside of the upper teeth.

He threw in a plug for older horses, saying, "Out at my place I run an old folks home for horses over 15. With a little attention and the right feed you can keep them in good shape."

Parasites are another problem of horse nutrition and Catlin says there isn't a horse anywhere without parasites.

"Worm a horse when you need to," be advised. "Each situation in each horse is different."

He said researchers of sheep parasites have discovered that the soil temperature in the high mountains isn't cold enough to kill parasites, but instead preserves the eggs. So the common belief that worming a horse after a hard frost will free him of parasites until spring could be disputed.

Catlin said to determine if your horse needs worming, take a feces sample to a veterinarian to check for worms and take a good look at the general condition of the horse.

He said there are many drugs available that do a good job in killing parasites. All parasites are capable of building resistance to certain drugs, so drugs should be rotated, according to Catlin. Tubing or feeding both are adequate, but tubing has the advantage of getting the drug in the stomach and "in my estimation probably does a more efficient job."

Gagnon said traditionally, fat horses sell better, but thinner ones may be of equal quality and size.

"Excess fat may hide some undesirable qualities in the horse," he cautioned. He noted there is much individuality in what nature horses require and each one should be fed and treated as an individual.

Gagnon said the number one detriment to horses is fat, closely followed by lack of exercise.

"All horses need exercise and keeping your horse in a 10 by 10 foot box stall may cause many problems, nutritionally, physically, such as leg ailments," he said. "Many stable vices also may develop."

Obesity in mares is undesirable, according to Gagnon, and they often will have trouble cycling when over-fat.

He said it has been shown that an increased plane of nutrition 35 to 40 days before the breeding season increases reproductive efficiency. Management of a stallion's exercise and condition also will increase his reproductive efficiency, according to Gagnon.

He said 30 per cent of the development of the fetus takes place during the last 90 days of gestation, so there is a demand for more nutrients at this time.

Up to the last 90 days of pregnancy, most mares can get by on maintenance rations, according to Gagnon.

He cautioned if you have more than one horse, watch "the social behavior and don't just throw out the rations and walk off because one horse might end up with quite a bit less than the others."

"Develop a keen sense of feel for the individual horse and keep some kind of a record on each one," he said. "Horses don't have to eat timothy hay. They can eat almost anything as long as it's good quality. Don't overlook good quality forage as a sole source of nutrients. Many times it can meet all nutrient requirements."

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Calf Scours On Decline

BOZEMAN — Calf scours is on the decline in Montana this year, according to reports received by the Montana Veterinary Research Laboratory.

Dr. Richard Diersks, head of the lab and Montana Agricultural Experiment Station researcher, said there are various factors that may account for the decline. One reason, he said, is that it has been an unusually mild calving season with no major snow or rainfall. He said poor weather causes chills and stress, which lower animal resistance to infection. Calf scours is characterized by dehydration, diarrhea and ultimately death unless the rancher has the time to treat each affected animal individually with intravenous transfusions of liquids.

Also, because of lower cattle prices this year, ranchers culled heavily and eliminated many first calf heifers.

"Every rancher knows that normally there are fewer reproductive problems with older cattle, the first calf effort is usually harder on the cow," he said. "Also, older cows may have built up antibodies to calf scours and passed them on to their calves this year through their colostrum, the first milk, which contains antibodies."

Last year the Veterinary Research Laboratory received reports from ranchers throughout the state of calf scours cases running from 25 to 35 per cent in individual herds. The highest incidence reported this year was 12 per cent and, Diersks said, "Most ranchers are having 15 per cent or higher calving rate success."

Scours is also down throughout Canada. Diersks and Dr. Lyle Myers, also of the Veterinary Research Laboratory, recently attended a symposium on animal disease at the University of Saskatchewan.

Diersks explained that Canadians are starting a five-year intensive research program on diseases of economically important animals. Myers talked on scours in newborn calves and piglets and about his research in developing a vaccine for scours. Diersks spoke about weak calf syndrome, another problem plaguing newborn calves.

Diersks noted that 1976 may just be a good year for the rancher and that next year could be as bad, or worse, than other years.

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41 Year SCS Record

The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) marked its 41st anniversary this past month with a record of achievement that has literally changed the face of rural America.

Congress created the agency less than two months after the second great dust storm in a year swept eastward from the great plains in March, 1935. It had darkened the skies over the nation's capital. Public Law 46 was signed by the President on April 27, 1936 establishing the new agency as part of the U. S. Department of Interior.

The Soil Conservation Service provides technical assistance through local organizations, primarily your Soil Conservation District.

Current SCS Administrator is Kenneth Grant. "When SCS began," he said, "the plains states were written off as the 'Dust Bowl,' and millions of acres of western rangeland were so overgrazed as to be practically useless."

Since then, according to Mr. Grant, more than two million farmers and ranchers have voluntarily cooperated in programs to prevent soil erosion and improve water management.

"We also have seen the creation by neighboring farmers and ranchers of 3,000 local soil conservation districts. A whole new profession—that of soil conservationist—has developed, to give land users technical help in applying conservation practices on their land," he said.

These new farming practices include contour plowing, strip-cropping, minimum tillage, terraces, grassed waterways to move storm water safely off fields, and planned grazing systems.

Mr. Grant said the former Dust Bowl is the source of much of America's wheat and cattle today and that the once depleted Southeast is now "one of our country's most productive and diversified farming areas."

He added that reestablishment of native grasses has helped reclaim and improve much of the nation's grazing lands.

"What was barren in the 1930's is green again," Mr. Grant said. "But he warned that America's land users cannot afford to become complacent."

"Soil conservation is a voluntary program in this country, and there are still millions of acres not under a conservation plan. New landowners must be sold on conservation every day and new farming techniques demand new conservation practice. We also have faced in recent years the growing threat—of critical soil erosion around cities, as once-rural land is scraped of its cover for housing or business development."

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Horse Nutrition Opinions

by Marcia Kring
Assistant Editor, Montana Agricultural Experiment Station

Two speakers on horse nutrition at the recent Montana Nutrition Conference in Bozeman had differing opinions on what to feed horses.

Dr. Robert Pulse, a representative of Ralston Purina from Oklahoma City, talked about feeding the foal and yearling and Dr. William J. Tynnik, professor at Ohio University, discussed mature horse feeding.

Pulse said, "We as horsemen have to provide what Mother Nature doesn't in the way of nutrition. What we get out of a foal depends on what we put into it."

He said the average mature horse will survive on what Mother nature offers, "but if you want maximum performance you have to put together a feeding program."

He said all horses need protein and minerals. Young horses need 18 to 18 percent protein, and mature horses from 10 to 12 percent.

"Generally any horse will do a lot better if he gets this kind of protein," Pulse said.

He said that protein is especially important for growth in young horses, citing studies where a 16 percent protein control group out performed all others.

Pulse added that protein must be balanced with minerals for proper bone development.

"This is very important in young horses for sound skeletal development," he said.

He said a ratio of about 1 1/2 to 1 of calcium to phosphorus is necessary for horses.

"The other minerals are pretty much taken care of in nature," Pulse said. "If you provide a mineralized salt, that's about all they will need."

Pulse said all horses need Vitamin A and the younger ones need the D, E and B complex.

He cautioned horse owners to remember that the energy requirement just for maintenance is about 1,600 calories per 100 lbs. of weight in a mature horse. This increases to 3,000 for a suckling foal for two years.

"As foals grow, their energy requirement climbs from 12 to 14 months of age until it tapers off," he said. "I'd start all foals on dry feed at the age of one month."

Pulse said feeding horses plain rolled oats "isn't very good because they need minerals and protein for growth."

He also suggested creep feeders that are divided so each foal gets his fair share.

Tynnik said the "Mother Nature theory" almost completely.

"I don't think many people today accept horses as animals," he said. "They make them into their own images."

He commented that the difference between a horse and a cow is "mainly his gut," noting the horse's stomach has a capacity of only eight quarts. He said feed leaves the stomach within 12 minutes.

"At least 90 percent of all nutritional requirements of the horse can be met by good hay," Tynnik said.

He noted people have a tendency to overfeed horses, especially mares.

"The stomach should look somewhere between the point where you can hang your hat on her hip and when you can't feel if she has a skeleton because she's so fat," he said. "No pregnant female of any species is supposed to gain weight, so why do it to mares?"

He said there is no such thing as "the correct amount or the right thing to feed horses. I suggest you feed whatever you have," he said.

He said some studies at Ohio State have proved mares fed only hay had no trouble foaling and produced as many healthy foals, as those fed other types of ration and complex.

He panned "sweet feed," saying, "I think most horses eat what you give them because they don't want their owners to be psychologically disturbed. There's nothing a horse hates more than a psychologically disturbed owner."

He elaborated, saying mares have no value except to keep the dust down. Tynnik said he doesn't believe the mature horse really needs much protein and termed the standard rule of giving stallions 18 percent protein during heavy breeding "as ridiculous."

He said vitamins have taken over worse than anything else. "They're the biggest rip-off in the horse market today. Mature horses store Vitamin A for about 6 months. If you come off a good pasture you don't need a supplement. If your horse is exposed to sun, he doesn't need a Vitamin D supplement, in fact it can be damaging. If you feed 10 times the minimum daily requirement to a mare due to foal, there's a good possibility the foal would die of an anemia."

He said no need for Vitamin E as it has been established and the B-12 complex is the biggest rip-off at the racetrack and shows.

He said the only horses that might need additional Vitamin B supplements are those eating only timothy hay and oats.

He also cautioned against spending money for blood counts.

"The race horse people are very much involved with blood counts," he said. "I don't tell you anything you couldn't observe anyway."

"Mature horses need good hay and will make it an almost anything. Good hay smells good and feels like velvet."

He also cautioned against products that promise a gleaming coat.

"All they have are plain old corn oil in them, so why not use that and save yourself some money," he said.

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Montana Stockgrower Officers

Present at the recent Meeting of Meagher County Stockgrowers Association were, left to right: Elmer Hanson, vice president; Walter Johnson, president elect; Belt; Charles Jarecki, Pulson, western district director and James Keith, representative to the Montana Beef Council. (Bob Saunders photo.)

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