

# The Ekalaka Eagle

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## EKALAKA, MONTANA

### A Brief Description of The Town and The People Who Are Interested In Its Welfare And Future.

Forty-two miles southwest of Baker, in the valley of Russell Creek lies the town of Ekalaka. It is an inland town, off from the railroads and the beginning of its history as a town dates back to the early eighties. Ekalaka owes its name to the deceased wife of D. H. Russell whose Christian name was "Ekalaka" and who was the first woman here. The first building in town was built by Claude Carter in 1885 and was used as a saloon. In '86 Harry Yomin started a road ranch and then bought out Carter. The hard winter of '86 forced the closing of the saloon the following spring which was not opened again until late in the winter when Whit Terrell purchased the property. The first few years of its existence it was recognized as the headquarters for the large cattle outfits that were then numerous in this part of the country. The cowboys would come to town and make themselves merry spending their money freely. In later years these companies soon passed out of existence and today the country is gradually settling up and with the rush of the homeseekers heading this way, it is regarded as the coming agricultural and farming section of Montana. All the land will soon be taken up and those who have and are settling have no regrets to express for the step taken. The range is being fenced up and within a few years the "open range" which was the making of many a fortune, will be no more. Ekalaka today has a population of nearly 400 people and is prospering and thriving under the most promising condition. New people are taking up their residence in town, several new business enterprises have been added during the past two years and more are contemplated at this date. The business houses include two general merchandise stores, one confectionery and postoffice store, one exclusive hardware store, two prosperous banks two hotels, one boarding house, two livery barns, one blacksmith shop, one barber shop, one dentist office, two saloons, one shoe makers shop, and a newspaper all of which are enjoying a good business. A new \$3000 school house is now in the course of construction and will be completed within a short time. Four teachers, F. L. Funkenbusch, Clarence Yokley, Miss Lucy Markin, and Miss Anna Olesen, being employed to instruct the younger generation. The affairs of the school district are well cared for by the school board, consisting of John

Oliver, Wm. Freese, Robt. Yokley and Mrs. J. Oliver, clerk. Among other organizations and establishments in town are, three lodges, the I. O. O. F., Gertrude Rebebak, and Modern Woodmen of America, one Union Church with Mrs. F. D. Bohr as the present pastor, a fire department a telephone co'y, a band, and an industrious Commercial club. Ekalaka is connected with the outside world by three different telephone lines, one running to Camp Crook, S. D. where connections are made with a newly constructed line to the Black Hills, another running to Baker where telegraphic communication are sent and received, and the third coming from Miles City affording us communication with the county seat. The U. S. mail is carried to and from the town via three different routes, one coming from Ismay a distance of about 50 miles another from Camp Crook a distance of 52 miles and the third going to Ewalt a distance of nearly 35 miles. A private express line is also operated by Jolly Bros. between Baker and this point. All these lines arrive here on Monday's, Wednesday's and Friday's, and leave on Tuesday's, Thursday's and Saturday's.

#### R. C. Charters Co.

One of the pioneer stores whose business has kept pace and even anticipated the needs of the town is that of The R. C. Charters Co. The history of this store dates back to 1885 when Geo. Cartright built the log shack that now sets southeast of the present establishment. This was the first store erected in town and was later sold to Fountian Bros. J. H. Brummet then bought out the Fountian boys and later organized a stock company that operated the business under the name of the Ekalaka Merc. Co. This organization proved to be a "white elephant" to the stock holders and the store was then taken over by Reno Swift. R. C. Charters became the next owner and the business continued under his name until May 11, 1907 when a stock company was again organized, with C. H. Emerson as President, R. H. Beazley, vice president E. F. Emerson, secretary and H. D. Ruttell, general manager. Under this management the R. C. Charters Co. is being operated today and doing a good business. A full line of general merchandise is carried in stock to supply the needs of the residents of the country.

#### W. H. Peck.

One of the most active and industrious young men of Custer county is W. H. Peck whose versatility and energy makes him an esteemed and valued citizen of the town. Mr. Peck came here from Ansonia, Conn. in 1889 first working as a clerk for Reno Swift and later for R. C. Charters. He worked as a clerk for several years and then in partnership with Lorin Gilman operated the ranch now owned by Geo. Boggs. On Oct. 19, 1904 he started his present business securing the building formerly occupied by A. W. Lucas as a saloon. Mr. Peck served as deputy county assessor in 1901-2-3 and as deputy county treasurer in 1904. He also acted as Justice of the Peace here in 1900-4. Mr. Peck carries an excellent line of general merchandise and draws trade from many miles around. Mr. Peck is one of the leading members of the Odd Fellows lodge and in Custer Canton No. 6. he now holds the office of Captain. Besides being a member of the Odd Fellows he is also interested in many other orders of the town.

#### Jay E. Wilson.

The subject of this sketch came to Ekalaka in 1890 and in July 1897 embarked in his present business—an up-to-date confectionery and notion store. In October of the same year he was appointed postmaster by Postmaster General James A. Gary, which office he has held ever since giving the patrons of his office the best of service. Mr. Wilson occupies today the same building that he began business in 13 years ago and carries a large supply of goods. At present he is assisted by one clerk, S. W. Davidson who has been with him for over two years.

#### Wm. Freese.

Wm. Freese started in the hardware business in '97 buying out J. C. Charters. A few years later he succeeded John Craft as U. S. weather observer which position he still holds. Mr. Freese is an enthusiastic worker among the Odd Fellows and now holds the office of H. P. in the Ekalaka Encampment.

#### A. W. Lucas.

A. W. Lucas came to Ekalaka in the spring of 1901 from Camp Crook. After working for wages for some time he bought out H. W. Ewalt in the saloon business and on July 10, 1904 went in partnership with J. H. Booth who at that time ran a saloon here also. The saloon continued under the name of Booth & Lucas until Nov 1 of last year when Mr. Lucas assumed entire control. "Dad" as he is familiarly known draws a good trade and his friends and acquaintances are many throughout the country.

#### Ekalaka Bank.

The Ekalaka Bank first commenced business in its present location in 1904 being then owned and operated by R. C. Charters. On May 11, 1907, articles of agreement were drawn up between R. C. Charters, R. H. Beazley, J. W. Hiscock, E. F. Emerson, and C. H. Emerson for the establishment of a private bank. These gentlemen still control the institution and constitute the board of directors. The officers consist of C. H. Emerson President, R. H. Beazley vice president and G. G. Grant, cashier.

#### A. E. Dague.

On Sept. 14, 1908 E. C. Metheny and A. E. Dague formed a partnership in the saloon now known as the Kids Place. On the morning of the 17th of that month they opened up for business continuing as partners until Oct. 19 of the last year when Mr. Dague assumed entire control. This establishment enjoys a good patronage and carries a full line of wines, liquors and cigars.

#### Ekalaka Hotel.

The Ekalaka Hotel bears the distinction of being one of the first buildings erected in town. T. J. Martin the present landlord purchased the property in Feb. 1907 from Joe Ebert and since has enjoyed the best of patronage. The hostelry was built by J. O. Speelman and later sold to Mrs. Hattie Kinsey who disposed of it to Mr. Ebert. Besides being landlord of the hotel Mr. Martin is at present the Justice of the peace, which office he has held with general satisfaction to all since 1906. Mr. Martin is a member of the Odd Fellow's lodge being Clerk of Canton No. 6. He came to Ekalaka in July 1903 from Ashgrove, Mo. and like many others is a true booster for the town and country.

#### J. H. Booth.

Among the old timers still residing here is J. H. Booth. Mr. Booth came to Custer county in the spring of 1891 from Buffalo, Johnston county, Wyoming and when to work as a cowpuncher for the LX—outfit. He continued working for them until July 3rd, 1894 when he built a saloon in town. On the night of May 31st 1900 his place was destroyed by a fire which consumed besides his place, the Whit Terrell hotel and another saloon owned by W. H. Bullard. He then constructed a new building and in 1904 went into partnership with A. W. Lucas who on Nov. 1st of last year took over the entire business. Mr. Booth settled on a claim on Box Elder in 1900 and in partnership with M. A. McLean has one of the finest ranches in Custer county.

#### Ekalaka Commercial State Bank.

The Ekalaka Commercial State Bank was organized in the summer of 1908 with a capital of \$20,000. The officers of the institution consist of H. N. Sykes, Pres., Septon Cady, Vice Pres., and John Oliver, Cashier. The bank occupies its on building and has a commodious vault of steel and stone erected in the same. The directory at present consists of the following well known gentlemen; R. L. Yokley, J. T. Smith, Septon Cady, H. N. Sykes, and Kenneth McLean.

#### Other Old-Timers

Among the first settlers and old timers that are still making Ekalaka their postoffice may be mentioned D. H. Russell, Dr. J. P. Hedges, Fred King, C. H. and E. F. Emerson, R. H. Beazley, Jacob Speelman and Amos Lambert, Sr.

Mr. Russell is one of the first settlers of the country coming here in 1881. He is engaged in stock raising and farming and has a modern ranch south of town.

Dr. Hedges has a up-to-date dentist office here and is known over the country as a skilled workman. He first came to this country in 1884 building the first ranch on Box Elder that was then known as the "Running M." In later years he moved to town and has been a resident here since. Mr. Hedges was recommended for the appointment of county commissioner last week and it is more than probable that he will secure the position.

Mr. King is now a resident in town and is interested in the care and raising of live stock. He was appointed the first deputy sheriff in this part of the county, this being in 91, 92, 93.

C. H. and E. F. Emerson are located on ranches north of town on Little Beaver. Both have cattle and are interested in the welfare of the town.

Mr. Beazley is residing in town and has a very modern home. He is interested in the Ekalaka Bank and the R. C. Charters Co.

"Dad" Speelman came to Ekalaka in the early eighties when he spent most of his time hunting buffalos. In later years he built the present Ekalaka Hotel later selling out and going into the live stock business. He now has one of the finest residents in town and with his wife intends to live in comfort in his old age.

Another "Dad" of whom Ekalaka is justly proud is Mr. Lambert. He first came here in 1893 leaving Denver, Colo. at the time of the Cleveland panic. Besides being interested in live stock he is now holding the office of the justice of the peace here.