

# J. J. Broadhurst, 92 Years Young, One of County's Most Colorful Residents

One of the most colorful men of Liberty county is the highly respected and well liked Joseph Jackson Broadhurst. He is 92 years young and still is able to make his rounds and see how people are behaving. His cheerfulness and ready quips are qualities that make him a welcome visitor. He is always full of fun and enjoys a joke, even on himself. He has many records and memories of olden days, and from the records and statements made when J. J. was reminiscing, the material for the following article was found.

J. J. was born in Clay county, Missouri, November 23, 1855. He was a son of Jacob and Sarah Broadhurst. Jacob Broadhurst was born November 22, 1811. J. J. lived on a farm all of his childhood in Clay county. The farm was about 8 miles from Kansas City. Liberty is the county seat of Clay county. J. J. lived on this farm until he was 60 years of age, and then he came to Montana. He lived in Raynesford until 1916, when he came to Chester.

"Joe Jack" was the baby of the family with 3 sisters, Dinah, Unecy and Jane and two brothers, Moses and Alfred.

J. J. still has a copy book that was made by his father in the days when they made pens from goose quills. These pens were homemade. The ink, also homemade, was from Walnut bark and



log wood. Cloth and dyes were also homemade from log wood.

J. J. attended writing school 10 days to learn to write. Later he attended several writing schools. He worked on his father's farm during the day and went to school at night. During his youth he attended a subscription school, where his parents paid a subscription of \$1.00 per month per pupil to the teacher. A few of the schools lasted 9 months, but most schools were 6 months. J. J. has the slate that he and his father used in school. He explained that they would first work their problems on the slate and then copy the problems in the copy book.

His earliest childhood recollection was a trip to Oskalusa, Kansas at the age of 5 with his mother to visit his brother, Moses. He was 7 years old when his father left to fight for the South during the Civil War. His family arose at 4 a.m. every morning, the year around, regardless of the time they retired. Church was held every 3rd Sunday, but there was Sunday School every Sunday. He reports that the family was very devout.

In the copy book, which was mentioned above, there is a bill of sale for a young, healthy negro boy, sold at auction for a thousand dollars. In those days, negroes were sold at auction, as stock.

In reminiscing, J. J. told that once Clay county advertised a spelling contest. Many prominent men took part including lawyers, doctors and others, but Jacob Broadhurst, J. J.'s father won the contest.

His father died in 1874, and he took care of his mother. She lived with him after his marriage until she died. He states that there were no hospitals or homes for the aged and, "People them days took care of their own."

"Joe Jack" came to Liberty county in 1916 and farmed south of the Marias river. He lived there until the death of his wife, and since that time has made his home with his daughters and sons. He lives in Chester most of the time, but spends part of each summer on the ranch.

Mr. Broadhurst has lived in the time when what would seem like primitive methods to us were used in farming.

His was a large family, almost a community in themselves, and whenever there was a big job to be done, they would gather at a farm and work together.

At harvest time the wheat was cut with cradles. Joe Jack has seen 18 cradles working at one time. A boy would follow each man and gather the wheat into bundles. One man followed each boy and tied the bundles. Two boys followed him, collecting bundles into piles, while

the 2 grandfathers followed and did the entire shocking of the wheat.

When ready to be threshed, the wheat was hauled in from the field by one yoke of oxen. The threshing machine was worked by four horses.

Before this threshing machine, the flail was used and the threshing floor. Then the 10 horse threshing machine was used.

Then the first harvester was purchased and, used by a neighbor. It was ridiculed and laughed at as an impossibility. Everyone was out cutting with the cradles, but upon hearing of this new contraption, they laid down their cradles and "walked or rode over to look on. It was a great curiosity. It cut the wheat and men followed it and bound the wheat. The next year most of the farmers had cutters."

Hay was cut with mowers and gathered with forks, but soon they had rakes and binders.

The first power engine had to be pulled by yoke of oxen to guide it. Power machinery was on farms when Joe Jack left Missouri, but it was used only for threshing etc. After he moved out here to Montana, he saw the steam engine and mold board plow at work, but land at that time still had to be worked down with horses.

At the time when the first bridge was to be built across the Mississippi river at Kansas City, Mr. Broadhurst's uncle, Alfred, had the contract to haul the timbers needed for its construction. He had several children and would allow them to go with him now and then. One day a son rode with him and sat on the foot square timbers. Alfred had four mules and used a jerk line. The road was very rough and on this particular trip one of the wheels ran into a chuck hole, jarring the load and unseating the little fellow. He yelled and his father looked back just as the hind wheel ran over the boy's head. His father stopped his team and left them, picked up his son and carried him, coming as fast as he could, to his mother-in-law's house, about one-half-mile away. Someone rode about miles after the doctor. Upon arriving the doctor gently pressed the little mangled head back into shape, saying that the boy would be all-

right. He said no bones were broken and it was lucky that he was so young. It would have killed an older person. The little fellow stayed there for 2 weeks and then was able to go home.

These are only a few of the many bits of history, human interest and customs that Mr. Broadhurst has stored away in his story book and keen mind.

# Colorful 95 Year Old J. J. Broadhurst Meets the President

"I might not be the oldest, but I'll bet I'm the oldest active Democrat in Montana," 95-year old J. J. Broadhurst of Chester told President Truman in Havre Friday night.

J. J.'s meeting with the president came as the fulfillment of a life long desire. He told reporters that all his life he'd wanted to meet and talk to a president of the United States, "and by golly," he said, "tonight I'm going to."

Though he talked to President Truman for only two or three min-



utes, he placed his hand on the president's shoulder and realized the ambition of a life time.

As President Truman helped him down from the presidential train platform, a smile from ear to ear spread over Broadhurst's face.

The near Liberty County centenarian was born in Clay County, Mo. on November 23, 1855, only about 50 miles from President Truman's home town of Independence. He lived there for the first 60 years of his life and then came to Montana in 1916 to begin what he terms 'life No. 2'.

For the first years in Liberty County he was engaged in farming, but later on, when farm work became too strenuous, he moved to Chester where he now resides.

He is still not too old to appreciate the farm. Nearly every summer he spends a month or two there supervising operations.

*J. J. meets the boss . . .*

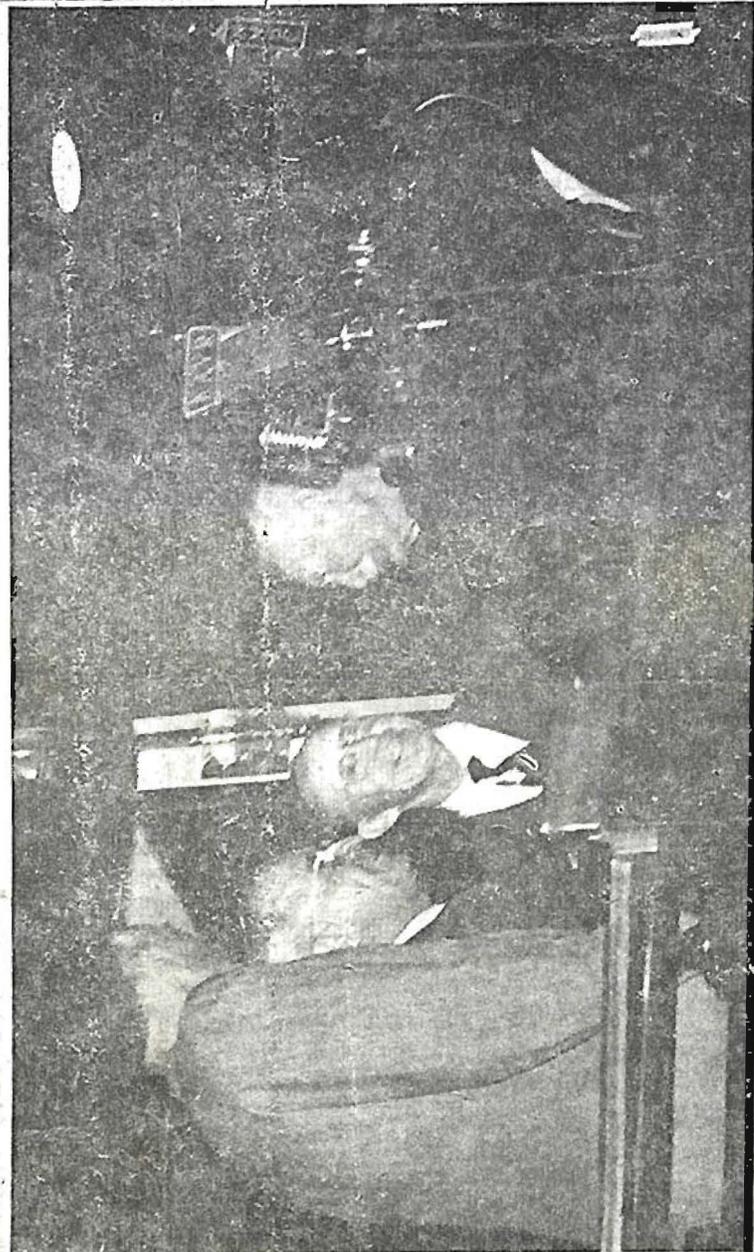


Photo by Swarens

State Senator Dave James of Joplin introduces J. J. Broadhurst, 95 year old Democrat of Chester to the President of the United States. Mr. Broadhurst is a former Missouri native, and he asks the president, "How are things at home, Harry?" J. J. is considered to be the oldest active Democrat in Montana.

Monday, May 2  
4:00 P.M.

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