

Louis Desch 1877-1959

Louis Desch was born in Celina, Ohio, February 11, 1877 to John and Katherine Desch whose German immigrant parents had settled in Ohio in 1834.

As a young man in Celina, Desch was employed as a salesman for Christ Schunck Shoes and at the Farmer's Store.

In 1910 he came to Montana to homestead next to his brothers, Andy and Fred, on the sunny slope area west of Polson along Highway 93. Although not much of a farmer he did just enough to prove up on his homestead. He assisted Andy with his apple orchards and Fred, who raised cattle and turkeys, and grazed a few horses on his own.

In 1912 Desch partnered with Herman Schnitzmeyer and the pair marketed many photographs of the local area as postcards under the Dayton studio name of "Schnitzmeyer and Desch".

Louis traveled to Los Angeles to learn the art of hand-coloring photos and returned to join Schnitzmeyer in the operation at the Polson studio where the pair shared quarters.

During the 1920's Desch formed the L. Desch Art Company, colorizing primarily Schnitzmeyer photographs, but also the pictures of F.J. Haynes and others. He became a major marketer of Schnitzmeyer images, charging 25 cents for small ones and 75 cents for large photos.

In later years Desch ran the Farmer's Store in Polson and then moved to Missoula where he was an employee of the Missoula Hotel.

In 1956 he moved to Kalispell where he died October 20, 1959. His Certificate of Death lists his occupation as "Picture Retouching".