



# The Wagon Tongue

Volume 7 Issue 1

Madison Valley History Association, Inc.

January 2009

**From the Wagon Seat:** 2009 is here! It doesn't look like it is going to be a very prosperous year, but the MVHA is still planning, meeting, and moving along towards its goal of building a museum for the Madison Valley. We have a couple bids on paving our approach in accordance with the DOT. We also are working on bids for a forge building and the possibility of some other buildings on our site. Hopefully 2009 will be a real progressive year for the MVHA.

Don Black of Jeffers and Great Falls gave a great program in October on Businesses and Monkey Business of Ennis, and in November Hal Pasley entertained us with his history memories and his memories of main street Ennis. Our Christmas potluck dinner and program was a great way to end the year with our members sharing their Christmas memories. It is not too late to submit your Christmas Memory for our book to be placed at the museum.

We would like to get the recipe book started so be sure to submit your old time family recipes for it. If our members do not participate it will not get done. Recipes do not have to come from Ennis, Madison Valley or Montana. Old family recipes from anywhere you lived or grew up would be great.

This year we would like to feature stories of the earth quake in the Wagon Tongue and the stories will be placed in a book in our history museum library. 2009 is the 50th anniversary of the quake. You may send your stories in anytime. We would like to plan some programs around the earthquake and maybe a field trip to the earthquake site. We always need ideas, people to give a program or groups to present their stories at our meetings.

In looking forward a couple months, we are looking for someone to chair a committee to have an Irish Stew dinner on St. Patrick's Day. March 17 is the birthday of our founder, William Ennis.

An election at the annual meeting in May will be for directors of our board. Think about submitting your name for director. We have grants to write, have to put power into our land, have to start pounding stakes as to where the buildings, parking lots, etc. go at the museum site and have to get a building on our museum land. We very much need some doers.

Our history wall at the First Madison Valley Bank has generated a lots of good comments to us. Thanks to the people from Jeffers for the display. If you would like to put up a display depicting your family or if you have ideas for the history wall, let us know.

In 2009, plan to get involved with the MVHA. You can write a grant, work at the museum, prepare an Irish Stew or any other Irish dish, give a talk at a meeting, run for a position on the board..the list goes on. We need your help. The strength of the MVHA is its membership all helping to preserve the history of the Madison Valley in a lot of little ways. Your Wagon Master, Larry Love

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Member Application Madison Valley History Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 474, Ennis, Mt. 59729

Our Mission is to develop a museum to house and preserve collections of artifacts, tapes, photographs and stories of historical importance to the Madison Valley and interpret them through display and education.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_ (used only for communication of MVHA info)

(\_\_\_\_)Student \$5.00 (\_\_\_\_)Individual \$10.00 (\_\_\_\_)Family \$15.00 (\_\_\_\_)Business \$50.00 (\_\_\_\_)Patron \$100.00

**Welcome to Membership** The following have joined since the Oct. 2008 issue. Please add to any membership list you might be keeping for your committee work. If you need a complete list of members, please contact Shirley Love and she will print a complete updated list for you.

- Clark, Shirley (I)**  
 P.O. Box 1333                                      406-682-7173  
 Ennis, MT. 59729
- Grauman, Becky & David (F)**  
 P.O. Box 944  
 Logandale, NV 89021
- Johnson, A. J. (Huet) (I)**  
 344 East 7635 South                      801-255-1905  
 Midvale, UT 84047
- Marosok, Dixie L. (I)**  
 882 Olympus Dr.                                      307-752-3502  
 Sheridan, WY 82801
- White, Ann & John (F)**  
 P.O. Box 331                                      406-682-3987  
 McAllister, MT 59740

**Membership Update**

Almost all 2008 memberships have been purchased by now!! Please check your address label on your Wagon Tongue and you will be able to tell when your next membership is due or if you have not purchased it yet. Your membership is good for a full year from the date that you purchased it. The Wagon Tongue committee and the treasurer thank you for that as it allows the work load to be spaced over the year. :)

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**Memories**

The Wagon Tongue has been getting favorable feedback on the memories of our members and long time Madison Valley residents who have passed on. Please help by sending stories about deceased members or residents to the Wagon Tongue. Obituaries from the newspaper are not reprinted. We are looking for stories that will expand on the deceased lives, genealogy, and contribution to the history of the valley. The Madison County Trials and Trails and Progressive Years has helped but not everyone's families are printed there. So help out if you have information to share. Thank you.

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The Madison Valley lost a long time resident on Sept. 19, 2008 when Edna Daems Schabarker passed away in Ennis. Edna was born on May 5, 1909 at Varney to Levinus and Mary (Kramer) Daems. Her parents and grandparents had very interesting Madison County backgrounds. Her mother, Mary Kramer, was born to John Frederick and Mary (Guth) Kramer. They were both from Germany. John had arrived in Alder Gulch in 1864 and documents are recorded in Book E and Book P in Madison County, Montana Territory in 1865 and 1867 that he acquired land. He married Mary Guth

on March 6, 1873 in Virginia City. John was a saddle maker and considered expert at this craft. He was also interested in mining, owning claims in the area. Her father, Levinus S. Daems, was born in Virginia City to Dr. and Mary Daems. Dr. Daems practiced medicine and owned the City Drug Store in Virginia City, a town of about 10,000 at that time. "Lev" as he was known by his friends, grew up in Virginia City and married Mary Kramer. They lived in Virginia City for several years and owned and operated a meat market in partnership with brother, Harry. When Dr. Daems died, he left an estate and trust fund for his children. Lev and Harry bought a ranch at Varney, MT with gold coins that were left to them. After moving to the ranch home on Spring Creek, he and Mary sold most of their property in Virginia City. They took up a homestead, used mostly for grazing. The family lived there a few years. The home, a log building, was built near a spring on Dry Creek. Edna grew up on her parents' ranch at Varney with sisters Alice, Florence, Agnes and one brother, Leonard. She enjoyed ranch life, especially her love of a horse named Major. The older children married and Florence had gone to school in a "far away place", Sheridan, MT. At least that seemed like the end of the earth for a little girl when she kissed her big sister good bye. But Edna and Agnes had lots of fun playing together and that they were going to the big city. They would dress their cats up in the doll clothes, put on an old hat and their mother's shoes, then climb up into the old spring wagon and off they would go. They did not travel very far or fast, but in their childhood dreams, they were right in the big city. Edna attended the Varney summer school and her first teacher was Adelaide Miller. She stayed with her sister, Alice Kennedy, while she attended and graduated from Ennis High School. She had planned to go to nursing school in Butte but a handsome young man came into her life and she forgot all about the nursing profession! She married Raymond Schabarker on Oct. 4, 1926. They lived on the ranch for a short time then she and Ray bought the Hugel house in Ennis. *From Pioneer Trails and Trials Madison County, Montana Daems page 42 written by Mrs. Raymond Schabarker and Kramer page 336 written by Harvey Romey and Ben Williams.*

*Carol Krause Love, niece of Edna sent this story.....she was my most favorite person when I was growing up....I loved staying with her, and would have spent all my time there if my folks would have let me. And, of course, when I started going with Earl, it was wonderful to have a place to stay in order to go out with him! Edna and Ray liked Earl, and always made him feel comfortable at their home. I spent a lot of my life with them. They worked at the Bear Creek Ranch when I*

**Memories cont.**

*was growing up, and I spent part of every summer with them. Mrs. Orr gave me my first horse, Tony. I would go get the milk cows in every day, and when I left that summer, she told me I could have the horse, or she would pay me. My folks had the service station in Norris, and the last thing my Dad wanted was a horse! They gave in tho, and let me keep him, however, it became my job to find pasture for him, and as I was only 12 years old, this became a big job for me, but , I did get the job done. I had a paper route, rode the horse and delivered my papers, I sold pop bottles and anything else I could find, paid for my horse! Every child should have a horse!*

Another loss to the Madison Valley was Jesse (Jess) C. Armitage who died on Nov. 26, 2008 at 87 years of age. Jess' daughter, Alice Sue (Armitage) Wright of Anthem AZ is a faithful member of the MVHA.

Jess was born in San Bernardino, CA in 1921 to Mr. and Mr. Rommel Armitage, whose home was in Redlands where he received his education. He graduated from high school in 1939.

In 1941 Jess came to the Armitage Ranch. Part of this ranch had been his father's homestead. It was owned by his cousin William K. Armitage. (Editor's note The Armitage ranch is now the Carroll Ranch.) While working on the ranch Jess met Grace Hippe, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Reinhold Hippe. They operated a cattle and sheep ranch on Wolf Creek which was twenty seven miles south of Ennis, near the Madison River. On October 4, 1941, Jess and Grace were married and moved to Mentone, CA, where they worked through the orange harvest. They then moved to Clearfield, UT where Jess worked in the Air Depot and while there in 1942 learned that he was accepted in the Army and to report to Hemet, CA. He was inducted into the 91st Pinetree Infantry Division and had his basic training near Medford and Corvallis, OR. where he was trained as a truck mechanic. He was then sent to Fort Benning, Georgia for specialized training in mechanics. In the spring of 1944 the 91st Division was shipped to North Africa, and he spent most of his war time in Italy. In 1944 Alice Sue, their first child was born.

Jess received an honorable discharge from the service in 1945 and the family moved to Homestead, Florida where Jess operated heavy equipment, clearing land for orange and avocado groves.

The Armitages moved back to the Madison Valley when Jess accepted employment with Wetmore Hodges, who had purchased the Valley Garden Ranch. A son, Brian Ray was born in 1948. Later Jess moved to the Jumping Horse Ranch where he was foreman for seven years. When this

ranch was sold to Phil Yeckel, Jess was able to buy a house that had been built for his family on the ranch. Harold Helt took the job of moving the house to a lot in Ennis, on the west side of the Madison River. He moved the house to the east side of the river. The Montana Power cooperated by holding the river back in Hebgen Lake

When the water became more shallow at the old ford, Harold started across with his truck, pulling the house. As a safeguard, in case his truck failed, he had a cable attached to the front of the truck he was driving which lead to a truck on the west bank of the river. Lyal Thompson was on horseback in the river to see that the cable was "free" all the time. It took 10-12 minutes to make the crossing. Jess had the foundation on his lot ready for the house. Everyone who had gone to the river bank to watch cheered and clapped.

In 1952 the Armitages bought the Economy Store form Roy Wiedenmeyer. In 1954 they sold it back to him. They bought the Madison Theater from the Erie estate in 1953 and operated it for many years. Their third child, Kristin Day was born in 1956.

The Armitage Ford Garage was bought in 1961 and sold to Dan Todd in 1963. At that time Jess went into the Real Estate and Insurance business with Juanita Stalcup and others. They conducted a growing business under the name of F.N.I. (First National Insurance) with several offices in southwestern Montana.

From Progressive Years Madison County, Montana Vol. II Pg. 714-15 by Jess C. Armitage

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MVHA member, Barba Rowe Tuss sent this letter written by her Dad, Hank Rowe to a family friend, Charles "Buck" Crump.

Norris, Montana  
February 6, 1949

Dear Buck and Family:

Received your letter a few days ago so will start a answer then will probably get it finished before too long. I too am getting slack on the letter business as compared to what I used to be altho I still like to receive and write letters yet. Get a few too many things for to think about at one time then then let it affect your normal life a little bit on the wrong way.

In this country for the last three months, there is never a lack of conversation with any one that you chance to meet. The one main topic of thot is the weather, and it is the most interesting of all things at present. Never has anyone in these areas witnessed the likes of this winter. Believe me, everyone has learned a lot as to what can happen. In writing you a description of what it is like, I can't possibly put in words for to describe the conditions We are not or have not suffered any from any of it, but there is the toughness of the ability to get

around to feed and care for all of the necessary work in feeding, etc. We are and have been snow bound as to cars and access to any town at present. Only once in about a week do we get out, then only on extreme necessity where the women and kiddies are concerned. Snow fall has been beyond anything that is on record. There is no telling about what it might be here, the wind has it piled in drifts beyond conception almost before the storm is over. There has been no warm spells in between the storms like we are always expecting from what other winters has been. Not one day of above freezing temperature here since in the last part of Nov. when the 21 inches fell over night for the beginning. For over a week in January, I don't think it was above 10 below day or night. Three mornings in a row it was -51, -48, and -44. It was almost too cold for stock to exist even tho they had plenty of feed. We have had no losses from winter other than natural to any winter. People are out of all sorts of supplies in every district. All those who live below us toward Bozeman are isolated about half way to Boz. The train has not been to Norris for some weeks now, and there is no gas, coal, fuel-oil etc. in Norris and on up the country. Roads to Ennis are blocked at present but they manage to get them open pretty well and not longer than 36 hours closed, but the machinery of both County and State is short for to meet such conditions. Only big Rotaries can do anything now. If it holds on for another week and no let up, it will find us in bad shape to get to hay for the stock as we have fed most of the hay out on the lower end of the ranch and the upper end is almost impossible to get to. Took the County Bulldozer last evening and plowed a hole thru to a big stack after the regular crew quit at five o'clock but this morning the wind is about 50 mph and you can't see 300 yards. Just for an idea--some 500 yards up the road toward Norris from the house, the drifts from both sides of the hill across the road would be from six to twenty feet deep. No fences show, tops of willow trees stick out, but there has been no travel on the roads since before Xmas. We leave the ranch straight North for the corrals to take ridges, etc. for any chance to get thru. We here-Rowe Bros.- have been awful lucky. We had coal, wood, fuel-oil, gas and stock supplement all in before any of this started and still have over a months supply yet regardless. As for our stock, its about the way I spoke of plans in the summer range to you. We sold all of the ewes we had up there, received the yearlings and have over 1200 of them now all in good shape yet. The cattle we culled down to 150 head with the oldest one-other than one milk cow-4 years old. They are in excellent shape other than a-

bout 10 head that carried calves and didn't quite get time enough to pick up before winter set in and are of course on the thin side. We are very fortunate it all worked out in the manner that it did for to compete with the tough conditions we are having now. While in Bozeman waiting for the baby to arrive, I saw and talked to Bill Denecke. He and several men had hen been three days with big Army 6 by 6's trying to reach camp at the Green Ranch with supplies both for the sheep and the ranch. Had snow plows hired the last I heard for help to go thru. Oh, I can't begin to tell of the misery its causing. I was in Bozeman from a Monday to the following Thursday trying to get to Norris. The Madison River had over flowed and the Highway between Three Forks and Logan putting all traffic over the arterial thru Great Falls. I could only go some 250 miles to get 30 so waited and finally tackled the short cut and shoveled and bucked the roads thru, the boys going from this end to the bridge to meet me. I had 2850 pounds of rolled grain on a new 3/4 ton Ford so really made tracks. Crossed thru the water on the highway going in after a call from Wilma of her entrance to the hospital, and against the will of the flagmen but with their assistance finally. It was a sight. Houses with very little showing through the ice, etc. You may have seen some of the pictures there that ran in papers. Everything has happened. Wild game are suffering, bird life is depleting and all of those things that of course goes with a condition of its kind. Weather reports offer no foresight of any break before the 17th. yet. We here in this state are not seeing the worst of it, compared to those on further south in the prairie countries in Utah, Neb. and Wyo. Over half of the nations sheep have been lost and over half the cattle in danger. So much for the weather. I could write 10 pages on it with what I have seen. We just pray for a break soon.

You asked about the out come of the hay foresight. As far as this whole valley is concerned, I don't believe there will be but a few who will have hay enough. Several are about out now with no surplus from which to draw from. As for us, ours will be nothing to crow about. If it continues and we have to feed as heavy as we are now, the first of April will be about as long as we could expect to last. We have been feeding everything since the 5th of December. We have some 3 sections of untouched good pasture. Should it open up, the sheep will take that without any hay. It will make good turnout for the cattle in early spring. It looks bad which ever way we turn for an out. Have fed about 10 tons of supplement-Soybean cubes of 44% which has been good feed. Got in on an early market of \$69 per ton. Now its something over a hundred delivered. We expect to get in another 5 ton later on. Hay is \$45 per T.

ing cattle and stated that the blizzard today was one of the toughest they were ever out in. Just now the radio sent warning of the several roads now blocked--Ennis, -Sappington, Bozeman, -Three Forks, Butte-Helena, Bozeman-Livingston, so you can see what she is like. Its still about a 60 mile wind and some snow falling.

Just, Hank and family

Editor's note: This is the Rowe Bros Ranch now known as Red Bluff.

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**Earth Quake August 1959**

2009 is the 50th anniversary of "The Night the Mountain Fell " or the Madison Valley Earth Quake. During 2009 the Wagon Tongue and the MVHA plans to feature articles and museum exhibits on the earth quake. If you have stories, pictures, etc. to share of this event please contact the MVHA. In this January issue will be printed the first earth quake story that has been submitted. We pick up with Doris Angle Benscholter, daughter of Oscar Angle. They were visiting in Yellowstone Park in August of 1959.... We stopped at Hebgan Dam to see George Hungerford on our way back to Ennis. Dad (Oscar Angle) had mentioned the lake looking rough but there did not seem to be much wind. Later we stopped at Rock Creek down in the con-yon for another lunch before going on home to Ennis. The water in that creek came down out of the m mountain and was very cold and very clear. We usually had a watermelon to put in the creek for a half hour before we ate. We had our lunch and head ed home after we got home there was a hail and thunder storm. It didn' last long but later after we had gone to bed we heard loud noises and thought there was another storm. It was clear and we realiz-ed that it was an earthquake. It was about 11:40pm Dad said that was the strongest one he had ever felt and he had been in Montana since 1903.Things calmed down a bit and we went back to bed only to wake up to sirens blaring soon after 2 a.m. We were told that there were reports that the dam had gone out. Everyone was told to go upon the hill to-ward Virginia City. I must say that is a good way to meet all of your old acquaintances--everyone was up there--some I had not seen since I left home in 1942. One of my cousins was there with her picture albums--the only thing of real value to her. Some other cousins had a hardware and appliance store. They went back to take out some things from the store.One man after taking his wife and 3 young daughters upon the hill, went back to town to stock up at the liquor store. Don (Doris' husband) went with the school principal who decided to get his rowboat and oars then changed his mind, put the oars back but took the row boat. By daylight when the flooding didn't materialize, a plane flew over the

area and discovered what had happened. The dam had held but water had sloshed over the dam at the time of the quake. The south end of the lake raised up several feet. It was like water in a basin sloshing around. The mountain fell down into the canyon below the dam and stopped what water went over the dam.

Editor's note. This then became what we know now as Quake Lake.

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**Montana Trivia Part 8.** I recently found some more clues for other towns in Montana that had not yet been included. Get out your maps and here are more clues!

1. River that flows into the Dead Sea
2. Enclosed car
3. Ancient city of the Trojan War
4. City in Holland
5. First name of an English nurse
6. House of worship+a small hill
7. Famous mountain man
8. Snow color+passage way
9. Another name for Bison
10. Brand of cosmetics
11. Made firm
12. A lofty peak
13. Species of deer
14. Bell tower

**Answers to Montana Trivia part 7**

1. A famous ballet-Swan Lake
2. Solar explosion-Sunburst
3. To hold back-Reserve
4. Book of accounts-Ledger
5. Frying-Browning
6. Before this- Pryor
7. Beside the pond-Lakeside
8. An early wild man-Savage
9. To find-Locate
- 10.A steep small water fall-Cascade
11. Where we would like to go someday-Paradise
12. When the preacher says to the Bride groom "will you...."- Havre
13. A large cascade- Great Falls
14. Girl's names- you can find at least 20
15. Boy's names- you can find at least 24

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**History Tidbit** Cardboard boxes were invented by the Chinese in the 1600's. Probably the first cardboard hideouts for kids and cats came shortly after. If your kids played longer with the box than the new toy it came with, you are not alone.

The **basketball rules** were published in the Triangle Magazine, Springfield, MA, January 15, 1892.

**Monopoly** is the world's best selling game, which started as The Landlord Game in 1904.

**For your reading pleasure**

**Hattie Big Sky** by Kirby Larson. This book is last year's (2008) One Book Montana selection. It is fiction based on facts. A 16 year old girl inherits a homestead in Eastern Montana and comes West alone to prove up her 340 acres. Setting in Montana in 1918.

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**Fish out of Water**

MVHA has been selected for the "Fish out of Water" fund-raising project. Our fish is a "historical" fish entitled "Carrying the Legacy" depicting history events in the area by artist Christine Blockledge. MVHA will receive 45% of the final bid on this fish at the auction over Labor Day. Check out the website [www.madcoedc.org](http://www.madcoedc.org) to see a picture of this painted fish. April's Wagon Tongue will contain more detailed information about this project.

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**Looking ahead**

**Feb. 19** MVHA meeting at 4:00pm at the downstairs meeting room at the First Madison Valley Bank. Program TBA. Hopefully there will be a program on earthquakes to start our 50th Anniversary of the Madison Earth Quake.

**March 19** MVHA meeting at 4:00pm at the down stairs meeting room of the First Madison Valley Bank meeting room. William Ennis birthday party.

**History Items for sale**

Early Days of the Madison Valley by James Spray \$18.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling.

Order from MVHA P.O. Box 474, Ennis, MT 59729

**Madison Valley History Association, Inc.  
Board of Directors**

President: Larry Love

Vice President: Otis Thompson

Treasurer: Neil Kent

Co-Secretary: Duane Thexton & Shirley Love

Director: Jimmy Carlson

Director: Smitty Overstreet

Meetings held monthly on the **third** Thursday of each month. Watch Madisonian for details of time and place and program. (Note the change from 2nd to 3rd Thursday)

Board Meetings are held the 1st Wednesday of each month. First Madison Valley Bank

The Wagon Tongue will be published quarterly.

Next issue will be April 2009.

Editor: Shirley Love

Contributing editors:

Doris(Sis) Angle Benschoter Earth Quake story from her memories from Larry Keifer Barba Rowe Tuss and Hank Rowe letter to Charles "Buck" Crump

Jess Armitage From Progressive Years Madison County, Montana Vol II

Mrs. Raymond Schabarker for Daems history and Harvey Romey and Ben Williams for Kramer history both from Pioneer Trails and Trials Madison County, Montana

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