



The Wagon Tongue

Volume 7 Issue 2

Madison Valley History Association, Inc.

April 2009

From the Wagon Seat: March came in like a lion and went out like a lion too. But spring is around the corner for sure with all the birds back and all the changes that are taking place. A lot has taken place since the last Wagon Tongue issue in January. The MVHA is in the process of moving the old Madison Valley Clinic to our land for the first History museum in the Madison Valley. The Madison Valley Hospital and Clinic has moved into their new building and the Hospital board offered the clinic building to the MVHA just for the cost of moving it. After much deliberation in just a short period of time, the MVHA board decided it was an opportunity and a step in the right direction for getting a building for a museum. It is already approved to code and is in great shape. At the time of this publication, the foundation has been built and Tamietti House Moving of Butte will move the building during the month of April. The hard part will be getting this building ready for a museum by the summer of 2010. So get your carpenter aprons on, hammers in hand, ideas of how to turn a clinic facility into a museum, and carve out some time so you all can help the MVHA complete this project. Give a board member a call telling us about how you can help. The Angle forge foundation and then the replication of the building is in this project too. In June, after all the cement trucks, moving trucks, etc. have finished their work, Wharton Asphalt will pave the approach according to DOT rules. The drainfield is approved and Shorty Roberts will put that in. Shorty Roberts has been a lot of help on this project and has donated a lot of his expertise and work.

Yes, having an active museum does incur expenses such as electricity, telephone, insurance, and many incidentals so we need to constantly be thinking about raising funds. Everyone needs to be thinking of the MVHA when they want to make a contribution of any kind. 2009 memorials for our departed members and friends have been coming in and each is greatly appreciated. The MVHA is a 501c3 non-profit organization so any moneys given is tax deductible so think BIG. The board is still looking for someone to do grant writing so if you have even just a little expertise, please step forward. The MVHA will appreciate it.

The first annual William Ennis Birthday party Irish Stew Dinner was a huge success. We served about 100 people and made about \$900. A big thank you to stew cooks Jane Rebus, Shirley Gustafston, Manny Hoag and Ann and John White, Cole slaw maker, Shirley Love, Blarney Stone bakers, Pat Hale, Jim Nelson and Shirley Love and Soda Bread bakers, Smithy Overstreet, Phyllis Wasick and Marcia Zankowski. Thanks to Zoe Todd for the Stew recipe, table set up and help with Chamber window and to Dode Baronet for the original inspiration to get this whole project started. Also to the set up committee, the food servers, the money takers, the greeters and last but not least the dish washers and clean up committee. Many hands made light work and everyone's help was greatly appreciated. The party was a great success!!

May 21 will be the annual meeting and the MVHA membership will be electing three directors to the board of directors. Larry Love's, Neil Kent's and Shirley Love's terms expire. If you would like to be considered as a director, please let a board member or the nominating committee (chosen in April) know of your desires. The meeting will be held at 4:00pm at the downstairs meeting room at the First Madison Valley Bank. Looking ahead, don't forget the Muse Historic Music concert on June 19 at 7:00pm Peter T's Park.

Keep in mind your earthquake memory stories, Christmas memory stories, and recipes for the historic cookbook. Also memories of departed friends, relatives and/or history members for the Memories section of the Wagon Tongue are welcomed. The MVHA Museum will open on Memorial Day weekend so plan to volunteer 3 or 4 days or more at the museum this summer. The museum will still be at the temporary museum site at 121 W. Main in the Altimus Wildlife building for this summer as preparations are in progress for the future permanent museum. An exciting and very busy time for the MVHA lies ahead so plan to be part of the action.

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 January 2009 issue. Please add to any membership list that 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.

Killingsworth, Teresa & Tom and Audrey Jennings (P)

8401 Old Stage Rd #66
Central Point, Oregon 97502

Engel, Dick & Terry (F)

P.O. Box 1429
Ennis, MT 59729

Sherick, Steve & Doris (F)

4996 Lower Miller Creek Rd
Missoula, MT 59803

Membership Update

2009 memberships have been arriving every day. Please check your address label on your issue of the Wagon Tongue and you can tell when your 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 Board of Directors of your Madison Valley History Association appreciates all the memberships that are purchased as this allows them to have funds to continue the work of developing a museum in the Madison Valley:)

AA

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 your stories and memories about deceased members or residents to the Wagon Tongue. Obituaries from the local newspapers will not be reprinted. We are looking for stories that will expand on the deceased lives, genealogy, and contributions, etc. to the history of the Madison Valley. The Madison County Trails and Trials and Progressive Years have helped but not everyone's family history is included there and sometime there are good stories out there that have never been printed. So help out if you have information to share. The Wagon Tongue does not want anyone excluded because of lack of new stories.

The Madison Valley lost a native and a resident for the last years of his life on Dec. 25, 2008 when **Norman Chamberlin** passed on. His family history was published in the October 2008 Wagon Tongue under Chamberlin Homestead. Sister Dode Barnett shared a few additional stories of Norman. Norman would tell the story of the fire in the old gymnasium at the school in Virginia City. The Ennis Fire Department had an old fire truck that

they got from Salt Lake City, Utah as Army Surplus. Norman, Barney Barnett, Jesso Baker, Bud Baker and George Sprout took that old fire truck over the Virginia City hill to help in putting out that fire.

When living in Maryland, Norman brought his girls out one summer. They were in the 7th and 8th grade. There was a grass fire at McAllister up on North (or South) Meadow Creek. Norm said "This is a grass fire. We can all go and help." He rounded up his daughters and all the nieces and off they went, flip flops, shorts and all. They spent part of the day putting dirt on the fire, swatting at the fire with wet gunny sacks, etc. to help put out the fire.

Hazel Marie Saunders, mother of MVHA member, Beverly Saunders Whitman, passed away on Jan. 28, 2009. Hazel was born in Yacolt, WA. on Nov. 3, 1913 daughter of Orval and Florence Grady. Hazel was about 3 months old when her parents moved back to the Madison Valley and she has lived there ever since. Her mother died when we was three and one-half years old, and her father, a local ranch hand, found it difficult to take Hazel with him when he worked so he asked various families in the valley to help him care for her and her brother.

In 1920, when she was about 7 years old she moved to the James Shewmaker home where she lived until she married. Hazel started her school career in the small settlement of Abe near Wall Creek in the upper Madison. When the Abe School was abandoned, she transferred to Ennis where she completed school and graduated from Ennis High School in 1932. She attended one year at Dillon Normal College (now University of Montana Western).

She married the local sports hero, Byron Saunders, on September 3, 1934 at the Ennis Hotel. (now the Blue Heron Antiques and Gifts) She and Byron lived in and helped run the Ennis Hotel. Their two children, Raymon Byron and Beverly Jeanne were born there. At the beginning of World War II the family moved into the Ennis Telephone Office located where the Shedhorn Sports is now. Byron kept the telephone equipment running and strung telephone lines throughout the Madison Valley and Hazel was the friendly telephone operator. They operated the State Liquor Store from 1948-1952, Byron and Hazel took over the Saunders Hotel in 1955 from his mother, Beulah Saunders which they operated until 1979. Information taken from article written by Hazel Saunders in the Progressive Years Madison County, Montana Volume II page 776 and Madisonian Obituary Feb. 4, 2009

Earth Quake Memories cont nued from page 3

Shirley Jeffers Gustafson shared this earthquake memory.

It was a normal morning on the date of August 18, 1959 at the ranch outside of Chinook, MT. Duke was at the Havre Livestock Auction Company and the kids-Greta, David and Gary-did the morning chores and then kept busy with ranch activities.

A friend called and heard that there had been an earth quake around the Ennis area the night before. I tried calling my parents Lawrence and Jo Jeffers but the phone lines were down so I called the sheriff departments of both Chinook and Havre and they had no information regarding the earthquake in the Madison Valley. I finally found a Saskatchewan, Canada radio station saying that a powerful earth quake had hit the South end of the Madison Valley and had destroyed Hebgen. Needless to say, I had gone into a panic mode. I called Duke at Havre and told him what had happened and that I was going to go to Ennis to see if my parents were all right as they live on the Madison River. Duke returned to the ranch to take care of the kids. I was on my way to Ennis.

It was a long trip to Ennis and of course your imagination runs away with you. I arrived in Ennis about mid day. The town of Ennis was quiet with everyone moving to higher ground. A Marine stopped me at the bridge but I explained to him that my parents lived across the river. He let me pass as I chuckled to myself--a Marine stopped me and there was but a trickle of water in the Madison River due to the slide that had stopped the Madison.

Mother and Dad were at the ranch but I expected them to be on high ground of the East Bench. They had been there but came back at daybreak when they heard that Hebgen Dam did not break and that a slide had stopped the Madison River flow.

I did not sleep much that night. The next morning Mother and Dad discussed in depth what had happened the night of the quake. They were awakened by a rocking and rolling of the house. They turned on the lights and Mother said that the floor was rolling and walls were weaving so much that she got sea sick. Outside with the porch light on, there was sound of the wind but there was no wind. They noticed the willows were bending almost to the ground as the ground was still rolling under there feet. This all happened in a minute, but the after shocks continued. Mother was still uneasy from the rolling of the earth when some one drove by and said that Hebgen Dam had failed. They hurried up to the bench just east of the ranch. At daybreak, they could see that the Madison Valley was dry and they went back to the ranch to learn that the dam did hold. They were surprised to see that the house received little damage from the quake.

On the 19th, a friend of ours flew Duke and Gary down to the Jeffers Ranch. They flew over 4

the slide area but soon returned as there was lots of planes flying in the area seeing the damage. From the air they could see the Madison River was just a small stream. The river had been blocked by the slide which formed what is now Quake Lake.

Dad mentioned that on the eve of the earthquake, he had been outside and noticed the sunset was brilliant red with no clouds in the sky. The evening was quiet with no birds or animals making any noise. It was dead quiet. He was bothered by the stillness of the night as he went to bed that night.

I stayed until the weekend and learned that a person in Ennis missed the warnings of evacuation and went downtown to get his coffee and there was not a person in sight or a dog to greet him. He did not get his coffee. A friend of mine was taking his apprenticeship in the mortuary business and was preparing a person when the quake hit. "My God, he is alive!", running out of the mortuary looking over his shoulder to what he had just witnessed.

That Christmas we went down to Mother and Dad's. We took a day trip down to Quake Lake to see what damage the slide had done. Climbing over rocks and boulders, we could see how the mountain slid and backed up the Madison River to form Quake Lake. As we were walking, Gary saw something shiny. He reached down and picked up an Indian Head nickel. We stood in a moment of silence as we all understood that people were buried below us. Gary still has that nickel to this day.

Earthquake stories for this issue will conclude with this story submitted by **Mary Ann (Neville) Alger**. I, Mary Ann Baker, had just returned to my home at the Riverside Motel. It was about 11:30pm. I had been to a meeting in Virginia City. I went into the dining room where we had set up a bed for my husband's nephew, Michael Speer, to ask him where my husband, Vincent "Bud" Baker was. He said he had gone up to the bar for a drink. About that time I heard an awful roar so I looked out the window for a talc truck or something going by and about that time the floor started to roll and I grabbed the door casing to keep from falling down. Mike got out of his bed and put his pants on. I could never figure out how he did that by the way the floor was rolling. I ran to the stairway to see about my daughters and they met me at the bottom of the stairs. About that time, the door opened and my husband came in. He was worried about the girls, Anita Irene, Ellen Louise and Patricia Ann. We talked for a few minutes and Bud and Mike took our truck and drove the streets in town looking for fires.

We had gas tanks in our backfield that belonged to Jack Northway and we could hear them rocking back and forth.

The chickens in the neighborhood chicken yards were all out of their houses and crowing .

Mary Ann Baker story continued on page 5

For Your Reading Pleasure
Shallow Diggins Tales from Montana's

Ghost Towns Compiled by Jean Davis This is compilation of stories grouped around approximately a hundred of Montana's ghost towns. Available at the Madison Valley Public Library and the MVHA museum for "in house use" and possibly available at some other libraries as interlibrary loan.

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Looking Ahead

May 21, 4:00pm Annual meeting at 4:00pm at the First Madison Valley Bank downstairs meeting room Program TBA

June 18, 4:00pm Monthly meeting at 4:00pm at the First Madison Valley Bank downstairs meeting room. Program TBA This meeting is for all the "snow birds" who miss the winter meetings.

June 19, 7:00pm MVHA is helping to co-sponsor with the Friends of the Madison Valley Public Library the celtic music group, The Muse, playing *The Ballad as History*. They explore historical events and how they are recorded in song MVHA will help sell tickets and will share in the profits of this concert so plan to attend and help out in selling tickets and promoting this event.

July is tentatively set aside for a field trip but details are still to be worked out depending on availability of the leader.

August 20, Field trip to Madison Valley Earthquake site Details in July WT.

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 July 2009.

Editor: Shirley Love

Contributing editors:

Don "Kid" Neville Earthquake memory

Shirley (Jeffers) Gustafson Earthquake mem

Mary Ann (Neville) Alger Earthquake mem

Hazel Saunders From Progressive Years

Madison County, Montana Vol II page 776

Earnest Vincent and M. Elaine (Vincent)

Sprout Herb and M. Elaine Sprout From

Pioneer Trails and Trials Madison County,

Montana Vol II pages 699, 700

Carol Hacker H Brand by Paul M. Jeffers

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