



# The Wagon Tongue

Volume 7 Issue 4

Madison Valley History Association, Inc.  
website: [www.madisonvalleyhistoryassociation.org](http://www.madisonvalleyhistoryassociation.org)

October 2009

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## **From the Wagon Seat:**

Summer is over, fall is here, and winter is just around the corner. The MVHA is back with its regularly scheduled program with members meeting the third Thursday of each month at 4 pm at the First Madison Valley Bank. We have some exciting programs lined up, so watch for their announcement in the *Madisonian*.

We have been busy working on our Museum building. The new roof is on, a porch was added, electricity is now to the building, and we are now back filling around the building. We had a great work party in September who tore the old siding off the building and tore down some temporary walls inside the building to make a larger open display area. We are now in the process of getting the siding ordered and hope to have it up by the end of October. I want to thank all those members who have helped but I won't mention anyone by name for fear that I would leave someone out. As a fund raiser for this project, the MVHA will be selling boards in the "Walk of Names" at the Museum on which names (and your brand, if you have one) will be engraved. Look for information elsewhere in this newsletter. Remember, any donation you make to the MVHA is tax deductible, so honor your Madison Valley ancestors (and yourself) by having their names (and yours) displayed as a sponsor for this worthy project.

A group of MVHA volunteers journeyed to Bozeman in August to retrieve some old farm machinery (two horse drawn mowers and a dump rake) that has been donated to the Museum and will become part of our permanent display. If any of you know of other such artifacts that are "rusting" away somewhere, contact one of the board members and we will try to acquire it for our Museum. We have plenty of room to display these artifacts at our new location.

We had two wonderful field trips this past summer. On August 20, twenty members journeyed to the Madison Earthquake site and had an enjoyable outing reliving some of the excitement from that event that occurred 50 years ago. On September 17, eighteen members journeyed to Whitehall to visit the Jefferson Valley Museum. The staff at the Jefferson County Museum were excellent hosts and passed on many suggestions and ideas as we plan our new facility.

The Madison County Economic Development Council (MCEDC) "Fish Out of Water" art auction is now history. The sculpture that was assigned to the MVHA sold for \$4250 (of which the MVHA received \$1912.50.) A big thank you goes out to the MCEDC staff for all their efforts on our behalf and to Bullwinkle's Restaurant in West Yellowstone for purchasing this piece.

MVHA is registered with the Montana State Employees' Charitable Giving Campaign in which all 13,000+ state employees are invited to give to their choice of non-profit organizations. If you are or you know someone who is a state employee, encourage them to mark the MVHA as the choice for the 2010 payroll deduction giving. A special thanks for Larry Love and John and Ann White who set up and managed a booth for the MVHA at this Campaign's annual kickoff drive in Helena on October 2.

Gary Forney, historical author about Madison County, has been contacted by Arcadia Publishing to do a picture history book of Madison Valley. This book will consist of roughly 200 images along with captions for each, and some introductory text as well. The MVHA board has agreed to assist Gary in writing this book and Gary has graciously acknowledged our support by donating all the royalties from this book to the MVHA. But we need your help. If you have any early day photos of people or happenings in Madison Valley, please contact Gary or any board member so these can be considered for inclusion in this book. Besides the standard photos, the images can also include artifacts and ephemera from the early days of Madison Valley.

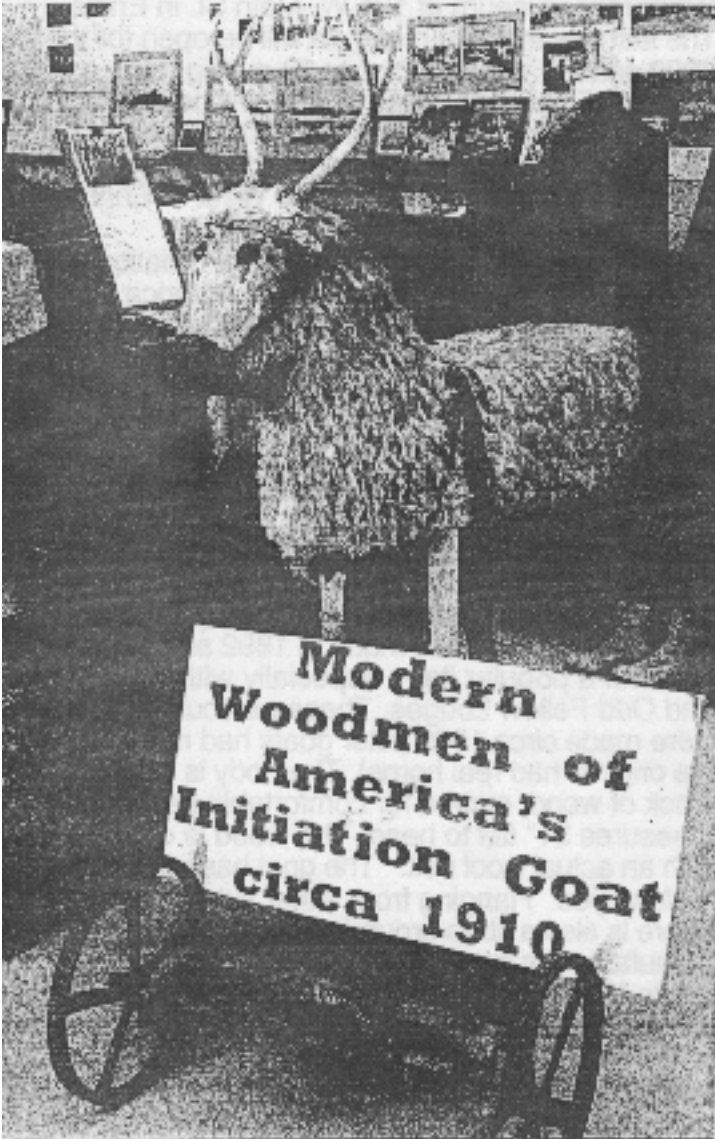
As we continue to work on the Museum building, pass along any ideas you may about its organization to any board member. Let's keep the wagons rolling. Your Wagon Master, Otis Thompson.





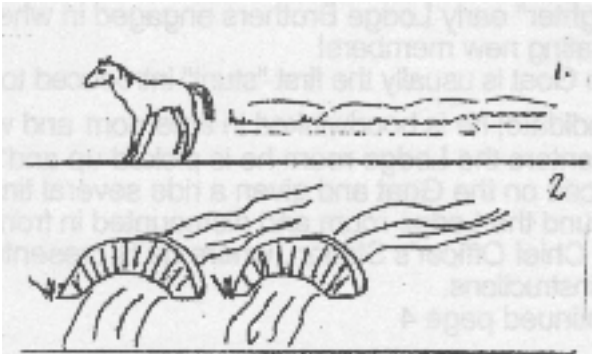
**Continued from page 3**

The Wagon Tongue and the MVHA would like to have your stories about the Woodman Hall, the Woodman Fraternal Society and the initiation goat. Please share.



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Thanks to Kevin (Williams) Brenneke the Wagon Tongue has a new **Montana Trivia**. Name these Montana towns or cities. Answers and more Trivia in January 2010 Wagon Tongue



**2009 Museum Update**

Our guest book at the museum is not an exact science because some of the volunteers forget to ask the guests to sign the book and some guests just do not like to sign guest books. And some sign but do not record where they are from. But with the facts that we do have, the MVHA museum for the 2009 summer saw a very busy tourist season. 800 or more guests visited and signed the guest book. Visitors from Montana led the list with 178 signed guests with 18 of those Montanans from our great community of Ennis. Washington State lead the way of the rest of the states with 72 visitors, Utah with 58, Idaho with 50 and California with 46. Thirty six other states that recorded guests had numbers from 26 down to 1. We had 16 guests from Canada, 5 from Australia, 3 from England, 2 from Germany, 2 from Ireland and one guest each from Chile, Taiwan and Rep. of Belerus, States with no guests recorded were Hawaii, Michigan, New Hampshire, Mississippi, New Jersey and Vermont. If you did not have the opportunity to visit the MVHA museum this summer, definitely plan to visit the new museum next summer.

Our museum and volunteers shared a lot of Montana and Madison Valley History with folks from all over and that is what museums are all about. Now we just have to figure out how to get folks from some of those states who didnt visit to come to our Madison Valley.

A great big thank you to all our many MVHA volunteers who helped keep the museum open on a regular basis this summer. 11 volunteers were needed each week for 3 hour time periods. Special thanks to Zoe Todd, Vern Thibideaux and Shirley Love who shared the scheduling duties doing a month each. Thanks to all the volunteers who signed up or said yes or returned the phone message when called by a scheduler. You made their day and made the day of a guest who stopped by the museum and found it open.

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**History Tidbits**

The two mile trip to Jeffers was the shortest Ennis High School football team road trip.

The oldest brand recorded in Madison County was George Thexton's. "Otis Thompson's dad always told Duane Thexton as a little kid that GT stood for 'Grandma Thexton', when it actually stood for 'George Thexton'? Duane actually believed him for a little while." Thexton quote provided by Duane Thexton

Fort Benton was the nearest US Government Military protection for the Madison Valley settlers in 1867. History Tidbits provided by Don Black





## For Your Reading Pleasure

Since the MVHA and author, Gary Forney, have started on a project to do a pictorial book of the Madison Valley, you might take some time and look at books already published by Arcadia Publishing. [www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com)

**Images of America Red Lodge** by John Clayton and the Carbon County Historical Society

## Looking Ahead

**November 19** 4:00pm monthly meeting First Madison Valley Bank downstairs meeting room  
Program: Dr Jeff Safford speaking about all sorts of interesting items in the history of Sterling.

**December** Date and time TBA Christmas Social

**January 21** 4:00pm First Madison Valley Bank Downstairs meeting room. Program Jacqui Marotta, Woman of the Bozeman Trail.

**Walk of Names** The MVHA will be doing the handicapped ramp and any other walkways around the new museum with boards engraved with donor names and brands. A board with a name engraved will be \$40 and adding a brand will be an additional \$10. The order blank for the Walk of Names is not ready for this issue but will appear in the January 2010 issue. Be thinking of names you will want on a board, about how to honor a deceased family member or how to acknowledge a long standing Madison Valley family name or series of names on this Walk of Names. This will be your opportunity to be a part of the history of the Madison Valley. Stay tuned for details.

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## Madison Valley History Association, Inc.

### Board of Directors

President: Otis Thompson

Vice President: Jimmy Carlson

Treasurer: Neil Kent

Secretary: Duane Thexton

Director: Larry Love

Director: Smitty Overstreet

Director: John White

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 10:00am First Madison Valley Bank conference room  
The Wagon Tongue will be published quarterly. Next issue will be January 2010. Editor: Shirley Love

Contributing editors: John White Story of our Name about the Modern Woodman and the Early DeMoulin  
Goat riding Trike from internet research

Ruth Matzick Bouchard from Madison County Trails and Trials page 121

*Madisonian* Sept. 3, 2009 obituary of Ruth Matzick Bouchard

Sept.9, 1927 Old Timer Vists County Seat

Hazel Grady Saunders from Madison County Trails and Trials Charles Orval Grady pg. 64

Elwin L. Grady from Madison County Trails and Trials John M Grady pg 64

*Great Falls Tribune* Sept. 29,'09 Obituary for Elwin L. Grady  
Jan Smith *Bear Creek schoolhouse celebrates landmark anniversary*

Printing of this Newsletter was generously provided by the First Madison Valley Bank