

# The Wagon Tongue

Volume 14

Madison Valley History Association

April 2016

website: [www.madisonvalleyhistoryassociation.org](http://www.madisonvalleyhistoryassociation.org)

Visit MVHA on Facebook: "Madison Valley History Association"

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.

**From the Wagon Seat:** Weather in Montana! If the wind isn't blowing, just wait a minute. It'll blow. If it's blowing, well, just wait another minute. It'll blow you away. Well, as long as this is Montana and it's blowing, I will know I am still on the right side of Paradise. Regardless of the wind, things go on.

For some time now, the MVHA has been trying to figure out how to electronically index and catalogue the artifacts, documents, and pictures in our Museum. Thanks to a National Endowment of the Humanities Grant conveyed to the MVHA through Humanities Montana, this project can now begin. Using these grant funds, we have acquired the services of an intern for a few months this summer. This intern will set up a process, begin data entry, and provide training on use the computer application we will be using.

The MVHA is required to match the \$3,000 of the NEH grant. Some of that match will be in the form of cash. But most of it will be in the form of in-kind contributions by MVHA members. You can make your contribution either by taking training on using the cataloging software or by helping with developing more detailed documentation of the museum collection.

Another thing we expect to complete this summer is the new display and storage building. This project has been on hold (speaking of weather!) for the winter to save a bit of money on concrete work. But as of this writing the foundation and floor have been poured. Sometime in the next few months, we will begin putting up the building, and will be looking for strong backs and willing hands to help get it built this spring and early summer.

In May MVHA will have two major events. One of these, our annual highway cleanup, is our contribution to keeping Madison Valley beautiful. This scheduled, weather permitting, for May 14 at 10:00 at the Museum. The second is the MVHA annual membership meeting and pot luck which will be held on May 19<sup>th</sup> at the Episcopal Trinity Church in Jeffers. This is the meeting where members nominate and select MVHA board members.

Further information on these events will be provided at the April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting and should be posted in the Madisonian.

Our April meeting (4:00 PM in the basement of the First Madison Valley Bank) should be interesting. Ken Robison, Montana Historian, will be speaking about the Civil War in Montana and will be focusing on that war's Veterans in the Madison Valley. As usual with our meetings in the bank, please arrive before 4:00 as the bank locks the doors at that time. Your Wagon Master, Lee Robison

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## Madison Valley History Association Raffle

Win a **Larry Zabel** Giclee print on canvas. The print is "**High Mountain Brunch**" **No 1 of 250** and comes with authenticity letter. Print is framed. Drawing is Saturday, August 13, 2016, after the Art Festival. Devonna and Lynn Owens graciously donated this print to the MVHA to use for our summer fundraiser. Thank you to the Owens family. Tickets are \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00. Use the order blank enclosed in this mailing to order your tickets or order for your friends, neighbors, family or anyone else who might be interested in this beautiful print. You may also contact any MVHA member to purchase tickets. MVHA is a non-profit organization. You need not be present to win and must be 18 years or older to enter.

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Schools in the Madison Valley will be continued in the July issue with the 7th school in Jeffers.

**History Tidbit** The first major gold strike in Montana was on July 29, 1862 at Grasshopper Creek resulting in the city of Bannock, the first territorial capital.

**Membership** The following are new members since the *Wagon Tongue* went to print in January. Add them to any membership list you are keeping and welcome them to membership. Remind them of the meetings and special events of the MVHA.

**Steve and Nanci Garrett**(F) 406-682-3964  
233 Hayfield Loop Trail  
Ennis, MY 59729

**Joe Gecho**(I) 623-551-9767  
2452 W. Muirfield Dr.  
Anthem, AZ 85086

**Jill Haldeman and Tom Waldron** (F) 231-250-9524  
253 Hayfield Trail Loop  
Ennis, MT 59729

**Anne P. Hocker** 703-314-5137  
P.O. Box 100  
McAllister, MT 59740

**Jeanne (Merica) Miller** (I) 599-2000  
3300 Graf St. #37  
Bozeman, MT 59715

**John T. Peterson** (I) 266-9933  
P.O. Box 75  
Toston, MT 59643

**Membership update** Any outstanding 2015 memberships are now over due. Almost all of you have taken care of business and the MVHA has received your membership. Just check your address label on the envelope and you can easily tell if your membership is paid or which month you are due. Your membership is good for a full year from the month you purchase it and you are not penalized for submitting early. If your 2016 membership is due during April, May or June or if you are past due, you will find a membership renewal form included with this issue. Memberships are \$5.00 for students, \$10.00 for Individual, \$15.00 for Families, \$50.00 for Businesses, \$100.00 for Patrons and \$500 or more for Benefactor. If you are inviting someone to join or if you want to purchase your membership before it is due, just write name, mailing address and type of membership on a slip of paper and mail with membership fee to MVHA at P. O Box 474, Ennis, MT 59729.

The MVHA Board of Directors appreciates all memberships that are purchased and your support as this allows them to have funds to continue the work of developing a museum in the Madison Valley. If anyone needs a ride to a meeting and program, call 682-5780 and a ride will be arranged for you.

#### **Member News**

Can anyone help the MVHA find **Ruth Paige** or information about her? She is a long time MVHA member and formerly resided at Winston, MT. Her January WT came back as undeliverable and her phone has been disconnected.

Updated information from **Maureen Cheney**

**Curnow.** Maureen and Ed Curnow welcomed a granddaughter, Cordelia Eloise Burns,

born on September 8, 2015. Her parents are Michael Burns and Carina Curnow Burns, longtime Montana residents. Cordelia Eloise was named for her Great Grandmother, Roberta Eloise Carkeek Cheney.

The March 24th edition of *The Madisonian* featured long time MVHA member, **Ted Coffman**, in the LifeStyle page. Make sure you find it and read up on Ted!

#### **Memories**

**Donna Leita Baush** long time MVHA member and benefactor passed away at her home in Ennis on November 8, 2015. Donna was born in Texas on Jan. 18, 1919 to Mr. and Mrs. Donald McDaniel. Her parents moved to Southwest Montana in 1939 when Donna was 19 and Donna worked as a telephone operator in Harrison. There she met and married John Bausch in 1940. The family lived in Harrison before leasing ranches in Ennis and eventually purchasing the home ranch in McAllister in 1946. Donna was a rancher's wife, being a vital part of the ranch operations, preparing meals for family and hired hands. She loved to visit and reminisce about family and recorded an oral history for the MVHA.

**Kathleen D. Wilson** of McAllister passed away Dec. 11, 2015. She was born April 19, 1958, to Thomas J. (Bud) and Donna Wilson. She graduated from Ennis High School in 1976 and spent her life on the family ranch in McAllister and worked as a bookkeeper for local businesses. Kathy was very active in the Friends of the Madison Valley Public Library and helped with all the planning for the current library addition.

**Alice Michelle "Shelly" Segota Boss** of Grand Rapids, Mich. passed away on December 27, 2015. She was born on Jan. 12, 1963 in Ennis, MT to Dan and Virginia (Schabarker) Segota. Shelly attended school in Ennis and graduated from Ennis High School in 1981. She attended the John Roberts School of Modeling in California but soon switched to bookkeeping which she did for the rest of her career. She married Craig Szezepaniuk of Grand Rapids, Mich. They later divorced and in 2010 she married Larry Boss.

**Lloyd Smith, Sr.** passed away on Jan. 1, 2016 at his home in Manhattan, MT. He was born in Conrad, MT to James Nelson and Edna (Stull) Smith. He attended school in Conrad until 8th grade and left home in his late teens following the death of his parents. He got work in the lumber industry near McAllister, MT. He broke horses and worked for ranches in Wyoming and Montana. He married Sarah Mize of Bozeman on Oct. 28, 1940. They moved to a home near McAllister and Lloyd worked for the county road management and worked on the roads after the earthquake. He continued to work with horses and rode many miles in the mountains of the Madison Valley. (cont pg. 3)

*(Memories continued from page 2)*

Lloyd also drove the mail truck between Butte and Ennis for many years.

**Philip H. Hutton** passed away on Jan. 1, 2016. He was born July 7, 1926, to Homer Earl and Myrtle (Foreman) Hutton, the youngest and last of the Hutton family that was raised on the small ranch. You turned in at the Belle Jeffers place, went passed the Dallas Hayden's and at the end of the road was the Hutton place. A left hand turn took you up the hill to Scott and Lucy Hoag's. Phil's sister was Genevieve Hutton James and brothers Victor, Lowell and Wilbur. Phil graduated from Ennis High School in 1944 and went on to Montana State College. He was enrolled in the Army Air Force Cadet Program when it was cancelled at the end of World War II.

On Sept. 10, 1949 he married Eunice Hunt from Butte. After college graduation, they moved to Billings on a job. Their son Mark was born there. In May of 1952, they packed up and moved to Richland, WA. where Phil worked for General Electric and later for Battle Northwest. Daughter Laurie was born in Richland. For 63 years of our 66 years of marriage, we have lived in Richland where Phil passed away. Phil was a retired Mechanical Engineer and in 1973 he was named Tri City Engineer of the year.

.....Memory of Philip Hutton by Eunice Hunt Hutton.  
*Thank you, Eunice, for sharing your memory.*

**Sharlene Wooten Love** passed away Dec. 10, 2015 at her home. She was born March 3, 1935 in Salt Lake City, Utah to Jay Grant and Sadie Anderson Wooten. She spent her childhood alternating between West Yellowstone, MT where her folks owned and operated the Alpine Motel and Salt Lake City where her father had a used car lot. West Yellowstone did not have a high school in the early days so Sharlene graduated from Ennis High School in 1954. She married her high school sweetheart, Roy Alvin Love, in Bozeman on May 22, 1954. They began their married life on the family ranch in Ennis, eventually moving to Farming, Utah where they raised their family.

**Charles Edward "Ed" Clark**, long time MVHA member, passed away on Jan. 12, 2016. He was born on June 30, 1922, to William (Bill) and Emily (Woods) Clark in Ennis, MT. He attended Ennis schools and graduated from Ennis High School in 1940. He enlisted in the Army with his brothers and served in World War II. Ed married Merrilyn Daems in 1951. Ed spent many years guiding on the Madison River and retired in Nov. 1979 after 20 years of government service with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the US Postal Service. Ed was a 50 year member of the Masonic Lodge.

**Charles Conway "Chuck" Bennetts**, long time MVHA member who received Honorary status when he turned 100 years of age, passed away on Jan. 13, 2016. He was born in Virginia City on Dec. 15, 1913 to John and Hetty (Milroy) Bennetts, 7th child of 11 children. Chuck had just celebrated his 102nd birthday at the Front Range Assisted Living Center in Fairfield, MT in December 2015. Chuck worked as a ranch hand and cowboy in the Madison Valley as a youth until the fall of 1937 when he joined the Montana Power to begin what became a wonderful 41 year career working throughout the state of Montana. He kept an alphabetic list of the 109 towns in Montana that he worked in while constructing power lines around the state. His career included long term stays in both Whitehall and Dillon. He also had a short stint in the Army during WWII. Chuck married Hannah Gallagher on Jan. 4, 1941 and they had three children.

As Editor of the Wagon Tongue, my greatest memory of Chuck was the many phone calls to keep us up to date on old time history happenings in the Madison Valley. He was a fountain of information.

**Diane Louise (Ring) Keller** passed away Jan. 15, 2016. She was born March 4, 1951, in Seattle, WA to Gerald and Helen Ring. After graduating from high school, she met and married Ron Handlos in 1971. The couple moved to Ennis and later the marriage ended in divorce and Diane married Stanford (Buzzy) Keller. Diane started cooking for Meals on Wheels in 1985 and managed the kitchen for almost 30 years.

**Kim C. Warburton** of Billings, MT passed away in Ennis on Jan. 22, 2016. He was born May 1954 in Ennis, MT to Gene and Esther Warburton. In 1957 he moved with his parents to Stevensville, MT where he attended school and graduated from Stevensville High School in 1972. Kim worked for Buttery Foods in Missoula, Bozeman, Billings and Moorhead, MN. He was Protein Specialist for Sysco of Montana for many years and won several national awards. He was still employed by Sysco at the time of his death.

**Marian McAllister Morton** passed away Feb. 11, 2016. She was born in Ennis, MT on Mar. 14, 1927 to Owen and Clara McAllister. She was raised along the Madison River. The small town of McAllister, just north of Ennis, was her family's ranch and homestead. The family eventually moved to Polson, MT where she attended high school.

**Marjorie Claire Bowersox** passed away at her home on Feb. 18, 2016. She was born June 23, 1929, in Ennis to Albert Edison and Anne Charlton Barter. She was raised on a ranch in Bradley Basin and attended school in Norris, MT and graduating from Harrison High School in 1947. She married William Dale Bowersox *(continued on pg. 4)*

*(Memories cont from pg 3)*

on June 23, 1948. They spent 10 years on the ranch in Bradley Basin and her remaining years on their ranch on North Meadow Creek. Her work career included waiting tables and working at the talc mine. She took correspondence and night courses to obtain a medical records secretary for the Madison Valley Hospital for 14 years. She was past president of the Medical records Division of the Montana Hospital Association.

**Robert Jesse Endecott** of McAllister, MT passed away on Feb. 19, 2016. He was born in Ashton, ID on Oct. 5, 1944 to Richard and Hilda (Warsany) Endecott. He served in the 716th Military Police Battalion in Vietnam. After the Army, Robert spent several years working for dude ranches in Gallatin Canyon. He started ranching in the Madison Valley in the early 1970s. He married Janet Goggins in 1978 and then worked with her family on the ranch. Bob was active in the Ennis Rodeo Association and helped put on the 4th of July Rodeos.

**Dr. Hugh Alexander Leslie** passed away on Feb. 23, 2016. He was born Dec. 5, 1918 in Deshler, Neb. He attended school in Belvedere, Neb and graduated in 1937. He enlisted in the Army in 1941 and was part of Troop D, 33rd Cavalry, 20th Armed Division in World War II. While on leave, he met Mildred (Arlene) A. Naiman and they were married June 21, 1942, in Baltimore, MD. In 1954 he received his veterinary degree from Colorado State University. Doc and Arlene moved to Ennis in 1955 to establish his vet practice. He also loved to fly his airplane which he kept behind the Sportsman's Lodge. Doc retired in 2013 and was a lifetime member of the MVMA and AVMA.

**Marvin Paul Love** of Townsend, MT passed away March 3, 2016, in Helena, MT. Marvin was born on Nov. 7, 1935 in Sheridan, MT to Paul and Roberta (Angle) Love. He lived in Virginia City, MT for the first 14 years of his life attending school in V. C. His family moved to Ennis in 1948 and Marvin graduated from Ennis High School in 1953. He attended Montana State College and received a degree in range management in 1957. He was drafted into the Army, served in the Signal Corps, was discharged in 1960, returning to Ennis to work at family owned Angle Hardware. In 1962 he returned to MSC and received his teaching certificate, taught in Lewistown, got his Master's Degree at Oregon State University and continued his teaching career in Townsend, MT. He married Terry Sullivan in 1970. They have two sons, Steven and Timothy. He retired in 1997. After retirement, Marvin volunteered at the Broadwater Health Center and at the Townsend schools.

*Memories of your family members and friends are welcome for printing in the Wagon Tongue. The editor does not print full obituaries from the newspapers and uses the Madison County histories and other sources to find additional information. The memories column is intended to be a genealogical record of our departed.*

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**Jess Armitage History** We left Jess as he was making his way home after being discharged from the Army. He was in Idaho Falls, Idaho where he took a train from there to West Yellowstone, MT. There was no public transportation from West Yellowstone to Ennis, so I started to hitch hike home. Fred and Mildred Kirby, very good friends of the Hippes, recognized me, picked me up and took me to the Hippe ranch. I suppose that was the happiest day of my life.

In the winter of 1945-46, Grace and I went to Homestead, Florida to work for Ray Hippe, Grace's brother. Most of the work to be done there was to clean up trees that had blown down from a hurricane the previous fall. After we cleaned up the mess in the orchards, I cleared off more land for additional fields for row crop vegetables and fruit trees. I operated a TD18 Allis Chalmers dozer for knocking down trees which was kind of rough as it was all on coral rock. Spraying the orange groves was interesting as you had to keep watch for Star Spiders that would reach from one row of trees to the other side. In the spring of 1946, Grace, Alice Sue and I headed to California on our way back to Montana as that is where we decided to make our home. Going through Texas near Dallas was the first time I had seen 2-3 inches of ice on power lines. The Chevrolet we bought to make the trip didn't have any floor boards as they had rotted out and that made it hard to stay warm.

The Valley Garden Ranch, about 6 miles north of Ennis was owned by Mr. Hodges, who also owned the Jumping Horse Ranch, and he needed help. Mr. Hippe, Grace's father, applied for the job for me before I got home so I went to work right away. I worked on the Valley Garden Ranch feeding cattle and haying for about 1 year when they offered me the foreman job on the Jumping Horse Ranch. Brian was born on the ranch in 1948. Brian learned to walk quite early, as the house we lived in had a fiber rug and it hurt too much to crawl, so he got up and walked.

I wasn't a cowboy on the Jumping Horse Ranch and only had to round up the cattle when we drove them in to the U.S, forest land for the summer grazing and again when we had to round them up in the fall to bring them back to the hay fields. My job was to see that the men were kept busy and during haying season I would go to whichever job needed help and it was also my responsibility *(cont on pg. 5)*

*(Jess Armitage History cont from page 4)*

to keep the machinery running. In the winter I was also the "chore boy" and did the milking and fed the penned animals. After chores we would load the wagon, or sleigh, if we were going up to the Mountain Ranch, with hay and take it up to the feed lot on the Mountain Ranch. I had a favorite horse I named "Mike" and we had a good relationship. I rode him whenever I had to check on the cows at calving time. I tried roping off him once and about caught a calf. That was too close for me as I was afraid I would catch the calf and didn't know how to get the rope off or if Mike would stand still until I would get the rope off the calf. Claude Windecker, my boss, told me, "I don't care what you do, but I want you to keep the men busy."

One interesting project we sometimes had to do in winter was thawing out water pipes after a good freeze. Most water lines were buried deep enough, about 6 feet, not to freeze but there was always one or so that would freeze up. We would dig a hole down to the pipe every so often, whatever would give us the distance for portable welding machine cables to reach each end of the pipe that was frozen. When everything was connected, we would start the weld-er and the power would heat up the pipe enough to thaw out the pipe. When we discovered that process, it relieved us of digging up a lot of frozen ground.

I stayed on the Jumping Horse Ranch (they used to raise jumping horses before I went to work on the ranch) until Wetmore Hodges, owner of BirdsEye Frozen Foods, sold to Phil Yeckel, an oil man from Texas about 1952. I learned a lot from Claude Windecker, the manager, and enjoyed working for him. Grace had worked for Hodges in Boston before I went to work on the ranch and she thought they were nice people. I think I only received \$300 a month but I got milk, eggs, vegetables and meat. All I had to buy was cold and hot cereal and a new car once in a while. A good place to save money.

Pat Goggins, who now owns Public Livestock yards and a shopping mall in Billings, MT was the herdsman for the purebred cows on the ranch. Chauncey McKee was the cowboy for the commercial herd, Edgar Bright was the summer chore boy and I did anything that anybody wanted me to do. Milking cows in the wintertime was my duty until more men were hired in the spring.

After 6 or 7 years working for Claude Windecker, I thought it was about time to make a change as Claude was leaving the ranch. When I retired from the ranch, Phil Yeckel gave me a chance to buy the house that Hodges built for me. That house is still my Cottage by the Madison in Ennis. Harold Helt had the job of getting the house across the Madison River into the town of Ennis. Harold drove the truck into the river until the water prevented it

from running. Then he used a dozer tractor winch to finish crossing the river. We had a good crowd of towns people sitting on the river bank until the house reached the shore. In 1952-53, I moved to Ennis and bought the Economy store from Roy Wiedenmeyer with \$10,000 down payment borrowed from Mr. and Mrs Hippe. In a couple years Roy wanted to buy the store back, so I sold it to him. I went to work for Sonny Jackson operating a "cat" to make roads for the forest service for a couple of months, then went to work for Angle hardware store. Later I went to work for Fred Nelson who owned the Ford dealership. My first new car sale was to Ken and Adeline Story. While I was working for Fred Nelson, Mrs. Erie, a widow who owned the Madison Theatre, asked me if I would be interested in buying the Theatre. Grace and I decided to buy the Theatre, but of course didn't have any money and would need to buy it on time. Mrs. Erie agreed to do that and I made payments for a long time. Mrs. Erie had a reputation for knowing all of the kid's birthdays so she could charge them adult prices. Jackie Ann Northway Kirtly was our cashier for 25-30 years and was pretty good at that also. About that time television came to our town which affected the movie business quite a bit. I thought we would need to give the Theatre back but she told us that we wouldn't have to pay any interest on the balance. It was still tough to make payments but we had a very nice man, Byron Saunders, who was our projectionist and he would sometimes wait a week or two for his paycheck. I think our first show was either "The King and I" with Yule Brenner or "Ma and Pa Kettle on the Farm." John Wayne was popular at the time and we soon played his pictures. We started by running the Theatre every night, then cut it down to 2 nights a week in the winter time and 6 nights a week in the summer as that is the tourist season in Ennis. Women and children would attend the show while their husbands were out fishing. We would get up about 6:00 am to clean the Theatre and then I would go to work and after dinner we would go to the theatre so Grace could make popcorn and I would rewind the film. The pictures usually ran for an hour or two and then we would go home and do the paperwork. box office reports, etc. We would sometimes rent the Theatre to an outside animal photographer to show their animal shows. We also had promotional shows by donation for the Hospital and free shows for the kids just before school got out. We operated the Theatre until Grace became ill with cancer and couldn't clean any more. Byron had passed away that same year. He had been our projectionist for several years and also helped us clean the Theatre when he didn't have to travel out of town on another job he had. We sold the Theatre in 2001 to a very nice couple that lived next door to us.

