

The Wagon Tongue

Volume 15 issue 4

Madison Valley History Association

October 2017

website: 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: October is here with frost and snow—not much of either. But in the mountains, the white snow caps and the dark fir and pine timber are patched with the yellow quaking aspens. All of it telling us that Winter is looking down on us. If it isn't the smoke of summer, it's the snow and frigid of winter—gifts of our northern neighbors. Still, we love the loveliness of this Valley.

Summer, as usual, has been good. It looks like our volunteers made sure the museum was open almost every day (except Mondays) between June 15 and September 15. We had 330 people sign in as visitors this summer. This is down from the 390 last year. We are hoping to encourage a few more next year and are working on signage to enhance our visibility to people traveling along Montana Highway 287.

The Madison Valley History Association cannot thank our volunteers enough. We appreciate the few hours everyone takes out of their summer schedules to greet our visitors. Especially a thank-you to Mona Durham who was the member who worked to find volunteers to docent our museum. Mona did a wonderful job.

While we are on thanking people: We should not forget Shirley Love and the efforts she makes to produce this Wagon Tongue news letter. She does most of the writing and all of the administrative work associated with providing this newsletter to the members of the MVHA. Shirley also keeps our membership list, sending notices when individual's memberships lapse and providing a list for the Board to use in its activities. Both of these jobs require a lot of Shirley's time, so the next time you see her, thank her for the articles in the Wagon Tongue and for reminding you when your membership is about to be lost. The MVHA is fortunate to have her helping us.

Finally, we should thank our board members (Kevin Brenneke, Marty Brenneke, Jim Carlson, John Gecho, Larry Love, Lee Robison, and Otis Thompson) who do most of the rest of the work related to keeping the MVHA going. One way to thank them in a way that they would really appreciate is to volunteer to take on some of the tasks they currently do. If, for example, you have an idea for presenting at one of our monthly meetings, develop the idea and let us know when you would like to present. This would relieve the board of one of their tasks and be greatly appreciated.

In July MVHA members had an opportunity to join a Gravelly Flower Tour tour led by former Forest Service employee. About 15 people took advantage of this tour. This was considerably fewer than the number of people attending the Forest Service tour the previous week, but that's a good thing because it made it possible for almost everybody to engage with the tour guide. The MVHA also sponsored a tour of the Talc Mine in August. In spite of some confusion, the tour seems to have been a success for those who attended. In September we were pleased to hear about the Madison Valley's author, Hughie Call, from her cousin, Lynn Mahan. The October program is "Stories from the Past: Growing up in the Madison Valley." Presenters will be members who grew up in Madison Valley. If you did not attend this program and have some "Growing up in Madison Valley" stories please send them to MVHA and we can have a new section for the Wagon Tongue. We have not been able to find something for November. Your ideas and assistance is appreciated.

Your Wagon Master, Lee Robison

Exciting Elk chase The following is taken from a letter written by Geo.S. Watkins to his sister, Mat. 2/25/1867

"Exciting elk chase a few days before—Sundown and hands feeding his oxen when he heard a gun shot. He and another man ran for their guns and went after the elk. After considerable running, turned them from the mountains and toward some slick ice. They let the dog go for them and in less than no time we has 25 elk all in a herd on slick ice, helpless. We rushed at them as fast as our limbs would carry us. I arrived first and killed four. The man with me killed two, making 6 for us. Another man saw us after them and came killing two. The Indians following them came in time to kill one—total nine. The Indian told me his legs were "heap sick" and showed how deep the snow had been when he was trailing the elk. He wanted to stay the whole night. I let him stay and gave him supper and breakfast. Brought 6 elk to the cabin to keep the wolves from eating them. I sold over \$100 worth of meat. Having Indian and squaw drying hides will be worth \$40 when tanned."

Membership: The following are new members since the *Wagon Tongue* went to print in July. 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.

David and Susan Aced 682-7949

P.O. Box 399

Ennis, MT 59729

Charles and Emily Friedman 310-503-3966

(S)3607 Moose Bay Drive

Island Park, Idaho 83429

(W) 909 Kenter Way

Los Angeles, CA 50049

Diana Lewis 951-746-6933

28 Sheffield Dr.

Ennis, MT 59729

Stanley E. Mainwaring 685-3561

P.O. Box 534

Pony, MT 59747

Membership update 2017 memberships are now due as you receive your renewal application. Almost all of you have taken care of business and the MVHA has received your membership for 2016. 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 2017 membership is due during October, November or December or if you are past due, you will find a membership renewal form included with this issue.

Memberships are now \$10.00 for students, \$15.00 for Individual, \$20.00 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.

Thank you to all renewing members who generously submitted your renewal memberships at the newly voted amount.

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 and arranging programs for the community. If anyone needs a ride to a meeting or program, call 682-5780 and a ride will be arranged for you.

Member News

Gary Forney longtime MVHA member was featured in the Sept. 14, 2017 *Madisonian* Volunteer Spotlight for his interest in Montana history

and his work with the Virginia City Preservation Alliance.

Zoe Todd, MVHA founder was featured in the July 13, 2017 *Madisonian* Volunteer Spotlight for her interest in Madison Valley history, support of the museum and her volunteer work establishing the Meals on Wheels and work in preparing the public Christmas dinner for years.

Don and Martha Scudder, longtime MVHA members, were featured in the Lifestyle section of the *Madisonian*. The story was about taking flying lessons at age 83. Don is proving that age is only a number.

Memories

Christine Adele Jackson passed away March 27, 2017 of a horseback riding accident. She was born in Ennis, MT on March 27, 1959 to Carl and Frances (Clark) Jackson. She was delivered by Doc Losse. When she was two years old, her family moved to Ketchikan, Alaska where she grew up and completed her schooling. She graduated from Ketchikan High School. She went to college in Ellensburg, Washington graduating from Central Washington University with a teaching degree in special education and was a dedicated special education teacher at Whittier Elementary School in Great Falls, MT up to the time of her death.

(Thank you to all the MVHA members who directed me to Christine's mother, Frances Clark Jackson Young. I was able to get all the genealogy information for this memory. Thank you, Frances, for helping me get all Christine's background information.)

Carmen Pasley passed away on August 3, 2017. She was born Jan 24, 1962 in Bozeman, Mt. to Marcella and Clint Cain. She grew up on Cherry Creek in the Beartrap and attended Harrison High School and later transferred to Ennis. She met Rob Pasley and they were married on August 3, 1979. Carmon got a degree in nursing and worked at the Madison Valley Manor. She then worked at the family auto parts store, the Ennis Auto Parts.

Steve Huber passed away August 16, 2017. He was born Oct. 8, 1937 in Butte, MT to Carl and Ethelyn Huber. From 1940 to 1944, the Hubners lived in Brandon, a mining town East of Sheridan. He started school in Sheridan and then his family moved to the Hay Camp Ranch a mile North of Jeffers and Steve graduated from Ennis High School in 1955. Upon graduation, Steve received scholarship offers to play football from three schools and chose to go to Montana State College in Bozeman. His real passion was operating heavy equipment so he left MSC and attended a tech school in Weiser, Idaho. He began a (cont on pg 3)

(cont from pg 2) life long career of building roads, interstates and when the earthquake hit in 1959, Steve was the last civilian worker at the scene clearing the site for the Army Corps of Engineers. He married Frances Leding in 1959.

A very generous donation in memory of Steve was given to the Madison Valley History Assoc. by the Silver Dollar Bar, proceeds from their poker tournament. Special thanks to the Silver Dollar. And if you have access to the August 24, 2017 *Madisonian* and Steve's obituary, read the "Dedication to my grandpa" by Kelsey Hubner. It is a very special and touching tribute to her grandfather.

Martha Scudder, longtime MVHA member and supporter, passed away in Ennis, MT on September 5, 2017. She was a very strong and gracious lady who defied all the odds of her cancer and lived long after her cancer diagnosis.

Lois Camilla (Sannes) Saier passed away at her home on Sept. 27, 2017. Lois was born on July 21, 1932 in Williston, ND to Olaf Martin and Twylah Mary (Price) Sannes. The family moved to Portland, OR when Lois was 13. A year later, the family moved to Flathead Lake where Lois attended a two room country school for her eighth grade. Lois attended Missoula High School for her freshman and sophomore years before her family moved to Helena and she attended Helena High for a year. The family finally moved to Billings and settled down. Lois graduated from Billings Senior High in 1951. She worked for Shell Oil Company and in her spare time joined a ski club and started ski racing. In 1955 while at a race in Jackson, she met another skier, Volker Saier, and they were married on May 19, 1956. She began her life as a ranch wife with a big learning curve changing a city girl to country girl. After raising her family, Lois worked for the county at the court house and for 4 years at the *Madisonian*. She used her skiing skills to start a ski club for kids and taught several youngsters to ski. In 1980 she started a flower shop in the School House Gallery building. She worked her business for 25 years. The Flower Shop is now the Bragging Rights Gun Shop. (Editor's note) The Memories section of the Wagon Tongue is a genealogical record of folks who spent time in Ennis and the Madison Valley. When folks come looking for their roots, we at MVHA need to have basic information to start looking in the right direction. It is always a thrill when someone comes or calls asking for information and we know our work and research is paying off. If I can find special stories to go along with the genealogical information, I include that in the memories too. I do not copy obituaries so need stories from others who

have memories of the deceased. Stories are few and far between so not every memory is privileged to have a family story, too. So please help out if you are able. Thank you.

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Museum UpDate

The guest book has been tabulated and 330 guests signed the guest book this year. Montana always leads the way with 149 guests and 55 of those were from Ennis. More Ennis folks visited this year than last year! California was 2nd with 38, Washington 26, Idaho 21 and the Eastern state with the most guests was Pennsylvania with 9. 26 states had folks visit our museum. Canada, Denmark, Spain and the United Kingdom were foreign countries with visitors.

Special thanks to Mona Durham who did all the scheduling. She reported that she did not have too much trouble finding volunteers. **A great big thank you** to all the folks who said yes when Mona called or signed the schedule pages when those were passed around. The most help is from those volunteers who sign up and work a day each week and before you know it, the season is over!

This is not a true scientific study as it is only as good as visitors are willing to sign the book and give their location information. And only as good as our volunteers reminding them to sign and counting how many enter under the Family groups. But still a good number for the summer which was hot and smokey.. The only times we have had larger numbers was when we were able to keep the museum open all day. We miss a lot of folks who will not stay around for our 1 o'clock opening. We can just continue to advertise and sometimes word of mouth is the best advertising.

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Unconventional Dr. Losee *Bozeman Chronicle* Mar. 20, 2011 Jodi Hausen Part 2

We left Doc Losee in July 2017 with the statement "They tested me in their own way." At card parties, church, the bars, the barber shop, the Ennis Café, local civic group meetings and "every hour over the telephone company's party lines," local residents tested both Losee and his wife.

"The state's medical examination was nothing compared to the community's inquest," Losee wrote. "Their gossip tended to establish and maintain a decent social behavior; it continued, and when we comfortably accepted it we could happily call Ennis home."

His first knee patient

There's a half-page chapter in Losee's book entitled, "To Linda!" -- an ode to Linda Shadiow, (cont pg 4)

(cont from pg 5) was less than a year old when Chief Joseph and his band of Nez Perce Indians passed through Southwestern Montana in their dash for freedom across the Canadian border. The Indians had been engaged in a skirmish with the Army in the Big Hole. It was reported that they were headed for the Madison Valley.

All of the Madison Valley residents were alerted and the men prepared to defend their homes. They took the precaution of taking the women and children to an island in the Madison River, where they were hidden for the night. Mrs. Wiles was one off the children in the group.

As it turned out, Chief Joseph and his band went into Yellowstone Park and down the Yellowstone River, bypassing the Madison Valley. Mrs Wiles could remember when she was a small girl, often passing Indians would stop by the ranch house to trade or ask for something to eat. One time two Indian men stopped and sat down in the front room to talk. "Myrtle" as her mother called her and her older sister, Ida, were playing in their room. These Indians, in the manner of most male Indians, braided their hair in two braids with a braid hanging over each shoulder. As the girls played, Ida picked up a pair of scissors and walking up behind one of the Indians, she cut off one of his braids just below his ear.

As might be expected, the Indian brave was highly indignant at such an act. He leaped to his feet just as Ida dashed out the door and Myrtle ran and crawled under the bed.

Ida circled the house, ran into the front entrance, then into the bedroom, slammed the door and locked it. The brave, close behind her, tried in vain to open the barred door. Both Indians then left the house. As they were leaving, two of Myrtles's older brothers and another young man rode up to the ranch house. They were all armed and this may have deterred the Indians from seeking revenge. At any rate, the braves went on their way and were not seen again.

In 1894 she was married to Sylvester (Ves) Wiles and they homesteaded on Wigwam Creek. The homestead developed to become one of the leading ranches in the valley, raising both cattle and horses. It is the present Foster ranch.

Mrs. Wiles, in the manner of pioneer women, worked with her husband on the ranch. She had no fear of a horse and could handle most of the wildest of them, saddle horses or or teams. Some "old timers" have commented on seeing her drive a wild team and buckboard into Virginia City that many a good skinner wouldn't want to hitch up.

Mrs. Wiles was always active and energetic. All of her life she loved to dance and even at the age of 90, she could still get out on the dance floor and dance.

Thank you to Alice Sue Armitage Wright who sent this piece of history to the MVHA. Her Aunt Virginia worked on the Armitage family history and copied articles that mentioned the Armitage family. Thanks to her we benefitted from a good piece of Madison Valley history and a good Indian story.

History of AM Welles, Inc. Company

In August the MVHA had a field trip to the Talc Mine. It was a great field trip and we learned a lot about this mining company that is an integral part of the Madison Valley. But we also learned that without A.M.Welles trucking the talc to Sappington, this mine would not exist.

This article is from a talk that Ann Hokanson gave to the MVHA in 2014 so is the history up to and into 2014.

Albert Moody Welles homesteaded just outside of Norris in 1913. He came across country from upstate New York near Buffalo with his wife Blanche and his daughter LaVerna. Daughter Gertrude was born in Norris and they later adopted a son, Clinton. The homestead is where the Cold Springs ranch is now located.

He walked over the hills from Cherry Creek to Norris every day to work for the local lumber company in Norris. In 1922 he bought the lumber company where he sold lumber and shipped wool on the railroad. It was known as the Welles Lumber Company.

Albert Welles began trucking in the late 40's. He hauled freight and coal to Ennis and gold from the mines on the Revenue, up the Boaz, etc. to the railroad in Norris.

Shortly thereafter, in 1951, he began to haul talc from the Yellowstone Mine south of Cameron to Norris where it was shipped on the rail headed to Grand Island, Nebraska.

In 1959, the company was incorporated and became A. M. Welles, Inc.

About 1961, Sierra Rock and Talc built a plant in Three Forks to process talc and A.M.Welles began hauling talc from the Yellowstone mine to Three Forks. In the late 60's talc was also hauled from the Beaverhead mine, which is up the Ruby Road to Alder to be put on the rail. A.M. Welles hauled from the Beaverhead until the late 90's.

The company had 3 dump trucks hauling talc at that time. They would haul 2 loads a day at about 7 ton load each. Currently we have 4 trucks hauling 6 loads a day at a 40 ton load capacity. A.M. Welles has been hauling talc for all the mine companies—Sierra Talc and Clay, Cyprus Minerals, Luzenac America, Rio Tinto, and currently Imerys. In the early 60's, the A.M.Welles shop in Norris was built adding to the landscape of Norris.

Grandpa Welles died in 1969 and operations of A.M.Welles, Inc. were turned over to son-in-law, Fred and his grandsons Alfred, David and Rodney.

Alfred soon took over ownership. With his wife Dixie, Alfred began building the company—adding trailers, more trucks and in the late 60's A.M. Welles began building small roads, mostly BLM roads which required hauling gravel and blading it out.

In the early 80's, A.M.Welles was contracted by Cyprus Industrial Minerals to mine for chloride at the Antler mine just outside of Silver Star. At this point more loaders and bigger equipment—such as excavators were added to the fleet. A.M.Welles mined at the Antler for about 10 years, from 1980 to 1990. We returned in the late 90's for about 5 years until it shut down production.

In 1985 A.M.Welles, Inc. bought local fuel distributor McLeod Mercantile. A new convenience *(cont on Pg 6)*

For Your Reading Pleasure

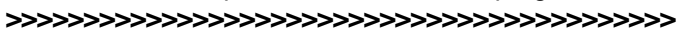
River Runs Through it by Norman McLean. This is a book that has a deep and lasting effect on Montana, its rivers and it’s literary legend

This House of Sky by Ivan Doig or any book by Ivan Doig Both these author were featured by the Elling House Art’s and Humanities Center and the Virginia City Preservation Alliance for their Notable Montana Authors series held at the Frank Bird Linderman Cabin near Laurin, Mt. during this past summer.

Looking Ahead

November 16, 2017 4:00pm Location and program to be announced. November Monthly MVHA program

December 21, 2017 time and place to be announced Annual Christmas potluck and Christmas program



Still looking for the history of the creamery in Ennis and additional information on what happened to the eagle. Don’t forget to write to MVHA at Box 474, Ennis or visit with a board member. Someone must be able to help out.

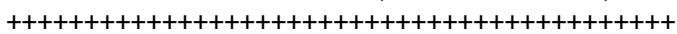
History of A.M. Welles, cont from pg 5

store was built in Norris. Fuel deliveries were expanded to Madison and Jefferson counties. Since that time, fuel sites have been set up in Ennis, Harrison, Whitehall and TMC gravel pit in Bozeman. In 1997 McLeod Mercantile bought Conner Exxon out of Whitehall expanding our customer base in Jefferson County. In 2004 McLeod Mercantile bought Elser Oil and added a second convenience store in Sheridan to its business.

A.M.Welles, Inc. also expanded into crushing in the mid 80’s. They now have 3 self contained crushing operations. They operate 2 gravel pits-theDSL pit North of Ennis and the TFZ pit between Logan and Three Forks. In the early 90’s A.M.Welles began bidding at the state highway lettings. Locally they have built the highway from Ennis to McAllister (1995), Twin Bridges to Sheridan (1999) and Ennis to Cameron (1999-2000).They have built roads for various subdivisions including Pronghorn Meadows and Hollowtop Vista. Since then they have had construction projects in Deer Lodge, Columbus and up at the Westfork rest area.

A.M.Wells contracts with Holcim to haul Gypsum from Geyser and Iron ore from White Sulfur Springs.

In 2014 they employed approximately 60 people and could be as high as 115 by midsummer. The owners of the company now are Alfred, his wife Dixie and their son Tim. This is definitely a family affair. Alfred and Dixie are in the office every day. Tim is vice president and day to day operations manager. Alfred and Dixie’s youngest son, Keith, is the road construction superintendent. Tim’s wife, Susan, their daughter Katie and Ann, Keith’s wife, all work in the office. Katie’s husband is the shop foreman. Even Ann’s kids—worked in the store, cleaned the office, etc.



History of the Flower Shop building The passing of Lois Saier and reading her obituary prompted me to review the history of her flower shop. The building at 202 1st. St. was formerly the old Cameron School which was near the highway south of Cameron and was moved to **6**

Board of Directors

- President: Lee Robison
- Vice-President: John Gecho
- Treasurer: Kevin Brenneke
- Secretary: Otis Thompson
- Director: Marty Brenneke
- Director: Jimmy Carlson
- Director: Larry Love
- Historian and researcher: Don Black
- Graphic Design and Facebook: Liz Applegate
- Meetings and programs held monthly on the **third** Thursday of each month or as scheduled. Watch the *Madisonian*, posters and your email for details of time, place and program. Board meetings are held on the **first** Wednesday of each month at 10:00am, at the First Madison Valley Bank Sept-May. *The Wagon Tongue* will be published quarterly. Next issue will be January 2018. Articles of historic interest and memories of the departed are welcomed. Editor needs your history stories!
- Editor: Shirley Love whitneypranch@wispwest.net
- Contributing editors:

Madisonian Obituaries, Volunteer Spotlight and Lifestyle section.

- Geo. S. Watkins *Letter to his sister*
- Alice Sue Armitage Wright *Funeral given Woman who recalled Indian Troubles in Madison Valley*
- Ann Hokanson *History of A.M.Welles, Inc.*
- Minnie Paugh *Madison Valley A High Mountain Community*

Jodi Hausen *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* March 20, 2011 “Ennis Unconventional Dr. Losee”

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

to the present site around 1940 and was used as a private dwelling until it fell into disrepair. Olive Losee bought it in 1970. After much hard work, the School House Gallery opened in 1971. The Pot Shop started later as the result of work done by Fannie Aaberg and Rachael (Rick) Vujovich. The School House Gallery and Pot Shop continued for a number of years. Then Brent Warburton then used it as a potting business until Lois and Chrissy Saier rented the building for their business as the Plant and Flower Shop. When Lois retired, Dutch Martin continued with the Plant and Flower Shop. Now the Flower Shop is in the old Wildlife Museum building formerly rented by the Madison Valley History for their second museum site. The former Plant and Flower shop is now the location for the Bragging Rights Gun Shop and history continues on. The information for this article excerpted from The Madison Valley A High Mountain Community by Minnie Paugh

Editor’s note: If you would like to read the whole article on the School House Gallery and Pot Shop go to the MVHA Website listed on top of pg 1. Find the Wagon Tongue section and look for Volume 5 Issue 4 October 2007 pg 3, 4 and 5. If you have missed any issues or continued articles of the Wagon Tongue, find them on this website.