

# The Wagon Tongue

Volume 16 issue 1

Madison Valley History Association

January 2018

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** I have recently become interested in one of the most common items in our lives apart from ham and eggs and water. It is something so ubiquitous that we see it everywhere—except when our digital device steals our attention. It is in our schools, our living rooms, our libraries, our bathrooms. We see it on almost every business doorway in town, and it's on the table when we sit down to dine in any eatery in Ennis, or Cameron, or Norris—and invariably, it is there in more than one form. When we buy a sack of dog food or move a box of crackers from the store shelf to our shopping cart, we handle it. Used to be, before our devices and computers, it was even more pervasive than it is now. But even now it is an integral part of our time and life. Those very devices stealing our attention from the glory of the world around us would not come to us were it not for this very common, but very necessary commodity of civilization. You can't even pump a tank of gasoline without having to decide whether you also want a slender slip of this stuff. I write of course of the very stuff you hold in your hands as you read this—supposing you are not reading a digital, archived copy via your device. It is paper.

In the course of my interest, it occurred to me that even before railroads made it to Salt Lake City, even before Bozeman made his road up the past the Tongue River into the Yellowstone Valley and then on to the Madison/Ruby mining camps', paper had made its way in bulk into these mountains. And sure enough, what occurred to me is a true occurrence.

We know this because on August 27, 1864, just a short year and two months after the discovery of gold in Alder Gulch a man named John Buchanan published the first issue of the *Montana Post*. Something he could not have done had he not had paper. As it happens Mr. Buchanan brought the paper, the printing press, the typeset and other necessary appurtenances for newspaper making with him, shipping them to Fort Benton by steamboat and from there by wagon and mule to the gold camps. As it also happens, he did not bring enough paper. Everything else he had was in sufficient supply to bring his neighbors the news. But by April Fools Day 1865, he was running short on paper and apologizing to his readers for the quality of the stuff he was printing his news on. Although a sufficient supply was on its way from Salt Lake City, the winter condition of the roads was holding up delivery. Regardless, Buchanan promised to continue publishing even if he had to print the paper on shingles. (*Montana Post*, April 1, 1865)

He must have gotten his paper, because the *Montana Post* published for several years thereafter, and there is no record it was printed on shingles.

Interesting times. Times when people looked at the world a bit differently than we do, a time before UPS and FedEx when expecting freight delivery required patience and innovative thinking on how to continue without the freighted item, should it arrive later than expected. (The week's news on shingles! That I would liked to have seen—fake or otherwise.)

Note: Most of the information in this article is taken from two issues of the *Montana Post*. In addition to the April 1, 1865 issue noted above, the July 14, 1866 issue contains a brief history of the paper's early days and fills in some details on its founding. Your Wagon Master, Lee Robison

**History Tidbit** 1913-13th Legislature passes a law allowing ratification of the constitutional amendment extending to women the right to vote. Jan. 1, 1917—4 years later, the first two women elected to the legislature, Maggie Smith Hathaway (D) and Emma Ingalls (R) began to serve.

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

**Shore, Renata & Steve** 406-682-7177

P.O. Box 1245

Ennis, MT 59729

**Membership update** 2017 memberships are now past due as you receive your renewal application. Almost all of you have taken care of business and the MVHA has received your membership for 2017. 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 2018 membership is due during January, February or March 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**

**MVHA and members Esther Warburton, Jack Kirby, Don "Kid" Neville and Larry Love** made the Lifestyle page of the Thursday, Oct. 26, 2017 *Madisonian* for the Story Hour program presentation at the October History meeting. If you did not get an opportunity to read this, you may read it at the Madison Valley Public Library or at the *Madisonian* archives.

Two MVHA members, **Jan Smith** and **Larry Love** participated in the Ennis Community Christmas Concert before the holidays. Besides singing the cantata with the choir, they sang Winter Wonderland as a duet.

**Willie's Distillery..Willie and Robin Blazer**, MVHA Business members, were featured on the front page of the Jan. 4, 2018 edition of the *Madisonian* **2**

with a story of their business and the Ennis brand gained national attention when Fifty Best, a New York City guide to living, awarded Willie's Bighorn Bourbon Whiskey a gold medal in December 2017.

History is being made on Main Street Ennis!

#### **Memories**

**Minnie Pearl Clark** passed away Oct. 24, 2017 in Ennis, MT. She was born to Maggie on March 22, 2004 in Salt Lake City, Utah joining 8 chocolate Lab brothers and sisters. She came with Melody Clark, activities director, to the Madison Valley in 2013 and became part of the Madison Valley Manor family. Minnie spent the rest of her life bringing joy and comfort to the residents of the Manor. About a year ago, Minnie reluctantly allowed the adaptation of her sister, Mickee Lynn. She taught Mickee the ropes of the Manor. Minnie was loved by all the residents, volunteers, staff and families. She will be missed but not forgotten. She gave her heart to all of those who need it.

**Peter John Traxler** passed away October 26, 2017 in Ennis, MT. Pete was born on May 4, 1946 in St. Peter, MN to Anthony and Monica (Hughes) Traxler. He was a graduate of LeCenter High School, class of 1964. He lived and worked in LeCenter and Mankato, MN until he moved to North Dakota. But it was his move to Montana when he finally found his home, living his last 20 years in Ennis. While in Ennis, he was active in the Elks Club and Trinity Episcopal Church.

**William F. Miller** passed away October 30, 2017 at home near Ennis, Mt. He was born Nov. 25, 1927 in Spokane, Washington. After service with the U.S. Occupational Force in Japan, he returned home to marry Sally. Bill spent his career with Chevron Oil and frequently came to the Madison Valley to camp and fish. Following his retirement, he and Sally built their home near Ennis and for several years were in partnership in the Happy Angler Antiques store. Bill was also a charter member of the Madison Meadows Golf Course Association. Bill is father-in-law to Gary Forney, long time MVHA member.

**Richard L. (Dick) Todd** passed away November 1, 2017 at the Tobacco Root Care Center in Sheridan, MT. He was born at the Todd Ranch on Moore's Creek near "the rocks" west of Ennis, on March 25, 1923. Dick's oldest brother, Jack, attended his first year of school at the 8-Mile School. After that the Todd family children rode their horses 4 miles to Ennis for school. In winter the horses were stabled in town during the day. They had one horse, Ed, who did not like being ridden double, so two children would have to squeeze into the saddle or get bucked off. Dick's mother, Mary, would watch for the children to come over the gap on their horses from school, sometimes in bitter weather. *Cont pg 3*



McAllister, Harry Odden, Pauline Oakwood, Hazel Reyner and Louise Steiner from the Ruby Valley.

The county owes a debt of gratitude to these dedicated workers. And the MVHA and its members appreciate all the work that was done. These books are used a lot.

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In memory of the most famous doctor in the Madison Valley, Doc Losee, the Wagon Tongue will continue with the following history account taken from *The Madison Valley: A High Country Community* by Minnie Paugh

### **Doctors came to the Madison Valley**

The first doctors moved from Bannock into Alder Gulch in Madison County in 1863. Settlers followed the prospectors to the gold diggings, then scattered to the good farm land where they raised root crops and grain for the miners and produced fodder for their livestock. The first men to build crude cabins in the Madison Valley intended to cut wild hay for the freighters and to fatten their worn out oxen and horses. The first wave of settlement included as many medical practitioners as the healthy miners needed. The early doctors must have been rough and ready individuals because the wagon train captains and freighters could handle most emergencies without help.

Pioneers were tough. Orson N. Newman who was the first man to settle his family in the Madison Valley amputated his own big toe after he could not find a doctor willing to solve his bunion problem. (1) John Vetter Sr., who started a shoe and leather shop in Virginia City in 1863, brought with him a well stocked drug kit. The local doctors said it included the best possible selection of remedies to bring to the frontier. Mr. Vetter's nephews and nieces started to settle in the Madison Valley in the 1880's.

The doctors who came to Virginia City, Montana in the 1863 did not lack for good medical training. Dr. Levinus Daems, whose sons, Harry and Lev, homesteaded on Wigwam Creek, graduated from the Medical Department of the University of Paris.(2) He shared his practice with Dr. Erasmus D. Levitt of Bannack who took care of most of their medical practice. Dr. Daems mixed drugs for the other doctors in Virginia City. He was an excellent surgeon when his skill was required.

Dr. Ira C. Smith who arrived in Bannack in 1863 had one of the first practices in the Madison Valley. He visited regularly at the home of a patient at Henry's Lake which was more than a hundred miles from his office in Virginia City. He made his calls to this sick woman even during the snowy winter months.(3)

Dr. Smith traveled in a buggy. He always wore a black suit with a Prince Albert coat and a 4 freshly laundered white shirt. He topped his tall, spare figure with a black silk hat that only partly covered his silky white hair. He died in 1884 when his neck was broken as he was thrown over the dashboard of his overturned buggy. The accident happened on a lonely road in the Madison Valley. This doctor had no close personal friends, but his monument in the Virginia City Cemetery was paid for by popular subscription and is engraved, "Madison County's Tribute to Madison County's Friend".(4)

The first doctor to reside in the Madison Valley was Calvin M. Pinckney.(5) He was the son of the 1864 pioneer Simeon Pinckney. They belonged to a family that earned its living by practicing healing and by farming. He was in the Union Army during the Civil War where he provided medical care to the 5th Michigan Cavalry. Three years of active combat service gave him excellent training for a medical practice on the frontier where most of the practice was treating accidents or controlling epidemics. Dr. Pinckney joined his father at Meadow Creek in 1875. Simeon Pinckney had a small farm and a saw mill on the Washington Bar. The doctor had a wife and two children when he came to Montana. Esther Pinckney became the postmistress at Meadow Creek in 1882.

Between 1875 and 1904 Dr. Pinkney traveled the roads and trails of the Madison Valley giving medical service to his friends and neighbors. When medical problems could be anticipated the Pinckney's took cases such as expectant mothers into their home. The pioneers respected and depended upon him, and he delivered most of the babies born in the Valley during his 29 years of practice there.

Dr. LeRoy Southmayd, who practiced in Virginia City with Dr. Patrick J. Ragan roughly between 1889 and 1899,(6) had a thriving practice in the Madison Valley. This doctor set up hospital rooms in hotels such as the one in Meadow Creek which was owned by George B. Bess. He was a young doctor who left the state in 1898 to serve with the Montana volunteers during the Spanish American War. Soon after his return he took up a practice in his home town, Great Falls, MT. His testimony prevented the execution of Martin Peel for the murder of William Ennis when the case was appealed for clemency in 1899. Dr. Southmayd who had attended to Mr. Peel during a long illness was away at war when the trial occurred.

Thomas B. Marquis was the first medical practitioner to live in the Madison Valley who had a

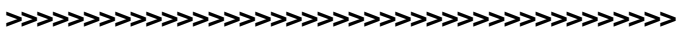


**For Your Reading Pleasure**

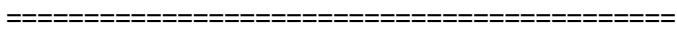
*Vigilante Moon* by Stan Lynde (Historical fiction) It's laid in largely unknown stretches of expanding western lands as the Civil War is drawing to a close and new vistas are opening. Check your local libraries or Amazon. Will be available at museum in June.

**Looking Ahead**

- February 15, 2018 4:00pm** Need a program
- March 15, 2018 4:00pm** William Ennis Birthday Celebration. Event and place to be announced
- April 19, 2018 4:00PM** Need a program

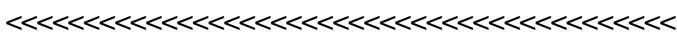


Still looking for the history of the creamery in Ennis and additional information on what happened to the eagle. Don't forget to write to MVHA at Box 474, Ennis or visit with a board member. Someone must be able to help out.



**MVHA Programs**

All programs of the MVHA are recorded and transferred to DVD. If you are interested in any specific program, send your request of specific program or programs and payment of \$5.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling for each DVD ordered to MVHA P.O. Box 474, Ennis, MT 59729



*Cataloging project Continued from pg 5*

In order to begin this process, in 2016 the MVHA applied for and received a grant of \$3,000 from Humanities Montana. With this grant the MVHA contracted with Mary Biehl, a Doctoral Candidate in American Studies with a minor in history at Montana State University as a summer intern. Ms Biehl was selected from among several candidates who responded to the MVHA announcement of its need for an intern. She is highly qualified for the job, having completed a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in English. Ms. Biehl also has museum experience having worked in a museum where she researched exhibits and assisted with cataloguing newly acquired artifacts. She has also lectured and participated in conferences and presentations related to history, including preparing and presenting two lectures on the "Mary Miegs Atwater: Success and failures of a Montana Businesswoman." Her interest in history, and specifically Montana history, and her experience with history research and cataloging make her the ideal choice to help the MVHA get started with organizing the museum. The MVHA expected that Ms. Biehl, with the help of MVHA member volunteers would be able to develop and complete a digital catalog. However, after expending the grant funds and funds provided by the MVHA, we found that only a portion of the work had been completed.

As a result the MVHA applied for and obtained a second grant for \$2,500 from the Humanities Montana. The MVHA again contracted with Mary Biehl who, with member assistance continued to inventory and catalog the museum collection.

After two years, two grants from the Humanities Montana, and the help of local individuals, the project is still not completed. When the MVHA started this project it had high hopes of a completed inventory and digital

**MVHA Board of Directors**

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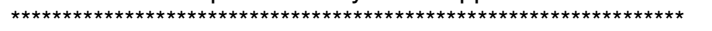
Meetings and programs held monthly on the **third** Thursday of each month or as scheduled. Watch the *Madsonian*, posters and your email for details of time, place and program. Board meetings are held on the **first** Wednesday of each month at 10:00am, at the First Madison Valley Bank Sept-May. *The Wagon Tongue* will be published quarterly. Next issue will be April 2018. Articles of historic interest and memories of the departed are welcomed. Editor needs your history stories!  
Editor: Shirley Love whitneypranch@wispswest.net  
Contributing editors:  
*Madsonian* Obituaries, Volunteer Spotlight, Lifestyle section and Spirits High at Willie's Distillery  
*Pioneer Trails and Trials* Len Todd pg 191  
"Owed Debt of Gratitude" *Madsonian* Thursday, November 5, 1992 Page 12  
Minnie Paugh *The Madison Valley A High Mountain Community*  
Lee Robison "Madison Valley History Association continues cataloging project with assistance from Humanities Montana" *Madsonian* Thursday, December 14, 2017

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**Printing of this Newsletter was generously provided by First Madison Valley Bank**  
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catalog within two summers. This proved not to be the case. And, although great progress has been made so far, much remains to be done. The MVHA will continue to look for financial assistance and will ask members and others in the Madison Valley Community to assist in completing the project.

The Madison Valley History Museum helps us look into the past and try to understand the difficulties, heroism, and plain doggedness of those who cooked, farmed, ranched, hunted, gathered roots and berries in order to survive and make this Valley the habitable place it is today. Our cataloging project helps to ensure that the tools, equipment and toys these first citizens used are identified and described so that historians and others can find them and better describe and bring back to our imaginations just who these people are.

If you as a member or someone who happens to read this article are willing to help out in some way, please step forward. Your help will be very much appreciated.



**History Tidbit** Elwin Grady was the US Army Veteran who helped build the Alaskan Highway and also lived in Jeffers.  
Compliments of Don Black