# The Wagon Tongue

Volume 16 issue 3

Madison Valley History Association

July 2018

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 Greetings from the Madison Valley. It is now past the 4th of July and it has been hot. The MVHA is still thriving and the wagons are still rolling along although slowly.

At the May Annual meeting, the membership passed a budget and elected two new board members. They are Eric and Brandi Palmerton. A big thank you to you both for stepping up and becoming board members. President Lee Robison presented two thank you awards; one to Mona Durham for an excellent job of scheduling people to work at the museum and one to Liz Applegate for creating the monthly posters that MVHA puts up around the valley to promote our programs, field trips and museum. President Robison reported that MVHA received a \$4000 grant from Montana History Foundation to continue our cataloging of the artifacts at the museum. This is a continuing and very important project. The meeting ended with a lively auction of 10 items. Thank you to all those who donated items and to those who won the bids.

On June 2, MVHA held a highway clean up on the highway that runs past the museum. Very few volunteers showed up to do this community project so MVHA will not be doing the highway cleanup in the future. The Highway Department has been so advised.

The June Board meeting was the annual re-organization of the board meeting. The election results were President: Larry Love, Vice President: Brandi Palmerton, Otis Thompson to continue as secretary and Kevin Brenneke to continue as treasurer. Directors: John Gecho and Eric Palmerton. Lee Robison agreed to remain on the board to finish out the 2 years left of Jimmy Carlson's term. Congratulations to all board members.

Our regular meeting in June was a program to get ideas from our membership on how to get more members involved in the future of the MVHA by serving on committees, chairing committees, planning programs, field trips, fundraisers, and providing articles to be put in the Wagon Tongue. This was done by breaking into small groups and the MVHA received some very good ideas, suggestions, program topics and field trip ideas. Now the board needs members to actually volunteer to or sign up for carrying these ideas forward. The board really needs your help as many hands make light work. The board of seven members, which you have elected over the years, cannot carry the whole load to keep the MVHA a viable organization.

For July, the board is working on signage for the outside artifacts. Can you help? The summer fundraiser is the raffle of the Larry Zabel giclée. You have all received in the April Wagon Tongue a picture of this painting of the 3 Dollar Bridge, information on the painting, and an order blank to send in names of folks who are willing to buy a chance on this picture. Send in money collected and the names of ticket buyers to MVHA, P.O. Box 474. Ennis, MT 59729. Kevin Brenneke, Treasurer, picks these up at the Post Office and fills in each name and address on each raffle ticket sold and deposits them in the drawing box. This is a lot more efficient than mailing raffle tickets back and forth. This is a project each MVHA member can do no matter where you live. Just pick up the phone or walk down the street. Thank you to all members who have already sold tickets. There is still time for raffle tickets to be sold and sent in.

Due to printer problems, the July 28 field trip to to the Armitage barn and early history of the Armitage family will be over before you get this mailing. The August 4 field trip is to the Wall Creek Game Refuge. MVHA is still working on the September Field trip or program. The board is working on programs for October and November. So let the MVHA know what you would like to do.

Have a good rest of the summer and we will see you around the history corner. Your Wagon Master, Larry Love

From Pioneer Trails and Trials Schools in the Pony- Norris Areas From the records of Mrs Henry Adkins.

The first school in Pony was held in the back of the old Episcopal Church. In 1890 a school of two rooms was built near the present building. This was made into a barn after the new school was built. By 1901 there were about 166 school children and to accommodate them, the two story brick school was built for \$10,000 in 1905. The first floor was used for the grade school and the second contained a library, laboratory and classrooms for high school students.

The grade school had six regular teachers and a music and physical education. Around 1920 a gym was built next to the school. The building still stands. The first piano for the school cost \$400. The students helped raise the money to purchase it.

There was a school at Stringtown and then one was built on the corner of the Martin Place. In about 1912 another school was built so it would be centrally located. It was located where Harrison is now.

Membership: New members since April 2018.

**Brandi & Eric Palmerton** (F)

Ennis, Mt 59729

Membership update 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 July, August or September 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 have generously submitted your renewal memberships. 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**

**Polly Todd** celebrated her 90th birthday on May 5th, 2018 with a big party in Sheridan, MT.

**Patsy Eckert** was the volunteer honored in the volunteer spotlight of the *Madisonian* for May 10th, 2018. Patsy gives back to her community through her art.

**Vickey Gordon** was honored as the Grand Marshall of the recent 4th of July parade. Her accomplishments for our community are very many and very admirable.

Lynn and Devonna Owens and family were honored for their conservation work and community engagement across more than half a century of ranching and farming on North Meadow Creek area. The story of their award appeared in the July 21st. issue of the *Madisonian*.

**Memorials** Correction: Steve Hubner instead of Huber.

Do not forget to share with family and friends when a loved one passes that a memorial to the MVHA is a great way to remember a departed and have their memory preserved in history. Besides money memorials, another great way to preserve the memory or honor a friend, a family member or a whole family is to purchase a Walk of Names 2

board for the walkways at the museum. As the museum complex grows, there is still room for name boards so request an application and more information at MVHA, P.O. Box 474, Ennis, MT 59729 or call Larry Love at 406-682-5780 or Otis Thompson at 406-682-7415. Summer and fall are great times to have a Walk of Names board prepared and mounted on the walkway.

MVHA is a 501(c)3 non profit so all donations are tax deductible.

#### Memories

Elizabeth Marie "Lisa" Hill passed away on April 1, 2018 in Bozeman, MT. She was born November 22,1971 to Deneice Keller and Cecil Hill. She grew up in Ennis and Frenchtown.

Barbie Harmon Durham passed away April 16. 2018 in the Madison Valley. Barbie was born May 24, 1960 to Bobbi and Orin Harman in Arco, Idaho. She spent her young years in southern Idaho and graduated from Bonneville High School in 1978. She moved to the Madison Valley in 1988 when she married Todd Durham of Cameron. Mona Durham. long time MVHA member, is Barbie's mother-in-law. Barbie enjoyed working and was an extremely active community member. She was a grant writer and served on many boards and was appointed by both Governor Schweitzer and Governor Bullock to the Montana Heritage Commission. She will be remembered in Virginia City for her work for the new Visitors Center, Barbie helped MVHA in our beginning stages of writing grants.

Karen D. Claassen passed away on May 6, 2018 at the Madison Valley Manor in Ennis, MT. She was born in Fullerton, Calif. on Jan 3, 1949 to Kenneth and Beverly Claassen. Her dad was a career Air Force officer so her education was gained in California, over seas in France, Missouri and Colorado. She graduated from Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO. She was not able to pursue her career of social work because she was diagnosed with M.S. She was cared for at home. After her father passed away, Bev moved with Karen and her elderly mother, Esther Zabel, who also lived with them, to Ennis to be near her brother, Larry Zabel, renowned Western artist. Karen and her grandmother, Esther, became residents of the Madison Valley Manor and were together there for a couple years. With her talents of writing, Karen wrote monthly articles for the Madisonian. Karen was known for her wonderful smile and for her love of trying to do the many activities at the Manor. She loved to go fishing at Lion's Club Park.

**Shanna Robison** passed away May 22, 2018. She was born in Sheridan, MT on March 7, 1978 to Vern Robison of McAllister and Yvonne (cont on pg 3)

(Cont from pg 2) Conko of St. Ignatius. She spent her early life in the Madison Valley moving cattle on the Robison ranch with her horse Sky and participating in the Ennis Rodeo. When her mother moved to St. Ignatius, her interests turned to pow wows and she learned to do Indian dances. She was talented in sports and played basketball for Northern Idaho College in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho.

Faye June Oetter Watkins passed away on June 8, 2018. She was born on June 22, 1929 in Joliet, Illinois to Conrad and Pearl Oetter. Faye graduated from Joliet Township High School and then earned a Bachelor's degree in Voice from the Conservatory of Music in Chicago, Illinois. On her way home one night during a snow storm, while waiting for her father to come and get her, she met another stranded traveler. He was traveling from Detroit, Michigan with his first new car. He beguiled her with the description of his ranch in Ennis. His name was Jack Watkins. Later they became husband and wife. Jack M. Watkins was a descendent of a long time Madison Valley family starting with George Spencer Watkins who ended up in Virginia City, Montana Territory on June 2, 1864. He did not like gold mining so came to Ennis and found land covered with wild hay. He cut this hay with a scythe and raked it by hand and hauled it to Virginia City selling it for \$40 to \$50 a ton. He was hauling the hay at the same time that William Ennis started his freighting business to Virginia Citv. George Spencer married Frances C. Lee Fort of Willow Creek, MT in 1879. They had four children Mary Irene, Andrew Jackson (Jack) John Spencer and Catherine. Andrew Jackson (Jack) married Ethel May McCormick. To this union were Joanne, Janice, and Jack M. who married Faye Oetter. The young couple moved around as Jack explored career opportunities but he was asked to return to the ranch to help his family's business. Thus Faye became a rancher's wife with all the various duties. Fave was also involved in many community activities. One of them included singing and while going through Faye's treasures, niece, Cindy Lou, found and donated to the MVHA a copy of the Blue Book of Favorite Songs, property of the Ennis Singing Club dated March 1938. You may see a copy of this book displayed on the piano at the museum as soon as it is cataloged and displayed. Information on Watkins family: Pioneer Trails and Trials George S. Watkins, and George S. Watkins Family by Cathrine Watkins Carrau pg. 197-198

Remember: If you have family stories about any of our deceased folks, please submit to the *Wagon* **3** 

Tongue. It is never too late to submit a story. Any piece of history is important. to the Madison Valley.

Doctors came to the Madison Valley From The Madison Valley: A High Country Community by Minnie Paugh Continued from April 2018. The story continues with Dr. Farnsworth...

He remembered the occasion when he received a rushed call to North Meadow Creek. He had only the equipment in his medical bag, because he had no knowledge of the type of emergency he would be handling and he had to walk a quarter of a mile through deep snow. He found his patient had miscarried and would bleed to death if he waited for help or tried to get her out. He did a bare handed curettage and she had no problem with infection.

Dr. Farnsworth preferred to perform his surgeries in Butte at the Murray Hospital. He remembers getting his car high centered in the deep snow of the old highway across the Norris Hills. The highway he followed from Virginia City to Ennis was even worse during some winters. Paris was the halfway point and sometimes a welcome sight. There was a toilet near a cool spring of water where drivers used to cool their horses or their automobile motor with its boiling radiator. A county commissioner names Paris had this facility built at a wide bend in this mountain road.

Dr. Farnsworth's memories of his practice in Ennis are varied. There was a polio epidemic soon after he came to the community. People wanted him to close the schools but didn't want to give up community gatherings. He treated his three patients and left the quarantine alone. He enjoyed buying eggs from Harrison Comely's mother whose ranch house was beside the road as he started back to Virginia City. She loaded his car with vegetables worth twice as much as his eggs. He laughs ruefully about two elderly ladies, sisters, who approached him about the rebates Hiny Rakeman, the druggist, gave him when he prescribed drugs. It was hard to explain to them that Hiny's business and his had no connection and he made no profit from the drugs he prescribed.

A health problem caused the doctor to return to medical school where he specialized in problems of the eye, ear and throat. He could no longer continue the exposure and risks that were a part of his rural general practice. His medical practice followed him to Bozeman where he has practiced since 1948.

Between 1940 and 1942 Dr. Willard Thierfelder practiced Osteopathy in Ennis. He had started a medical degree at Temple University in Philadelphia and in 1947 he returned there to complete it. While he was in Ennis his office was in the (cont pg 4)

#### For Your Reading Pleasure

Please turn in any good book titles you have read lately that would be of interest to our MVHA Members.

### **Looking Ahead**

Sat., August 4, 2018 Field Trip to Wall Creek Meet 9:00 am Lion's Club park

September date and program to be announced

**October & November** MVHA working on program suggestions from June meeting or any idea you might be able to present.

From Gary Forney: The Virginia City Preservation Alliance and the Elling House Arts & Humanities Center will again be co-sponsoring a summer series of programs to be held in the Linderman Cabin. The theme of the 2018 series will be "Montana's Millionaires" and will profile the lives (sometimes admirable, sometimes not) of some former residents of the Alder Gulch who made it good..really good! The continuation of this year's schedule will be:

August 16th at 6:30pm William Andrews Clark (Gary Forney)

**Sept. 9th** William Boyce Thompson (Christina Koch)

The beautifully restored Linderman Cabin is located at the historic Robber's Roost inn, approximately 4 miles east of Sheridan on Hwy 287. There is no charge to attend these programs. Please visit the Elling House web site (ellinghouse.org) for more information.

From Otis Thompson and Roger Stommel:

## **Cliff Lake School House Summer Speaker Series**

One program left: August 23 7:00-8:00 pm Cliff Lake School House: "Big Horn Sheep." Join Julie Cunningham MT FW&P wildlife biologist and MSU Prof. Bob Garrott as they share their knowledge and passion of Big Horn Sheep and what is being done with re-location efforts within the local Madison Valley herd.

# >>>>>>>> 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

<<<<<<<>></>(cont. from pg. 3) Bauer Building. In 1974 he has his own Clinic in Forest Grove, Oregon. (16)

A Dr. McLean came to Ennis in 1943 and left because he found a better practice in his home area. Dr. Van Veen came as a result of the work of a Commercial Clubs committee's search for a doctor. He left because he was called back to the Army Reserve in 1948. There was a Dr. Robert Coles who had a practice for a short time but no one seems to remember him.

Dr. Ron Losee arrived in Ennis in 1949 driving an Army jeep. He was accompanied by his wife, Olive and their daughter, Rebecca. He was a native of Red Hook, New York. He took his undergraduate college degree at Dartmouth and his medical school degree at Yale.

#### **MVHA Board of Directors**

President: Larry Love

Director: Lee Robison

Vice-President: Brandi Palmerton Treasurer: Kevin Brenneke Secretary: Otis Thompson Director: John Gecho Director: Eric Palmerton

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. Please call Larry Love 682-5780 for date of board meetings. *The Wagon Tongue* will be published quarterly. Next issue will be October 2018. Articles of historic interest and memories of the departed are welcomed. Editor needs your history stories!

Editor: Shirley Love whitneyptranch@wispwest.net

Contributing editors: Madisonian Obituaries,

Minnie Paugh <u>The Madison Valley A High Mountain Community</u> Doctors came to the Madison Valley" Catherine Watkins Carrau *Pioneer Trails and Trials* "George S. Watkins and George S. Watkins" P. 197-198 Mrs. Henry Adkins *Pioneer Trails and Trials* Pg 904

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

Dr. Losee's first home and office in Ennis was a log cabin he rented from Mrs. Fay Jeffers, the daughter of the founder of the town. His office furniture at first was an army cot, a card table and the contents of what he called his "cutting kit" (suture equipment.) He was the general practitioner in the Madison Valley from 1949 until 1957 when he returned to Royal Victoria Hospital to specialize in bone surgery and his wife to complete her nursing degree

During the preceding eight years the Madison Valley Hospital had been built and Dr. Losee had to cope with surgical problems caused by automobile accidents on Highway 287 to West Yellowstone, farm accidents involving machinery, and recreational accidents due to skiing and hunting. It was possible to fly critical cases to the hospital in Great Falls using the airport at Crooker's Sportsman's Lodge, but time was an important factor. Dr. Losee knew his hospital needed modern equipment and a doctor trained to handle orthopedic surgery.

To be continued in October with Dr. Losee back in Ennis for the 1959 earthquake.

- 16. Storey, Mrs. Randall. Interview April 1974
- **17**. Kuglin, John. Orthopedic Surgeon Seeks to Eliminate Pain, Help Patient to Walk. *Great Falls Tribune July 20, 1969 Montana Parade* p. 2

If you have missed any of the previous parts of any Wagon Tongue articles, you may find them on the website listed on the top of page 1.