

# The Wagon Tongue

Volume 16 issue 4

Madison Valley History Association

October 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** Fall greetings from the Madison Valley. The colors of fall are awesome now and winter is coming around the corner. The MVHA Board is still doing it's business and are still looking into the future.

The past season has been an average one. Our regular meetings have been well attended mainly because of the great programs. We had field trips to the Armitage barn and ranch in July which is now the Carroll ranch hosted by Martha Armitage Klauman. Martha did an excellent job of telling her family's history of growing up on the ranch to an audience of about 50. Thanks, Martha. In August, Fred King hosted a tour of the Wall Creek Game Refuge for about 45 individuals. This tour resulted in a story of what history is all about. The Dale Family, MVHA members, who were on the trip to learn more about their family background found out where the grave of their ancestor's twins were buried by way of tour direction of Fred King and grave location by Larry Love. The grave was at the Virgil Lichte house and although the grave has been known about for years, who was buried there was a mystery. The Dale family has since erected a grave marker made by MVHA member, Steve Garrett. Wow. Way to discover history, guys and gals. In September Darlene Neville Rochez gave a program about artifacts of the Jeffers, Switzer, Ennis and Chowning families. Well done, Darlene.

There was no program scheduled for October but there are programs scheduled for November and December.

The MVHA needs to have everyone on board to help keep the museum open, schedule field trips and programs and keep the organization running.

In 2017, 500,000 tourists visited Virginia City during a summer season. We need to figure out a way to get some of these tourists to our museum. If you have any ideas just let the MVHA board know.

It has taken a lot of work and effort for the MVHA board to get interesting programs and field trips on a monthly basis. It would be great for a volunteer committee to be formed for finding programs. With all of the membership having input to this committee, continuing to have programs every month could be achieved. MVHA needs your help in this area for us to continue having a viable organization. It does take a lot of work but many hands make lighter work, but it can be done. Just let the board know of your ideas.

Stay warm, drive safe and don't eat too much turkey. Think about your Madison Valley History Association and get everyone on board. See you around the history corner. Your Wagon Master, Larry Love.

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## **Museum Report for Summer 2018**

The MVHA museum hosted the annual visit of Jenny Brozovich and her 4th grade class on May 10, 2018. The students always enjoy their visit to the museum. The guest book started showing visitors on June 12th and 14th with the official opening on June 16th. The museum closed for the season on Sept.15. The count taken from the guest book tallied in at 263 visitors for 2018. . This is less than the past two years but the second year of fires and smoke in Montana may have kept folks away. Our guest book is only as good as the volunteers who invite visitors to sign in. But what other ways do we have to record individuals visiting? As MVHA members, we need to figure out a way to get more folks to come by on North 287 and stop and visit the museum. Put on your thinking caps and see what kind of ideas might come up.

Remember the museum is always open during closed hours in the summer and all the rest of the year by appointment.

**Membership:** New members since July 2018. MVHA thanks the following for joining and for their support.

**Barnett, Vurnie (I)**  
Ennis, MT. 59729

**Ferris, James & Velora (F)**  
Island Park, Idaho

**Simmons, Diane (I)**  
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 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 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**

**Neil Kent, Lois Daems Miller and Richard Coad**, all were raised near Varney and their birthdays were only 5 days apart. When they were young, all three celebrated their birthdays with one party. As they aged their parties ceased. In 1999, at age 60, the celebrations resumed. In 2018, their 79th birthdays were celebrated. Sept. 13, 2018 *Madisonian*

**Jack Kirby** hosted a 70th year class reunion for members of the class of 1948 on Sept. 18, 2018. Eight of the class of 20 were able to attend. Class members attending were Mona Durham, Emily Watson, Mae Hautier, Lynn Owens, Clarice Wonder Brooks, Bobbi Klatt and host, Jack Kirby. Alumni came from as far away as Billings and Columbia Falls to attend the reunion.

**Esther Warburton** also hosted a "gathering" at her home. When she left her home to run errands on July 12, 2018, there wasn't anything in sight. When she returned later that afternoon, the whole tree 2

was buzzing. Throughout the afternoon, she watched as the swarm of bees became larger and by Friday morning, the thing was solid and about a foot wide. She called for help and it was determined that the swarm was honey bees, not hornets or wasps. Thus the bees were placed in a hive box and took to a place with more bee hives. Everyone got a happy ending, especially the bees and all those involved did not even get a sting.

**Jan and Bob Beekman** were honored in the Volunteer spotlight in the *Madisonian* recently.

#### **Memories**

**Robert B. Goggins** passed away July 9, 2018 in Ennis, MT. He was born in Brooks, MT on May 24th, 1924 to John and Pearl Cook Goggins. He grew up in the Clark's Fork Valley near Fromberg, MT. After graduating from Fromberg High School in 1942, Bob worked a variety of farming and ranching related jobs. One of those was for an apiary that sent him to Harlowton area to work bees. A cute red head named Cora Amdor working at the local soda fountain caught his eye. He asked her for a date the day after she graduated from high school and they were married October 30, 1946. Bob and Cora worked for several prominent Hereford breeders with Bob as herdsman. He and Cora bought their first registered Herefords in 1955 and bought the home ranch in Ennis in 1959 from the Earl Love family.

**Dorothy Allene Gates** passed away July 11, 2018. She was born in Madison, Florida on October 19th, 1930 to Benny DeLoy Wells and Berta Lenora Johnson Wells. She spent her childhood years in Madison, Florida. She then married, had a child and divorced. After her divorce, she met George Schabarker. The majority of their married life was spent in the Madison Valley and Montana. After separating from George, she married Henry (Hank) Madison Gates, with whom she lived happily for the rest of their lives. She was a cook for the Ennis schools for over 12 years.

**Cecil Clarence Klatt** passed away August 17, 2018 in Ennis, MT. He was born on April 20, 1920 in Westport, South Dakota to Louis Klatt and Nellie Hollihan. He grew up along the North and South Dakota border and worked on the family farm. He married Ruth Beecher in Ellendale, North Dakota on July 23, 1944. During February and March of 1946, the newly weds jumped in their Plymouth and made several trips to Montana with the goal of finding a ranch to buy. They ended up purchasing Ben Lockhart's ranch on Wall Creek. He considered himself a cowman and continued to follow the livestock and grain markets for the rest of his life. Needing to be closer to town (continued on pg 3)

(continued from lag 2) for school, they bought a small house and three acres in Jeffers in 1951. In 1958, the Wall Creek ranch was sold and Jeffers became home. After several years of odd jobs, Cecil spent most of the next 30 years working at the Diamond J helping with the many projects that Pete Combs came up with.

One of Cecil's brothers is MVHA member, Lester Klatt.

**Suzie Reints Whitman** passed away Sept. 8, 2018 in Bozeman, MT. She was born October 7, 1943 to John and Erna (Rast) Reints in Jeffers, MT. John and Erna Reints came to the Madison Valley in March 1932 as newly weds. John's uncle, William Reints, homesteaded close to the Bill Armitage Ranch. In later years William Reints bought the John Grady ranch one and a half miles north east of Jeffers and that is how the Reints came to take over that place when William Reints passed away.

John was born in Iowa, raised in California until he was 14 years old, then returned to Iowa. He came to southern Idaho in 1930 for a climate change due to his asthma and there he met Erna Rast. Erna was born in Kulm, North Dakota and when she was 8 months old, her family moved and homesteaded in American Falls, Idaho. On March 17, 1932, Erna and John were married in American Falls, Idaho and boarded a train for Butte, MT. They had to stay in Butte for 4 days before they could catch a train to Norris, MT. From Norris they rode with Vic Anderson on the freight truck to Ennis and they rented a room in the Schoenek Hotel. In the morning, Lou McKean took them to their new home in Jeffers. Neither of them had ever been to Montana before but they fell in love with the country and a few years later they bought the place. The John Grady's called the place the "Cold Springs Ranch" and rightly so as it had good cold water springs that they used for the household and the livestock for many years. They milked cows and then later just raised stock cows. In 1957 they bought the Johnny Olin ranch in Jeffers.

John and Erna had three children, Elso J., long time MVHA member, Jack R., whom the MVHA is still trying to get to join the association and who has continued to manage the ranch after his father passed in 1968, and Susie. Susie graduated from Ennis High School in 1961 and went to hair styling school for a year. She married Clyde Whitman from West Yellowstone, MT in 1962. Susie spent most of her life in West Yellowstone.

**Progressive Years** pg 771-772 *John and Erna (Rast) Reints* by Erna Reints

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Do not forget to share with family and friends when a loved one passes that a memorial to the MVHA 3

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 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. Christmas and New Year are great times to have a Walk of Names board purchased and ready to be mounted in the spring. MVHA is a 501(c)3 non profit so all donations are tax deductible.

**Doctors came to the Madison Valley** From *The Madison Valley: A High Country Community* by Minnie Paugh. (Continued from July 2018)

The story left off in the July *Wagon Tongue* with Dr Losee knowing his hospital needed modern equipment and a doctor trained to handle orthopedic surgery.

Dr. Losee was back in Ennis when the Madison Valley Earthquake in 1959 (18) brought a flood of emergency cases from the slide area to the little hospital. During this harried experience he was introduced to Dr. Phillip Pallister, the general practitioner at Boulder River School. Later Dr. Losee worked on his days off with Dr. Pallister in a clinic where Dr. Losee tried to correct the orthopedic problems for deformed children among the special needs children who were cared for at Boulder. He tried to relieve them of pain and help them become capable of caring for themselves..

As Dr. Losee became known as an expert in correcting orthopedic problems of the knee, patients started to come to the Madison Valley Hospital from all over the nation. The Doctor handled such surgery for the athletes the teams of the branches of the Montana University System. The Doctor may have stayed in Ennis where he lacks much surgical equipment, stimulating professional contacts, and a good medical library because he enjoys the quiet beauty of the mountain valley and the freedom from social pressure which permits him to enjoy his family and his hobbies. In a larger community he might feel under pressure to join in the activities of the American Medical Association whereas in Ennis no one cares if he had a membership. The Doctor can hope to have time to play his bagpipes and tinker with his model train.

Olive Losee can have her kitchen located over the tipi rings of prehistoric Indians and hope to have some piece of mind as she performs her domestic tasks. (19) (continued on pg 4)

(Continued from pg 3)

Dr. Gene Wilkins joined Dr. Losee in February 1965 to help care for the the general practice in the community. By this time Dr. Losee had become widely recognized as a skilled orthopedic surgeon and was attracting many patients from outside the Madison Valley. A general practice there is still an arduous task since the doctor is never off duty and calls break his sleep and take him away from his meals. Some of the most difficult work is made easier by properly trained people such as Ronald Handlos, a physicians assistant. When he was added to the staff in 1972, he was the first person from the MEDEX Program to work in Montana. He was trained first in the army and then spent a year at the University of Utah. He handles many routine emergencies and saves the Doctor's time for problems which require his skill.

18 Dr. Alan Iddles, who now practices surgery in Bozeman, was cereal practitioner in Ennis from July 1957 until April 1959.

19 Dr. Ronald Losee and Olive Losee review this interview in August 1974.

This ends the *Doctors came to the Madison Valley: A High Country Community* by Minnie Paugh.

Dr. Losee retired in 2015 and passed away May 14, 2017.

Dottie Fossil, chairman of the MVMC Board of Trustees provided the following information to bring the history of doctors in the Madison Valley up to date.

Drs. Losee, Wilkins and PA Handlos were followed by a series of doctors who had little help and still many sleepless nights...Dr. Haywood, Dr. Jay Swoboda, Dr. Cindy Sharp, Dr. Patricia Moran, Dr. James Bischoff, Dr. Anderson, Dr. Curtis Blake, and Ben Linderman, Physician Assistant.

The hospital and clinic (now the history museum) moved to a new facility next door to the old one in 2008 and became known as the Madison Valley Medical Center (MVMC).

Dr. R.D. Marks, who is presently our chief medical officer and chief of staff, joined the MVMC in 2009. Dr. Marks, a Clancy native, with his many years of experience in Missoula, began to attract a stable medical staff. Pat Watson and Tabby Phillips, physician's assistants joined the staff for a year or two. Physician Assistant, Marty Hensel joined Dr. Marks in 2010 and in subsequent years, Dr. David Newton, (who as a student from Tulane did a rotation here), Dr. Maura Davenport from Michigan and Krystin Nutt, a nurse practioner, are our present providers. Dr. Newton does endoscopy procedures here. MVMC has a full laboratory and radiology department offering not only X-rays

but CT, MRI, ultra sound, mammography and bone density screening.

Traffic no longer needs to be stopped for the helicopter to land on the highway at the 10 bed critical access hospital and trauma receiving center. Thanks to the generosity of a community member, our Foundation was able to give the funds to build the helipad we have today.

Along with our medical staff we have regularly visiting specialists. Dr. Blair Erb sees cardiology patients; Dr. Jack Hensold sees oncology patients; Dr. Mick Lifson sees gynecology patients; and Dr. Will Helton sees patients needing hearing assistance, all saving valley residents the trip to Bozeman.

Dr. Andy Thomas heads an active physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy department at the Medical Center and serves patients at the Madison Valley Manor. Patients who have surgery in another hospital can come back here to recover and receive therapy. Cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation is also offered. This enables our community members to receive the services that they need locally near their friends and family. It is with the generosity of our community members and mill levy support that we are able to deliver high quality medical care close to home.

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**Searching for History** by Shirley Love, Editor

The two field trips last summer were very productive in learning the history of the well known Madison Valley family, the Armitages and finding the history of another prominent Madison Valley family. John and Bridget Dale attended the field trip to the Armitage ranch and while there they met and visited with Mona Durham and learned that she would be working at the museum the following Tuesday. Looking for family information, John and Bridget went to the museum on Tuesday and visited some more with Mona. Mona suggested that they attend the next field trip to the Wall Creek Game range as that would encompass the area of interest to the Dale family.

At one of the field trip stops, John Gecho, who grew up in the area, pointed out the Ruby Creek drainage and the possible location in the wide spread area that was known as Abe, MT where the Claude and Maude Mulhall Dale, John Dale's grandparents, would have homesteaded. John Dale mentions that his grandparents had lost stillborn twins in their early days. The field trip continued and pretty soon we were at the Virgil Lichte homestead. At a previous field trip in 2009, Smitty Overstreet took us to this old homestead— (continued on pg 5)

*continued from pg 4)*

by now mostly gone—and she pointed out an unmarked child’s grave and told the story that had been passed down that Emma Lichte, Virgil and Clarence Lichte’s mother, had cared for this little grave for the many years before she died. We remembered that it was at the backdoor step and was encircled by white quartz rock. Larry Love, MVHA president, went bushwhacking through the overgrown weeds and found the exact same grave site. The house is now completely gone and even the foundation hard to see. The Dale family is pretty sure that this would be the grave of the still born twins.(1)

As we continue to put the pieces of this history puzzle together, we learned by way of the Pioneer Trails and Trials(2) that Clarence Lichte’s wife was a registered nurse. Her profession helped her care for her family as well as take care of the many emergencies that occurred in the wide spread area of Abe, MT. We also learned that she and Clarence had five children of their own so when Claude and pregnant Maude Dale came for help, they went to Virgil’s home right next door to Clarence. Esther then went there to do her mid-wife duties. When the babies were stillborn, Claude had to thaw the ground for a grave (3) and the twins were buried by Virgil’s home and thus his mother, Emma Lichte cared for the little grave.

Steve Garrett, MVHA member, who has been following this whole family history with his friend, John, decided to make a grave marker for the site. This grave marker is now in place and John’s aunt and uncle will now be forever remembered.

(1) John Dale conversation 10-10-18.

(2) Pioneer Trails and Trials Clarence Lichte pg 109 by Esther Lichte

(3) John Dale conversation 10-10-18

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This story shows what “preserving the history of the Madison Valley” is all about and why your Executive Board works endlessly each month and each year to continue to preserve the history. Hopefully you, as members and readers, will continue to find some more stories such as this to preserve and share.

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The past story of *Doctors in the Madison Valley* made reference to the fact that the Ennis Commercial Club made a search for available doctors when there was no doctors in the valley. Your editor became curious about the Ennis Commercial Club and found a story compiled by Minnie Paugh from the minutes of the Ennis Commercial Club as made available by Lewis Chamberlin, secretary in 1974. Records from Jan.1951 to Sept 1970 are lost.

## **Ennis Commercial Club**

The Ennis Commercial Club which is a member of the Montana Chamber of Commerce was started in 1944 as a means to work out cooperation to improve the community. During World War II the town lost much of its identity because vital people were either in the armed forces or away from the Madison Valley working in the war industry. Soon these residents would be returning and thoughtful citizens felt the time had come for some planning. Letters were written to service organizations in Great Falls, Helena, Bozeman and Sheridan. Ennis people visited as many organizations as they conveniently could to get ideas about how their club should be organized. A meeting was called on December 4, 1944 with Charles Baur as chairman to permit Frank Blair, who is now District judge, to tell about the Vigilance Club in Virginia City and to express his opinions about how the Ennis club should be developed.

An effort was made to make the entire community aware of the starting of the club and of the need for it. As a part of the advertising, students were invited to suggest names in a contest. At the first meeting \$5 was awarded to Dorothy Hungerford for submitting the name which the club had decided to use during it’s second planning session. Elections were held at their first stated meeting on January 5, 1945. Their usual meeting place at this time was to be the Methodist Church. The first officers were Charles Bauer, President; Richard Alsop, first vice president; Hal Pasley, second vice president; and George Hungerford, secretary-treasurer. In 1947 Harold Helt was elected as the second president. The following month the organization sponsored the first Boy Scout troop in Ennis. \$20 was set aside to help the new troop get started. Walter Bryan volunteered to be the first Scout Master. In 1948 the Club spent \$19 to buy him a uniform.

The improvement of the road between Ennis and Virginia City was important to Ennis because it was extremely dangerous, especially during winter. Several Ennis people worked in the county offices in Virginia City. A committee was appointed to push for a new highway since it was a state road. As county commissioner, Charles Bauer, the Commercial Club president, had already been looking for the best possible route for this road.

Rural electrification was vital to the Madison Valley people in 1945. Electric lines were only present where the Montana Power Company could see a profit in building them and where the government had provided lines for an agency such as the Forest Service. A few private lines had *(continued on pg 6)*

