

# The Wagon Tongue

Volume 17 issue 1

Madison Valley History Association

January 2019

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** Winter greetings from the Madison Valley. The river is running slush ice and is starting to back up the river from the lake so the gorge might get to Ennis

The MVHA ended 2018 with our Christmas potluck. Special thanks to Kevin and Marty Brenneke for preparing the turkey and to Jo and Otis Thompson for preparing the ham. A big thank you to those who came and brought their favorite dishes. It was great. Christmas stories were shared and special thanks to Bev Claassen for even bringing "show and tell" with her antique Christmas ornaments.

We are now into 2019 looking towards our museum opening on Memorial Day and in June. For the new year we need to improve our membership by including some of the younger members of the Madison Valley so MVHA can preserve their stories. Another idea is working on a plan to get more of the 5,000 folks who visit Virginia City each summer to drive this way and visit our museum. Thirdly is to get a line up of programs and field trips so MVHA can do better than we did this past year by missing a couple months.

MVHA will still need volunteers to work the museum during the summer so look at your calendar right away and make plans. If you live out of the area, plan your trips here to visit or to bring guests by including working a shift at the museum. Lastly we need help to arrange artifacts in the new museum building.

There is always work to be done. If you have ideas, suggestions, or would like to take on a project, please let the MVHA Board know. We have to look toward our membership for help in some capacity.

On Feb. 21 MVHA will be having a program on the history of the Madison Theater given by John Heckler, owner of the theater. Watch for posters and publicity.

Stay warm and Happy Valentine's Day. Your Wagon Master, Larry Love.

**Trinity Episcopal Church.** The Trinity Episcopal Church in Jeffers has been working for the last six years to rejuvenate and restore the old church which is now 116 years old. After a celebration held last fall, the church is ready for another 100 years. Read the article in the September 13, 2018 *Madisonian* by Reagan Colyer to review the progress done in the last six years to restore this piece of history.

Now the *Wagon Tongue* will share the very early history of the Episcopal Church in the Madison Valley.

First services were held in the school house on the east side of the river. Bishop Daniel Tuttle and Rev. E. G. Prout had services about 1874. Trinity Mission was organized and services were held in the Grange Hall until it burned in 1880, then in a hall where Jeffers now stands. It was a two story building. The first story was fitted up for church services and for Sunday School, which was organized by Rev. E. G. Prout about 1885. The second story was used as a community center and dance hall.

The church had a good organ and Sunday School library. The little Mission suffered a loss by fire in 1897.

The present church in Jeffers was built in 1902 while Reverend Chas. Quinney was rector in Virginia City, Montana. He held services in both places. Trinity Mission Church was dedicated September 14, 1914 by Bishop L. R. Brewer. The church was served by ministers from Virginia City until 1914 when Rev. Thos. W. Bennett came as a resident clergyman. He supervised the building of a small rectory and garage in 1915.

In 1918, Rev. Bennett was called to Dillon and clergy of Virginia City again supplied Trinity Mission through 1922.

By Winifred Jeffers for the Madison County History Association pg 886 Pioneer Trails and Trials

## History Tidbit

### HOT OFF THE PRESS

As the paper goes through the rotary printing press friction causes it to heat up. Therefore, if you grab the paper right off the press it's hot. The expression means to get immediate information. Tidbit by Kevin Brenneke.

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

**Duane and Marjorie Gregg (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 2019 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 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**

**Willie's Distillery** owners Willie and Robin Blazer received the Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development award for Veteran-Owned Business of the year. Congratulations Willie and Robin. They are Business members of MVHA.

**Dottie Fossel** is pictured in the Dec. 6, 2018 *Madisonian* speaking to the Jack Creek Preserve Conservation Field School.

**Jan Beekman** is pictured with the Community Choir making beautiful music with her accordion in the Christmas Stroll article Dec 13, 2018 *Madisonian* article.

**Memories**

**Jane Ellen Jeffers Rybus**, long time Madison Valley resident and one of the founders of the Madison Valley History Association passed away October 21, 2018, in North Bend, Wash. She was born on October 19, 1924, in Ennis, MT to Winnifred Chowning Jeffers and Fay Burton Jeffers, both descendants of Madison Valley pioneers. Jane attended schools in Ennis graduating from Ennis High School in 1942. She attended the University 2

of Montana during World War II. In 1946, she was the first woman elected student body president at UM. Echoing her future feminism, during a June 2007 oral history interview, she said "during the time that I was in college all the men were gone, we women were able to take on men's jobs. Women were empowered during those years and then after the war when the men came home, we lost it"

Jane graduated with a degree in English in 1946 and hoped to go east and become a writer or an editor. Instead she married a returning service man, Henry E. Rybus, and the family settled in Washington State. After her children reached school age, Jane returned to school in Seattle and earned teaching credentials. She taught high school English during the 1960s in Bellevue, Wash. In 1985 she and her husband divorced and she returned to Ennis to care for her elderly mother.

Jane was very proud of her deep roots in Madison County. Her father, Fay, was the son of Myron D. Jeffers and Florence Switzer. Myron was the eventual founder of Jeffers and a rancher who after the Civil War drove cattle to the Madison Valley from Texas. Her mother, Winifred, was grand-daughter of William Ennis and Katherine Schriver. He was the town's founder who initially was a shipper of goods to the mines in Virginia City.

In the early years of the Madison Valley History Association, Jane served as secretary for numerous years and when the museum opened, she was the keeper of the keys to the museum at her home on Main Street. Your editor remembers her best for her love of football. One year Larry was fishing in Canada and I had an extra ticket to a Bobcat football game. I asked her to go with me and she very excitedly accepted even though it was not a Griz game and she wanted to start out the afternoon with a tailgate party. We had a fun afternoon.

**Thomas Wesley Hughes** passed away October 24, 2018 at the age of 95. He was born March 13, 1923, in McAllister, MT to Thomas S. and Emily A. Mackel Hughes. He and his family all lived, grew up and worked on the family ranch near McAllister. He attended the local school and graduated from Ennis High School in 1940. After graduation he worked at local ranches and helped his father on the ranch. In 1944, he joined the Army and was sent to the front lines in France and Germany. He was wounded in his knees by a by a .50 caliber machine gun bullet. He was shipped back to the United States and after surgery and recovery in Washington, he was awarded two Purple Heart medals and returned to the family ranch at McAllister. He spent the next two years on the family ranch. *continued on pg. 3*

His father wanted to retire and suggested that Tom find himself a partner. Tom had already been spending most of his time with the store owner's daughter so this worked out well. On Sept. 16, 1948 he married Darlene Emma Harris. They took over the family ranch from his parents and moved into the old house on the Hughes ranch which had been vacated by Tom's parents. It was tough on the ranch and Darlene and Tom worked side by side raising cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens and always having horses. Tom was the first in the Madison Valley to have Angus cattle. In 1968 they sold the Madison Valley ranch and moved to the Bitterroot up the Sleeping Child where they bought a small ranch and continued to run cattle.

Ranching was taking its toll on Tom from the service injury to his knees. He sold his cattle and took a small engine class at the VoTech and after working for a couple shops he bought the McCullough Chain Saw shop. Standing on cement all day again took a toll on his knees and he again retired only to sell real estate and he and Darlene became snowbirds.

Longtime Ennis resident and former history member, **Barbara McGowan**, passed away December 7, 2018, at the Madison Valley Manor in Ennis. There will be more information on Barbara's life as an obituary is available.

**David Arthur German** passed away on Dec. 19, 2018 in Bozeman, Mt. He was born on Jan 24, 1949 in Jackson, Wy. to Archie and Daisy Germann who then lived and worked on the original Germann Ranch which had been homesteaded on the Buffalo by Archie's father. When David was 5 years old his father moved the family to a ranch near McAllister, MT. David attended local schools in Ennis and graduated from Ennis High School in 1967. He attended the MSU College of Engineering, joined the ROTC and pursued his dream of being a pilot by being accepted into the Air Force pilot training program after graduation. He spent the next part of his life in Alaska where he met his future wife and married in 1980. He worked in California and spent summers working on the Germann ranch and in 1996 relocated his family back to Montana and spent the rest of his life as a rancher.

Longtime history member and Ennis resident, **June Haigh** passed away on Dec. 23, 2018 in Billings, MT. He was born on June 7th, 1924 in Three Forks, MT to Gail and Margaret Haigh. There will be more information on June's life as an obituary is available.

**Barry Leslie Rice**, long time Madison Valley rancher passed away unexpectedly on December 28, 2018. He was born March 6, 1953 to Bob and Bonnie (MacMillan) Rice in Butte, MT. Barry graduated from Ennis High School in 1972.

He then graduated from Montana State University with a B.S. degree in Pre-Vet Science with an emphasis in Chemistry and Animal Science. He was an active member of the Madison County community.

**Charles Emmett Stoltz, Jr.** of Ennis passed away January 4, 2019. His memory will be in the Wagon Tongue in April after more research is done on the long time Madison Valley Stoltz family,

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**Ennis Commercial Club** Continued from October 2018. We left off when the Commercial Club proposed the first general system of street lights. They helped the Ennis Volunteer Fire Department get a night watchman to make night alarms possible. Foster G. Ballard started work on this job on September 5, 1945. Many meetings provided forums for the discussion of ways and means to acquire a water and sewage system. This always led to the unpopular issue of town incorporation. The club appointed its first committee to work for incorporation on May 14, 1946.

Several community services were badly needed. The Ennis young people needed outlets for their social development. They had only the Ski Club and high school athletics. During the war the school band and chorus were neglected. In December 1945 the Commercial Club appointed a committee to look for a location for a youth center but they soon gave up because they could not find a building. Not able to finance a center they used their influence to improve the school's activity program. They helped the Ski Club locate places to house visitors during their ski meet in March of 1946. They sent the school band on a good will tour to West Yellowstone in April 1948. They have worked consistently to pass bond elections for the school and in 1973 they worked for the vocational education addition.

The inability of Ennis to keep a doctor in residence after Dr. Daniel F. Clancy could no longer visit patients frightened all the residents of the valley. Between 1940 and 1948 Ennis had three doctors who stayed long enough to become aware of how isolated they were from the facilities they need to properly care for serious health problems. Dr. Willard Thierfelter came in 1940 as an osteopath and left to get a complete medical education. Dr. McLean came in 1943 and left because he had found a better practice in his home area. Dr. Van Veen came as a result of the work of a Commercial Club committee's search for a new doctor. He left because he was called back to the army Reserve in 1948. On March 15, 1948, after Dr. Van Veen was gone, Ray Kohl's electrified a Commercial club meeting by opening discussion *(continued on pg 4)*

