

The Wagon Tongue

Volume 18 issue 1

Madison Valley History Association

January 2020

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 Happy New Year I hope we can all have a great 2020. This is a brand new year. We ended a decade and have started out with a new decade. The MVHA kicked off the new year and new decade with a program on January 16 on the 1964 Centennial train. Stay tuned for more wagon train stories as soon as we can get old technology up to date with 2020 technology!

In looking ahead into 2020, the MVHA always has work to be done, ideas to think about and finding ways to make the MVHA better. I have confidence that our great membership will make all those things happen. The following is a list of things looking us in the face that need to be fulfilled. The board is looking for help so hopefully you can find a way to assist us. MVHA needs volunteers help in any capacity to help with calling other members, with painting projects, staining the forge building, cutting weeds, scheduling folks for hosting the museum during the summer, becoming a board member, helping display artifacts in the Overstreet Building, finding good ideas for programs and field trips. There should be something on that list that you could take a few hours and do.

In our Wagon Tongue quarterly newsletter, MVHA has the privilege of bringing history stories to you. The folks who wrote these stories had the foresight to put pencil to the paper and put down their history memories and recollections. In just this issue and future ones, Robert Hughes collected and printed stories of McAllister and Meadow Creek history. In this issue you will read a story by James Womack about hound racing in our part of Montana. We are not finished sharing all the history stories that Minnie Paugh wrote and printed. We took all the Jimmy Spray stories and had them published into a book which MVHA has sold many copies. The Jumping Horse Ranch history has been printed and shared with you. The Madison County Trails and Trials and Progressive Years has many family histories and history of the Madison County collected. Most of the folks who wrote all these history stories have passed on. But history did not stop when they passed. More history is being made each and every day. Who is continuing to write family histories? Who among us never did get a family history put into the big blue books? Don't be afraid to jot your memories, recollection and stories down. If you write, MVHA has folks who would be happy to edit your writing and fix spelling, sentence structure and all those things. Or if you don't want to write, it is very easy to record oral histories. MVHA has the recording equipment and would be glad to record your stories. So now you have a new New Year's Resolution! Get that great story written or recorded. Get that family history down for your children or grandchildren.

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Now for the next story: **Hound racing in Montana** by James Womack

The hound racing in Butte, Montana started in the late 1920's. They had what they called "coursing." Coursing was when they took the grey hounds and turned them loose to chase jack rabbits. I don't know how they rated it, but anyway the outgrowth of the coursing with the electric power brought along the mechanical rabbit.

So in Butte, Montana, in the '20's, about 1925, the Highland Kennel Company had a 30 day race meet in the summer. Hounds from all over the western part of the United States as well as the Midwest were brought to Butte to race where they had para-mutual betting. Among the big wheels in the racing business there seem to be the Mudrows. I don't know who the Mudrows were but they had a nice track out on the flat where the big strip is now. My father, Emmett Womack, got interested in the hounds and in a year or two he had race hounds. We would take the hounds to Butte and they would have to be exercised. Every hound got a pound of hamburger a day, sometimes with an egg on it. They raced around and it was quite interesting. We raced those hounds for several years, had a big lawsuit in Butte over the ownership of hounds with a gentleman by the name of H. Joe Chant who was a hound racer. A lot of guys in Butte had hounds and it was very interesting. Then Oscar Dahlberg, who was a brother of Swede Dahlberg, the famous coach, and Jiggs Dahlberg, the famous coach at the University of Montana, was a great hound man and raced his dogs all over the world.

They went to Florida in the winter and California and Arizona.

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Membership: No new members since Oct. 2019.

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 2020 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 and membership 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.

Receiving your Wagon Tongue Several years ago the MVHA started using non-profit organization postage stamps. The MVHA saves a considerable amount of money since we mail out most of the quarterly newsletters, **The Wagon Tongue**. MVHA did not know that non-profit stamps are not forwarded and if you have a forwarding address during the winter months or any other time, your Wagon Tongue is dumped in the trash. It is not returned to sender and MVHA does not know who you are. Please let the MVHA know by phone to Shirley Love 406-682-5780 or by email to whitneyptrench@wisptest.net or even to MVHA PO Box 474, Ennis, Mt 59729 and the address labels will be updated. Also let MVHA know the approximate date you leave in the fall and the approximate date you will arrive in the spring so the correct address label will be used. Thank you to those who have already provided this information.

2020 ends a decade and begins a new decade as history marches along. This is the 18th volume of The Wagon Tongue and we begin with January 2020 issue 1. As a new year begins we all try to look back and then try to make a new year better in some way. Over the years you have seen slight changes in The Wagon Tongue but for the new year I am going to change the format and start with the history **2**

stories and place the memories and member news toward the end of issue on pg 4 and 5.

The *Wagon Tongue* will be sharing stories from **Meadow Creek History, 100 years ago and Now** compiled by Robert R. Hughes, February, 2010.

The pioneer community of Meadow Creek becomes McAllister. Introduction by R. Hughes

McAllister, Montana, as you whiz by it, at 60 miles per hour, is only another intersection on the map, or maybe just a crossroad. There is not time to reflect that at one time this was a hub of thriving little community, complete with cows and pigs, roosters that crowed in the morning, and people that got up to do what they had to do to be what we now call being a pioneer. Thousands of little communities were growing up in the western areas of this country one hundred years ago. Yesterday's pioneer is now your neighbor. It is small wonder that McAllister escaped public notice and still attracts only the attention of a few fishermen, hunters and curious tourists.

I don't know where they all went but I hope this work will give readers a slight inkling of why the people of Meadow Creek, now McAllister, got up in the morning. It was a nice place to live. The reader will note that I have made generous use of certain documents authored by others. The lifeblood of a community comes from many different sources and chances of finding essays written in other perspectives is a great stroke of luck. In the following narration I give full credit to the authors and their articles that recorded pieces of Meadow Creek history, as they knew it. It just happens that the subjects for these little articles: McAllister, Fletcher, Wilson, and the Church history, plus my own resurrection of some Hughes history, describes the central community of Meadow Creek as I knew it during the early 1900s and 1920s.

CHAPTER ONE

McALLISTER, Written by R. Beals in Pioneer Trails and Trials.

Nearly midway between Norris and Ennis is situated McAllister, Montana, altitude 5050 feet, near the west shore of Meadow Lake. This area was formerly known as Meadow Creek and was settled in the late 1860s. The old Meadow Creek post office was established perhaps in the 1870s. A. M. Berry was the first post master. In 1980, George Bess was postmaster and he also had a hotel.

The first school building was a log structure built in the early 1870s and the first teacher was a Mr. Done. This building burned later and the school was held in the community hall. The hall was enlarged in the early 1900s. In 1901 a brick school building was completed.

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A Methodist church was completed in 1887.

The settlement now known as McAllister was settled in December 1896 on ground bought by Alex McAllister from the Northern Pacific Railroad Company. Mr. McAllister had settled near this spot with his parents in 1871. The post office was established in 1902. Dave Lindsay was the first postmaster.

CHAPTER TWO By Robert R. Hughes EARLY DAYS

My mother told me that when she first came to the valley in 1903, Upper Meadow Creek and Lower Meadow Creek were developing as two separate communities, and for awhile there were two post offices. The Gibsons had a post office in their house, known as Meadow Creek, which was located about two miles up the South Meadow Creek Road from where the McAllister post office is now. She said that there was really no confusion about mail. Everybody knew everybody else and she seldom went to the post office. Neighbors would bring the mail. Ruth Beals writes in her article, "McAllister" that George Bess had a post office in the hotel. The post office moved around a lot and probably it was in the hotel until Alex McAllister moved it to the store when he built his store about 1902. He added onto his store building in order to accommodate the post office. The community that Alex McAllister nurtured had a general store, service station, rental cabins and eventually the post office. Alex also had considerable hay growing acreage and he built a big barn and a corral system where he produced amateur rodeos on weekends.

The weekend rodeos that Alex produced were rough and tumble affairs. They did not have anything resembling a chute so they did it the hard way. Several husky ranch hands would hold a horse immobile, even if they had to throw it, while more helpers positioned a saddle, if one was used, and then a hopeful cowboy would get on. He had to ride the horse to submission as it probably soon would be somebody's saddle horse or would join the outlaw bunch to be tried again at a later date.

Another event in the weekend rodeo was a horse race. Dad and Jasper would tell stories and snicker about how the Tom Wilson's dirty gray buggy horse consistently beat Alex's Thoroughbred race horse. They also had the story about Frank Sanguin, who couldn't ride a stick horse sober but after a few beers, could ride the worst outlaw horse in the bunch.

The two streams named Meadow Creek are fed by melting snow from the Tobacco Root Mountains. 3

occasional contribution from fresh water springs. The snow waters flow down as North and South Meadow Creek to eventually empty into what is now Ennis Lake. All along their length, irrigation water is taken out of both of these streams for the thousands of acres on the ranches that were founded in this farm and ranch area.

Over the years beaver dams and other natural causes has created a swampy area down where two creeks emptied into the lake and up the creeks for about a mile. If the area had been bigger and more important, like the Mississippi River, I could call it a "delta". However, being in Montana, it remains a "swamp". A short section of the road that went past McAllister and served the area below had to cross this swamp by crossing the corduroy bridge. The "corduroy bridge" went across an extremely soft and swampy stretch caused by poor drainage of South Meadow Creek into the lake. In the early days, when nothing but horses and wagons used the road, it was made passable by cutting short logs and laying them side by side in the approaches on both sides of the wooden bridge that spanned the channel. It was an ordeal to cross even with a team and wagon. The horses stumbled and fell, or their legs went through the cracks, wagon wheels bounced violently. It was almost impossible to ride in the bed of a "dead axle" wagon. In the spring it became completely impassable for a few days during run-off. Those living below were stranded. When people started to try to cross over this monstrosity with automobiles, it became a community peril. Finally work crews were organized to clear out the creek for better drainage and with the county's help, the approaches to the channel bridge were filled with dirt and graded.

I clearly remember using the old corduroy bridge riding in the wagon with Dad when the logs were still there. We hauled ice from the lake over the corduroy bridge for several winters. The road must have improved around 1927 as the Potter Hotel was open for business by that time and "summer" people from Butte had started to build their cabins across the creek. Uncle Tom and Aunt Lora had retired and lived down there. Uncle Tom bought a new Rea automobile every year or two and he certainly added to the pressure to tear out that menace to automobile traffic.

100 years ago, in the 1910 census, the area was listed as Meadow Creek, but by 1960 popular use of "McAllister" as the name forced an official change. The history of McAllister by Dr. Mae Pankey is actually a biography of Alex McAllister. She brings out the important place this stock man, rancher, mercantile dealer,

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keeper of race horses, all around jack of all trades, played in the area and left his family name to a section of Montana.

CHAPTER THREE

JAMES ALEXANDER McALLISTER—Stockman Madison County by Dr. Mae Pankey

James Alexander McAllister was born at Malad, Idaho, Jan 12, 1868. He was the youngest of three children two boys and one girl, born to James McAllister, a native of Glasgow, Scotland and Elizabeth Powell McAllister born in Wales. His father carried freight between Corine, Utah and Virginia City, Montana as early as 1864. He decided he wanted to live in Montana so he left Idaho bringing his family, two wagons, one yoke of oxen, one team of horses, three extra horses and ten or twelve head of cattle, and arrived at Meadow Creek in the Madison Valley in June, 1871 after being several weeks on the road. They noticed the ranch owned by Don O. Spaulding at Meadow Creek and made inquiries about the location. When they found the land was unsurveyed, they drove to Lower Willow Creek on a tour of inspection. Not being satisfied, they returned to Meadow Creek and bought the Spaulding property, which consisted of 160 acres of land and several log buildings. They immediately went in the dairy and cheese business, making large quantities of cheese. Their market was Virginia City and sometimes they took a load of cheese to Bozeman.

James McAllister was the first white man in the Madison Valley to have white face cattle. He bought his first white face calf from Alex Metzel in the upper Ruby Valley and paid \$50 for it. His dairy cattle were a cross between Hereford and Durham stock and he kept up the strain as long as he was in the business. Aside from his dairy stock, he raised Shorthorn and Hereford cattle and increased his herd to about 150 head.

Alex got all his common schooling at Meadow Creek and in 1888 and 1889 went to school in Valparaiso, Indiana, a popular place for students in those days. On March 4, 1894 he was married to Miss Annie Alice Thexton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Thexton of Virginia City where she was born. The family was living at the Thexton ranch in the Madison Valley when she was married and that is where the wedding took place. She was educated in Virginia City, Deer Lodge and Madison, Wisconsin. The young couple rented the McAllister home place and lived there for two years after which Alex bought 120 acres from the Northern Pacific railroad at \$1.25 an acre, built a home and settled on the place where he still lives. At this time, he

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had about thirty head of cattle and 25 horses, mostly saddle animals, with which to begin his stock business. With his father and brother, he had bought a section of railroad land in 1889 and he later bought their share and thus added to his land holdings. He also increased his land by homesteading 160 acres. The railroad section cost \$1.40 an acre. He later bought 320 acres on North Meadow Creek, the ranch known as the Pickney place. In 1897 he went into the general mercantile business. He carried on in the same building in which the family lived and it was not long until he had established a good sound business. In 1899 he enlarged his building and again in 1902 when the McAllister post office was established. He built an addition especially for the post office and separate rooms for the residence for the first postmaster, David Lindsay. Mr. Lindsay kept the position only for about six months when he resigned to move to another locality. The next postmaster appointed was a sister of Mrs. McAllister, Mrs Margaret Deyarmon. She was followed by Miss Marguerite McAllister, Miss Marcella McAllister, and Miss Lorena all daughters of Alex McAllister. In 1906 Mr. McAllister enlarged his building again adding more rooms for the use of the family and moving the store into the post office building. He carried a large stock of merchandise and built up his business. He was carrying on his business at the same time and building it up with his own finances.

We will leave Alex McAllister with his business and continue with **Meadow Creek By Robert Hughes** in April 2020 _____.

MemoriesThe MVHA aspires to have a genealogical record after their passing of all folks who were born and raised in the Madison Valley and anyone who moved here for work, owned a business, or spent considerable time here as each of these folks are part of the historical record of the Madison Valley. Please share your records, stories and other interesting information of those who have passed on to make these records as complete as possible. They will not be forgotten.

Mary Lou (Zook) Gillan passed away in Ennis on Oct. 14, 2019. She was born in Traverse City, Michigan on Nov. 26, 1932 to Charles and Vivian Zook. Mary Lou graduated from Shepard High School in Shepard, Mich. She married Eugene (Gene) Gillian on Dec. 1, 1950. She started her career as a bank teller, became a secretary, and eventually she and Gene became owners of Burt Lake Market when they moved to Brutus, Mich. They retired to Belt, MT in the early 1990's and moved to Ennis about 5 years later. Gene and Mary Lou worked at the

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Continued from pg 4 Orvis fly Shop and Mary Lou worked at the Ennis Trading Post and Sundays found Mary Lou playing music for various churches in Ennis.

Melvin Joseph McKitrck passed away Oct. 30, 2019 in Ennis, Mt. He was born on March 15, 1947 to Maurice and Ruth Hatch McKitrck in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Mel spent his summers as a child with his grandparents, Joseph and Della Hatch on the Hungry Horse Ranch near Teton, Idaho. Mel's parents settled in Three Forks where he attended school in Logan and Manhattan. He met his wife, Karen Louise Simmons there and they married on March 9, 1966 in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Karen and Mel settled in Ennis in 1968 where he worked as an apprentice barber and opened Mel's Barber Chop. Mel drove the Ennis Schools' longest bus route. For 31 years he drove the 200 mile round trip per day Reynold's Pass route. He also drove the activities bus and he doubled as the stat and score keeper for the Ennis football and basketball teams. In 1987 Mel took over the managerial position of the granger Ranches and he belonged to the Madison Conservation District.

Robert L. Foreman passed away on Nov. 28, 2019. He was born on June 26, 1929 at the old Deaconess Hospital in Bozeman, MT to Albert Lee Foreman and Mary Scott Campbell Foreman. The original Foreman family lived in Sheridan MT until his father, Albert, was about 6 years old and the family moved to Virginia City, MT. In about 1903 father, Albert, moved to the Madison Valley and went to work for the Nunn Company which operated a small hydro-electric power plant in the Madison Canyon. The Nunn Company was bought by the Montana Power Company who constructed a new and large power plant. Bobby spent his first 14 years at the Madison Power Plant. His father was employed by the Montana Power Co. until he retired in 1946. From 1944 through 1953, Bob was bedridden with a muscular problem. Bob graduated from Ennis High School in 1947. After getting back on his feet, he graduated from Montana Institute of the Bible in Billings. He met Mary Jo Key there and they were married in Kaycee, WY on August 14, 1960. They made their home in Bozeman. Bob worked as a stockroom clerk for 28 years at Montana State University Electronics Research lab. Bob and Mary Jo were involved with Awana, Sunday School, VBS and summer camps through Child Evangelism Fellowship and Grace Bible Church. They were later employed as custodians at Grace Bible church. Bob was a member of the MVHA for 15 years and MVHA will miss all his history information he shared with us.

George Parker Mainwaring passed away at his home in Pony on Nov. 24, 2019. He was born in Jeffers, MT on June 18, 1925 to George and Helen Mainwaring, one of 15 children. He attended Ennis schools and graduated from Ennis High School in 1948. During his early years he logged in the Missoula area, worked for the Department of Transportation in Madison County and farmed and ranched in Madison County including the Sitz, Rice and Brooks ranches.

Reverend Jean M. Johnson passed away at Benefis Hospital in Great Falls, MT on Dec. 7, 2019. She was born on Sept. 10, 1955 to Donald and JoAnn Fandrei Johnson in Ellison Bay, Wisconsin. After graduating from Gibraltar High School in Fish Creek, Wisconsin, she attended University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, receiving a BA in 1978. Jean's Master of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, was conferred June 5, 1984. She ventured west serving short term positions in small Montana communities of Whitelash, Wise River/Melrose/Wisdom and Seeley Lake. Jean was ordained as a minister of the word and sacrament by the Presbytery of Yellowstone on Sept. 18, 1984 at the Church of the Big Hole. She accepted the call as a minister of the Madison Valley Presbyterian Church in 1987, serving the Ennis community 32 years before her retirement October 15, 2019.

Doris M. Daems long time MVHA member passed away Dec.11, 2019 at the Madison Valley Medical Center in Ennis. She was born in Jeffers, Montana on July 31, 1923 to George and Helen Parker Mainwaring. She graduated from Ennis High School in 1941 and married Jim Daems on March 1, 1942. She lived on the family ranch in Varney until her death. After Jim's passing in 1993, she spent five days of the week volunteering. She spent countless hours helping with resident activities at the Madison Valley Manor. In recognition of the many hours she spent at the Manor, she was awarded the 1995 Volunteer of the Year award by the Montana Health Care Association. She also helped with the Senior Meal program and worked an all day Saturday shift at the Madison Valley Woman's Club Nearly New Shop for many years. Doris was a member of the MVHA for 14 years and MVHA went to her for a lot of historical information. She is missed.

History Titbit The 109 year old turbines at the Northwestern Energy Powerhouse downstream from Ennis Lake began construction to upgrade turbines and generators in October 2019 and project will take a year and half to complete.

For Your Reading Pleasure Your editor needs titles of good history books you would recommend. I do not want to list a book unless it has been read and given a good review.

Looking Ahead

February 2020 TBA a program is in the works but not ready yet.

March 2020 TBA William Ennis Birthday Celebration

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The board decided to print for your information the most current treasurers report for your information.

December 31, 2019

BALANCES

Cash	\$60.00
Checking	\$496.86
Savings	\$23,312.67

INCOME

DUES	\$230.00
SALES	
Recipe book	\$15.00
Spray books	\$36.00
Kerrigan's Ride	\$16.00
Steam,gas sawdust	\$5.00
Playing cards	\$15.00
David Smith CDs	\$10.00
DONATIONS	\$4.00
INTEREST	<u> .99</u>
TOTALS	\$376.99

EXPENSES

NORTHWESTERN ENERGY	\$25. 64
K. Brenneke-gift certificate	\$50.00
Trinity Church-fee for room	\$25.00
L.Love-post,env,tea,Bazaar table	<u>\$40.12</u>
TOTALS	\$140.76

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Member News

Pearl Kilman and **Jan Beekman** performed in the recently organized Bell Choir during Christmas celebrations in December 2019. If you did not get to hear them in concert watch for the next performance of the bell choir.++++

Hound racing (continued from pg 1)

My father raised hounds for several years and he had some great hounds. His hound, Sonny Montana, won the derby in Portland and we got a check for \$300 or \$400, which in 1933 or '34 was all the money in the world. We got another greyhound by the name of Madison. He was a great dog and my father got 35% and the trainer got 65% and it fed the family for several years. My father had a very unique way of feeding the dogs. Horses were very cheap and he would buy a horse for \$5 and then he would lead the horse into the hound pen and shoot the poor horse between the eyes, split the horse open a bit and then turn the hounds out everyday for a little lunch or a little dinner and they would tear up that horse. Then he'd dig a big hole and bury the bones—the bones are still in the yard down there today. Then in winter, to feed the hounds he decided that not only were bones and meat good, that barley was great for hounds so he had a cook house with an old stove in it and a big tub. He put all those bones and barley in the tub on the cook

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 *Madisonian*, posters and your email for details of time, place and program. Please call Larry Love 682-5780 for date of board meeting..*The Wagon Tongue* will be published quarterly. Next issue will be April 2020. Articles of historic interest and memories of the departed are welcomed. Your editor needs your history stories!
 Editor: Shirley Love whitneytranch@wispwest.net
 Contributing editors: *Madisonian* Obituaries, *Meadow Creek History* by Robert Hughes *Hound racing in Montana* by James Womack
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 stove and made a big stew for the dogs. It would be a great sight to see all the hounds run out there and gobble up that big tub of stew.

Sometimes he had his own hound races at the 4th of July. He was a great promoter. The hounds came out of the box. There were 10 stalls in the box and when the door was opened fast, the hounds came out. He didn't have an electrical rabbit, but our old friend, Rollo Tuttle, had a 1924 Oldsmobile sedan that he had converted to a pickup. So my father had a big fishing pole, an old bamboo pole like we used to use on the Madison. You don't see them anymore, a cane pole with a rope on the end of it and he'd tie a rabbit on the pole, they'd get in the car, rev up the car and run it fast and they would open the box and the hounds would come out. They boys from Butte who understood para-mutual betting would set up in the stands and we'd have a couple days' race meet down by the river in Ennis where the new river bridge is now.

We had another greyhound. In those days they had the hurdle races so my father said the best way to train a hurdle is in a big dog pen. He put two hurdles in there and the hounds liked to play and they'd run around and around and jump over the hurdles. He got a good reputation for great hurdlers. All of that continued until World War II started when my father went off like everyone else to work in the war industry. When he came back ready to resume the hound business, he had an accident with a wild horse and that ended the hounds for us in Ennis, Montana.

My father, old Emmett, decided that he would raise fighting roosters so he brought some hens and some fighting roosters home to Ennis. Pretty quick he had quite a yard full off fighting chickens. It didn't turn out too well so he sold all the fighting chickens to Mrs. Baker, who had a restaurant there, for fryers. I often wondered how the people who bought those chickens were able to eat those fighting chickens. But that is another story.