



The Wagon Tongue

Volume 5 Issue 1

Madison Valley History Association, Inc.

January 2007

From the Wagon Seat: Good bye "06"! Hello "07"! Well that didn't take long..12 months to be exact. In that 12 month period the MVHA has been to church, had a picnic, dug in the ground, found lead balls from Indian fight, walked the 22 acres on the V.C. hill, moved the sign to the VC hill, moved the museum items from Neil Kent's garage to what is now our temporary museum location. (You all know where that is.), kept the museum open 6 hours a day and 6 days a week, planted and watered the plants at the museum plus housekeeping. A flag with the MVHA logo was made to hang outside the museum. Several trips were made to the Museum of the Rockies for artifacts that they gave to us. These are all in storage awaiting a larger museum space. Met with some of the EHS teaching staff introducing them to our organization and museum. Made a home in the museum for "the bell". Do you know about our bell? Numbered and cataloged items large and small which have been donated to MVHA. Invited to make a historical display and visited the new First Madison Valley Bank to see where the display would be. Formed a committee to take care of this project and we are looking forward to seeing the fruits of their labors. Formed committees to study the out of town and in town museum sites and reports have been given at board meetings. Letters of refusal regarding the old Catholic Church and railroad depot buildings were sent to the respective parties. We won again at the 4th of July Parade and we are ready again with horses and wagon on reserve. Our open house was 10/29/06 at the museum. Nice to see everyone there. Good cookies! Got the Jimmy Spray book printed and sold copies at the Holiday bazaar and Christmas Stroll. Christmas meeting was held held at the Ennis Fire Hall. Christmas stories were told, sang Christmas songs and a pot luck was served with lots of good recipes. Maybe we should have a cook book committee. We did a lot of things in 2006 and accomplished some things. What would you like to see done and accomplished in 2007? Keep your board and membership informed of your ideas. Happy New Year!! Your Wagon master, Zoe Todd

Note the new look of your Wagon Tongue. Thanks to John Falat for designing the new MVHA logo and thanks to Otis Thompson for walking the editor through the steps to get it from a CD to the printed page. You will be seeing the John Falat MVHA logo in more places in the future.

History Tidbit: "Early Settlement and Growth in the Madison Valley: Joe Brion and George Thorpe were the first two men to stay permanently in the valley, but they did not homestead until quite a few others had done so. William Ennis was the first homesteader in the valley, having taken up the site of the present town of Ennis. He built his house in the latter part of June, 1863, and announced that he was going to start a town..... " From Early Days in the Madison Valley by Jimmy Spray

Member Application Madison Valley History Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 474, Ennis, Mt. 59729

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.

Name _____

Telephone _____ Mailing address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

e-mail address _____ (used only for communication of MVHA info)

(____)Student \$5.00 (____)Individual \$10.00 (____)Family \$15.00 (____)Business \$50.00 (____)Patron \$100.00

Welcome to membership The following have joined since the October 2006 issue. Please add them to any list you may be keeping. If you need a complete list of all current members for your committee work, please contact Shirley Love and she will print you a list.

Black, Dale and Virginia (F) 682-4887
P.O. Box 845
Ennis, MT 59729

Choate, Robin (I) 624-6207
3300 Graf St. #54
Bozeman, MT 59715

Clark, Ray and Juni (P)
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Ennis, MT 59729

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Kreitzer, Ellen Baker (I) 425-489-5068
21026 72nd Ave. S.E.
Snohomish, WA 98296

McMahon, Anita Baker (I) 406-251-9489
8601 Wise River Rd
Missoula, MT 59803

Memorials for 2006

Roberta Carkeek Cheney
Kay Hautier
Julia Rochez

The October issue is too far in front of Christmas so I am including this article for the first issue right after Christmas.
Christmas in Montana 1886 by EC Abbott and Helena Huntington Smith [We Pointed Them North: Recollections of a Cowpuncher](#) (pp 175-179)

I wore two pairs of wool socks, a pair of moccasins, a pair of Dutch socks that came up to the knees, a pair of government overshoes, two suits of underwear, pants, overalls, chaps, and a big heavy shirt. I got a pair of woman's stockings and cut the feet out and made sleeves. I wore wool gloves, and great big heavy mittens, a blanket-lined sourdough overcoat, and a great big sealskin cap. That way I kept warm enough. But not any too warm. For that was the celebrated winter of '86-'87 that broke the back of the range cattle business.....

We had two weeks of nice weather just before Christmas. But on Christmas Eve it start to storm and never really let up for sixty days. It got colder and colder. I have a cutting from the post paper at Fort Keogh that reads that on January 14 it was 60 below zero...

Pike(Landusky) had a cabin right close to the (Little) Rockies where he lived with his wife and family. Mrs. Pike was a French-woman from Louisiana...She was a good housekeeper and a real nice little woman when she wasn't stirred up about something, and the only human being I ever net who was a match for Pike.

I lived with him that winter and the company (the DHS, Granville Stuart's outfit) paid him for my keep, but we was riding most of the time...(On) December 24, we left our camp at the foot of the mountains and started for Pike's for Christmas. I remember it was a beautiful day, clear and sunny... At sundown we camped close to Tucker's cabin at the north end of the Little Rockies, expecting to be home in time for Christmas dinner the next day. But after dark it began to snow...

Next day the storm was so bad we didn't even try to make it home, but rode over to John Healy's ranch on Lodge Pole because it was nearer. We found three men there, so we put our horses in by a haystack and all cooked a Christmas dinner of deer meat and son-of-a-gun-in-a-sack (plum duff) We stayed there two days, bu the storm kept getting worse, so we pulled out for home (on) December 27....when we got over the hill the wind and snow hit us so hard we could not see fifty feet ahead or hardly breathe...That night we rode into a narrow canyon where we were out of the wind, but we got off our horses in snow up to our waists. We built a fire and made coffee, and held our meat on sticks until it thawed out and ate it hot and raw..... Next morning we lit out for home and it was fight for life. We had to go sideways to the wind and horses hate that. The wind blew the breath right out of our bodies and the snow cut like a knife. We got home nearly all in...Mrs Landusky run out of the house and begun giving hell. She said: where was we, and why didn't we come home;

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Christmas in Montana Continued from page 2

and this was a fine Christmas for her...alone here with all these children; and she cooked us a big dinner, and so on and so forth. Pike never said a word at first, while she kept on calling us everything she could lay her tongue to because we didn't come home to Christmas dinner, when we like to have froze to death in that awful blizzard and it was wonder we ever got there. And finally he turned to me and he says:“* * * * * ! She was sure in the lead when tongues was give out!” And I laughed till I fell over in the snow.

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Madison Valley Woman's Club celebrated their 85th anniversary in 2006. The following article was written Nov. 15, 1984 by Roberta Carkeek Cheney with the help of Winifred Jeffers, Irma Manley, Margaret Daems, Frances Womack, Adah Thexton and Algean Bausch.

Madison Valley Federated Woman's Club: A history 1921-1984.

Members of the “Priscilla Embroidery Club” dropped their embroidery and turned into a service club when World War I was declared. They learned to knit, rolled bandages, and worked with the Red Cross. After the War, the members decided to continue as a service club with the goal of improving their own community.

The year was 1920 and the limited outreach program of those few women has grown to the present day Woman's Club with an annual income of about \$10,000, most of which is returned to the community in the form of scholarships, donations to the hospital, ambulance fund, playgrounds and a myriad of other worthwhile projects.

In 1921 the Madison Valley group was formally made part of the General Federation of Woman's Clubs. Serving as president was Susie Maynard, grandmother of Sue France, and serving as vice-president was Winifred Jeffers' mother, Jennie Chowning. And there was sixteen year old Frances Womack from New York City who had come to Ennis the year before with her soldier husband, Emmett. Frances joined the Woman's Club in 1922 and has paid her dues and been an active member for every one of the 62 years since then. We have many long time members but Frances holds the record for sustained membership.

There were no other service clubs in the area in the early days and then, as now, if there is a big job to be done, the Woman's Club tackles it and carries it through. There have been dramatic projects like raising \$2,775 for a desperately needed operating table for the hospital. The old makeshift one started to collapse during an operation and Edna

Carpenter had to get down on the floor under it and hold up the table until the surgeon finished. Sometimes it was a humble project like having two outdoor toilets built for the school.

The Smith family donated land for a cemetery but a fence was needed to keep the cattle out. The Woman's Club put on public card parties and basket socials to raise enough money for the metal fence that still serves. Much of the cemetery land was overgrown with sage brush and wild rose bushes. Each spring before Memorial Day, members of the Woman's Club took their lunches, hoes, rakes, and spent a day cleaning up the cemetery and grubbing out the weeds. Sometimes they hired a teen-age boy or two at \$1 per day to help.

Mrs. William Ennis, widow of the founder of the town, donated a part of her big lawn for a city park in the center of town. The Woman's Club put up a fence and provided benches, and picnic tables. At another location, they had a skating rink dug and lighted.

In 1938 the ladies became concerned with the need for a dump ground which could be used by residents of the valley. They bought eleven+ acres of land and promoted publicity for the proper handling of garbage.

The Volunteer Fire Department has been a permanent concern of the Club. In 1941 they purchased a siren and in 1944 they bought time clocks for the night watchman and set aside \$200 for the Fireman's Fund.

The health facilities of the community has been a constant concern of the Woman's Club. In 1948 they had the city ambulance painted, and in 1949 when the community sought to build a hospital, the Club responded with work and money. An “Amateur Hour” directed by the Woman's Club helped furnish a room in the new hospital. The Club also contributed to the new surgical wing. They have sponsored the TB Mobile Unit and blood donor program of the Red Cross and helped with a good vision screening program. Polio immunization was sponsored by the Woman's Club and administered by Doc and Olive Lossee. Five hundred dollars was sent to the Cancer Center in Billings and a like amount sent to the hospital at Galen for the Chapel.

Before television came to monopolize our living rooms and recreation hours, home talent plays were popular. They were a good fund-raiser and fun to produce. Members of the Woman's Club put on many of them--one was the ever popular “Mail Order Bride”.

Education has been an on-going concern. Girls were sent to the Vocational Congress and later to Girls State. Roberta Angle Love was one of the first ones to go. Two Ennis girls were elected governors and went on to Washington, D.C. For over 50 years, the Club took the Junior and Senior Classes from the high school to Helena for a day at

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Madison Valley Federated Woman's Club,
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the Legislature and an interview with the Governor. Each year now, the Madison Valley Woman's Club awards \$1000 in scholarships to the Ennis High School graduating seniors. Another \$1000 is given to the alumni who are still attending college. The Club also administers some private donations for scholar-ships. The 1984 total given to students was \$3000.

This and other big community projects have been made possible by the income from the highly successful "Nearly New Shoppe" No one anticipated back there in 1971 that this recycling shop would generate the community interest, service, and income that it has. During the first ten years of its existence, the Nearly New Shoppe Board turned over to the Woman's Club more than \$53,000-all of which was reinvested into constructive community projects. In 1983, \$9000 was earned and expended for the good of the community. All work is done on a volunteer basis by members of the club. The only expenses are rent, heat and lights. Nothing is sold on consignment. Everything brought into the shop is on a donation basis and the great boxes of clothes, household goods, books, and a variety of odds and ends continue to come from people in the area. The store is now open three days a week and the crew of volunteer workers is kept busy unpacking, sorting, even cleaning and ironing, so the merchandise is attractive and salable. Contributions of clothes are made to any family in dire need and many things are sent to the St. Vincent dePaul organization in Butte.

A library of sorts had been operating since 1914 with the ladies of the town taking turns being the librarian. Patrons paid 25 cents every three months for the privilege of checking out books. The Woman's Club decided to support the library as one of its major and ongoing projects. It was first housed in the room above the Chowning Store. (That's where the Nearly New keeps its extensive collection of period costumes now). Eventually the Clancy home on Main Street was converted into a library. The Woman's Club helped the city raise money to buy the building and now contributes \$300 a month to support the library. The librarian and her volunteer assistants keep it open three days a week and conduct an active reading program for children.

Other Woman's Club contributions made possible by the Nearly New income include \$887 to further develop the Lion's Club camp ground and the children's fish pond and playground. \$600 went to the Search and Rescue Unit, a group of volunteer men who rescue people who are lost or involved in an accident.

The intensive care and heart monitoring unit at the local hospital was given \$887. The back yard of the Ennis Nursing Home was fenced so the residents could be in a protected place outdoors. Landscaping was provided around the building.

The Madison Valley Woman's Club has always supported state custodial institutions especially those concerned with children and veterans. Donations were made to the former Aqua project where hot springs near Polson were used for therapy with children and we have more recently supported the Shodair Hospital's program for adolescent drug and alcohol addiction.

In 1961 and '81, we hosted District Conventions. The Club received recognition and awards from the State Federation for its Community Improvement Projects. Several members have served as project chairman for the Montana Federation. Catherine Armitage is currently president of District Two and Irma Manley is the state Kitchen Conservation chairman.

The motto "Seek to serve rather than to be served" that was adopted at that organizational meeting 63 years ago has been the basis for , and indicative of, the enthusiasm, the work, and the accomplishments of the Madison Valley Federated Woman's Club. The red carnation chosen as the symbolic flower appears each year at the Anniversary tea to remind us of the need for beauty in our lives along with all that volunteers, officer, and committee work that has led to the success of the Club.

Editor's note. The Woman's Club is still doing many of the things mentioned in 1984. Names and faces have changed. The Nearly New has moved twice and is purchasing the old Angle Hardware building. The sale of donated items still continues and donations to the community continue. There are still members of the current Woman's Club who are decendants of the original club so history still goes on.

Museum Update 2006

The mission of the MVHA 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. As most of you are aware, the MVHA rented space for about 3 years in Grandma's Overflow until the building was sold and the artifacts put into storage. Because our artifacts were not available for public display and because the projected museum was not started yet, the MVHA chose to rent the two rooms in front of the Altimus Wildlife Museum to house our museum for the 2006 tourist year.

This was a beneficial move for the MVHA

Museum Update Continued from page 4

as the museum gained exposure and we had a small but steady income selling tickets to the Wild life Museum. Tourists and locals who came to see the Wildlife Museum had an opportunity to view the MVHA Museum too and some came to see the MVHA Museum and were pleased to have a chance to visit the Wildlife Museum.

The MVHA museum was open from May 25, 2006 to October 29, 2006 Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00am to 4:00pm. when volunteers were available to have it open. A quick look at the guest book shows that there were visitors from all over the United States and many parts of the world. The Museum was open a total of 718 hours but could have recorded more hours if all shifts could have been manned. Forty four total MVHA members worked a shift or more this past season. 328 of the hours were covered by the 7 MVHA Board members with Zoe Todd leading the group with 85 hours plus doing all the scheduling.

It is obvious that the MVHA needs more of our member's volunteer help. Please, right now, make a New Year's Resolution to increase your volunteer hours at the Museum by at least 1 shift or more. If you did not get an opportunity to work a shift, please plan on volunteering this next season. If you are a summer resident, plan to get your volunteer hours completed during your months in the Madison Valley. If you not longer live here, but still return once in a while to visit family or attend a reunion, plan to work a museum shift during your stay. If you live in a town nearby, plan to drive to Ennis to spend a day and work a shift at the museum. It just takes a little planning and a telephone call or e mail from you to schedule you in. Volunteering is easy and fun. You do not need to know any Madison Valley History. There are many reference books that you and guests can use to answer any questions and you can also refer the question to one of our local historians.

If you do not live here, do not spend a part of the year here and just do not ever get back to Ennis, you can still help. You can continue to support the MVHA with your dues, donations and contributions, letters to the editor, history tid bits, history articles and other ways to share the history.

From the Mail Box: Ginny and Jack O'Neel wrote "Did you know that the Varney P.O. is located at the intersection of Varney Road and Gravelly Range Rd? It is tucked in against the bench. It needs to be saved. A small log structure that is falling down."

Donna L (Bennett) Armstrong wrote....."I remember writing an early history of Ennis and I think interviewing Jimmy Spray when I was in the 7th or 8th grade. If not him, then some other old timers..."

Early Days in the Madison Valley by Jimmy Spray has been printed by the MVHA and sales of the book are going very well. As of Jan 1, 2007 the price increased to \$18.00, If you still want to purchase a copy call 682-5780 or 682-4360 and you can arrange to pick up a book in Ennis. You may send a check for \$18.00 plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling for each book ordered (total of \$21.00 for each book) to MVHA, PO. Box 474, Ennis, MT 59729 and book(s) will be mailed to you. All profits made on this book will go to the museum building fund.

Thank you to all of you who have already supported this project by purchasing a book.

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For your reading pleasure
Early Days in the Madison Valley by Jimmy Spray is a historical accounting of the brave pioneers who settled this unique area of southwest Montana in the 1800's. Purchase information see above and there is a copy for in library use at the Madison Valley Public Library.

We Pointed Them North: Recollections of a CowPuncher by E.C. Abbott This is an as-told-to memoir of the early years of a cowboy who grew up in Nebraska and drove cattle along the western trails, settling in Montana, where he worked for several cattle owners, all during the 1870s and 1880s. This book is available for check out at the Madison Valley Public Library and at many other libraries. Just check your local library.

Montana Trivia Get your atlas or state road map out and join the fun. Below is a list of clues to the names of Montana towns and cities. Find the Montana town name that matches the clue. Answers at the Feb. Meeting and printed in the April W.T.

1. A small horse
2. Union General
3. A large tree
4. A section of New York
5. Sheriff of Dodge City
6. A kind of bean
7. An African Explorer
8. A red gem
9. A large rock
10. Double crossing
11. Some table utensils
12. A man who works in a flower bed
13. A girl's town
14. Devil's tool
15. A wash bowl
16. Great learning

Montana trivia will continue next issue with more clues. Thanks to Zoe Todd for contributing this.

Looking Ahead

Feb. 8- 4:00pm Regular scheduled meeting at VFW Program to be announced.

March- William Ennis Birthday month. Watch for date and time of the birthday party

April 12-7:00pm Daylight savings time has started so note time change. Regular scheduled meeting at VFW. Program to be announced.

The **fundraising committee** has been working on some future projects;

Look forward to an **Old Time Country Dance** to be held in the spring at the Bear Creek School House.

A **House Tour to Historic Homes** and a tour of **Old Barns** are being planned for sometime in 2007. Watch for details.

Help Needed

Program chairperson Smitty Overstreet has arranged programs for too many years to count and she would like a break. You , as members, have completed a long list of suggested topics and speakers as suggested ideas. MHVA just needs someone to make the arrangements. Call 6824405

Zoe Todd and Shirley Love have done the **museum scheduling** for the past 4 years. Are there others out there who could complete their volunteer time by doing museum scheduling? Does not have to be one person. A committee would be great. Call 682-4360 or 682-5780.

Madison Valley History Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 474
Ennis, Montana 59729

Madison Valley History Association, Inc. Board of Directors

President: Larry Love & Zoe Todd

Vice President: Jim Carlson

Treasurer: Neil Kent

Secretary: Mary Ann Alger

Director: Shirley Love

Director: Smitty Overstreet

Meetings held monthly on the second Thursday of each month. Watch Madisonian for details of time and place and program.

Board Meetings are held the 1st Wednesday of each month.

The Wagon Tongue will be published quarterly. Next issue will be April 2007.

Editor: Shirley Love

Contributing Editors: E.C. Abbott

Roberta Carkeek Cheney
Zoe Todd

The Wagon Tongue welcomes articles of historical significance from any of the MVHA members or interested public.

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