



The Wagon Tongue

Volume 5 Issue 3

Madison Valley History Association, Inc.

July 2007

From the Wagon Seat: Wow! Is it hot out? Your Wagon Master and WT editor just got back from a month long trip to the North country and are trying to play catch up. The 4th of July parade is behind us. A big thank you goes out to everyone who had a hand in getting our float into the parade. A special thank you to all those cowgirls that rode in the wagon or on the truck to make our float a success.

We are planning to have a field trip to the Mining Museum in Silver Star in August. Smitty and the MVHA needs help to keep organizing programs. We are trying to keep the museum open but without any volunteers, this has been a struggle. Please call and say you will take a shift. MVHA needs a scheduler for the museum for August. Please volunteer. Many hands make light work.

The board is still pursuing the basics of getting a permanent museum. The old Norris Train Depot has been given to us and we are investigating moving it to our land. It is in fairly good condition and is currently sitting on private land about a half mile from our land. We are in the process of getting permission from the land owners to our east to expand the current approach. The land has been water witched for getting a well drilled and we will be determining a well site soon. Larry Keifer has sent us plans that he had drawn to code and at his expense for building a duplicate of the old forge building. Now we need to decide where to put these buildings on the land. Any builders out there with good ideas? MVHA can use your input.

As we move into the second half of '07, you can see there are many projects on which to make decisions and on which to work. And we need to think about some serious fund raising and grant writing. Without additional funds, all the good ideas and projects will never get off the planning stages.

The last item is a big thank you to Deb and Harry Townshend and their crew for having the annual Hutchins Bridge Party as a benefit for the MVHA. The Townshends are thinking about fundraising already!! The party is being held Sat., July 21, 2007 from 6 to 9pm at the Old Kirby Place. Plan to attend this fun event and pick up your tickets at the MVHA Museum, local banks, Old Kirby Place, from a Women of the Wild member, or just come and buy your ticket at the gate. MVHA members are helping out in various ways, but the main thing your organization needs from you would be a plate of cookies. Bring the cookies when you come or send them with someone who is going. See you at a meeting, field trip, or at the Museum. Your Wagon Master, Larry Love

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History Tidbit HORSERADISH FOR SALE Minnie Chamberlin had a beautiful horseradish patch next to her house. In the spring, she would dig up the roots, scrape them clean, and grind them in an old fashioned meat grinder. She would mix the ground horseradish with vinegar and sugar and bottle it in pint or quart jars.

My brother, Norman Chamberlin, and I would go around town selling it for \$2.00 a quart or \$1.00 a pint.

Our favorite customer was the banker, Hugh Wakefield. Other customers were Francis and Emmett Womack and Porter Nelson, to name a few.

Grandmother would let us keep the money, which we usually split. We generally made about \$10.00 and we thought we had made a fortune. Submitted by Doris "Dodie" (Chamberlin) Barnett

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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 April 2007 issue. Please add to any membership list you might be keeping. If you need a complete list of members for your committee work, please contact Shirley Love and she will print you a complete updated list.

Clark, Jesse Love (I) 406-683-2028
116 Riverside Dr.
Dillon, Mt. 59725

Crump, Charles (I)
1225 Whirlwind Hill Rd
Wallingford, Ct 06492

Harper, Shirley Love (I) 801-451-5223
647 No. 400 E.
Farmington, UT. 84025

Morton, William & Monna (F) 682-5577 (Ennis)
110 Mattison Cv. NE
Atlanta, Ga 30319-1093

Shooting Sheriffs In Montana by George
Shepherd of stories told by Tom Whitney
Continued from April 2007 issue

As we left Tom Whitney in the last issue, he was heading for the Conray horse ranch and... he quietly approached the place and saw two men coming from the house. They were headed for the barn.

I dropped down under the hill so that I would not be seen and approached the ranch buildings. I passed the corral and a big cow shed and there was Wolff saddling up my Blue Ridge runner. He had the bridle and the blanket on and was stooping to pick up the saddle when I called out, "Hands up Johnnie and come here through the fence." He looked at his gun standing by the fence. "No false moves Johnnie. I don't want to kill you and I have the drop on you."

He came through the fence as I stepped off my horse. But before I could search Wolff this man Nickerson came out of the barn with a Winchester rifle and rammed it into my middle. He was an ugly looking customer himself and he says, "What the hell are you up to?" I wasn't feeling too easy in my mind at this turn of events but I told Nickerson "This man has killed the sheriff and has stolen my horse and Bill Ennis's saddle."

Nickerson then asked Johnnie if this was so, while still keeping me in his gun sights. Johnnie admitted this was true and said that if I hadn't got the drop on him, I would have kicked in too. After Nickerson took the gun off me and trained it on Johnnie, I went through his clothes and found a 38 six-shooter in an inside pocket.

Wolff was now my prisoner and I took him out to head off Plum who was still on the wagon trail headed south. When we caught up to him he covered Johnnie with his gun and says to me "Go through him." I replied "I may look like a darn fool but he has been thoroughly searched so cut out that sort of stuff"

We then caught up to Bill and Dick and started to Virginia City, the county seat. Instead of taking the main road, we traveled the back roads in case we found a hanging posse. We went through the hills and thus avoided a bunch congregated to do the final act. We landed in Virginia City the back way and had Wolff in jail before they realized we were there. Personally we would have been glad enough to see Wolff strung up but as we had been sworn in as deputies, it was up to us to deliver the prisoner.

In the meantime the Governor of the State had offered a reward of \$500 for the capture of Wolff. Everyone I talked to said that I would get the dough as I was the one that took the chances. But the others got busy too, even Nickerson, to collect the bounty. Politics took a hand in it and so the reward was finally split four ways.

Feelings ran pretty high in the Madison county for Jim Summers was a popular figure with everyone. It sure looked like a neck-tie party for Johnnie. But Norris, Johnnie's lawyer, got a change of venue, and Johnnie was taken to Dillon at Beaverhead County. We were to give evidence at Dillon. It took several days before a jury was completed as over 100 jurymen were examined. There are none of those jurymen still living today as I remember. The prosecuting lawyer, Charlie Stewart, later became governor of the state and Norris, the defendant's attorney, later achieved high office too.

continued on page 3

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It was a hard fought trial by the best lawyers in the state, with their helpers. Mrs. Summers was brought into court. The widow with her children, made quite an impression on the jury, for sympathy. Then came the plea of Norris to the jury for Wolff. He had Johnnie dressed in knee pants, looking like an innocent kid. The courthouse was packed. The plea of Norris for Wolff soon had all the females crying and even the jurymen were wiping their eyes. Especially when he said, "An aged father and mother in Wisconsin were on their knees at the bedside praying for the mercy of the jury for their wayward son."

I might have cried too if I had had a rag to wipe my eyes. When Norris opened up on Nickerson, it pleased me quite a bit as I had no love for that man. He said Nickerson reminded him of a mangy calf trying to follow a bunch of wild cows. The jury- men were mostly ranchers so a mangy calf would be passed up as worthless. Norris must have been the offspring of some old time rancher as he used cowmen's language. The jury came to a decision and Wolff was found guilty of murder and was sentenced to life imprisonment in the State prison at Deer Lodge.

Years afterward, after I had located in Canada , I was on my way back to Virginia City going through Butte, Montana. At Whitehall I went into a restaurant for breakfast. At one of the tables there sat a gentleman in store clothes feeding his face. As the waitress came to take my order she says "Do you want mush"---that's what they call oatmeal over yonder. I says "Madam. Don't talk mush to me as I want to forget all about it. I've been eating it out of a nosebag up in Canada."

The gentleman at the other table calls out and says "Come over here Tom and we will have a little visit." "Do you know me?" I says. He replies, "No, but I would recognize that voice in Purgatory. I am the man who defended Wolff at Dillon and your voice has remained with me as you can see." So we shook paws, sat down for a long talk about old times and enjoyed a good visit, minus the mush.

George Shephard, who loves his Saskatchewan history as much as anyone, frankly admits that his stories on Tom Whitney have nothing to do with the subject. But, he says, they do bring out, in a rather striking manner, the background of one of the best loved of the old time cattle barons of the Cypress Hills. "What amazes me," says Shephard, "is how the range men from the Montana territories, brought up under the most lawless conditions, settled quietly in Canada and became the most law abiding citizens any country could ask."

Tom Whitney took up a ranch adjacent to the Cypress Hills Park in the early 1900's. Today, the family still operates the ranch. Tom has a son, Ace, who lives in Maple Creek, and another son, Earl, who has ridden in the Calgary Stampede. This is a little of his story, told in the lingo of the open range. (Thanks to Laraine McIntyre ,great grand-daughter of Tom Whitney, for sharing this story.)

Montana Trivia Answers to April 2007 trivia

1. A person leaving a place-Emigrant
2. Monthly charges-Billings
3. A large snake-Anaconda
4. City limits- Townsend
5. A learned stream-Wise River
6. Prime minister of Great Britian during WWII- Churchill
7. A bush or shrub in a small stream-Willow Creek
8. British government or its policies-Whitehall
9. A steep hill-Butte
10. Where Napolean met his match-Waterloo
11. A tree usually going in a wet place-Alder
12. Good card player-Cardwell
13. Bright point of light in sky at night-Silver Star
14. A smalll, narrow valley-Glen
15. A famous sailor-Columbus

If you have an answer which you feel is just as good as the one given, please share. Montana trivia is a work in progress!! Watch for October issue for more Montana Trivia.

4th of July Parade

Zoe Todd and Karen Shores did a good job of co-chairing the float committee. With the theme of the Celebration of the American Cowgirl, Larry Love got Todd Brannon and his beautiful team of Belgian horses and his wagon. Pearl Kilman made wonderful signs, Kid Neville framed the signs and was the main jack of all trades, Fred and Darlene(Neville) Rochez provided the staging area, and Jimmy Carlson provided and drove an extra flat bed truck. Cowgirls from all walks of life were rounded up. They were: Marry Ann Alger representing her mother, Annie Thexton who in 1923 rode in the last roundup for the Arrny Calvary, Sandy Alger who represented her great grandmother, Lillie Hankinson who was a great horse woman in the 1925 era, Polly Todd who was herself helping to drive the horses and who was a rodeo queen as a teenager, Shirley Storey as Violet Thexton who rode side saddle in many parades, Mona Herrick Durham as herself and still a rancher, Shirley France Visintin as herself as a horse woman, Bev Miller Martin as herself as a horsewoman and leather artist, Bailey Flynn, grand-daughter of Darlene and Fred Rochez representing Dale Evans who rode through town on the silver screen, Ruby Gleason as herself and mother of Rodeo Champion, Brad Gleason, and wife of Famous Rodeo Clown, Larry Gleason. And the Robison girls.... Jerry Wing, Kate Robison, Vickie McNally, Patty Grauman and Molly Agarde, Kate's daughter, who all represented themselves as ranch women... Zoe Todd who represented Virginia Todd 1939 Rodeo Queen and last but not least the 2007 Rhinestone Cowgirl, Karen Shores. Thanks to this committee and all the individuals who made this a great float!!

For Your Reading Pleasure

Rain or Shine: A Family Memoir by Cyra McFadden. With Montana and other parts of the nation attending rodeos and following their favorite rodeo cowboy, it would be a great time to read this memoir. The author describes an emotionally tumultuous life as the daughter of celebrity rodeo announcer, Cy Taillon.

Looking Ahead

Don't miss the Annual Hutchins Bridge party on July 21 at the old Kirby Place from 6:00pm to 9:00pm. Tickets can be purchased at MVHA Museum, local banks, Old Kirby Place, from Women of the Wild or at the gate. It is a really fun evening and a benefit for the MVHA.

Volunteers are needed at the MVHA Museum in order to keep the museum open on a timely basis. Call 682-5780, 682-4360, 682-7880 or drop by the museum to sign up.

August meeting will be the Field Trip to the Mining Museum in Silver Star, hopefully close to our regular meeting time. Date, time and other details to be announced by phone committee and Madisonian.

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

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Madison Valley History Association, Inc.

Board of Directors

President: Larry Love
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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 October 2007.

Editor: Shirley Love
Contributing Editors: George Sheperd from *The Western Producer*, Sept. 23, 1965
Zoe Todd for Montana Trivia
Dodie Barnett for History Tidbits

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