

# The Wagon Tongue

Volume 8 Issue 3

Madison Valley History Association, Inc.  
website: [www.madisonvalleyhistoryassociation.org](http://www.madisonvalleyhistoryassociation.org)

July 2010

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**From the Wagon Seat:** After a very wet June here in the Madison Valley, it appears summer has finally arrived. The hills are really green and most of the snow has left the mountain tops. A lot has been happening with the MVHA since the last newsletter. First of all, we elected new board members at the May meeting. The new board members are Don Black of Great Falls and Jeffers, Kevin Brenneke of Jeffers, and yours truly, Otis Thompson of Ennis. The board elected its "new" officers at its June meeting. I, Otis Thompson, was reelected as president, John White was elected vice president, Duane Thexton was reelected secretary, and Neil Kent was reelected treasurer.

Also at our May meeting, Ten-Year Certificates were awarded to Bud Angle (posthumously), Bev Claassen, Pat and Dave Hale, Neil Kent, and Larry and Shirley Love. Also, it was my honor as President of MVHA to present Harold White and Larry Love with Certificates of Achievement and a small gift for the many hours they have spent this past year in getting our new museum site up and running. Without Harold's expertise in plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, locks and the use of his tools, we could never have made the May opening. Larry, as the museum project director put in many hours behind the scenes getting work crews together and making things happen. Larry has also accepted the task as project chairman for the Otto Coss-Oscar Angle Forge building.

The Walk of Names project has really been a success story for the MVHA. We really appreciate the support we have had in this project from all of you out there. If you have not had the opportunity to purchase a board for yourself or a loved one, it is not too late to do so. This will be an ongoing project for some time. We have now sold over 200 boards and collected over \$10,000 in this project. These funds have enabled us to get the Walk of Names in place. We are about 3/4 of the way done with the walks leading to the museum. Also, with these funds and a generous donation from the Madison Valley Woman's Club and a grant from the Horizons Program for the Madison Valley, we are ready to start phase one on the Forge building. As I write this column, work has begun on preparing the site for the foundation of this building.

Our monthly programs in May and June have been very successful. Zoe Ann Stolz of the Montana Historical Society gave a very entertaining presentation on toys from the 1800s to the present day. MVHA member Rick Arnold added to the presentation by bringing many of the toys he has collected over the years. This program concluded with our annual potluck dinner enjoyed by all. At the June meeting, Joe Smithson, a local amateur historian, gave a presentation on the ancient Indian civilizations here in the Madison Valley. He had a slide show presentation that showed the evidence of these ancient people. On July 15, we will have our first summer field trip. This trip will take us to the Varney area, where MVHA members who grew up in that area will be our tour guides. In August, we are tentatively planning a field trip to take a tour of the talc mine.

Again this year your MVHA carried on the tradition of having a float in the annual Ennis 4th of July parade. This year our theme was "Preserving History Forever" in which several members, dressed in vintage clothing, rode on the trailer with an old horse drawn mower. The trailer was pulled by Larry Love's restored Cub International Tractor.

With this article I wish to express my condolences to the Overstreet family on the passing of our beloved friend and mentor "Smitty Overstreet." She will certainly be missed along with her knowledge of the valley and the passion she had for the MVHA.

This summer, if any of you have time, we could certainly use your help in maintaining the summer hours of the museum. The success of our museum depends on the volunteers who unselfishly give of their time. Remember, it takes all the members of the wagon train to "keep the wagons rolling."

Your Wagon Master, Otis Thompson

**Welcome to Membership** The following have joined since the April issue. Please add to any membership list you might be keeping for your committee work. If you need a complete list of members, please contact Shirley Love and she will print a complete updated list for you.

**Gecho, John & Sharron (F)**

P.O. Box 253 (682-4682)  
Cameron, MT 59720

**Morton, Marian E. (I)**

17502 102nd Ave. NE  
Bothell, WA 98011-6704

**Roberts, Linda (Secora) & Chris (F)**

P.O. Box 124 (843-5458)  
Virginia City, MT 59755

**Wasick, Phyllis (I)**

P.O. Box 1337 (682-7768)  
Ennis, MT 59729

**Membership Update** 2010 memberships are now due, There are memberships still outstanding for Jan., Feb., Mar. and April. May, June, July, Aug., Sept. are now due at the this time for this Wagon Tongue publication. Please check your address label on your issue of the Wagon Tongue and you can tell when your membership is due or if you have not purchased it yet. Your membership is good for a full year from the date that you purchased it and you are not penalized for submitting early. Memberships are \$5.00 for students, \$10.00 for individuals, \$15.00 for families, \$50.00 for Businesses and \$100.00 for Patrons. If your membership comes due before the next October Wagon Tongue, you will find a membership application enclosed. If you are inviting a new person to join or want to purchase your membership before it is due, just write out name, mailing address and type of membership and mail with membership fee to MVHA at P.O. Box 474, Ennis, MT. 59729.

The Board of Directors of your Madison Valley History Association appreciates all the memberships that are purchased as this allows them to have funds to continue the work of developing a museum in the Madison Valley:)

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**Memories**

The Wagon Tongue has been getting favorable feedback on the memories of our members and long time Madison Valley residents and natives who have passed on. Please help out by sending your stories and memories about deceased members or residents to the Wagon Tongue. Obituaries from the local newspapers will not be reprinted. We are looking for stories that will expand on the deceased lives, genealogy, and contributions, etc. to the history of the Madison Valley. The Madison County Trails and Trials and Progressive Years have helped but not everyone's family history is included there and sometime there are good stories out there that have never been printed. So

help out if you have information to share. The Wagon Tongue does not want anyone excluded because of lack of new stories. Please, I need your stories. I do not have much information on some of these folks.

Passing away since the last issue of the Wagon Tongue that has been brought to my attention are:

Mar. 31, 2010 **Curt Gibbs** age 71 at his home in Ennis. He was born on Sept. 26, 1938 at Virginia City to Benjamin and Eliza (McGee) Gibbs. He was raised in McAllister. (April 8, '10 *Madisonian*)

April 2, 2010 **Daniel Frank Armstrong** age 85 in Spokane, WA. He was born January 27, 1925 in Norris to Frank and Zora Armstrong. His father, Frank, was born in Oakly, Kansas. He came to Montana in the spring of 1913 with friends who were moving to farmland west of Three Forks, Montana. That same year, in June, he rode with a companion from Three Forks to the Madison Valley. It was a rainy day, you know the way it rains in June, the rain drizzling down, the smell of the wet earth, the richness of things growing, perhaps scudding clouds breaking up in the north. It was something like that when Frank rode over the Norris Hill, and he loved it. It became his home.

His first years in the Madison, he spent working as a freighter hauling beer from Virginia City to Ennis, as a ranch hand, working for Jimmy Shewmaker when he owned the ranch which serves now as the home ranch for Goggins Herefords, and as a car sales man.

On August 1, 1917 he married Zora McKee of Jeffers. Zora's father William Edward McKee ( Dan's grandfather) was born in Illinois. He married Ida Woodworth and they first came to Montana in 1896. bringing six children, one of them Zora and five more were born in Montana. Their first home in the Madison Valley was a log house that stood where the house of Harold Kilmer was and is now the home of Gayle and Danette Clark. It was owned at that time by one of Ida's uncles, John Woodworth.

Some time previous to the August 1 wedding, Frank had tried to enlist in the Army to fight for his country. He was rejected for physical reasons, and this rejection left him secure, no doubt with the knowledge that he could safely marry without worrying about a long separation imposed by the draft. But somewhere in the bureaucratic logic behind making armies, Frank was drafted one year, 27 days after his marriage and barely a month after his first child was born. Six months later the war was over and Frank was discharged having served 157 days. The closest he came to brutality of was facing the influenza epidemic. It quarantined him and his company at their point of debarkation. He was discharged on Jan. 30, 1919.

Frank came home to a disaster. The livery stable and house he had bought in Norris burned down in his absence. He came home to find that his means of supporting his family no longer existed. He began working for the Montana Power Company and later he found work on ranches near Ennis. Sometime during that time other children were born including son, Daniel Frank.

This work carried the family into the depression, and then

## Memories from page 2

because work was hard to find, Frank took his family back to Kansas to work for his father, Bob Armstrong. It was out of the drought and into the dust bowl.

Four years in Kansas was enough and Frank brought his family back to the Madison. Daniel Frank attended school in Ennis, graduated in 1943, was drafted into the Army and served in WWII and was captured and imprisoned as a POW in Germany. After the war, he married Donna Bennetts of Butte in 1947. (Pioneer Trails and Trials Frank Armstrong pg 11 and William E. McKee pg131 by Zora McKee Armstrong) (Daniel Frank Armstrong Obituary April 8, 2010 *Madisonian*) April 27, 2010 Long time Madison Valley resident, **Pamela Kafferlin Sheffield** passed at age 100 at Generations Assisted Living in Ennis. Pamela was born in Shoshone, Idaho on May 9, 1909 to Leslie A. and Mae O. (Erwin) Kafferlin. She married Ben Sheffield on June 22, 1933 and they moved to Montana in 1936 and worked for the Elkhorn Ranch and then they owned and operated the Windy Water from 1946 to 1970. (May 6, '10 *Madisonian*)

April 29, 2010 MVHA member and long time Madison Valley resident **James Ried (JR) Pasley** passed away at age 73 at Bozeman. J.R. was born on Nov. 12, 1936 to Robert Darwin and Mabel Luella Pasley in Jeffers, Montana. J. R.'s grandparents, S. Ried and Myrtle Draper Pasley were both born in Calwood, Callaway County, Missouri and they farmed for a number of years near Fulton, Missouri. Three sons and one daughter, Robert Darwin, Irene, Louis and Joseph Hal were born there. Due to ill health of S. Ried and son, Louis, they moved to Madison County, Montana in 1913. They first lived on the Gilmer place south of Jeffers, and later purchased and moved to the Frank Selby place. They raised hay and cattle. They raised a large garden and Myrtle canned hundreds of quarts of fruits and vegetables. The boys were called early in the morning to help with the chores, to milk the cows and separate the milk. They raised chickens and pigs and always had plenty of meat. Myrtle was a good cook and made pies almost every day, had hot biscuits and made her own light bread. She sold butter, eggs and cream to the residents of Jeffers and Ennis. Most of the cream went to the creamery. Myrtle was a good seamstress and made her and Irene's clothing. They were a thrifty family. the children went to grade school in Jeffers and to Ennis High School. For many years they lived in the original two story log house, which was later moved and used for a barn. They built a modern two story home in 1925. Dar married Luella Hayden Krupp in 1928. Luella was the youngest child born to Mr. and Mrs. Jake Krupp. Her mother died when she was 5 months old and her mother's sister, Mabel Hayden came from Montana and brought her back to Montana with her. Luella went to Jack Creek School, attended Ennis High School, graduated in Michigan while living with her parents. She returned in 1925, worked for the Chownings, attend Butte Business College, worked for Belle Jeffers and then she and Dar were married. At the time that their first child, James Ried (J. R.) was born, Dar was working for the Jeffers General Merchandise Store. They were living in a small house in Jeffers. In 1944, Dar became the manager and part owner of the Marshall Wells

Store and in 1957 he had the Pasley Farm Service and Pasley and Son Construction Company. This is the same year that J. R. married Darlene Reamer. He and J. R. added the Ennis Auto Parts and J. R. learned the trade of mechanic. Another addition was added in 1981 for storage of grains, seeds and machine parts. J. R. continued this business, retiring in 2005 after 46 years of dedication.

(Pioneer Trails and Trials pg 145 and Progressive Years pg 766-767 by Luella Pasley May 6, '10 *Madisonian*)

May 23, 2010 **Mary Ella (Mae)Leth** age 90 at Madison Valley Hospital in Ennis. Mae was born on June 11, 1919 at Norris, to George and Thursa(Card) Benson. She was raised in the Orphan's Home in Twin Bridges and married Andy McCuaig. ( June 3, '10 *Madisonian*)

June 4, 2010 **Ted Hamilton** age 50 at McAllister. Ted was born on November 8, 1958 to Bill and Lillian Hamilton in Polson, Mt. He attended Montana State University and on September 12, 1981, married Bonnie Gail Owens of McAllister, daughter of long time Madison Valley residents, Lynn and Devona Owens.

June 7, 2010 **Harold Wesley Brown** age 84 at Madison Valley Manor. "Brownie" as his friends knew him, was born Nov. 23, 1925 in Wray, Colorado to Thomas and LaVida Brown. In 2002, the adventurous spirit overtook him and Arlene and they made one more big move to Ennis, to be near son, Larry and his family, and to enjoy the view of the Madison Range out their window.

June 30, 2010 "**Smitty**" **Pricilla Smith Overstreet**, age 84 at Pioneer Medical Center in Big Timber. Smitty was born in Melrose, Massachusetts on Oct. 10, 1925. Smitty's memory will be printed in the October issue of the W T.

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The MVHA has a William and Katherine Ennis celebration on March 17 each year which is the date of William's birthday. This past year the 7th grade students in Dusty Schrock's class wrote poetry and essays about William and Katherine Ennis, the founders of Ennis. The winning essay and poetry were printed in the April WT. For this issue two of the runner up submissions are printed:

### **William Ennis I am a Poem**

by Jarrod Nye

Ennis is a founder and a history maker.

I wonder what life was like for him.

I hear very few stories about him.

I see him digging Morris Creek and building his cabin.

I want to know more about him.

Ennis is a founder and a history maker.

I pretend I help him found Ennis.

I feel the joy when I think about him founding Ennis.

I touch the cabin he lived in.

I worry where I would live if he hadn't found this great place.

I cry at the thought of that.

Ennis is a founder and a history maker.

I understand that we wouldn't live here if it wasn't for him.

I say Ennis is the best town ever.

I dream of seeing what he saw when he first arrived.

I try not to forget William Ennis.

I hope you don't either.

Ennis is a founder and a history maker.

**I am Ennis** by George Ball  
 I am founded in 1863 by William Ennis  
 I hear the wind singing  
 I see dancing herds of elk and deer  
 I want to grow and prosper  
 I am founded in 1863 by William Ennis  
 I feel new building being built  
 I touch the leaves as they fly through the wind  
 I worry I might be deserted and abandoned  
 I am founded in 1863 by William Ennis

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**Madison County's Civil War Veterans**

As a follow-up on Jeff Safford's excellent presentation at the Association's meeting in April, and recognizing that 2010 marks the 145th anniversary of the end of America's Civil War, Gary Forney thought it might be of interest to provide a bit more information regarding Madison County's Civil War veterans.

**Taps** by Gary R. Forney

In what was almost certainly an incomplete enumeration, the 1890 Federal Veteran's Census identified 150 Civil War vets who were residing in Madison County. The largest group of these (38) were found in the Red Bluff district, and 21 veterans were registered in the Madison Township district. The census also identified a few men who had served with the Confederate forces. The June 1, 1911, issue of the *Madisonian* reported on a Memorial Day ceremony organized by the Frank Blair Post of the Grand Army of the Republic in Virginia City. A detail of seven GAR members marched from the auditorium to Hillside Cemetery. The article noted that the graves of 15 GAR vets and 2 Confederate Army veterans were decorated. The article lamented that, "a few years after its organization [the Post] had 75 names on its muster rolls." There were also active GAR Posts at Sheridan (Custer) and Ennis (Moody) at this time. In the autumn of 1926, the Virginia City Eagles Club undertook a project of marking the graves of Civil War veterans with cement markers. This project, which focused upon the cemeteries of the Alder Gulch communities, identified the gravesites of 22 veterans; including 11 of whom who had not appeared on the 1890 Census. The 1926 project included 3 men who had served with the Confederacy and who also did not appear on the 1890 Census. The *Madisonian* of March 11, 1927, reported the death of Jacob Burger, another Civil War vet. The article noted that, at the time of Burger's death, there were only 2 surviving

vets who were still active members of the Frank Blair Post of the GAR (Virginia City); Paul Amberg and Jeffery Fouts. Fouts would be the last of this distinguished fraternity to pass away, in September of 1928.

Leaning heavily upon Sue Ren's work, I have been able to thus far identify fifty-one Civil War veterans (GAR or CSA) who are buried in Madison County; undoubtedly, there are several others who lie in unmarked graves. The lives, and deaths, of each of these men provide wonderful—often poignant—stories. William Reed was a GAR veteran from New Hampshire, who is buried in a pauper's grave at Pony. Archibald McGown was a native of Alabama who served as Captain in the Confederate Cavalry and who, for years, tenderly cared for his invalid wife. Stephen Gainan was from Iowa and with Territorial Governor Benjamin Potts, was among those who marched through Georgia. James Madison Page, who settled near Twin Bridges, survived imprisonment in the hell-hole known as Andersonville and—very controversially--publicly defended the prison's commander. Though these men came from several states and countries, they had all once known the tragedies of war and had shared the dream of a new and better life far from those bloody battlefields in this place called Montana.

**Sources:**

- 1890 Federal Veterans Census of Montana
- Madisonian*
- Miller, M. Mark. "James Madison Page," papers of 2004 Gallatin Valley Historical Society annual conference.
- Progressive Men of Montana
- Ren, Susan Slater. All Should Be Remembered, Vols 1-4.

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**History Tidbit:** The Daems Brodge sunk a foot on one side and has been repaired by the Hutchins Bridge builder. July 31, 1903 *Times*

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**Montana Trivia** Answers to April 2010 issue:  
 5.Columbus 6. Eden





## For Your Reading Pleasure

### Hebgan Dam Earthquake August 17, 1959 Remembered

Excerpts from "They were long and Hard but Happy Days" an autobiography by George C. Hungerford. Paper back (8x11) Approx 35 pages including many color and black and white photos. Available at the MVHA Museum for \$9.00 or order at MVHA, P.O. Box 474, Ennis, MT 59729 for \$9.00 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling (\$11.00)

Varney, Montana A Condensed History by Don Black for the MVHA. A paperback pamphlet Available at the MVHA museum for \$5.00 or by order at MVHA. P.O. Box 474, Ennis, MT. 59729 for \$5.00 plus \$1.00 shipping and handling (\$6.00)

## Looking Ahead

**July 24, 2010 11:00am** Author Talk and Book Signing with Ron V. Rockwell with his recently published book The U.S. Army in Frontier Montana

at the Thexton Rm of the Madison Valley Public Library in Ennis. The MVHA also has his book available for purchase at the Museum.

**August 6 3:00 to ?? pm** Branding Party for Walk of Names Boards. Hamburger BBQ for \$5.00 Tours of the Museum

**August 6-8, 2010** Ennis All School Reunion

**August 16, 2010 7:00pm** Bill Rossiter Singing High Country Ranch Tales Thexton Community Rm of Madison Valley Public Library in Ennis.

**August 19** MVHA tentatively scheduled Field Trip to the Rio Tinto Talc Mine. Time and car pooling, etc. TBA

Madison Valley History Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 474  
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## Madison Valley History Association, Inc. Board of Directors

President: Otis Thompson

Vice President: John White

Treasurer: Neil Kent

Secretary: Duane Thexton

Director: Larry Love

Director: Kevin Brenneke

Director: Don Black

Meetings held monthly on the **third** Thursday of each month. Watch Madisonian for details of time and place and program. (Note the change from 2nd to 3rd Thursday) Board Meetings are held the 1st Wednesday of each month 10:00am. Madison Valley Museum MVHA office.

The Wagon Tongue will be published quarterly. Next issue will be October 2010.

Editor: Shirley Love

Contributing editors: Zora McKee Armstrong Pioneer Trails and Trials page 11 and page 131

Luella Pasley Pioneer Trails and Trials pg 145 and Progressive Years pg 766-767

Jarrold Nye *William Ennis I am a Poem*

George Ball *I am Ennis*

Gary Forney *Madison County's Civil War Veterans*

Charles "Buck" Crump *The Sun Ranch-Years 1934-1941*

Kevin Brenneke *Montana Trivia*

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