

# Upper Swan Valley Historical Society

## NEWS & NOTES



WINTER 2021-22

DISCOVERY—COLLECTION—PRESERVATION—EDUCATION

VOL. XV. NO. 4

### Ed Foss: joys and hazards of heating with wood

Ed Foss moved to the Swan Valley in the 1960s. He wrote about his experiences in his book, *A Swan Valley Journal*, published in 1994.

In a chapter called “Mountain Living,” Foss talked of heating with wood. “Living in the forest brings great satisfaction, especially when the wood has been cut, hauled and piled by one’s self.... But the inherent dangers in burning this wood lower the satisfaction level.”

A succession of chimney fires starting in 1970, which occasionally burned out the pitch accumulating in Ed’s chimney, led to a full-blown fire in 1977.

Ed wrote, “I wasn’t concerned—until ... I found smoke billowing out between the mantle and fireplace.”

He managed to pull the mantle out and douse the flames that he could see. He connected a garden hose in case he would need it and checked the log wall behind the chimney every half hour. Then, smelling no smoke and seeing nothing unusual he went to bed.

“Twice between ten and two I sat up to look at the fireplace. Then at two I sat up again and through sleep-filled eyes saw a line of flame above the fireplace. Panic!”

Ed drove to a phone to alert the fire department.

“Never, I swear, has there been a better crew of firefighters! ... I never appreciated the sound of a chainsaw until I heard two of them in action in my living room.”

Tile chimney flues had been set against the log wall with only a single layer of fiberglass between them, causing the fire.

Many copies of Foss’s *Swan*

### Firewood: too common to say much about

Finding, hauling, cutting, splitting, stacking and burning firewood has been such an ordinary part of people’s

lives in the Swan Valley that a search for the word, “firewood,” in oral history transcripts yields only a few mentions, despite the amount of time and effort devoted to wood by so many of us each fall and winter. Below are just a few comments found in transcripts.

In an interview by Suzanne Vernon, Oliver Hill, whose father Matt homesteaded in the Swan Valley in the early 1900s, hinted at the significance of firewood in people’s lives:

*SV: Tell me about your folks? What on earth ever gave them the idea to move here?*

*OH: Well, there was a bunch of Finlanders. They all worked at the ACM [Anaconda Copper Mining Company] in Bonner. When the homestead act started up, they all wanted to come up here. Most of them were living in the ACM housing. There was Jalmar Maki, Jacobson, Becks, Kolehmainens, and my dad and mother. My dad and mother got up Buck Creek because it*



**Some people make firewood stacking an art. The heart shape in Steve and Sharon Lamar’s woodshed was in honor of son Luke’s wedding to Sara Halm in 2020. Lamar photo**

*Valley Journal* book are still available at the USVHS and other local venues.

### January 23, 1969 Foss Journal Entry

“Happy morning ... When I flushed the toilet the damned thing wouldn’t drain.... The drain to the septic tank was frozen, probably to remain so for the rest of the winter. Oh well. Pioneers didn’t have flush toilets either!”

**Continued page 2**

## Firewood cont. from p. 1

had birch trees. There are no birch trees down here, but there are up on Buck Creek and in the old country, birch is one of the prime trees going. In fact they had birch farms, where they raise birch. They'd cut it up and use it as firewood, when it gets to about three or four inches. So that's how my folks ended up up there, instead of down here with the rest of these Finlanders.

Early resident Bob Martin told Suzanne Vernon about tearing down an old lookout structure when he was 17 years old.

*BM: Yeah. Well, they sent Johnny Hulett and I up to a smoke chaser school up at Coram. When we came back. Johnny went on the trail crew, but they put me on Jim Lookout. They'd just built the 50-foot tower the year before. Standard lookout on the top of it. But they had a two-story log structure. The flooring, the planks were hewed out with an adze, and a map board up above. So I tore that down and cut it all into firewood.*

Gloria Busch with husband Jim Busch co-founded and owned the Rustics of Lindbergh Lake log home business [1970s]. In an interview with Suzanne, Gloria described a locally grown advance in log home building, the lengthwise strip cut out of a log's bottom edge;

*GB: Joe Wilhelm is the one that devised this... he would take [a] chainsaw—and make these—we even called them Adolph [Anderson] strips—he'd ream them out of there about this long (3 feet) and they make great firewood. They'd do all the logs that way then turn them over and make them fit.*

When life-long resident Wes Kesterson, who sells firewood in the valley, was asked recently why firewood was so seldom mentioned in oral histories, he said: "You cut it, you split it, you burn it. What else is there to say?"



The Swan Valley Connections Landscapes & Livelihoods students toured the Swan Valley Museum October 4 and discussed the history of the Swan Valley with USVHS President Steve Lamar. Lamar photo

## Looking back: five winter days in the 1950s

Doris Haasch's entries in her January 11, 1955-1959 five-year diary tell of her family's typical day-to-day activities in the 1950s and pinpoint when the Swan River Tavern moved into the building that is now Liquid Louie's. The original Swan River Tavern is now at the Swan Valley Museum.

### *Doris Haasch Diary, January 11, 1955-1959*

*Tues. 1955—Harold worked. I crocheted and knitted. We went to a basketball game.*

*Wed. 1955 [1956]—Nice. The men worked. Mame [Krause] went to town. Lucille [Haasch Wilhelm] came down to watch the bar. I baked bread and ironed.*

*Fri. 1957—Snowed all day about 1 foot. Mary Lou [Krause Wilhelm] went up to Margarite's [Marguerite Wilhelm]. I hauled the last load of hay from Luke's & got stuck. Gail was here.*

*Sat. 1958—Little snow. We all helped move over into the new bar [now Liquid Louie's] and then had a party.*

*Sun. 1959—Nice. We fished all day and then came on home.*



Harold and Doris Haasch, 1950s. Chaps and vests made by Marion Holmes Krause Haasch. USVHS photo

## Pearle Pepper Shea, Woman Homesteader, Part I

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For more information contact any of the Society's officers or directors or write:

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*News & Notes* is created and distributed by the Upper Swan Valley Historical Society. Become a member, donor, or volunteer.

USVHS welcomes all volunteers! If you would like to volunteer contact President Steve Lamar, 754-2745, or Colleen Kesterson, 754-2377. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Pearle Pepper Shea homesteaded in the Swan Valley in the early 1900s. We'll print Pearle's entire story in forthcoming USVHS newsletters. Florence Strom Tucker typed Pearle's story just as she had written it (*Thank you Florence*). We are sharing it here unedited. Pearle's story was first published in 1961 in the *Polson Flathead Courier*.

### ***Pearl Pepper Pioneer***

*I have been asked to write featuring Mr. Millet, whom I believe was Swan Lake's first postmaster. In so doing I will have to tell how I first came to know him.*

*As a young girl I often heard about teachers taking homesteads. Two would file on joining homesteads and build their cabins near the line that divided the claims. It all sounded wonderful to me and as married women could not file at the time, I decided what I wanted most was a homestead.*

*In 1917 Swan Valley was opened up for homesteading. My brother-in-law, who was living in Kalispell at the time, was going to file, and sent me word if I wanted a place to come. I was working in a confectionary in Oregon but I lost no time getting there. There were others who had applications on these two places and whoever was there first on the day they were to be let had first chance. We were there, but what a trip!*

*I thought I would only have to go to the land office in Kalispell and dressed accordingly, wearing high heeled shoes I wore to work in I took off. Everything started out fine, we rode out to Swan Lake. There was no road around the lake so we took the steamboat from the north end of the lake to the south end.*

*We had to spend a night at the lake. That was the first time and place I met Mr. Millet. He was the postmaster and also had a few cabins which he rented out to people who had to spend the night there and would serve you a meal if it were really necessary and if he felt in the mood.*

*There was a logging camp there and*

*we thought we would be able to saddle horses for the rest of the 18 miles up the valley, but all we could get was one little pack pony which had to carry our beds and grub for overnight. There was a logging road for six miles to the last camp and from there on just a trail.*

*We got to where we could look at the places we asked for at 6 p.m.*

*What I saw was the biggest disappointment I had ever known. What I wanted was a place covered with green trees and little mountain streams, which I only intended clearing enough to be able to prove up, so I would have all that beautiful, unspoiled wilderness to come to and rest.*

*What I saw was acres and acres of burned over land, big, tall black snags standing, fallen logs and stumps and a young growth of lodgepole about as high as your head and thick as hair on a dog's back.*

Part II of Pearle's story will run in the Spring 2022 newsletter.

### *What is it?*



*Neil & Dixie Meyer  
Collection*

### ***You can help: heat pump fundraising underway***

The USVHS is raising funds for the new heat pump (#2), installed May 27 in the south room of the Swan Valley Museum. The heat pump (#1) in the north room has significantly reduced energy costs since 2019. The heat pumps maintain a steady temperature that protects the valuable artifacts and exhibits at the museum. The fundraising goal for the south room heat pump is \$4600. Donations are welcome.

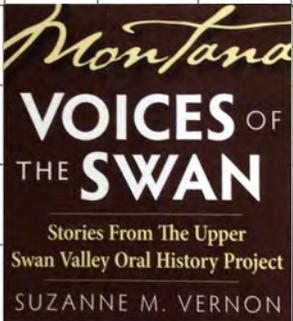
## Challenge

### Name the People on the Cover

The first person to submit a correct list of all the people photographed on the cover of the *Montana Voices of the Swan* book will enjoy a sense of satisfaction, gain notoriety and receive a free copy of one of the Upper Swan Valley Historical Society books: *As Time Goes By, A Chronology of Swan Valley; The Huck Book; The Gathering Place, Swan Valley's Gordon Ranch; or Montana Voices of the Swan.*

To participate you will need to see the *Voices of the Swan* book cover. Books are available at Swan Valley Library or for sale at Swan Valley Museum, Mission Mountains Mercantile, Swan Valley Connections, the Grizzly Claw, [swanvalleyhistoricalsociety.org](http://swanvalleyhistoricalsociety.org) and other venues.

Submit your list in the correct numerical order to Fern Kauffman at [fnkauff@yahoo.com](mailto:fnkauff@yahoo.com) or PO Box 1128, Condon, MT 59826.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23				24	25
26	27				28	29
30	31				32	33
34	35				36	37
38	39	40	41	42	43	44
45	46	47	48	49	50	51
52	53	54	55	56	57	58
59	60	61	62	63	64	65

*Thank You Volunteers &  
All Who Have Donated  
Historical Items*

## Member and Local Support Vital

*From President Steve Lamar's 2021 Annual Report*

Despite the Covid 19 pandemic, our community, membership, and visitors continued to support the USVHS financially—a real testament to the generosity of people during rough times. Numerous businesses and individuals donated supplies, money, and time to make our various events and activities possible.

Although grants and sponsorships help pay for specific projects and events, the most important source of funds are individual supporters who send donations and memberships, attend fundraisers and events, visit the museum, and purchase books and other merchandise. These funds pay overhead to continue the museum's existence into the future. People contribute to specific projects where the donation of time and money can be valuable as a match for a grant or even for other donations.

Volunteer time is extremely important for the success of the museum. Colleen Kesterson did a great job coordinating the numerous volunteers this past year.



### Recipe

### *Huckleberry Pie*

*By Steve and Betsey Ellis*

From the Huck Book

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 4 Cups Huckleberries            | 2/3 Cup sugar                          |
| 1/2 Cup brown sugar             | 1/4 tsp. salt                          |
| 1Tbsp. butter                   | 2 1/2 Tbsp. tapioca                    |
| 1 Double pie crust,<br>9 inches | 1 tsp. cider vinegar<br>or lemon juice |

Place bottom pie crust in pie plate and chill for 20 minutes. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Mix all the ingredients. Pour mixture into unbaked pie shell. Dot with butter. Add top pastry and flute edges. Cut vents for steam and place pie on a baking sheet. Bake 400 degrees for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake until the crust is golden and the juices are bubbling, 45-55 minutes more. Bake the pie longer if the berries are frozen.

### Tour of the Arts Gallery



Left: Little Bird Kinzfohl and jewelry display with guest.



Above: Sheri Burden and stained glass display with guests.



Sharon Lamar, water color artist and author, with TOA guest.



Above: Tour of the Arts visitors to the Swan Valley Museum October 9 and 10 enjoyed the historic U.S. Forest Service cabin, the Smith Creek schoolhouse replica and the other cabins and exhibits at the Swan Valley Museum.



Linda Guizzo and a granddaughter visited during the Tour of the Arts.

**Swan Valley Museum  
Schedule**

**Open year-round by appointment**

info@SwanValleyHistoricalSociety  
www.SwanValleyHistoricalSociety.org

Call Steve Lamar or Fern Kauffman for appointments ,  
or to inquire about accessibility.

406) 754-2745 or (406) 754-2238.



## USVHS Priorities

The USVHS priorities are the preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of the Swan Valley. As such our focus is on:

- Discovering and assembling records of historical work.
- Providing educational outreach and research opportunities.
- Preserving historical artifacts and sites of significance.

### Recent Accomplishments

- New security system for the Museum & Heritage site with more cameras and remote access.
- Ben Holland Family Tree.
- Heat pump #2 in south room.
- Spit-rail cedar fence at museum.
- July 4 Celebration at museum.
- New electrical indoor and outdoor outlets.
- Crawl space baseboard heater.
- Salish-Kootenai student tour at the museum.
- Roads & Trails Storytelling fundraiser at the museum.
- Landscapes & Livelihoods tour at the museum.
- Tour of the Arts at the museum.
- Annual meeting, October 21.

### Upcoming and Continuing Projects

- Expansion of historical resources on public research computer at the museum.
- Expansion of the digital archive system.
- Oral History Project Phase II.
- *Voices of the Swan* Book 2.
- Heat Pump #2 fundraising.

**How You Can Help** see page 7.

## Home Waters Project

Colleen Harrington's 6th - 8th grade Swan Valley Elementary School class will be learning why homesteaders chose to settle along the Swan River and how they benefitted from the river's proximity.

The project, called "Home Waters: Primary Sources and Place Names of Montana," is grant-funded by the Museums Association of Montana and the Library of Congress.

The USVHS will help locate "primary sources," such as homestead records, historical photos, letters, and oral histories, to help the students with their research.

The class will create a project to present on April 6 at the Kettle House Amphitheater in Bonner.

**Right: Water wheel at Laird's lodge, Swan River, Lindbergh Lake outlet. The wheel turned a model T engine that pumped water), 1932.**  
*Wolff collection*



### *In Memory of*

*Steve Hurlburt*  
*Debra Kay Krantz*  
*Cathy Wise Miller*  
*Eileen Patterson*  
*Colleen Cook Phillips*  
*Jim Thurston*  
*John (Jack) Zottnick*

### *What is it?* *Answer*

Horn benders to place on a calf's horns to gradually bend them downward so they'll be less dangerous.

*Neil & Dixie Meyer*  
*Collection*

### **2021 Raffle Winners**

Gravel - Craig Pfisthner,  
Rug - Frances Swigart,  
Alpen Glow photo - Dorothy Heath,  
Lynne Perry painting - George Beck

**Support the discovery, collection, interpretation and preservation of local historic and cultural resources.**

**We thank you, and future generations will thank you, too!!**

The Upper Swan Valley Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt non-profit corporation. Federal Tax ID #77-0666044.

Contributions are tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations. Contributions will be acknowledged by letter.

**Please make all checks payable to: Upper Swan Valley Historical Society, Inc., POB 1128, Condon, MT 59826**

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**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: July 1—June 30**

**Individual: \$25\_\_ Family \$35\_\_ Business: \$100\_\_**

**CONTRIBUTIONS: Amount—\$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Memorial: \_\_ In honor of: \_\_**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_**

**MULTI-YEAR PLEDGE: 3 YEAR \_\_\_\_\_ 5 YEAR \_\_\_\_\_**

**Total pledge amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Amt paid now \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Choose payment schedule: Annual: \_\_ Quarterly: \_\_ Monthly: \_\_**

**Undesignated contribution or pledge: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Contribution or pledge designated for: \_\_\_\_\_**

**SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**How Can You Help?** Keeping the Swan Valley Museum open requires a team of dedicated volunteers, inspired members and consistent financial support in order to have a viable operation and be able to pay the many expenses such as electricity, heat, insurance, taxes, maintenance and upgrades. To this end we are actively growing our membership and inviting new donors along on our exciting journey. As the saying goes “many hands make light work” and this endeavor is no different. We invite you to begin, or continue, your support of the USVHS through membership, volunteering or donations (one time, monthly, yearly or lifetime options). We are proud to call Swan Valley our home and look forward to preserving our rich history! Thank you for making a difference! Please contact Steve Lamar, President at (406) 754-2745 or info@SwanValleyHistoricalSociety.org.

*We thank you for your generous support.*

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**Bob Martin with Tootles at Pendant Creek, 1940s.**  
*See page 2. Wolff collection*



**Matt and Ollie  
(Oliver) Hill.**  
*See page 1.  
USVHS photo*

## Frostbite Festival Cancelled due to Covid 19.

### *Inside:*

- *Voices* book-cover challenge.
- Excerpts from Ed Foss Journal.
- Part I of Pearle Pepper Shea's story of homesteading in the Swan Valley.
- Doris Haasch diary entries.



Partial funding for this project was provided by Montana's Cultural Trust.

The USVHS is funded in part by coal severance taxes paid based upon coal mined in Montana and deposited in Montana's Cultural and Aesthetic Projects Trust Fund.

