

Upper Swan Valley Historical Society

NEWS & NOTES



SPRING 2022

DISCOVERY—COLLECTION—PRESERVATION—EDUCATION

VOL. XVI. NO. 1

Ed Foss: 1980 Volcanic Eruption

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 told of mysterious dust coating the ground and filling the air in May 1980.

Heading back from a hike on May 19 around the Holland Lake loop trail, Foss wrote, “A cloud of dull gray color was blowing over the Mission Range. ... In the evening when I looked toward the west I found that I couldn’t see the Missions.”

Going to the outhouse at 5:30 the next morning, Ed noticed that, “Brush and trees appeared gray in color. Roofs were gray and the lily pads on the pond below appeared to be made of concrete.”

“I then saw that I’d left footprints in a thick layer of dust on my way down the trail. Back in the cabin the floors felt sandy to my bare feet. As the light improved I could see large dust particles settling to earth like snowflakes. On the front deck were the tracks of a chipmunk in the dust. My world was a mess.”

At noon at the store, “I was told I was probably the only person in the state of Montana who didn’t know Mount St. Helens had blown her top.” On the 21st, Ed noted that he

Continued page 2

Northern Pacific Railroad Legacy

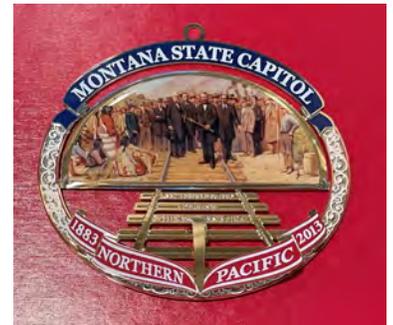
Steve and Sharon Lamar

The Northern Pacific Railway Company (NP) had a significant influence on the settlement, economy, and timber industry of the upper Swan Valley, though no railroad was ever built here. Maps of the early 1900s show the upper Swan Valley in checkerboard ownership comprised primarily of alternating sections (one square mile) of US Forest Service (USFS) and NP lands.

The checkerboard pattern came about in 1864 when President Lincoln signed a law authorizing the NP to build a railroad and telegraph line from Lake Superior in the Midwest to Puget Sound along the Pacific coast. As an incentive to help fund the project, the act stipulated that NP be given alternating sections of public land for 40 miles on each side of the “road” through the

Surveyor John. B. Taylor wrote about the magnitude of the survey project:

“...we learned that our party was to make a rough map and timber estimate of some half million acres, covering the entire drainage of the Swan River and of the Clearwater River, a tributary of the Big Blackfoot River to the south. We worked in parties of four men each, running lines east and west by compass and pacing and recording by species and diameter the trees on a strip one chain (four rods) wide. Each line started from a mile post established by a survey crew on the main trail and was continued until it reached timberline on either the Mission Range to the west or the Swan Range to the east. The men carried packs containing two blankets for the four men, together with food sufficient, we fondly hoped, to last out the trip. The line went straight through every thicket of willow or devil’s club (a thorny bush), through tangles of fallen timber from old fires, across streams and swamps, and up rough mountain canyons.”



Montana Northern Pacific Capitol ornament honoring the completion of the NP track across the country.

various territories (including Montana) and 20 miles of public land through the states. In 1907, the U.S. Forest Service sent a crew of 23 men led by forester Karl Woodward to begin a survey and inventory of the timber resources in the Swan River and Clearwater River drainages. The survey crew plotted section lines and created maps that later the General Land Office (GLO) used to legally allocate land for home-

Continued page 5

Ed Foss cont. from p. 1

could see “the bare outline of the Swan Range immediately behind the cabin, but was unable to see the Missions across the valley.”

He wrote, “Today is stifling; an air pollution emergency has been declared by the governor. Protective surgical masks are being sold on the streets of Missoula.”

“At the post office today I met a less-than-robust old friend, a protective face mask dangling about her neck and a lighted cigarette in her mouth. She seemed properly horrified that I was maskless, that I wasn’t protecting my lungs. Adult reasoning amazes me at times.”

The weather on the 21st, had Ed’s attention, “Late in the afternoon I heard thunder, then strong gusty winds filled the air with ash. A sudden intense (though brief) shower left the windows frosted with St. Helen’s ash.”

Wildlife seemed to go on as usual. “... a male rufous hummingbird flew in and landed on the ground juniper beneath the feeder. While I was watching the hummer, four deer walked single file along the shore of the pond...their ears flapping continuously because of bugs which have somehow managed to survive Mount St. Helen’s remains.”



Pearle Pepper Shea, Homesteader, Part II

Pearle Pepper Shea homesteaded in the Swan Valley in the early 1900s. We’re printing Pearle’s story as a series in the 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 was dismayed to see that the land she had chosen to homestead had burned, and that young lodgepole was growing, “as high as your head and thick as hair on a dog’s back.”

That wasn’t enuf—there was Swan River between us and the land and the only way to get across was to ford or find a drift (a bridge of logs that the river had washed down and piled up together).

That fire had come from Coeur de Alene in 1910 and according to Mr. Vandawarka [Vandarwarka], an old timer, had burned from the top of the Mission Range down through the Swan Valley in one night. Now I wonder why I didn’t give up the idea of homesteading after seeing all that, but the thought never occurred to me.

After Mr. Vandawarka and John Bartlett, who was a ranger at the Goat Creek Station in the summer, signed as witnesses for us, we headed back to the land office. F.O. Williams had the office at the time and was very kind and helpful in explaining the many, many things we did not know about homesteading.

One had six months before having to establish residence on the land and could get an extension of six months more but the time would not count when you went to prove up.

As there was no way of crossing during high water I went back to my job in Oregon.

Dr. Kirby, my brother-in-law, came to my rescue and made a request for an extension of five months time, because owing to health and all the hardships it would be quite impossible to do otherwise.

Returns in The Spring.

In the spring I came back to Kalispell and bought a cow for sixty dollars. Jim, my brother-in-law, bought a team and wagon, so we loaded up and got on our way. Some friends in Washington had given me a pig and my sister was taking some of her chickens. They also had a top buggy which was fastened on behind the wagon, that I, my sister and their two small children rode to Swan Lake where we boarded the steamboat for the trip to the south end.

There was no room on the boat for the horses so Jim took them around the lake the best way he could as there still was no road. We were able to get a couple of cabins from Mr. Millet and after a little rest and reorganizing, we began our trip up the valley.

During the time I was gone, the homesteaders who had spent that time to put up cabins for their families, had cut a road with the help of the Forest Service, but nothing but a wagon could get over it.

There was an old deserted cabin there which was only a little better than no cabin at all, but we had to get it in condition to live in because unknowingly we had come too late to get across the river. It could not be forded after the tenth of April until around the fourth of July because of high water. It seems a man by the name of Simmons had squatted on the place but found out later that he could neither buy or homestead it as it was railroad land. When we went back after the things we had left along the way they were al-

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

**Upper Swan Valley
Historical Society
PO Box 1128
Condon, MT 59826**

News & Notes is created and distributed by the Upper Swan Valley Historical Society.

USVHS welcomes all volunteers! If you would like to become a volunteer, member, board member or donor, please contact President Steve Lamar, 754-2745; Fern Kauffman, 754-2238; or Colleen Kesterson, 754-2377. Your support is greatly appreciated!



Gleason joins the board

Katie Matthew Gleason joined the USVHS board of directors in fall

2021. She is secretary of the Swan Valley School, a basketball coach, a member of Swan Valley Emergency Services for 13 years, and a lifelong resident of the Swan Valley.

As a descendant of homesteaders and early settlers, including the Kaser and Wilhelm families, her knowledge of the history and culture of the Swan Valley is a valuable asset.

Katie is the daughter of Ronnie and Tori Matthew. She and husband Travis have three children: Dakota, Darby and Camden.

***You can help:*
Tipi Camp Matching
Funds Challenge**

The USVHS is working with Tim Ryan, historian, anthropologist and Salish Kootenai College instructor, to create a Native People's Camp exhibit for the Swan Valley Museum.

An anonymous donor has generously offered to match donations up to \$1000. The estimated total project cost is \$5200, which includes the tipi, a bison robe and museum-quality tools and implements of a typical tipi camp used by the Selis and Q'lispe on seasonal trips through the Swan Valley and the South Fork of the Flathead area.

Sue Cushman is donating poles from her forest (17 are needed), to cut this spring. Neil and Dixie Meyer have agreed to help haul the poles to the museum. The poles will need to be peeled. Steve Lamar has already peeled two, which he harvested from his property.

The Native Camp Exhibit will be open for the summer season.

Settlers on NP Lands

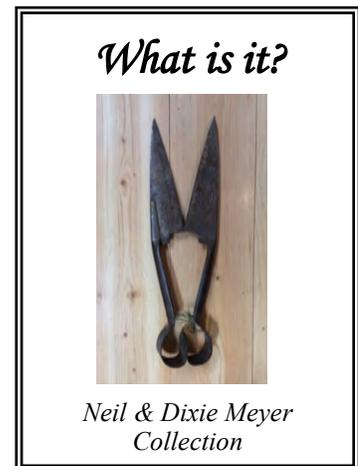
Although the upper Swan Valley was primarily settled by homesteaders staking claims on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands, some settlers purchased Northern Pacific (NP) lands for as low as \$1.25 an acre, usually in 80 or 160-acre parcels.

The Haasch family who homesteaded a USFS parcel later bought an additional 160 acres of NP land for \$1.25 an acre. The Swan Valley Museum stands on a small portion of what was once part of the Hassch land purchased from NP.

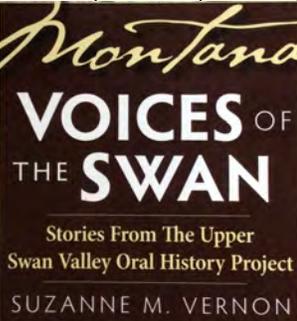
Other early-day settlers who purchased NP lands included Babe Clothier, Archie Clothier, Roy Fox, John Hulett, Glen and Clara Huston, Charlie and Olivia Lundberg, Carl and Ingeborg Anderson, Ed Beck, and Cap and Tyne Laird.

Through the years, many NP employees settled in the upper Swan Valley including homesteaders Charlie Anderson, Frank Anderson, Wiley Brunson, Everett Christy, George Clinkingbeard, Frank Drury, Frank Fox, Harry Hall, Bill Hoogbruin, Clarence Maloney, and Robert Sheehan. Other early-day residents who worked for NP were Joseph Waldbillig, Carl Nelson, Al Melton, Charlie Lundberg, Warner Lundberg, Vern Guyer, and Jim Papke. Still others, like Dennis Jette, contracted with NP.

Help with Research *If you know of more people who had connections with Northern Pacific, please let Sharon Gressle (406-493-1168) or Steve Lamar (406-754-2745) know. Thank you.*



Name the People on the Cover Challenge Answers

1 Mabel & Andy Anderson	2 Quevenc Clothier Beck Talley	3 Kenny & Blanche Huston	4 Father O'Korn	5 Sharon & Dan MacQuarrie	6 Karen Conley	7 Dale Conley
8 June & Rod Ash	9 Peggy & Bob Reed	10 Bob & Darlene Kaser	11 Wayne "Butch" Harmon	12 Bob Van Gieson	13 Bob & Gyda Newman	14 Harold Haasch
15 Bob Martin	16 Boyd Kessler	17 Ken Wolff	18 Buff & Dune (Eunice) Hultman	19 Al Wise	20 Carolyn & David Berner	21 Lucille Wilhelm
22 Lena & Bud Wolff	23 Sadie & Reuben Kauffman	 <p>Montana VOICES OF THE SWAN Stories From The Upper Swan Valley Oral History Project SUZANNE M. VERNON</p>			24 Cal Tassinari	25 Margaret & Warner Lundberg
26 Helen Anderson Brist	27 W.R. "Bud" Moore				28 Agnes Beck	29 Joe Waldbillig
30 Ed Foss	31 Vern & Joanne Guyer				32 Ed Beck	33 Gene & Myrtle Miller
34 Henry & Joan Meyer	35 Evelyn Jette				36 Gloria Busch	37 Herb Styler
38 Junise Nelson Howard	39 Lendal Kotschevar	40 Sue & Mike Holmes	41 Oliver Hill	42 Leita Anderson	43 John Hulett	44 Jerry Underwood
45 Mary Lou Wilhelm, Sally Nauman, Doris Haasch	46 Henry Pennypacker	47 Nan & Mel Nelson	48 Tony Koessler	49 Neil & Dixie Meyer	50 Marilyn Wilhelm Rose	51 John & Marion Matthew
52 Roxey Hollopeter	53 Dorothy Kirk Bocksnick	54 Chuck Conkling	55 Colleen & Wes Kesterson	56 Anne Reinhard	57 Peter Klein	58 Mabel & Clarence Stilwell
59 Alma Becson Vandevanter	60 Rich Nelson	61 Leonard Moore	62 Rod Fox	63 Ona Lake	64 ValGene Clothier	65 Vic Wise

Fern Kauffman was the only person who could name all the people photographed on the cover of the *Montana Voices of the Swan* book.

Swan Valley Museum Summer Season Opens Saturday, May 28

Swan Valley Museum Schedule

**Open Fridays and Saturdays
May 28—Labor Day September 5
Year-round by appointment**

info@SwanValleyHistoricalSociety.org
www.SwanValleyHistoricalSociety.org

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

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



Events Calendar 2022

- May 28**
Swan Valley Museum opening Fridays and Saturdays, noon-4pm.
- July 4**
Celebration at museum and parade float, 9am-2pm.
- August 6**
Northern Pacific Checkerboard Era storytelling fundraiser at museum, 3-5pm.
- August 13**
Huckleberry Festival booth, Swan Lake, 9am-4pm.
- September 3, Labor Day Weekend**
Museum closes for the summer season, open Sep 3, noon-4pm.
- October 8-9**
Tour of the Arts at museum, 10am-3pm.
- October 20**
Annual board meeting at museum, noon-1pm.
- December 3**
Frostbite Festival at Swan Valley School, 10am-3pm.



Recipe **Huckleberry Ice Cream** *By June Ash*

From The Huck Book

- 2 Cups Evaporated Milk
- 1 1/2 Cups huckleberries, mashed
- 3/4 Cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice

Mix ingredients thoroughly and chill completely (overnight is best). Pour into canister of ice cream maker. Follow directions for a 2 quart ice cream maker. Double the recipe for a gallon ice cream maker. Best if eaten when ready, rather than keeping in the freezer.

Note: The recipe was used for the infamous Condon, Montana 4th of July ice cream sale, which raised money for the Historical Society.

*Thank You Volunteers, Donors &
all who have contributed historical Items*

Swan Valley Students Home Waters Project Gallery

See page 7 for details



Pearle Pepper, continued from page 1

most surrounded by fire. The crew had logged up that far and were burning the brush. The stove might have stood the fire but I hate to think what might have happened to the trunk and what it's contents meant to me.

Our first job was to make a road down a steep bank to where we could ford the river. Somewhere I had heard that water was deepest where it was smooth so we graded the hill to where the water was quite rough and did not look too deep—one of our many mistakes learned the hard way. My sister worried because we were losing so much time when we could be getting out logs for our cabins. She knew nothing about the river or how dangerous it could be to try and cross. So finally Jim said he would try. He packed Pete the long-legged horse and rode Prince, the not so tall and rather nervous one. He had me go to the river with him so I could start Pete across after he got over to the other side, he was sure Pete would follow, but he had more sense than any of us and refused to start. We finally gave up and Jim started back across but the current began taking them downstream. Luckily the current carried them near enough to where a snag was sticking out from the bank so Jim could reach it and pull himself out, and by talking to the horse kept him calm enough that he finally got out. But that only prolonged his life for one year, but will tell about that later.

Part III of Pearl's story will run in the July 4, 2022 newsletter.

Northern Pacific, continued from page 1

stead claims and railroad sections. One of the crew members, Thomas Cooney was a land agent representing Northern Pacific. The NP company paid part of the expense of the survey to gather information about its grant lands.

A number of the survey crew members bestowed their names on some of the natural features of the area. Woodward Lake in today's Bob Marshall Wilderness, as well as Woodward Creek in Swan Valley, were both named for Karl Woodward. Piper Creek (Bill Piper), Sawyer Creek (G.E. Sawyer), Benedict Creek (Junius Benedict), Groom Creek (Dick Groom), Van Lake, and Van Peak (Orrin D. Vanderwarka), were all named for crew members of the survey party.

It is speculated that Cooney Creek was named for the NP representative, Thomas Cooney, who was a Rough Rider in the Spanish-American War under Theodore Roosevelt.

Crew members Junius Benedict and John B. Taylor both left written accounts of their experiences. Taylor wrote, "...we all agreed, easterners and westerners alike, that it was rather foolish to map this wilderness and to make a rough cruise of the timber. It could not conceivably be logged in our lifetime, we thought."

See also page 3 for people with ties to Northern Pacific.

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

- Heat pump #2 in south room fundraising success.
- Spit-rail cedar fence at museum.
- July 4 Celebration at museum.
- New electrical indoor and outdoor outlets.
- Crawl space baseboard heater.
- Roads & Trails Storytelling fundraiser at the museum.
- Landscapes & Livelihoods tour at the museum.
- Tour of the Arts at the museum.
- The Huck Book reprint.
- Tipi purchase.
- Seasonal Round Calendar of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille Tribes.

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.
- Fire finder exhibit.
- Tipi Camp fundraising.
- Fox Family Tree.

Upcoming Events

- July 4 Celebration
- Northern Pacific Legacy Storytelling, Aug. 6
- Tour of the Arts, Oct. 8 & 9.
- Frostbite Festival & Holiday Bazaar, Dec. 3.

How You Can Help see page 7.

Home Waters Project Swan Valley School students visit museum

See photos page 5

Colleen Harrington’s 6th-8th grade students visited the Swan Valley Museum February 22 to “discover” historical resources that will help them understand how homesteaders settled and made a living here in the early 20th century, particularly along the Swan River and its tributaries.

The students examined artifacts in the museum, scanned historic photos on the public computer, examined the names on the Family Trees, and visited the Mary Ann Whalen Cabin and the Smith Creek School replica, where they may film an enactment of homesteaders, as part of the Home Waters project, funded by the Museums Association of Montana and the Library of Congress.

What is it?
Answer

Shears for sheep-shearing.

*Neil & Dixie Meyer
Collection*

In Memory of

*June Ash
Henry “Kerry” Good
LaVera Morton
Dave Sterling*

Ash Remembered



June Ash, ca. 2015-16.
Lamar photo

June Ash, a longtime volunteer and strong supporter of USVHS, passed away November 10, 2021. She was 92.

June’s husband Rod Ash was USVHS president for 20 years. June and Rod first came to the Swan Valley in 1952 and had a home here for many years.

June’s memorial is scheduled for Sunday, June 26 at 1:00pm at the Swan Valley Community Hall.

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: _____

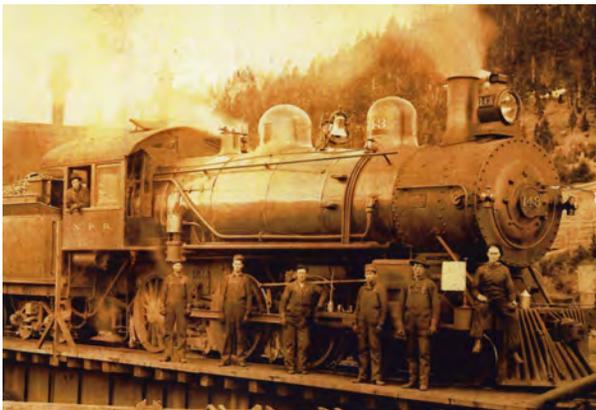
How Can You Help? Keeping the Swan Valley Museum open requires a team of dedicated volunteers, inspired members and consistent financial support in order to have a viable operation and be able to pay the many expenses such as electricity, heat, insurance, taxes, maintenance and upgrades. To this end 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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Wiley Brunson in cab of Northern Pacific Railroad engine, circa early 1900s. *Brunson Collection.*



Woodward Camp, Thomas Cooney on right, 1907. *Elsie M. Taylor Collection.*

Inside:

- The Northern Pacific Railroad legacy.
- Native American camp taking shape at Swan Valley Museum.
- Ed Foss describing the Mt. St. Helens eruption.
- Pearle Pepper story continued.
- Swan Valley School students and their Home Waters project.

MONTANA CULTURAL TRUST

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.

