

HISTORY OF THE GALLATIN CANYON WOMEN'S CLUB  
as told by Dorothy Vick  
at the home of Donna Kessler 8/10/83

The Club, begun in the Fall of 1927, is fifty-six years old this year.

There was snow the day Mrs. White picked Ede Benson up. They stopped for  
Eloise Bennett and were joined by Mrs. Freeman, Mrs. Lemmon, Mrs. Hinkey and  
Mrs. Durnam at the home of Mrs. Earl Benham on Buck Creek, September 28.

Grace Miller, who had belonged to a women's club in Wyoming, addressed them on  
the need for an organization to bring the women of the area together. The men  
met often because of business, but the women seldom left their homes and had  
little opportunity to become acquainted. The purpose of the club was social,  
and the ladies elected Mrs. Freeman president and Mrs. White secretary.

Mary Mills at Red Rock served as secretary for five years. Ede Benson  
was vice-president for eight years. For a number of years only Mrs. White,  
Mrs. Lemon and Mrs. Benson were able to make the Fall Meeting and enjoyed a  
luncheon at Gallatin Gateway Inn, famous for its decor, food and service.  
~~For some years Reno Sales, Mary Mills' brother, subsidized the club a bit when~~  
~~it ran short of funds.~~ Though no dues were asked at first, the ladies soon  
decided a dime a meeting was a good idea in the 1930's. Ede Benson wrote the  
Club Song...In The Good Old Busy Time...which reflected the summer meetings  
and the dime dues.

Elections were casual. Mary Mills caused, a certain amount of note  
writing was done, and a whispering campaign..thus were officers put in. Mrs.  
Karst and Mary Mills kept winter meetings going. During the Depression quilts  
were made. In the end no one wanted them and they were disposed of. From the  
first flat tires were a frequent casualty enroute to meetings.

Susie Taylor came into the canyon at the 320, Dr. McGills's ranch, in  
1937. She was in charge of the Breakfast Meeting for several years...the first  
Spring Meeting. While she fed her ranch crew and the game warden, she prepared  
for the Club with fried ham, eggs and biscuits. On one occasion Maudie Sappington

brought two gallons of ice cream and a huge pan of mushrooms, sauteed. The members could comprehend the mushrooms with the Breakfast, but the ice cream posed a social problem...which they solved by eating it at the end of the meeting.

For a number of years Breakfasts were held at Bopp's Rainbow Ranch.

School support figured importantly as families grew. Money was raised in one night for a film projector when Ima Bopp helped Susie Taylor do a dinner.

Hats and gloves were a must at the annual Fall Luncheons. Sometimes a good deal of trading of hats went on prior to the affair so ladies would have a new hat each year. .

Donna Markley became a regular member in 1945; she enjoyed the meetings at the various homes and loved entertaining at Deer Creek. Bessie Rehms joined in 1955 and recalled the good memories of the picnics. Her first meeting was at Maudie Sappington's in July of that year. It will be long remembered for the "salad lunch" (banquet) Maudie served. Soup, two kinds of meat, three salads and dessert of pie and ice cream...with trimmings. For several years the picnics were held at Markley's Deer Creek. In 1959 the picnic was a huge affair at Moose Flats. It rained, but did not stop the crowd from a good sing-along with Johnny Haynes at the guitar.

Laura Foster, a New York School teacher with accent, arrived in the late 1940's. She insisted on parliamentary procedure. She also initiated a Fall Luncheon of chicken and noodles which she called The Old Hens' Party.

Another lady, Margurite King, wanted a cookbook and gathered recipes for years. When Elaine Humes was elected president in 1950 at Maudie Sappington's, Susie Taylor, Dorothy Vick and others proceeded to help her get it all together. They organized, illustrated and got printed, beginning with a luncheon at Alma Vandecar's Almart. 500 copies were printed and sold through Phillips Bookstore and various guest ranches. Next year a second printing was sold. Then 3,000 copies were printed, a great part being sent to New York to the World's Fair of that year. They went all over the world. Today there are none left for sale. Patty Goodrich wrote the recipe of "How to Catch a Cowboy." Dorothy Niles did



the pictures. The wagon on the cover was Maudie Sappington's. It was a fun project and the money was used for the needs of the <sup>Ophir</sup> Porcupine School. The last \$1,000.00 started the present day scholarship fund, the first such found in the county. Today it rests at \$3,000 in a CD and its income funded Carol Wortman this year at MSU for \$400.00.

Baby showers were held for Keeta Noon, Elaine ~~Homes~~, Barb Miller, Ruth Gordon, Shirley Luhrsen, and others.

Crazy weddings were featured on the Fall Luncheon program for several years. Patty Goodrich was a ringleader in planning. She did a "Ballad of Bill" one year. There was <sup>80's</sup> a hippie wedding, a shotgun wedding, and a space wedding.

Thelma Worry, organized a highway garbage can project that disturbed the Forest Service and Highway Maintenance. In time the organization received a number of communications from the <sup>governor</sup> government about it. This finally resulted in the Club becoming recipient of any government, Federal, State or County, communications dealing with Canyon business. It was the only valid and active group in the Canyon for <sup>nearly</sup> half a century. It has been the only women's organization.

Dr. Caroline McGill, beloved Butte doctor, left money to the Club--\$30,000. The ladies had to incorporate in order to receive it. Doris Patten, then president, obtained the objective and the money was given to the school board for the promise--recorded in county and state records--to let the Club use the all-purpose room when school was not in session. It was so noted in the Ophir School in the days when Lucille Wood became president.

The story of the Bozeman Bank Robbery, long an annual feature of meetings, will be told at the September meeting.

We've come a long way, ladies!

(from notes taken by Shirley L. Luhrsen--Deer Creek)

Corrected - 10/20/89  
 H Dorothy Vick