

# Society STAR

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MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER 2014

## Celebrating Montana and Its Story

This is a grand year for Montana. Events and parties are scheduled across the state to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Montana becoming a territory, the 150th birthday of artist Charlie Russell, the 125th year of statehood, the 100th year of Montana women earning the right to vote, and the anniversaries of communities across the state.

“All of us at the Montana Historical Society urge you to join in the fun of celebrating Montana this year. It has been a lot of work for our staff to provide research and information on all the commemorative events under way. I think the staff’s pride in Montana shows in the exhibits, publications, websites, and other things they have produced to help people across the state reflect on our shared history and heritage,” MHS director Bruce Whittenberg said.

Montana Territory was created May 26, 1864, when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Or-

ganic Act into law. One of the first acts of the territorial legislature was to create the Montana Historical Society. It was signed into law by territorial governor Sidney Edgerton on February 2, 1865.

Montana Territory and MHS literally grew up together. MHS is one of the oldest organizations of its kind in the entire West. Montanans have always known that this is a special place and that all of its history, from its first people to the present, should be honored.

In this issue, you will hear more about the new MHS museum exhibit *Montana’s Territorial Legacy: The Montana Historical Society*, which celebrates the 150th anniversary of both. The Mackay Gallery of C. M. Russell Art has also been renovated to celebrate the birthday of Montana’s famous Cowboy Artist.

Many communities across the state were launched at the birth of the territory, and this summer is a great time to visit MHS and



When Montana Territory was young, all it took to get a shipment from Europe to the pioneers was a crate addressed to “Montana Territory, U.S. Amerika.” The trunk and a beautiful sampler celebrating Montana that hung in the saloon of Cornelius Kelly welcome visitors into the new MHS exhibit.

also get involved in local historical anniversaries and events. Log on to the MHS website, [montanahistoricalsociety.org](http://montanahistoricalsociety.org), to keep track of events that will culminate with the MHS birthday party in February 2015. Have a great summer and celebrate Montana with MHS. ☼



The MHS Montana History Conference will include the story of XIT cowboys and the changes they brought to a young Montana.

## MHS History Conference Celebrating It All

One hundred fifty years doesn’t come around that often.

That’s why you won’t want to miss this year’s Montana Historical Society History Conference “Montana Milestones: 150 Years of Montana History.”

It will feature a kaleidoscope of history since the creation of Montana Territory in 1864: Native American lifeways; the founding

of Butte, Helena, and Missoula; famous Montanans like Charlie Russell, the Cowboy Artist, and Senator Lee Metcalf, who played a major role in the development of wilderness areas and the national Civil Rights Act; the women’s suffrage movement; the abandonment of eastern Montana homestead-era communities; the

*History Conference (cont. on p. 4)*

# 150 Years: Some Perspective from a Child BY BRUCE WHITTENBERG

This is quite a year for Montana. It's the "Year of the 150s," as I've written about previously. Montana became a territory in 1864; the vision of Wilbur Fisk Sanders and territorial governor Sidney Edgerton led to the creation of the Historical Society of Montana on February 2, 1865. The territory's history is remarkable. Miners, stock growers, and homesteaders came here to chase their hopes for fortune and their dreams for their families. Montana's treasures

helped build a nation. Today, the state has evolved from a lawless frontier to one of the most efficient state governments in the nation. In the 1970s, a beautiful constitution—and the collaborative process by which it was drafted—became a hallmark for its vision. This is indeed history worth celebrating.

At the same time, at the Montana Historical Society, we have the privilege of exhibiting artifacts of the Clovis culture, including funerary objects of the Anzick child. This two-year-old child and his family lived in what is now Montana more than 12,700 years ago. This stunning discovery was made in 1968 near Wilsall and is among the most significant archaeological finds in North America. Objects in the cache predate the

human remains by nearly two hundred years.

Humans lived on our Montana land more than 12,700 years ago and have been a part of this land since. In that context, 150 years is just the blink of an historical eye. We celebrate this place, our rich history, and the institution we have created that will serve us many generations into the future. As we do so, we remember the people who first discovered this land, made it their home for thousands of years, and, whether through blood or heritage, are ancestors to us all.

To know where you are going, you have to know where you've been. Let's reflect on what that means to each of us and remember the Anzick child for an important lesson in Montana's history. ★

### About Us

The *Society Star* is published quarterly by the Montana Historical Society as a benefit of membership.

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## SOMETHING NEW SOMETHING OLD: TREASURES FROM THE SOCIETY COLLECTION

### 1892 Tribute to Montana's Native Flowers

There is something sentimental about flowers pressed in a book.

A new acquisition in the MHS Research Center is a collection of pressed wildflowers that was intended to share a love of Montana with the world.

The handmade and hand-bound booklet was made by L. A. Fitch

in Sheridan, Montana, in 1892 to be sold at the World's Columbian Fair—better known as the Chicago's World Fair.

"It is my wish to emphasize the fact that Montana has flowers and sunshine, and is not a region of perpetual cold and snow as many suppose," Fitch wrote.

Several varieties of wildflowers are dried and pressed in the booklet. There is also a poem titled "Montana Flowers," which is an ode to their beauty:

In warm vales, the flower of our nation,  
Raises its golden head—While our pride,  
the *Douglasia Montana*,  
Early springs from its snowy bed.

The *Douglasia Montana* is a dwarf primrose found only in



The cover of the hand-made booklet has an early photo of Yellowstone National Park.

Montana and parts of Idaho and Wyoming. Those and other wildflowers make people smile and sigh, Fitch wrote, "for in them may we oft find a symbol of feelings we carefully hide."

If you have any information on the booklet or on L. A. Fitch, please contact the MHS Research Center at (406) 444-2681 or mhslibrary@mt.gov. ★



Pressed in the pages of the booklet "Montana Wild Flowers" more than one hundred years ago is *Douglasia Montana*.

## Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument



Art, history, and natural beauty come together at the Little Bighorn Battlefield.

The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument is one of the most beautiful and haunting places in Montana.

If you haven't visited it yet or if you want to see it again, 2014 is the perfect year to go. This summer marks the rededication of the Indian Memorial with the completion of the permanent interpretive displays recently installed there.

The battle occurred June 25–26, 1876, when the Seventh U.S. Cav-

alry commanded by Lieutenant Colonel George Custer attacked 1,500 to 1,800 mostly Lakota Sioux and Cheyenne warriors. Custer's command was decimated, but the battle ultimately resulted in most of the Indians being forced onto reservations.

The battlefield is about sixty miles east of Billings on I-90, and its hours are 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. daily with a \$10 entrance fee. ☕

### SOCIETY STAR PROFILE

## “Bobby” Exhibits the Best in Montana History

MHS exhibit specialist Roberta Jones-Wallace, “Bobby” to her friends, has designed more than one hundred exhibits in Montana's Museum since she joined the staff in 1991. She grew up in Helena with a love of art and nearly weekly visits to MHS.

Her long trip back to the job she always wanted started at Montana State University as a student of art education. She went on to Genesee Community College in New York to study model making.

Although she landed her first museum job as a preparator at Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum in Rochester, New York, Jones-Wallace soon became an exhibit designer. “My boss told me to bring some drawings in and show them to him, and I got the job,” she said.

She eventually returned to Montana and worked for a short time at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman before landing her “dream job” at MHS. “I learned from a young age that I needed to be challenged to be happy. This job gives me the perfect blend of

autonomy, responsibility, and challenge,” she said.

In designing an exhibit, Jones-Wallace views it as a three-dimensional story and works with the museum curators' vision, the artifacts to be included, and the exhibit space to present the story for multiple and diverse visitors.

“It might sound funny, but we aren't doing a book on the wall, but in a way we are doing a book on the wall,” she said.

Recognizing that many people will walk through an exhibit and look at it without reading the text panels, Jones-Wallace said the visual appeal is important. “What we try to do is tease them into reading some of the text labels or maybe reading a quote and wanting to learn more about what they are seeing,” she said.

Jones-Wallace is an artist in her own right. Her wood carvings are striking and have a natural spirituality. When she began creating her own art in New York, she said some people thought it was influenced by Native American art.

“It was actually influenced by



Roberta Jones-Wallace at the entrance of MHS's newest exhibit.

African folk art,” she said. She does have a strong interest in Native American spirituality and says there is shared archetypal similarity across the globe.

“The collective consciousness, as psychologist Carl Jung called it, is evidenced by a transference in art that you can't really explain,” she said.

But she probably would find a way, if she designed its exhibit. ☕

## Mackay Gallery of C. M. Russell Art Ready for Summer

There are plenty of reasons to visit the Montana Historical Society this summer, and the newly renovated Mackay Gallery of C. M. Russell Art is a big one.

In honor of the famous Cowboy Artist's 150th birthday, the gallery has been equipped with new lighting that lets the color and detail of his works shine and is safer too.

The exhibit now includes two new cases with Russell sculpture on top and twenty-four drawers below that allow visitors to get



up close to Russell's illustrated letters and smaller drawings and paintings. ⚙

The family of Malcolm Mackay, a New York financier who owned a ranch in Montana and became a friend and patron of Charlie Russell, donated much of his collection to the Montana Historical Society in 1952. It included many of Russell's most important works and became the heart of the MHS collection. Members of the Mackay family were honored at the opening of the renovated exhibit. Standing in front of one of the paintings, *Charlie Russell and His Friends*, are (left to right) Jeffrey Kampfe, Derek Kampfe, Helen Mackay, Bill Mackay Jr., Julia Childs, Christian Mackay, Allsion Mackay, Shealyn Mackay, and Charlie Mackay.

## MHS Women's History Project a Big Hit Statewide



Montana women won the right to vote in 1914—and the Montana Historical Society's centennial celebration is proof that people in every corner of the state are keeping that spirit alive.

MHS built a website to encourage recognition of women's history more broadly. Articles on women in Montana history are posted twice a week on the site. Check it

out at [montanawomenshistory.org](http://montanawomenshistory.org). In addition to the website, the Montana Women's History Matters Facebook page has become a place to learn more about Montana women's history and to share your own stories.

The Women's History Matters initiative has inspired projects and events across the state that promote interest in women's history.

For example, Twin Bridges high school students wrote papers on Montana women's history after visiting the Montana Historical Society Research Center. Several groups plan to participate in community parades this summer to draw attention to women's history.

Many communities are also hosting Women's History Matters speakers, including Diane Sands, whose talk, "Taking Action: A Political History of Women in Montana," is sponsored by the Humanities Montana Speakers Bureau. Museums are joining in the celebration by installing exhibits on the women of their communities. In addition, the Missoula Centennial Committee produced a traveling exhibit, *Leading the Way: Montana Woman Suffrage and the Struggle for Equal Citizenship*. It is currently touring libraries across the state with assistance from the Montana State Library.

Looking to join the fun? Click on the "Celebrate" tab on the Women's History Matters website ([montanawomenshistory.org](http://montanawomenshistory.org)) for ideas of what your community can do to participate in this important anniversary. ⚙

### History Conference (cont. from p. 1)

1972 Constitutional Convention; the devastating 1964 flood; the rise and fall of the Ku Klux Klan in Montana; and much more.

The conference will be in Helena September 18–20 with headquarters at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel. You can log on to [montanahistoricalsociety.org](http://montanahistoricalsociety.org) to get more information or to register. MHS Prospector level members or above receive a 15 percent discount on registration.

One highlight of the conference is "Montana 1864: Clash of Nations." Humanities Montana executive director Ken Egan will examine how the gold rush and the development of Montana brought Native Americans, Union

true believers, Confederate sympathizers, and others into conflict that shaped the early days of the territory.

Historian and former Montana legislator Diane Sands will shed new light on women and government with "Taking Action: A Political History of Women in Montana," and Dr. Rosalyn LaPier and her University of Montana students will talk about the history of Native American hunting, fishing, and gathering in the context of how people lived and shaped the Montana ecosystem.

All of the anniversaries and commemorations in Montana history will come together at the conference with a spirit of Montana pride. ⚙

# Territorial Centennial Train Put Montana on the Map

This is the 150th anniversary of Montana becoming a territory and the 50th anniversary of the train that in many ways put Montana firmly on the national map.

As part of its yearlong celebration of the creation of the territory, MHS hosted a reunion of those who traveled on the Centennial Train fifty years ago. The floor and galleries of the Old Supreme Court Chamber in the Capitol were packed with those who came to hear their incredible stories.

A panel included former governors Tim Babcock and Judy Martz, who both rode on the train; Kitty Ann Quigley Taaler, who spearheaded entertainment and interviews with the press; Howard Fly, who was the horse wrangler and organizer of parades; Gary Wunderwald, who was a member of the Montana National Guard and part of the train's security team; and panel moderator Norma Ashby, noted broadcaster.

The stories they told brought laughter, outbursts of pride, and even some tears to the crowd.

The Centennial Train had twenty-five cars colorfully decorated with paintings of Montana scenes and people, seventy-two horses, and several wagons used in parades. More than three hundred Montanans rode the train that went from Billings to New York, where it became the backdrop for the Montana exhibit in the New York World's Fair.

Along the way, it stopped in major cities like Chicago and Philadelphia, where participants held parades. After each parade, people by the thousands went to the station to see the exhibits on the train, which had been created by MHS staff. They included historic objects, a million dollars of gold, mounts of animals that could be hunted in Montana, and other tourism opportunities like skiing and outfitting. Babcock, who was

governor at the time, said the train was the first major effort to make Montana a tourist destination.

All agreed that it was a major undertaking that could never be done again. For one thing, Quigley Taaler, who wore pistols—"usually with blank cartridges"—for train events and as a host at the fair, said: "They wouldn't let me pack let alone shoot off my guns today."

If you want to learn more, log on to [youtube.com/user/MtHistoricalSociety](https://www.youtube.com/user/MtHistoricalSociety) to view the entire panel presentation. ✪



Centennial Train riders (left to right) Governor Judy Martz, Governor Tim Babcock, Norma Ashby, Kitty Ann Quigley Taaler, Gary Wunderwald, and Howard Fly lived the history of the Montana Territorial centennial.

# How to Research at the MHS Research Center

Baseball Hall of Famer Casey Stengel always said, "You could look it up." That's certainly true in the MHS Research Center.

The MHS Research Center is known for its vast array of original primary source materials, such as maps, newspapers, photographs, diaries, and letters. Although the "real thing" is preserved and made accessible in the MHS facilities, patrons can also access catalogs, finding aids, and sometimes digital images of these rich, historic materials.

The Research Center's online catalog is accessible through the MHS website at [mhs.mt.gov/research](https://mhs.mt.gov/research). There you can find what types of materials would help in your research. You can create lists

of materials you would like to use, or just see what is available.

The Research Center is a member of the Northwest Digital Archives (NWDA). This consortium hosts the digitized finding aids for MHS's archival collections and those of many other archives in the Pacific Northwest and Northern Rockies. A finding aid is a detailed description of a collection. It provides historical and contextual information as well as an inventory of items. Searching the finding aids in NWDA can help you locate a letter, diary, or other historic document involving a specific person—items that may be part of a collection you may not know about or may not have thought to search. You can access

this site via the Society's web page at [mhs.mt.gov/research/online/nwda](https://mhs.mt.gov/research/online/nwda).

Our digitized collections can be accessed through the statewide Montana Memory Project, a collaborative digital repository curated by libraries and museums throughout Montana. The Research Center's digital collections include photographs, documents, books, maps, and other historical materials from our vast collections. These can be accessed via our web page at [mhs.mt.gov/research/online/mmp](https://mhs.mt.gov/research/online/mmp).

For help searching our online resources, call the Research Center's reference desk at (406) 444-2681 or email us at [mhslibrary@mt.gov](mailto:mhslibrary@mt.gov). ✪

# New Exhibit Celebrates Shared History of MHS and Montana Territory

Like bread and butter, the history of Montana and the history of the Montana Historical Society simply go together.

The newest exhibit at MHS—one you should see this summer—celebrates the 150th anniversary of both with treasures that tell a story of pride, determination, and how Montana grew into the state that we know today.

*Montana's Territorial Legacy: The Montana Historical Society* tells a story as big as the history of the land that inspired all of those who came to call it home.

Famous Montana pioneer Wilbur Fisk Sanders, head of the Montana Historical Society in its infancy, put it this way in his report to his fellow citizens: "Here is a society of your own creation . . . organized for your own uses, conducted in your own interest, to preserve your own story, and to keep in perpetual memory the manner of men [and women] you are."

Montana Territory was signed into law May 28, 1864, by President Abraham Lincoln. The Montana Historical Society was created by one of the first acts of the Montana territorial legislature and signed into law on February 2, 1865, by territorial governor Sidney Edgerton, making it one of the oldest historical societies in the West.

The exhibit features things like the Kessler Banner carried by Montana volunteers in the Spanish-American War that later became the Montana State Flag, an adobe brick from old Fort Benton built by the American Fur Company in 1864, the saddle of famous woman rodeo star Fannie Sperry Steele, and much more.

"Though diverse, the items presented here all illustrate in some way the events experienced and

the values held by our forebears who saved these artifacts as a way to document and commemorate Montana as they knew it," MHS Museum senior curator Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney said.

Montanans have always known that history is an integral part of who we are as a people. This exhibit shows how diverse and yet how shared that history is. ★

Montana isn't Europe, but its people did enjoy classical art. This marble statue of Odalisca created in 1825 came to Montana in 1906 to be shown off in the California House saloon at a cost of \$7,000—a lot back then. She lost her hand during a fire in 1953 but remains a Montana treasure.



## Historic Preservation Tells Montana Story of the Land

As we continue to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the creation of Montana Territory, it is important to remember the historic buildings and places that have been preserved—and that will be preserved—to help tell that story.

So far this year, the Montana Historical Society State Preservation Office has helped owners list four properties on the National Register of Historic Places.

The listings are important for history and heritage, but increasingly, historic sites and buildings are also proving valuable infrastructure for Montana's tourism industry.

If you have or know of a place that you think should be listed, contact John Boughton at the MHS preservation office at (406) 444-3647. Here are the properties added so far this year:

■ **Haight-Bridgwater House** (Helena). Constructed in 1890, the Haight-Bridgwater House served as an important gathering

place for both the Broadwater neighborhood and the city's African American community.

■ **Cottonwood Creek Bridge** (Fallon County). The bridge is representative of the type of structure used by the state and counties between 1915 and 1960 to provide access to railroad stations and primary state-maintained highways.

■ **Yodeler Motel** (Red Lodge). The Yodeler Motel was constructed as an apartment building in 1909 and converted to a motel in 1961. It provided housing to the city's coal miners and laborers.

■ **Judith Landing Historic District Boundary Increase** (Fergus County). Established in 1975, the Historic District includes about fifteen square miles of cultural landscape and important archaeological and historic resources. Ferdinand Hayden explored the area and collected fossilized dinosaur bones in 1855. ★

## Drink in the Beauty of Charlie Russell's Art

Share that morning cup of coffee with Charlie Russell, Montana's own Cowboy Artist.

The MHS Museum exclusively commissioned four 11-ounce made-in-the-USA ceramic coffee mugs featuring four of Russell's most famous paintings.

The beautifully full color reproductions are *When the Land Belonged to God*, *Bronc to Breakfast*, *Laugh Kills Lonesome*, and *OH Cowboys Roping a Steer*. The originals are all in the MHS collection.

"We thought it was a good time to create these mugs with the new look in the Mackay Gallery of C. M.

Russell Art in the museum," store manager Rod Coslet said.

The mugs are \$17.95 each and are available in the Museum Store by calling toll-free 1-800-243-9900, or online at [montanahistoricalociety.org](http://montanahistoricalociety.org) on the Museum Store tab. MHS members, of course, get a 15 percent discount on store purchases.

Coslet also commissioned four refrigerator magnets that feature full-color reproductions of the paintings listed above with the exception of *The Herd Quitter* instead of *OH Cowboys Roping a Steer*. The magnets are \$5.95 each. ★



## Take the Opportunity!

BY SUE NEAR, MHS DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING OFFICER

The many anniversaries of historical events that the Montana Historical Society is celebrating over the next few years offer an opportunity to reflect on the impact that history has on our lives. Why is reflection so important? We know that studying and sharing our heritage leads to a better understanding and appreciation of the daily experiences and dilemmas each of us goes through. Learning about our ancestors' lives or the history of our home helps us comprehend our place in

the world. History is inspiring. It teaches us that individuals and groups of committed people can change the world and influence the future.

Now is a great time to identify why you love learning about our heritage and why you support MHS. I invite you to think about why Montana history is important to you. How has knowledge of history affected your life? If you would like to share your thoughts, please send me an email at [snear@mt.gov](mailto:snear@mt.gov). As we commemorate the

## First Door on the Left

BY REBECCA BAUMANN,  
MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Your Montana Historical Society has never been busier, and "we are pulling hard on the throttle and picking up speed!"—as they said on the Montana Centennial Train back in 1964. We are celebrating the foresight of those who created Montana Territory 150 years ago and at the same time created the Montana Historical Society. We think that is an impressive fact.

In June, the lobby was beautifully transformed by the exhibit *Mastery in Bronze: The Art of Robert Macfie Sriver (1914-1999)*—not to be missed. This exhibit will be in place for about three months. The next exhibit, *Gold, Glory, and Rebellion: Montana in the Civil War*, will be unveiled in August and will be up through November.

We have a busy September planned and will welcome *Montana's Mining Frontier: Then and Now*, an exhibit of vintage engravings and contemporary black-and-white photographs by Lee Silliman. The exhibit will be in place through spring of 2015. September 18-20 is the Montana History Conference, "Montana Milestones," commemorating Montana's territorial sesquicentennial, which will be held in Helena. Prospector-level members and above receive a 15 percent discount on conference registration.

Thank you for your continued support and membership to MHS. When you are in town, please stop by and visit. We always have time to serve our members. ★

historical events that shaped Montana, we also celebrate you—our patrons, history enthusiasts, and partners—and your passion for history. MHS wants you to know that your donations and support are valued. ★

Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.  
**Montana**  
**Historical Society**

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During summer, some of the Montana Historical Society's best ambassadors—educational footlockers—return from traveling to every corner of the state. Outreach and Interpretation program specialist Deb Mitchell and MHS volunteer Colter Curey are pictured here hard at work cleaning, replenishing, and getting the “ambassadors” ready for next school year. MHS has forty-two footlocker trunks (representing twenty-one different topics and curriculum plans) that are sent from school to school throughout the school year. More than four hundred teachers use the footlockers in seventy-five school districts each year. “They are very popular among the students and the teachers, providing them with a fun and educational resource to teach ‘hands-on’ Montana history,” Mitchell said. The reproduction historic objects and curriculums range from the fur trade, the mining industry, and Indian lifeways to homesteading and many other topics.

*We are thankful for our members!*

Visit us online at [www.montanahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.montanahistoricalsociety.org).