

BUILDING ON THE PAST



The *50th* Annual
MONTANA HISTORY CONFERENCE
Helena, September 28–30, 2023



(above) The Colonial Hotel, built in 1971 with backing from former governor Tim Babcock, was the site of the first annual Montana History Conference in 1974. (front cover) The Endberg Garage in Ekalaka under construction in 1926. The building now houses the Carter County Museum, Montana's first and oldest county museum. Carter County Museum Centennial Collection.

Conference logistics (see map on page 39)

The history conference will be headquartered at the **Marriott Delta Colonial Hotel**, 2301 Colonial Dr., Helena. Group rate, \$160 per night plus tax. Call **(406) 443-2100** or visit bit.ly/DeltaColonialHelena to make your reservation. Be sure to ask for the Montana History Conference rate.

Other accommodations: **La Quinta Inn & Suites by Wyndham**, 701 Washington St., Helena. Group rate, \$116 per night plus tax. Call **(406) 449-4000** or visit bit.ly/LaQuintaHelena to make your reservation. Be sure to ask for the Montana History Conference rate.

Visit Helenamt.com for additional lodging options.

Accessibility: All conference rooms, the ballroom, and restrooms at the Delta Colonial Hotel are wheelchair accessible. Accessible lodging rooms are also available.

Teacher credit: Up to 22 OPI Renewal Units are available for conference attendees. Teachers seeking renewal units may obtain forms and additional information at the conference registration table.



Organizers of the first Montana History Conference in 1974, Harriet Meloy and Brian Cockhill.

BUILDING ON THE PAST

When MTHS librarian Harriet Meloy, archivist Brian Cockhill, and the Council to Preserve Montana History organized the first Montana History Conference gathering in 1974, they named it ***Montana and the West: New Directions***.

Then, as now, the conference endeavored to explore underrepresented facets of regional history and to recognize that the past is a continuum—not a dividing line—and its people, events, successes, and failures perpetually impact our present and future.

With this year's ***Building on the Past*** theme, we'll continue that tradition, bridging the past, present, and future through lectures, panel and roundtable discussions, tours, and workshops on a wide array of fascinating topics. Highlights include exploring two centuries of history through women's eyes, brainstorming expansion of Indian Education for All outside the classroom, and analyzing timely twentieth-century history topics. Outside the conference hotel, attendees will see how MTHS is literally "building on the past," with special hard-hat tours of the new Montana Heritage Center addition.

Each year many great partners make the Montana History Conference possible. We especially want to thank perennial partners the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation and new supporters, Helena's Valley Bank and Opportunity Bank. In addition, we could not pull this off without fantastic support from the Montana Office of Public Instruction, the Charles Redd Center, the Foundation for Montana History, Vital Energy Chiropractic, A&E Design, Historical Research Associates, Inc., and artist Becky Eiker.

We invite you to immerse yourself in Montana's past and enjoy spending time with others who share a love for Montana history. And, while in Helena, we hope that you will extend your visit and take advantage of the many heritage and cultural amenities that this historic community has to offer.

All of us at MTHS look forward to greeting you—our good friends—in Helena.

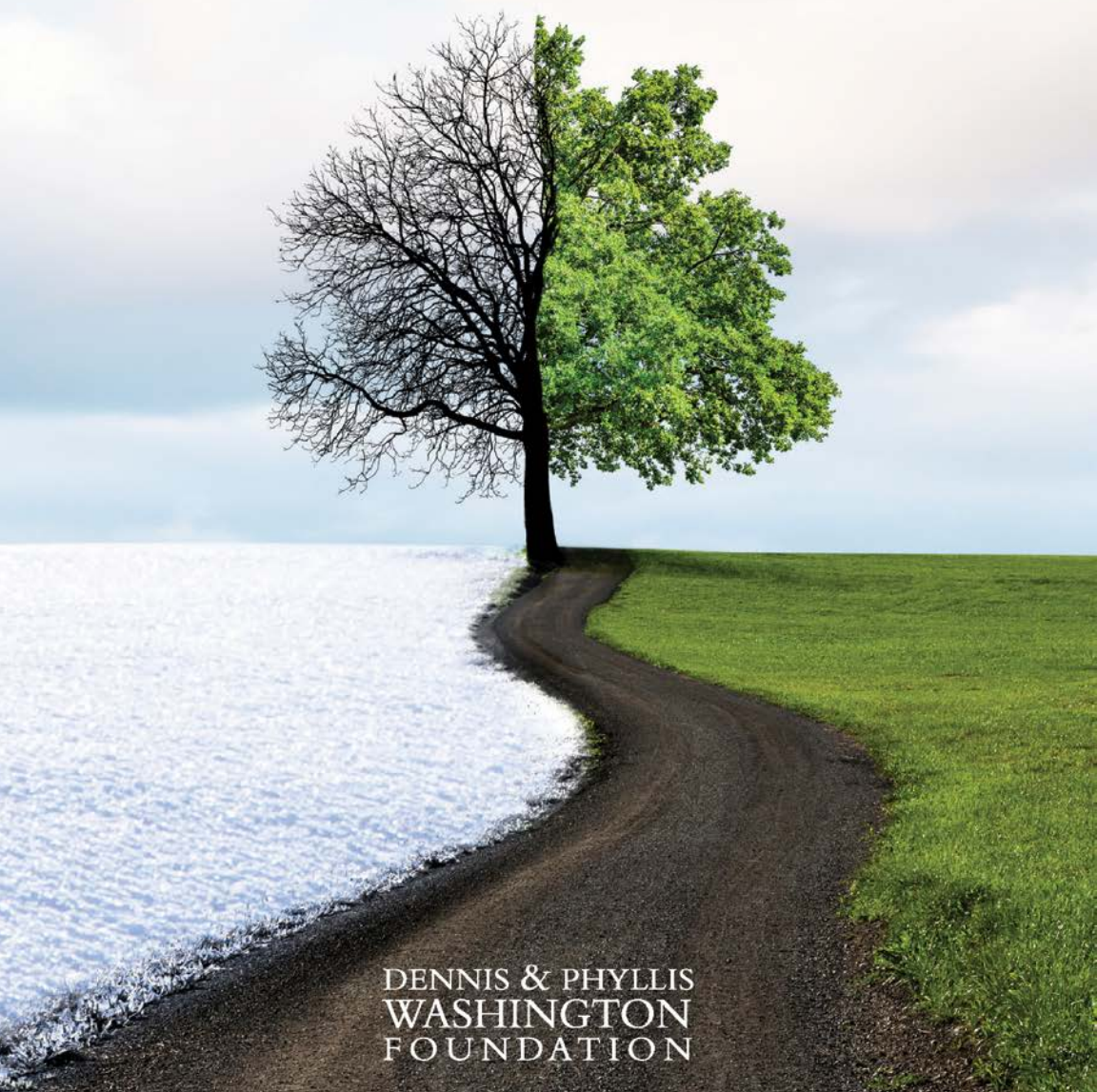
Molly Kruckenberg
Director



Photo by Tom Ferris.

"Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both."

– C. WRIGHT MILLS



DENNIS & PHYLLIS
WASHINGTON
FOUNDATION

Please note: The schedule is subject to change. Unless otherwise noted, all events will be held at the Marriott Delta Colonial Hotel, 2301 Colonial Dr., Helena.

Thursday, September 28

7:30 A.M.–5:30 P.M. Conference registration, Main Lobby

Tours and Workshops

8:30 A.M.–5:00 P.M. Made in Montana Tour
(departs from the Marriott Delta Colonial Hotel.
Wear sturdy boots or shoes and weather-appropriate clothing; expect to walk on uneven terrain; lunch included).

The Queen City's built environment emerged rapidly after gold strikes in 1864, demanding a myriad of industries to support its growth. Tour stops include the historic Gehring cattle ranch, where some of Helena's early food supply originated; the former Western Clay Manufacturing Company (now the Archie Bray Foundation for Ceramic Arts), where bricks to build many Montana buildings were fired; the Grizzly Gulch lime kilns, used to burn lime for mortar; and the Parrot Confectionery, where they've been making sweet treats for 101 years. Fast forward to 2023 with a hard-hat tour of the new Montana Heritage Center now under construction and a tour and tasting at the Lewis and Clark Brewery.




The beehive kilns still standing at the former Western Clay brickyard, now the Archie Bray Foundation for Ceramic Arts, fired millions of bricks used to build hundreds of Montana buildings.

Photo by Kate Hampton.

9:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M. Preservation Workshop (Lewis and Clark Library meeting room, 120 S. Last Chance Gulch; lunch included)

Keeping Pace with Preservation All are invited to join the Annual Historic Preservation Workshop. The morning starts with round-robin presentations of ongoing projects from Certified Local Government communities across the state, after which historian and Middle Tennessee State University Historic Preservation Program director Carroll Van West will share his insights in a “then-and-now” presentation looking back on Montana’s preservation priorities over the past forty years. Then the Foundation for


Montana History will offer a how-to guide to innovative walking tours—from tour planning, to developing sponsorships, to writing and delivery. Participants will see Foundation staff in action as they conclude the day with a walking tour of downtown Helena’s historic places.

 9:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M. **Historic Schoolhouses Workshop and Tour**
(Baxendale School, 2965 Country Club Rd.; lunch included)

Schoolhouse Preservation 101 Join experts from Preserve Montana for an all-day workshop on schoolhouse preservation. Participants will learn how communities can save schools, move historic school buildings to new locations, determine new uses, restore original features, or source in-kind replacement materials. After lunch, spend the afternoon visiting four local schoolhouses to see firsthand how Preserve Montana and the community helped save them.

 9:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M. **Educators Workshop** (Lewis Room; lunch included)

Thinking Like Historians Studying history is so much more than learning facts and dates. Learn new ways to engage students and teach them how to interrogate sources and construct historical arguments while discovering intriguing, under-told Montana stories. The Educators Workshop will begin with Mark Johnson, author of *The Middle Kingdom Under the Big Sky*, introducing lesson plans he’s created for teaching Montana’s Chinese history. Teacher Leader in Montana History April Wills will discuss how ChatGPT can improve social studies education, and retired Billings librarians Kathi Hoyt and Ruth Ferris will lead attendees in a gallery walk of primary sources for teaching Indian Education for All. Melissa Hibbard, co-director of National History Day in Montana, will discuss how the program offers students the opportunity to become historians. End the day with a presentation by Teacher Leaders in Montana History Jennifer Graham and Ron Buck, who will share strategies for bringing history alive.


 1:30 P.M.—4:30 P.M. **Writers Workshop** (Babcock Room; limited to 25)

Publishing the Past: A Workshop for Authors Are you interested in learning more about publishing? This two-part workshop will focus on the ins and outs of getting your books and articles into print. It will begin with a roundtable discussion featuring professional editors, including the team from the Montana Historical Society Press and *Montana The Magazine of Western History*. Then, participants will have an opportunity to talk in depth with editors on topics such as identifying a potential publisher, what happens to your manuscript after you

Montana Heritage
Center, north
entrance. Rendering
by Cushing Terrell.




submit it, what to expect during the editing process, how your work is marketed and financed, and your role once the book or article is published.

 2:00 P.M.–5:00 P.M. **Original Governor’s Mansion Tours** (304 N. Ewing; self-guided)


Visit the ornate, Queen Anne-style mansion that served as home to Montana’s first families from 1913 to 1959.

 5:00 P.M.–7:00 P.M. **Montana Heritage Center Tours** (reservations required)

MTHS is literally building on the past with our new Montana Heritage Center addition, set to open in 2025. Join a sneak-peek, hard-hat tour of the 66,000-square-foot building and go behind the scenes as we build expanded museum exhibits and state-of-the art storage, classrooms, a public event center, an enhanced research center, cafe, outdoor courtyard, and rooftop terrace.

 5:00 P.M.–7:00 P.M. **Opening reception**
(Montana State Capitol rotunda)

Join your fellow Montana history enthusiasts for heavy appetizers, drinks, and great conversations in the People’s House.

 7:00 P.M.–9:00 P.M. **Indigenous Documentaries and Desserts** (Myrna Loy Center, 15 N. Ewing)

Celebrate American Indian Heritage Day in Montana with dainty desserts and Indigenous documentaries (starting at 7:30). Fill your plate with sweets then sit back and relax to watch a selection of award-winning short documentaries by Indigenous filmmakers.



Interior view of the Montana State Capitol rotunda. Photo by Tom Ferris.

OPI Indian Education for All

We provide schools and staff with knowledge, skills, and content to ensure Indian Education for All means cultural enrichment, academic engagement, and equitable pedagogy for students.



Friday, September 29

🕒 7:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M. **Conference registration**, Main Lobby

🕒 7:30 A.M.—8:45 A.M. **Plenary breakfast**

50 Things I Know about Montana History

For almost thirty-seven years, Kirby Lambert worked at the Montana Historical Society in a variety of capacities, as registrar, curator, educator, and program manager. No matter his position, Lambert was continually delighted by his ongoing exposure to Montana's colorful history. To commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Montana History Conference, join him as he shares fifty insights—sometimes serious, but more often not—in a fast-paced romp through the Treasure State's past.



🕒 9:00 A.M.—10:15 A.M. **Concurrent sessions**

Indian Education for All: Beyond the Classroom Roundtable

In 1972, when Montana's citizen delegates rewrote the state's constitution, they included a unique constitutional mandate to teach about American Indians: "The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity." Legislators then passed the Indian Education for All (IEFA) bill in 1999, stating "every Montanan, whether Indian or non-Indian, be encouraged to learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner." Since then, the focus of IEFA has been



The History of Montana—Exploration and Settlement, by John W. "Jack" Beauchamp, oil on canvas, ca. 1943. MTHS Museum Collection 1981.58.01.

K–12 students, but there is a need today to help every Montanan learn about American Indians. This roundtable discussion gives attendees an opportunity to learn about the Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians and to propose solutions to the problem of expanding IEFA beyond the K–12 classroom.

Confronting the Past Dark stories of murder, racism, and defeat often get swept under the historical rug, but historians today are striving to illuminate these stories to better understand our complicated past. In **The Dark Side of the Headwaters of the Missouri**, independent historian Kira Axline will recount the ill-fated story of the Three Forks Post, a failed Missouri Fur Company trading post established in 1810. Axline will examine how the story was “forgotten,” define the term *dark history*, and show how encouraging dark tourism helps the public acknowledge past injustices. Author Shane Dunning’s **The Geddes Murder Trials: Gender, Race and Murder-for-Hire in Eastern Montana’s Criminal Justice System** tells the story of a young white man who was gunned down in 1897 by a Black man in southeastern Montana. The Black gunman was quickly arrested and unveiled a conspiracy to silence the victim for spreading uncomfortable rumors. Those rumors and the murder conspiracy included the active involvement of a (supposedly) rich white rancher, his wife, and a part Native American friend of the family.

Buildings With Purpose In **Building Our Rural Schools in 1915**, historic preservation architect Lesley Gilmore will discuss how small Montana towns used free standardized schoolhouse plans issued by the state. They specified minimum requirements for floor space, ventilation, heating, lighting, water supply, and toilet facilities.

As a result, Gallatin Gateway’s 1915 two-story, four-room brick school bears a remarkable resemblance to the masonry schools in Judith Gap, Musselshell, and Buffalo in both plan and elevation. Just as schools used standard plans for health, safety, and economy, so too did the U.S. Forest Service in their plans for fire lookout towers built in the national forests. In



The Salesville School, which later became the Gallatin Gateway School, bears a striking resemblance to other Montana schools built from standardized plan books. Photo courtesy Gallatin History Museum, Bozeman.

Grange Hall Lookouts, Lolo National Forest East Zone archaeologist Sydney Bacon will share the histories and rehabilitation stories of the Big Hole Peak and Skookum Butte lookouts—two of only four known lookouts of this type to survive.

🕒 10:15 A.M.–10:30 A.M. NEW! Student Poster Presentations

Meet the next generation of historians to explore their current research.

🕒 10:30 A.M.–11:45 A.M. Concurrent sessions

Those Most in Need

Caring for less fortunate children and adults in Montana dates to territorial days. In **Relocating the Lewis and Clark County Poor Farm Cemetery**, Montana Department of Transportation historian Jon Axline will explore the history of the Lewis and Clark County Poor Farm and discuss the findings of a recent survey of the cemetery site using ground-penetrating radar. The cemetery provides a fascinating insight into the lives of Helena's forgotten

citizens. While recent press has often been devoted to Helena as the last stop on the famed "orphan trains," little research has focused on Montana's own needy children. In **Child Welfare and Rescue: Helena as a Hub of Social Services**, historian Dr. Ellen Baumler will show how the state capital shouldered great responsibility in the early 1900s when Montana's scattered institutions—such as the orphanage at Twin Bridges and the reformatory at Pine Hills in Miles City—were grossly overcrowded. Bolstered by the first women who served in the Montana legislature and their supporters, Helena further matured and emerged as a vital regional center for child welfare.



St. Joseph's Orphanage, Helena. MTHS Photo Archives 2006-26.11.

The Hidden Side Western Heritage Center staff interviewed and collected photographs from Billings "Southsiders" to build the museum's historical collections and document the history of this understudied part of town. In **The Southside of Billings, 1882–1940**, Western Heritage Center director Kevin Kooistra will explore the significant people and places south of the railroad tracks in downtown Billings. Home to several immigrant groups and an African



Branch at 7th & Main, Helena, opened April 1956

Current Corporate Headquarters, Prospect Ave, Helena

HERE TODAY **HERE** TOMORROW **HERE** FOR MONTANA SINCE 1922

Proud partner of the Montana Historical Society
and proud to be part of Montana's history for more
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Sugar beet workers in Billings's Southside neighborhood celebrating Mexican Independence Day in September 1936.

Photo courtesy Western Heritage Center.

American community, the neighborhood developed a unique character centered on family, religion, and shared social bonds. In **Forgotten Souls: The Lost Voices of Western Montana's Restricted Districts**, University Of Montana academic advisor Sophia Etier will introduce Helena saloon proprietor and civil rights activist Lloyd Vernon Graye and Hamilton residents Clara and Henry Smith, Frank Gray, and Tish Nevins. Their extraordinary stories represent the shared struggle of African Americans in the West.

Preservation: Then, Now, Tomorrow How historians and preservationists define historical significance and recognize historic sites changes as history happens and as new research becomes available. Middle Tennessee State University Center for Historic Preservation director and professor Carroll Van West offers his perspective on how Montana's grassroots preservation movement has changed over the last forty years in **Extending Historic Preservation's Grassroots in Montana: The Resource Protection Planning Process, 1983–1986**. Van West's presentation will look back on images he captured in a 1980s planning survey alongside his images from the last seven years, revealing what he missed and highlighting issues that shape preservation efforts today. In **Building on the Past for a More Inclusive Future**, Bozeman historic preservation officer Sarah Rosenberg and Extreme History Project director Crystal Alegria will highlight a new approach to historic preservation, history, and inclusivity that they piloted during a recent Bozeman history project. Their goal was two-fold: to gather stories of underrepresented communities and forge a "people-centered" preservation movement that respects the traditional, place-based methodology.

12:00 P.M.–1:00 P.M. **Let's Talk History Luncheon**

Select a traditional networking table and catch up with friends and colleagues or join one of a dozen history-themed roundtable discussions led by an expert

conference speaker. Each expert will start with an introduction to their fascinating topic and end with plenty of time for questions and discussion.

1:00 P.M.—2:00 P.M. Plenary: Apsáalooke Women and Warriors

In 2019, the Field Museum in Chicago invited Indigenous scholar and museum curator Nina Sanders to curate an exhibition titled *Apsáalooke Women and*

Warriors, the largest exhibition of historic and contemporary items in the Crow tribe's history and the first major exhibit curated by a Native American scholar in the museum's 126-year history. Sanders will discuss her work collaborating with more than twenty Indigenous scholars to honor the cultural legacy of the Apsáalooke people and reimagine the work—and future—of cultural institutions with a colonial heritage.

Nina Sanders (Apsáalooke) is a curator, writer, and cultural consultant. She has worked for such institutions as the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, the School for Advanced Research, and the Field Museum, where she curated the groundbreaking exhibition *Apsáalooke Women and Warriors*. Her writing can be found in *Smithsonian* and *Native American Art Magazine*, among other publications. In 2020 she edited *Apsáalooke Women and Warriors*, a book published on the occasion of the exhibition that explores the past, present, and future

of Apsáalooke culture. Sanders currently resides on the Crow Reservation, on the banks of the Little Bighorn River at Medicine Tail Coulee.

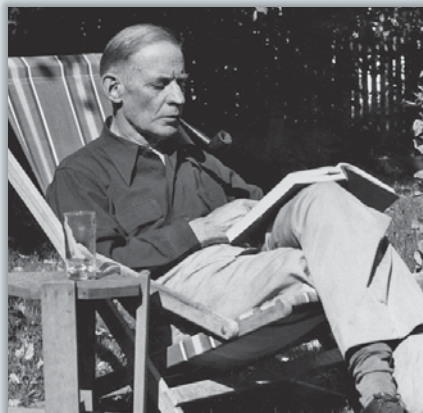
2:15 P.M.—3:30 P.M. Concurrent sessions

Conservation Controversies Looking back on public land management efforts over the past 100 years helps us better understand today's environmental challenges. In **Dissenting Conservationist: Elers Koch and His Legacy**, Montana State University history professor Dr. Mark Fiege will explore the often-overlooked impact of Forest Service conservationist Elers Koch. Koch gained notoriety not only for his forestry and conservation work, but also for his outspoken stand against the Forest Service's increasing orientation to industrialized forestry and the total suppression and exclusion of fire from



Photo courtesy Nina Sanders.

public lands. In **Almost Famous: The Bitterroot Controversy and the Fight for Sustainable Forest Management**, Bitterroot National Forest archaeologist Emily Swett and Heritage Program manager Matthew Werle will discuss the history of forest management within the Bitterroot Valley, including the impacts of terracing and clear-cutting that led to the “Bitterroot Controversy,” as well as future plans for the Took Creek and Blue Joint drainages within the Bitterroot.



Elers Koch. Photo courtesy Peter Koch.

Making Montana Modern Join Paul Filicetti, Crystal Herzog, and Kate Geer—preservation team members at A&E Design in Missoula—to learn about three influential **Montana Modernist** architects who shaped Montana’s built environment after World War II. Elmira Smyrl, a professor and educator at Montana State University’s School of Architecture, contributed to the design of the Montana State Field House (Brick Breeden Field House), which in 1957 was the largest clear-span wooden structure in the world. Few people know that Missoula architect William (Bill) Fox, known for his numerous Rustic-style commissions for the U.S. Forest Service in Missoula, designed a 1946 jewel, the Art Deco–style KPRK Radio station in Livingston. Last but not least, the first Montana woman to study at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design in the postwar period, Daphne Bugbee Jones, went on to design a number of significant Modernist residences in Missoula.



KPRK Radio station in Livingston, Montana, ca. 1950.

MTHS Photo Archives, Tom Mulvaney Real Photo Postcard Collection (Lot 048).

Growing Montana In **The Big M: Montana's Fruit Industry, the Big Fruit Boom, and Beyond**, historian Kelsey Doncaster will tell the story of Montana's fruit boom through the colorful advertising labels pasted on the ends of fruit shipping crates. With names such as Big M, Bitter Root, Blue Goose, Bonnie Highland, and Mountain Valley, growers advertised their products with catchy slogans and used attractive images to entice buyers in fruit auction houses and customers at local grocery stores. Each label reveals a piece of the story of the grower, the broker, the shipper, their times and places, and collectively the story of Montana's fruit industry. The square-and-compass brand is possibly the best-known brand in



Fruit crate labels from Montana farmers illustrate the history of Montana's cherry and apple booms. Artwork courtesy Kelsey Doncaster.

Montana. Retired ranch manager Ray Marxer will share his insights on thirty-seven years spent ranching in Beaverhead County and riding for the brand in **Matador Cattle Co. Past to Present**. Marxer will explore his transition from cowboy to ranch foreman to cow foreman to general manager of a historic ranch covering nearly 500 square miles of southwestern Montana.

🕒 3:30 P.M.–3:45 P.M. NEW! Student Poster Presentations

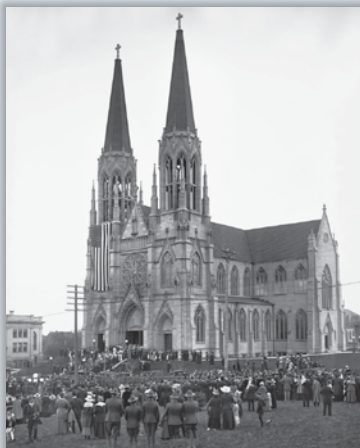
Meet the next generation of historians to explore their current research.

🕒 3:45 P.M.–5:00 P.M. Concurrent sessions

What's In a Name? In **Renaming Montana's Buildings and Peaks**, historian, activist, and former state legislator Diane Sands will moderate a panel discussion exploring the issues arising from renaming Montana's peaks and state buildings. Montana State University history professor Michael Reidy will present an overview and address controversies in the renaming of university buildings. Casey Pallister, PhD, will discuss his work on the legacy of eugenics as evidenced in state buildings named for eugenics supporters. Former senator Carol Juneau will highlight the controversies resulting from the ten-year process working with Montana tribes, local governments, and the National Board of Geographic Names to rename some eighty geographic sites containing the "Sq-word."

What Really Happened in Helena? Writer and storyteller Ednor Theriault illuminates a longstanding Helena history mystery in **The Pilot Who**

Split the Spires. In 1945, Helena residents looked up to see a fighter plane fly directly between the spires of the Cathedral of St. Helena. For more than sixty years, the story circulated but the identity of the pilot remained a mystery. In his presentation, Therriault will reveal how Air Force Col. Raynor Roberts finally revealed the story of his daring stunt. In **Heartbreak Hotel: Urban Renewal in Montana's Capital City**, former Helena city commissioner Paul Cartwright will discuss how Helena First, a corporation created by local bankers and other business owners, took the lead in the city's urban renewal efforts starting in 1968. Cartwright will detail Helena First's successful efforts to build a new hotel (the current DoubleTree) and failed plans for a massive shopping mall and conference center.



Who was the pilot who flew his plane between the two spires?

MTHS Photo Archives 74-104.GP359.

Traveling Tales James Hamilton Mills is remembered as an important newspaperman in Montana's territorial period. What he is not remembered for is being a Bozeman Trail diarist. In **James Hamilton Mills: A Diary from the Bozeman Trail**, Charles Rankin, retired editor-in-chief for the University of Oklahoma Press, will share the colorful and candid observations Mills recorded about his 1866 Bozeman Trail journey as well as Mills's recounting of the life, death, and scaffold burial of Lakota chief Spotted Tail's favorite daughter, Mni Akuwin (Brings Water Home Woman) at Fort Laramie, Wyoming. In **Catastrophe at Custer Creek**, historian Ian Campbell Wilson will recount Montana's worst passenger rail disaster, tracing the final journey of westbound *Olympian* No.15 from its midnight Chicago departure in June 1938 to its tragic plunge a day later into the roaring, frigid waters of Custer



The wreckage of the *Olympian* No. 15 after it crashed into Custer Creek in June 1938. Warren B. Jones, photographer. Courtesy the Jones family.

The Museum Store

Build your collection of great Montana history books and find a wide variety of jewelry, gifts, and home décor. Visit our pop-up store at the Montana History Conference.



NEW THIS YEAR

Student Poster Presentations

in the bookstore and lobby. Get to know what student historians are researching and writing about during coffee breaks on Friday and Saturday.



Creek, near Miles City. The nighttime wreck killed forty-nine people and injured another seventy-five, the worst train accident in Montana history.

🕒 5:00 P.M.–6:00 P.M. **Cocktails and Conversations**, Lobby Lounge and Grand Ballroom

🕒 6:00 P.M.–8:00 P.M. **Banquet and keynote**, Grand Ballroom

Sacagawea's Capture and the History of the Early West In this illustrated slide lecture, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Elizabeth Fenn uses



the circumstances of Sacagawea's capture to illuminate a deeper history of the Northern Plains and Rocky Mountains. Fenn discusses Indigenous warfare, hunting techniques, environmental conditions, horse-borne interactions, and plains power dynamics, illuminating the deep history of the West through the story of a one-month period in Sacagawea's life.

Elizabeth Fenn is the author of *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People* and *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775–82*. She is currently working on a contextual biography of Sacagawea titled *Sacagawea's World: Window on the American West*. Fenn recently

retired from the University of Colorado Boulder, where she is an Emerita Distinguished Professor in the Department of History.

Heritage Keeper and Heritage Guardian Awards

The Montana Historical Society's Board of Trustees' Heritage Guardian and Heritage Keeper Awards honor exemplary work, commitment, and effort in identifying, preserving, and presenting the history and heritage values of Montana for current and future generations. The awards recognize individuals, families, organizations, educators, historians, and others whose efforts have had a significant impact on generating interest in, and the preservation of, the diverse history of Montana.

The MTHS Board of Trustees hosted separate celebrations earlier in the year in each of the Heritage Guardian and Heritage Keeper Award recipients' home communities.

Schedule at a Glance The conference schedule is subject to change. Unless otherwise noted, events will be held at the Delta Colonial Hotel.

Thursday, September 28

- 7:30 A.M.–5:30 P.M. Conference registration—**Main Lobby**
- 8:30 A.M.–5:00 P.M. Made in Montana Tour (board vans at hotel main entrance; lunch included)
- 9:00 P.M.–5:00 P.M. Preservation Workshop (**Lewis and Clark Library meeting room**, 120 S. Last Chance Gulch; lunch included)
- 9:00 P.M.–5:00 P.M. Historic Schoolhouses Workshop and Tour (**Baxendale Schoolhouse**, 2965 Country Club Rd.; lunch included)
- 9:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M. Educators Workshop—**Lewis Room** (lunch included)
- 1:30 P.M.–4:30 P.M. Writers Workshop—**Babcock Room**
- 2:00 P.M.–5:00 P.M. Original Governor’s Mansion Tours (304 N. Ewing; self-guided)
- 5:00 P.M.–7:00 P.M. Opening reception (**Montana State Capitol Rotunda**)
- 5:00 P.M.–7:00 P.M. Montana Heritage Center Tours (advance registration required; **MTHS west entrance**, 225 N. Roberts)
- 7:00 P.M.–9:00 P.M. Desserts and Documentaries (**The Myrna Loy**, 15 N. Ewing)

Friday, September 29

- 7:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M. Conference registration—**Main Lobby**
- 7:30 A.M.–8:45 A.M. Plenary breakfast: *50 Things I Know about Montana History*—**Grand Ballroom**
- 9:00 A.M.–10:15 A.M. CONCURRENT SESSIONS
 - Indian Education for All Roundtable—**Grand Ballroom**
 - Confronting the Past—**Governor Room**
 - Buildings with Purpose—**Clark Room**
- 10:15 A.M.–10:30 A.M. Break: Coffee, Books, and Student Posters
- 10:30 A.M.–11:45 A.M. CONCURRENT SESSIONS
 - Those Most in Need—**Governor Room**
 - The Hidden Side—**Clark Room**
 - Preservation: Then, Now, Tomorrow—**Lewis Room**
- 12:00 P.M.–1:00 P.M. Luncheon: *Let’s Talk History*—**Grand Ballroom**
- 1:00 P.M.–2:00 P.M. Plenary: Apsáalooke Women and Warriors—**Grand Ballroom**

2:15 P.M.–3:30 P.M.	CONCURRENT SESSIONS Conservation Controversies— Governor Room Making Montana Modern— Clark Room Growing Montana— Lewis Room
3:30 P.M.–3:45 P.M.	Break: Coffee, Books, and Student Posters
3:45 P.M.–5:00 P.M.	CONCURRENT SESSIONS What’s In A Name— Clark Room What Really Happened In Helena— Governor Room Traveling Tales— Lewis Room
5:00 P.M.–6:00 P.M.	Cocktails and Conversations— Lobby Lounge and Grand Ballroom
6:00 P.M.–8:00 P.M.	Banquet and keynote: <i>Sacagawea’s Capture and the History of the Early West</i> — Grand Ballroom

Saturday, October 1

7:30 A.M.–2:00 P.M.	Conference registration— Main Lobby
7:30 A.M.–8:45 A.M.	Bradley Fellow breakfast: <i>Remembering the 1977 Women’s International Year Conference</i> — Grand Ballroom
9:00 A.M.–10:15 A.M.	CONCURRENT SESSIONS Focus on Literature and Film— Clark Room Persistence at High Elevation— Governor Room Montanans You Should Know— Lewis Room
10:15 A.M.–10:30 A.M.	Break: Coffee, Books, and Student Posters
10:30 A.M.–11:45 P.M.	CONCURRENT SESSIONS Communist Controversies— Governor Room A Woman’s Place— Clark Room Studying Snow and Fire— Lewis Room
12:00 P.M.–1:30 P.M.	Luncheon: <i>The Changing Status of Chinese Women in Montana, 1860s to 1950s</i> — Grand Ballroom
1:45 P.M.–4:15 P.M.	POST-CONFERENCE GUIDED FIELD TRIPS Sieben Ranch Tour (board vans at main entrance)
1:45 P.M.–5:00 P.M.	Last Chance Community Pow Wow (meet in Main Lobby lounge; transportation on your own)
1:45 P.M.–5:00 P.M.	Fort Harrison Historic District Trolley Tour (trolley departs at main entrance)
2:00 P.M.–2:20 P.M.	Montana Heritage Center Tours (MTHS west entrance, 225 N. Roberts)

Board of Trustees' Heritage Keeper Award Recipient

Ellen Baumler

Ellen Baumler spent twenty-six years as a historian at the Montana Historical Society (MTHS). Her efforts and contributions far exceeded those in her job description, and during her tenure no one did more for the cause of Montana history.

A native of Kansas City, Ellen earned her PhD from the University of Kansas in English, classics, and history. After moving to Montana in 1991, she became the first person to staff MTHS's then-new National Register sign program. As director of the program, Baumler wrote or supervised the creation of more than 1,600 interpretive signs.

While Montana is fortunate to have had incredible professional historians, none have surpassed Ellen in her exceptional capacity to connect with the general public and K-12 students. Her ability to share her passion with



almost everyone—making the past relevant, understandable, and enjoyable—is what makes her contributions so far reaching. At the same time, she retains the respect of academics and regularly lectures to college classes and volunteers on PhD advisory committees.

Hand in hand with Ellen's expertise in connecting with her audience and getting them excited about Montana's past is her unwavering willingness to present programs to those who ask. She regularly traveled across the state, delivering programs for all manner of local historical and civic organizations.

She is an award-winning author of numerous books and dozens of articles on diverse Montana topics. She has written blogs and regularly serves as an expert resource for journalists, reporters, newscasters, and others seeking reliable information on Montana's past. In 2011 she received the Montana Governor's Humanities Award and in 2017 the Peter Yegen, Jr. Award from the Montana Association of Museums for excellence and distinction in fostering the advancement of Montana's museums.

Since her retirement in 2018, Ellen has not slowed her outreach efforts. She continues to educate the public through her unique ability to share stories of Montana's past.

Board of Trustees' Heritage Keeper Award Recipient

Ramona Holt

Ramona Holt and her late husband Bill dedicated endless time and resources to collecting and preserving Western art and memorabilia. After a lifetime of collecting, in 1999 the Holts opened the Holt Heritage Museum adjacent to their home in Lolo, Montana, preserving Montana's western heritage for the public to enjoy.

Initially their barn housed a collection of horse-drawn wagons. Today the Holt Heritage Museum has grown to a treasure trove of 5,000+ historic artifacts and stories that capture the essence of the Old West.

Still situated on the property the Holts purchased as a young couple in 1960, the museum is just across from Travelers' Rest State Park, the famous campsite of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, which houses a small museum that Ramona and Bill also helped develop.

Since its opening, the Holt Heritage Museum has expanded to 15,000 square feet, where it displays cowboy hats, fur pelts, leather saddles, and silver stirrups; fancy embroidered shirts from rodeo show performances; and bronze sculptures by one of Montana's most famous Western artists, sculptor Bob Scriver.

Designed to be welcoming and friendly, the museum allows visitors to get close to its many collectables, close enough to feel what it might have been like to wear a certain hat or don a pair of spurs on your boots. Ramona plans to add another 10,000-square-foot addition in 2024 to create additional exhibits, more public space for entertainment and education, and an audiovisual studio where visitors can make their own films. Her goal is to introduce more children to the history of western Montana.



Board of Trustees' Heritage Keeper Award Recipient

Gene Thayer

As a civic leader and philanthropist, Gene Thayer has been the driving force behind developing and sustaining history in many of Great Falls' leading cultural institutions. His boundless energy and tireless commitment have been instrumental in expanding the C. M. Russell Museum, Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, and First Presbyterian Church. For over fifty years, Gene unflaggingly devoted his time, energy, and resources to advocate for Western history, culture, and heritage.

Gene's contributions to developing the C. M. Russell Museum into a premier cultural institution have been nothing short of remarkable. He led the

museum's Trails to the Future Campaign, raising over \$6.5 million to construct four new galleries, an atrium, and a research center. While serving as mayor of Great Falls, he galvanized public support for transferring management of Charlie and Nancy Russell's home and studio from the city to the C. M. Russell Museum. Finally, as co-chair of the Art and Soul Campaign, he raised an astonishing \$40 million, which increased the museum's operational endowment and expanded the campus by over two acres.

While serving in the Montana legislature, Gene co-sponsored legislation championing the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center and placed the Centennial Bell in the

capitol. Additionally, he has taken a leading role in preserving and sustaining the First Presbyterian Church, the oldest church in Great Falls. For his many contributions to preserving history in Cascade County, the Great Falls History Museum honored him as the 2023 Person of the Year. His passion, energy, and generous leadership are unmatched, and his vision has shaped the way people encounter Montana's collective heritage.



Photo courtesy The History Museum, Great Falls.

Board of Trustees' Heritage Guardian Award Recipient

USS *Montana* Committee

The MTHS Trustees honored the USS *Montana* Committee with the Heritage Guardian Award for instilling the U.S. Navy's newest submarine with a sense of place, history, and culture reflective of the Treasure State's heritage and values. The committee, comprising diverse stakeholders from across the state, played a critical role in engaging closely with the navy and imprinting the submarine's shared spaces with iconic Montana imagery. Common areas come alive with the spirit of the Big Sky through the artwork of Charlie Russell, a panorama of Glacier National Park in the Crew Mess, and an authentic ceremonial pipe made by Blackfeet artist Dale Billedeaux.

The ship's bell, installed on the boat at its commissioning, is also rich with Montana symbolism and connection with the navy. The bronze bell incorporates gold and silver from the Philipsburg and Butte areas as well as gold and silver dolphin pins, once worn by qualified sailors, melted into the bronze. Before installation, committee members traveled to towns across Montana to hold bell-ringing ceremonies in honor of all veterans.

Indigenous outreach played an important role in building support for the ship and included USS *Montana* crew member visits to veteran recognition ceremonies on Indian reservations in Montana. The commissioning ceremony itself featured extensive Indigenous recognition, including flag and honor songs by Indigenous singers and drummers, a solemn blessing by tribal representatives, tribal flags, and presentation of the beautiful ceremonial pipe now displayed in the submarine.

The committee's work has not ended with commissioning. Plans for a full-length documentary featuring the history of the USS *Montana* are underway with a goal of preserving an understanding of the ship's significance in Montana's history. In addition, the committee will maintain an enduring bond through additional crew visits, veterans' recognition ceremonies, and a college scholarship fund for crew members.



Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes hosts with USS *Montana* sailors at Arlee Pow Wow during a USS *Montana* Committee-sponsored state visit. Photo courtesy USS *Montana* Committee.



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Saturday, September 30

🕒 7:30 A.M.–2:00 P.M. Conference registration, Main Lobby

🕒 7:30 A.M.–8:45 A.M. **Bradley breakfast**



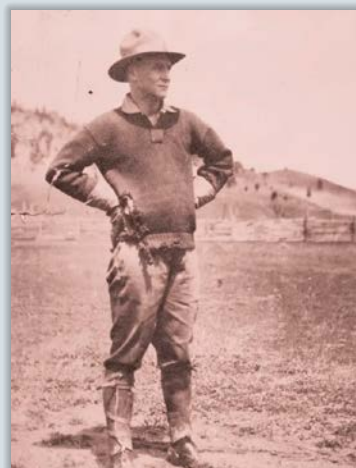
Remembering the 1977 Montana Women's International Year Conference Join Montana State University Billings associate professor of history Emily Arendt, recipient of the 2022 MTHS James H. Bradley Fellowship, as she chronicles Montana's involvement in the 1977 International Women's Year conference. Inspired by the United Nations International Women's Year (IWY) conference in 1975, the federally funded National Women's Conference brought nearly 20,000 Americans from every state and territory together in Houston, Texas, to discuss women's issues. Arendt's presentation will investigate the

Montana coordinating committee's planning efforts; the role of conservative grassroots organizers and their protests at the state coordinating meeting in Helena; and the ultimate participation of Montana's fourteen delegates in the national conference, including how news of their participation was reported and received in Montana.

Emily Arendt earned her PhD in history from The Ohio State University in 2014 and her undergraduate and graduate degrees in history from the University of Wyoming.

🕒 9:00 A.M.–10:15 A.M. **Concurrent sessions**

Focus on Literature and Film F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of *The Great Gatsby*, traveled to White Sulphur Springs, Montana, in 1915. The trip inspired his novella *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*. In *F. Scott Fitzgerald's Month in Montana: Race, Class, and Western Mythology* in *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*, Fitzgerald scholars Stu Wilson and Melissa Barker will explore newly discovered information on Fitzgerald's Montana visit, place it into its broader historical context, and highlight connections between Fitzgerald, *The Diamond*,



F. Scott Fitzgerald in Montana, 1915.
Photo courtesy Princeton University Archives.

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and three prominent Montanans linked to White Sulphur Springs: John Ringling, Michael Donahoe, and Emmanuel Taylor Gordon. In **Film Censorship in the Treasure State: The Law of 1907**, Daniel B. Wells will examine the conditions, content, and people that brought one of the nation's cutting-edge film censorship laws to passage. The law banned films depicting violence from being shown in Montana to protect impressionable minds, predating a much more famous ordinance passed in Chicago and similar laws passed in other states.

Persistence at High Elevation The Anaconda Copper Mining Company forbade African Americans in its mines, and histories of Butte and Montana include almost no mention of Black miners. However, high above Homestake Pass, six miles southeast of Butte, a small, intrepid community of African Americans staked claims and worked to extract wealth from the earth from the 1880s to the 1940s. The story of the Flagg and Brown families (among others) at what came to be known as Camp Caroline revises conventional interpretations of African Americans' westward migrations, of Butte's mining history, and of the Mining City's famed ethnic diversity. Though little remains of Camp Caroline today, archaeologists from the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest are investigating the site while teaching archaeological methods to college students. Janet Ore, director of the Ivan Doig Center for the Study of the Lands and Peoples of the North American West at Montana State University, will moderate a panel discussion with key players in the effort to illuminate the lives of Black Americans in this high-altitude mining community.

Montanans You Should Know Alma Smith Jacobs, Harriette Cushman, and Rudy Autio are three very different Montanans who made significant contributions to bettering Montana, and yet many people have never heard of them. In this fast-moving, three-part presentation, historian Ken Robison will explore the work and impact of Montana's first African American librarian in **Alma Smith Jacobs: An Exceptional Civil Rights Leader**. Preservation designer Jared Schmitz will profile the public artworks of Montana's most famous ceramic artist and sculptor in **Rudy Autio: A Legacy Beyond the Studio**. And Northwest College history professor Amy McKinney will explore the life, letters, and poetry of Montana's first woman poultry specialist in **"Dear People": The Letters and Poetry of Harriette Cushman**.



Alma Smith Jacobs. Photo courtesy Great Falls Public Library.

10:15 A.M.–10:30 A.M. NEW! Student Poster Presentations
Meet the next generation of historians to explore their current research.

10:30 A.M.–11:45 A.M. Concurrent sessions

Communist Controversies In **Comradely Yours: Willis Wright and the Montana Communist Party**, Cascade County archives administrator Megan Sanford will chronicle Wright’s career, from his 1920s rise to leadership in the Montana Communist Party to his fraught relationship with eastern Montana party organizer Ella Reeve “Mother” Bloor, which led to his eventual transfer to become party leader in Idaho. Before Wright left Great Falls, he recruited unemployed reporter Helen DeMark to join the party. In **Disruptive Influence: Helen DeMark and the Montana Communist Party**, American University of Sharjah Professor of history, Vernon Pedersen, traces DeMark’s destructive path through the Montana Communist Party, first as district secretary in 1932 and then again as an anti-communist crusader in the 1950s. The interlocking discussions illuminate a fascinating period in Montana political history, expand our knowledge of the history of radicalism in the state, and uncover gaps between events and memory.


A Woman’s Place The “New Woman” was a feminist ideal at the turn of the century, despite society’s ridicule of these women’s ambition, athletic activities, and activism. In **Feminists in**

Yellowstone: The New Woman Managers, Monterey Peninsula College instructor and author Kathleen Michael will show how, from the early 1900s through the Great Depression, single, educated women found a haven in Yellowstone National Park despite encountering discrimination elsewhere. In **Changes in Expected Gender Roles as Reflected through Grieving Rituals, 1929–1945**, Montana State University PhD student Katherine Montana will analyze how women’s roles in grieving rituals changed during the Great Depression and World War II. Using an array of primary sources, her presentation will analyze how economic and political conflicts affected Montanans in all aspects of life, even down to its end.



Setting the table for bears in Yellowstone National Park. Vintage postcard image courtesy Kathleen Michael.

Studying Snow and Fire Many conversations about the postwar West focus on the rural-urban divide. However, the history of avalanche research reveals cooperation between rural and urban communities, lab scientists and field scientists, and recreation and industry. In **From Studies to Centers: Evolutions of Avalanche Research in the West**, *Montana The Magazine of Western History* Emerging Scholar Alex Miller will show how snow studies and avalanche research have progressed over time, leading to a safer and more connected Mountain West. Like avalanches, wildfires shape the western experience. In **Images, Metaphors, and Smoke: The 2000 Montana Bitterroot Fires and the Wildland-Urban Interface**, Brant Short and Dayle Hardy-Short, professors emeritus at Northern Arizona University, will analyze how wildfires became normalized as a regular part of life in the American West following the Bitterroot National Forest wildfires in 2000.

 12:00 P.M.–1:30 P.M. **Plenary Luncheon**

“A Worthy Ambition for a Chinese Girl”: The Changing Status of Chinese Women in Montana, 1860s to 1950s

Because Chinese cultural traditions discouraged women from migrating and American legal obstacles excluded Chinese women from entering the nation, Chinese communities in Montana had a severe gender imbalance. The scarcity of women made family formation difficult. The few Chinese women in the region suffered negative stereotypes and assumptions about their character from non-Chinese Montanans, and experienced confinement and oppression within patriarchal Chinese cultural traditions. Despite these obstacles, several extraordinary Chinese women made their mark on Montana, exhibiting perseverance and strength of spirit that helped them carve out influential roles in Montana’s Chinese communities and beyond.



Mark Johnson is a fellow with the University of Notre Dame’s Institute for Educational Initiatives. His primary area of interest is Montana’s historic Chinese communities, focusing specifically on the global trends that brought the Chinese to Montana and their continued interconnectedness with events in China during their time in Montana. He is the author of *The Middle Kingdom Under the Big Sky: A History of the Chinese Experience in Montana* (University of Nebraska Press, 2022).

Available from Montana Historical Society Press

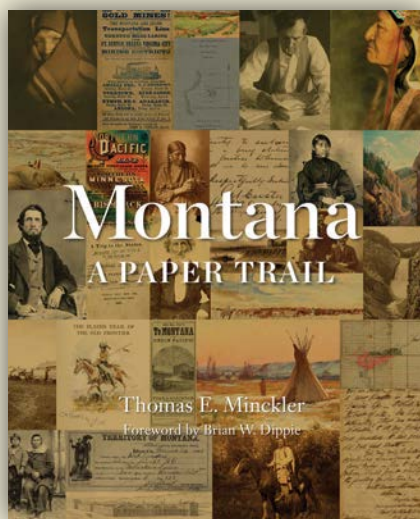
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Post-Conference Field Trips

1:45 P.M.–4:15 P.M. Sieben Ranch, hosted by The Foundation for Montana History (transportation provided; limited to 20)



Sieben Ranch. Photo by Tom Ferris.

Join Foundation for Montana History program director Ciara Ryan and Preserve Montana restoration director Mary Webb to explore the rich history and legacy of the Sieben Ranch. As participants tour the historic landscape, Ryan will bring to life Henry Sieben’s colorful and untold story as well as shed light on some of the historic events that make up the ranch’s

vibrant history. Mary Webb will lead a tour of the historic buildings and share the work she has done to preserve these significant structures and protect the ranch’s unique place-based history and heritage.

1:45 P.M.–5:00 P.M. Last Chance Community Pow Wow, hosted by Mike Jetty (meet at Delta Colonial’s lobby lounge for orientation; transportation on your own to the Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds)

Experience the Last Chance Community Pow Wow with guide Mike Jetty (enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Dakota Nation and a Turtle Mountain Chippewa descendant). Participants will learn about the various types of dancing, songs, and cultural events associated with pow wows.



Photo courtesy Last Chance Community Pow Wow.

1:45 P.M.–5:00 P.M. Fort Harrison Historic District trolley tour (trolley departs from Delta Colonial)

On this trolley trip through Helena’s military history, participants will visit Fort William Henry Harrison to hear how the fort developed in 1892 and



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The administration building, hospital, and parade ground at Fort William Henry Harrison, ca. 1920. MTHS Photo Archives 947-460.

has continually evolved to meet the needs of soldiers, special forces, and veterans. Fort Harrison Veterans Hospital public affairs director Christina Lundstrom will uncover the fort's long history as the trolley rolls through the architecturally distinctive historic district. The tour will continue on the Montana National Guard side of the fort and conclude with a visit to the Montana Military Museum.

 2:00 P.M.–2:20 P.M. **Montana Heritage Center tours**
(reservations required; see description on page 7)



Save the Date! Plan now to join us next year in **Great Falls** at the Heritage Inn for the **51st Annual Montana History Conference, September 26–28, 2024**. The Electric City promises to provide a fascinating array of conference sessions on Indigenous history, the military, river trade and tourism, smelter history, and field trips to St. Peter's Mission, Fort Benton, and more.

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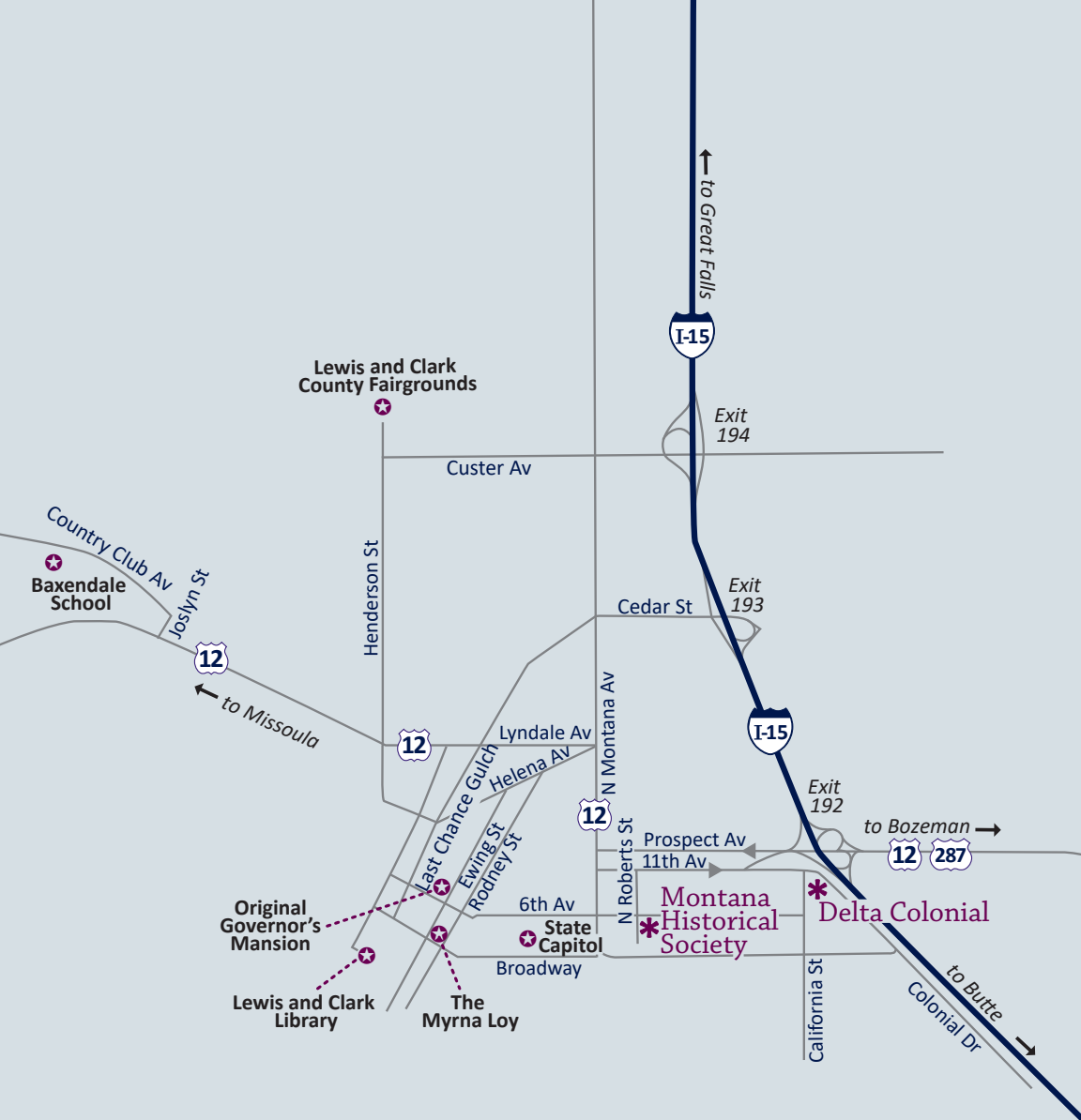
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