

# *A Place in Time*

MONTANA HISTORY CONFERENCE  2025



**September 25–27, 2025**

HELENA ★ MONTANA



**MONTANA**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS JULY 21**  
[bit.ly/MTSHistoryConference](https://bit.ly/MTSHistoryConference)

## Conference Logistics *(see map on page 35)*

The history conference will be headquartered at the **Best Western Great Northern Hotel**, 835 Great Northern Blvd., Helena. Group rates start at \$180 per night plus tax. Call (406) 457-5500 to make your reservation by August 26. Be sure to ask for the Montana History Conference rate.

**Other accommodations:** **Best Western Helena/Capitol Hotel**, 1714 11th Ave., Helena. Group rates start at \$125 per night. Call (406) 442-1770 to make your reservation by August 26. Be sure to ask for the Montana History Conference rate.

**Hotel Accessibility:** A limited number of ADA rooms are available at both hotels. Book early for best availability. All conference rooms and restrooms at the Best Western Great Northern Hotel are wheelchair accessible.

**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.

*On the cover:* **Fort Union on the Missouri.** Karl Bodmer.

MHS Museum 86.63.37

*Back cover:* **Walter R. Dorsey's Grocery Store, Helena, circa 1899.**

Edward M. Reinig photographer. MTHS Photo Archives 74-104 GP266

*Below:* **View looking east at Helena from Mount Helena.**

MTHS Photo Archives 76.050.1





# *A Place in Time*

Building a new home, moving, and getting settled again is cause for celebration and reflection. As construction workers, exhibit fabricators, and curators race to put the finishing touches on the Society's new home—the Montana Heritage Center—the 2025 Montana History Conference will appropriately focus on the power of place to inform views of the past and influence plans for the future.

This year's three-day exploration of place-based Montana history will examine the Treasure State's past through its storied places and people, highlighting new and old topics with the aim of uncovering new perspectives and insights. The Thursday agenda offers a wide variety of workshops for educators, preservationists, researchers, and living history enthusiasts. Tours will take people to the Archie Bray Foundation, Grant-Kohrs Ranch, Holter Dam, Sieben Ranch, and Little Shell tribal sites around Helena.



On Thursday night, don't miss out on seeing the nearly completed Heritage Center building during our opening reception. Conference goers will get a sneak peek into the new Homeland, Charles M. Russell, and changing galleries, as well as the common areas, and the Library and Archives reference room. On Friday and Saturday, immerse yourself in Montana history during five keynote and six concurrent sessions featuring historical topics ranging from military, mining, and agricultural history to historic preservation, art and design, ethnic and Indigenous culture, politics, women's history, and more. After enjoying this vibrant conference in the company of history lovers from across the state and nation, we hope you'll extend your visit in Helena and take advantage of the many heritage and cultural amenities that this historic community has to offer.

Each year many great partners make the Montana History Conference possible. We especially want to thank our annual sponsors at the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation and Opportunity Bank. We also extend deep gratitude to our conference sponsors A&E Design, the Foundation for Montana History, the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, and the Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers.

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

—Molly Kruckenberg  
*Director*

*The Montana Historical Society  
is grateful to these event sponsors:*

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MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Gift Shop

Find a wide variety of Montana history books, jewelry, gifts, and home decor at our pop-up store at the Montana History Conference.



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## THE MONTANA HISTORY CONFERENCE



### TOUR ACCESSIBILITY

Not all tours are ADA accessible. Please read accessibility notes included with each tour description on the online registration form.

**Accessibility questions?** Contact Christine Brown at [Christine.brown@mt.gov](mailto:Christine.brown@mt.gov) or call 406-444-1687.

**Please note:** The conference schedule is subject to change. Unless otherwise noted, all events will be held at the Best Western Great Northern Hotel.

## Thursday, September 25

► 7:30 A.M.–5:00 P.M. **Conference registration**, ballroom foyer

### GUIDED TOURS

► 8:30 A.M.–4:00 P.M. **Grant-Kohrs Ranch Tour** (Coach bus departs from the Best Western Great Northern Hotel; lunch included).

**Ranching and Refinement** Even before the gold rushes at Bannack and Virginia City, there were cattle ranchers in the Deer Lodge Valley. On



Courtesy of Tom Ferris.

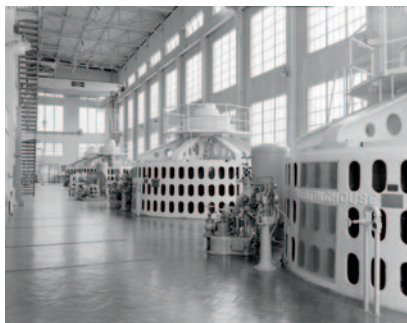
this daylong bus tour to the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site in Deer Lodge, participants will take a deep dive into Montana's cattle ranching history to learn how Johnny Grant, Conrad and Augusta Kohrs, and John Bielenberg shaped agriculture, economic development, and politics across Montana. Highlights include a ranger-guided tour

of the Grant-Kohrs Ranch house and barns, a draft horse–drawn wagon tour of the fields, lunch at the chuck wagon, and a special tour inside the museum collections building. End the day with a tour of the opulent 1887 Joseph Russell/Kohrs Mansion in Helena, a meticulously maintained private home in the Helena Historic District.

## GUIDED TOURS

- **8:30 A.M.–4:00 P.M. Made in Montana Tour** (Transportation departs from the Best Western Great Northern Hotel; lunch included).

**Harnessing the River** Join this daylong Missouri River history tour and learn how people and places in the Helena Valley evolved in response to the river. Highlights include a guided tour inside the historic Holter Dam powerhouse near Craig and a two-hour river cruise in the Gates of the Mountains Recreation Area. Participants will learn about the river's historic use as a transportation route by tribal nations, explorers, and traders; its industrial development for electric power, mining, and agricultural development; and the important role that fisheries management plays in its past and present.



Inside the Holter Dam powerhouse, 1968.  
Historic American Engineering Record. Kristi Hager photographer.  
Courtesy of Library of Congress.

- **1:00 P.M.–3:00 P.M. Gates of the Mountains Boat Tour** (drive on your own)



Gates of the Mountains tour boat at Hunter's Pointe.  
Courtesy of Gates of the Mountains Boat Tours.

**Cruise Through History** Meet up with other Montana History Conference tour groups for a spectacular odyssey through Montana history along the Missouri River. Sit back and relax on this two-hour covered boat tour to learn how Indigenous people, explorers, traders, and European newcomers to Montana relied on the river for transportation, food, irrigation and drinking water, and power. Also hear the tragic story of the 1949 Mann Gulch fire, a heartbreaking turning point in wildfire-fighting history.

- **1:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M. Charter Oak Mine Tour** (Vans depart from the Best Western Great Northern Hotel)

**Back in Time** Take a trip into the Little Blackfoot River drainage southwest of Helena to visit the Charter Oak mine, a preserved historic lead/zinc lode mine and mill. The mine operated with a stamp mill from 1916 until 1929, and later reopened in 1942 after mine owners developed a fifty-ton

flotation mill. Charter Oak processed tons of valuable lead and zinc, essential to fighting World War II. Largely unaltered since it closed in 1955, the historic mine is uniquely preserved and managed by the Helena National Forest.

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► **1:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M. Archie Bray Foundation Tour** (drive on your own)

**A National Treasure** To honor the long history of the Archie Bray Foundation in the world of ceramics and to capture the importance of the historic Western Clay Manufacturing Co. brickyard where the Bray was born, the Bray and Preserve Montana are working to designate the property as a National Historic Landmark. This special in-depth tour will explore the long history of the Western Clay Manufacturing Company from its beginnings as a brickyard in 1883 to its role today as a world-renowned ceramics institute. Retired Preserve Montana director **Chere Jiusto** will join with Bray staff to lead this special behind-the-scenes tour into select historic Western Clay buildings. The tour will continue into the Bray Foundation's contemporary facilities, and end with a presentation on current National Historic Landmark efforts. After the tour and presentation, attendees can visit the Bray's main gallery.



Industrial furnaces at the former Western Clay Manufacturing site. Courtesy of Kate Hampton.

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► **1:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M. Cemetery Tours** (Transportation departs from the Best Western Great Northern Hotel)

**Places of Rest** The history of two oft-forgotten communities lies in Helena's Home of Peace and Forestvale Cemeteries. Public historian **Patty Dean** will explore the lives of influential Jewish citizens at the Home of Peace Cemetery, the oldest active Jewish cemetery in Montana, in use



A gravestone in China Row. Courtesy of Mark Johnson.

since 1867. Dean will also discuss Jewish cemetery design and burial practices. Next, follow **Mark Johnson**, Fellow with the University of Notre Dame's Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies, and his son, **Thomas Johnson**, a student of Chinese language evolution, for an exploration of Chinese grave markers, language, cultural symbols, and burial practices in Forestvale Cemetery's China Row.

## GUIDED TOURS

- **2:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M. Little Shell Tour** (Last Chance Trolley departs from the Best Western Great Northern Hotel)

**Little Shell Tribe in Helena** Members of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians, many of whom have deep connections to the Métis people, have a long, but mostly invisible history in Helena. Métis resistance leader Louis Riel lived on Rodney Street. Tribal members held two Sun Dances in Helena, one in 1894 and one in 1908. In the face of prejudice, families survived on the outskirts of town, some making their living by crafting horns gathered from



Dan Pocha

the slaughterhouse into furniture. Others established businesses in south-central and downtown Helena, in the area later targeted by Urban Renewal and the Model Cities project. In 1969, community members joined together to form the Helena Indian Alliance, which grew to include a health clinic named for Little Shell community activist and Helena city commissioner Leo Pocha. Although many of the buildings are gone, the places and stories remain. Little Shell elder **Dan Pocha** will lead this bus tour exploring the geography of Helena's Indian community.

- **2:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M. Sieben Ranch Tour** (MTHS vans depart from the Best Western Great Northern Hotel)



### **Henry Sieben: A Sheep Ranching Legacy**

Henry Sieben came to Montana in 1864 and established an enduring legacy in freighting, mining, banking, and ranching. Join **Ciara Ryan**, scholar and author of *Henry Sieben and the Montana Story*, and ranch owners **John** and **Nina Baucus** to explore the rich history of the Sieben Ranch, one of Montana's oldest active sheep ranches.

Henry Sieben circa 1936.  
Courtesy of Sieben Live Stock Company.



## ON YOUR OWN TOURS *(no advance registration required)*

- **9:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. Montana State Capitol** (1301 E. 6th Ave.; one-hour tours begin at 9:30 and 11:00 A.M., and 1:30 and 2:30 P.M. at the first-floor information desk)

Discover the art and architecture of Montana's "People's House," built between 1896 and 1912.



Courtesy of Tom Ferris.



Courtesy of Tom Ferris.

- **1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. Original Governor's Mansion** (304 N. Ewing; one-hour tours begin at 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 P.M.)

Visit this ornate, Queen Anne-style mansion that served as home to Montana's First Families from 1913 to 1959.

## WORKSHOPS

- **8:30 A.M.–12:00 P.M. Cemetery Preservation Workshop**

**Researching Your Local Cemetery** Join local historians and preservation experts for a captivating workshop exploring the rich history, symbolism, and preservation of cemeteries across Montana. This event will feature respected voices in the field, including **Aubrey Jaap** and **Lindsay Mulcahy** from the Butte-Silver Bow Archives; **Crystal Alegria** from the Extreme History Project; **Charlene Porsild** from the Foundation for Montana History; and **Mark Johnson**, Fellow with the University of Notre Dame's Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies. Attendees will learn about the



Arched stone entrance to Forestvale Cemetery.

unique history and cultural importance of Chinese cemeteries, uncover the meanings behind gravestone symbolism, explore the hidden histories within Helena's cemeteries, and gain practical tools for researching their own local burial grounds. Optional tours of Home of Peace Cemetery and Forestvale Cemetery's China Row will follow. See page 7 for information.

## WORKSHOPS

### ► 9:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M. Educators Workshop (lunch included)

**Indian Education for All** To help educators fulfill Montana’s constitutional mandate to recognize “the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians” and endeavor to preserve that heritage through its educational institutions, this year’s educator session will provide attendees with new tools to teach about Indigenous history. OPI Indian Education Specialist **Mike Jetty** (Spirit Lake Dakota) will start the day with an examination of the Declaration of Independence and its reference to “merciless Indian savages.” Then, Language and Cultural Preservation Department original territories researchers **Nolan Brown** and **Bailey Dann** (Newe) will share the curriculum they’ve developed for teaching about the Shoshone-Bannock tribes, whose traditional homeland includes parts of Montana. After lunch, **Dylan Huiskens** (2020 Montana Teacher of the Year) will provide strategies for teaching about treaties. Finally, **Kathy Martin** and **Mary Ellen Little Mustache** (Piikuni) will present the Blackfeet Medicine Show, featuring artifacts, art, stories, and games.



Mike Jetty. Courtesy of Montana Office of Public Instruction.

### ► 9:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M. Historic Preservation Workshop

(Lunch included. Meeting location TBD and Gates of the Mountains Marina, 3131 Gates of the Mountains Rd.)

The 2025 Historic Preservation Workshop will include the annual round-robin presentations from local preservation offices about preservation efforts statewide. In addition, Preserve Montana staff will describe their Montana Trades Corps program, which trains students to work on brick-and-mortar preservation projects. State Historic Preservation Office staff and Preserve Montana will also lead a roundtable discussion to identify local preservation issues, facilitate breakout group discussions, and pinpoint action steps to address those issues. The workshop will conclude with an optional river cruise through history in the Gates of the Mountains section of the Missouri River.



Preserve Montana’s Trades Corps teaches college students hands-on preservation trades. Courtesy of Preserve Montana.



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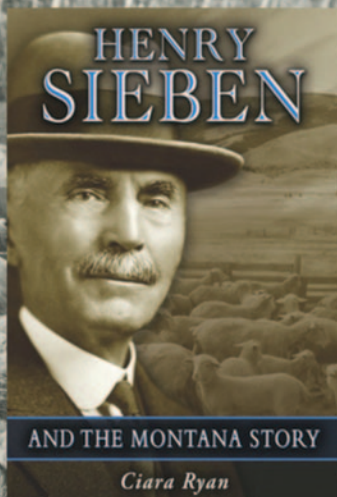
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Henry Sieben came to Montana in 1864. From freighting and mining to banking and ranching, he established an enduring legacy for Montana history. Based on newly discovered family documents, this book brings his remarkable journey to life.



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## WORKSHOPS

### ► 9:00 A.M.–12:00 P.M. **Living History Workshop** (Reeder's Alley Convention Center, 101 Reeder's Alley)

Freeman Tilden, considered the father of heritage interpretation, said *“through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection.”*



Mary Jane Bradbury



Austin Haney

Join professional historic interpreters **Mary Jane Bradbury** and **Austin Haney** for a lively workshop exploring the principles, tools, and techniques needed to expand storytelling, reveal hidden historical perspectives, and engage new

audiences at your museum or historic site.

### ► 1:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M. **Writers Workshop**

**Publishing the Past: A Workshop for Authors** Join authors and the Montana Historical Society's Publications department staff for a workshop focused on the ins and outs of getting nonfiction books and

articles into print. The workshop kicks off with a panel discussion featuring MTHS editors and graphic designer, joined by writer **Ednor Therriault**. Then, in break-out groups, participants will have the opportunity to talk in depth with panelists on topics ranging from how to identify a potential publisher to what publishers look for in research and writing, design principles and visual communications, what to expect during the editing process, how a work is marketed and financed, and the author's and publisher's roles once the

book or article is published. The workshop will conclude with a talk by retired Montana State University history professor and author

**Mark Fiege**. Fiege, the author of *Republic of Nature* and *Irrigated Eden* and an editor of Wallace Stegner's *Unsettled Country*, will discuss writing about historical figures in their whole humanity. He'll also offer advice on creating compelling stories from historical research and why this matters to the craft of history.



Ednor Therriault



Mark Fiege





## Evening Festivities

### ► 4:30 P.M.–6:30 P.M. **Opening Reception**

Montana Heritage Center Commons, 225 N. Roberts St.

As we kick off the 52nd annual Montana History Conference in the new Montana Heritage Center, let's party like it's 1952, 1970, 1986, and 2025—all years that marked major construction milestones for the Montana Historical Society. Conference goers will get a sneak peek of the nearly completed Homeland, Russell, and changing galleries, common areas, and the Library and Archives reference room. In celebration of the latest addition to our stalwart building, don vintage duds from your favorite year mentioned above, meet friends, get to know our beautiful new building, and enjoy a selection of nostalgic hors d'oeuvres.

### ► 7:00 P.M.–9:00 P.M. **Dessert and a Movie at The Myrna**

The Montana legislature designated the last Friday in September American



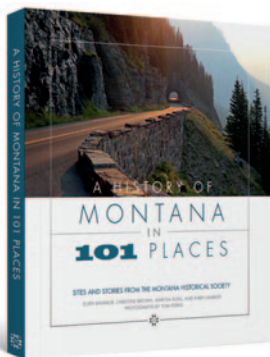
Indian Heritage Day. Commemorate the day by attending a special screening of the 2013 film *Winter in the Blood* at the historic Myrna Loy Center. Based on James Welch's 1974 debut novel, the film tells the story of a young Native American man coming to terms with a painful past growing up on a northern Montana reservation. Grab a dessert before the show and stay after for a conversation with the screenwriters and members of the cast and crew.

## Friday, September 26

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► 7:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M. **Conference registration**, ballroom foyer

► 7:45 A.M.–9:00 A.M. **Breakfast & Keynote Presentation**



**Places in Time** The Treasure State has, rightfully, been dubbed the Last Best Place. More accurately, though, Montana is not just one place but many—places large and small, natural and human-made, urban and rural, old and not-so-old. Behind each of these places are unique stories that, when woven together, tell the colorful history of this place we call home. Join co-author **Kirby Lambert** for the official release of the Montana Historical Society Press's newest publication, *A History of Montana in 101 Places: Sites and Stories from the Montana Historical Society*.

Now retired, **Kirby Lambert** worked for almost thirty-seven years at the Montana Historical Society where he served in a variety of capacities—as museum registrar, curator, and Outreach and Interpretation Program manager. He is a co-author of *The History of Montana in 101 Objects: Artifacts and Essays from the Montana Historical Society*, *Montana's Charlie Russell: Art in the Collection of the Montana Historical Society*, and *Montana's State Capitol: The People's House*.



► 9:15 A.M.–10:30 A.M. **Concurrent sessions**

**Glacier Park in 3-D** In 1996, Northern Arizona University history professor Michael A. Amundson purchased a cache of 3-D photographs at a garage sale in Lincoln, Nebraska. The photos—taken in Glacier National Park by Indiana lawyer Clyde McCoy in 1940—were lost for fifty years after McCoy was murdered in Detroit in 1942. In his presentation, **Glacier National Park in 1940 in 3-D Color: The Lost Kodachromes of Clyde A. McCoy**, Amundson will share McCoy's stunning pre-World War II 3-D photos of backcountry landscapes in Glacier National Park while detailing his twenty-eight-year search to find the locations McCoy captured and to uncover the photographer's mysterious life story. *3-D glasses provided.*



Courtesy of Michael Amundson.

► **9:15 A.M.–10:30 A.M. Concurrent sessions**

**Left Out in the Cold** Montana's involvement in the Cold War never ceases to offer new intrigue. In *St. Marie: Montana's Newest Ghost Town*, author **Ednor Therriault** will explain the curious story of the St. Marie



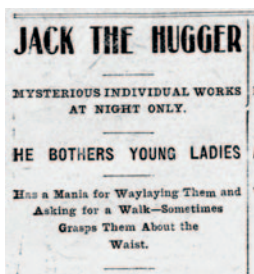
St. Marie in 2024. Courtesy of Kate Hampton.

community near the former Glasgow Air Force Base. More than 7,000 service members and their families lived at the base from 1957 until it closed almost overnight in 1976, leaving 1,200 empty homes and decades of sour development deals and tangled legal battles. In *The Case of Myron Tripp and Rocky Mountain College*, Billings librarian

**Joseph Lanning** will discuss how pressure from the government and the public to purge campuses of suspected Communists extended to a little-known professor in Billings. His unusual experience provides a window into the larger, national hysteria that defined the era.

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**Down the Rabbit Hole** As every historian knows, an unrelated news article or curious archival folder can overtake our minds while researching.



Eight hours later, pulse pounding, eyes ablaze with zealotry, we find ourselves “down the rabbit hole” and utterly lost. In *When Distraction Leads to Obsession and a Historian Gets Lost*, we’ll follow historian **Scott Meredith** as he loses his senses untangling *Fletcher and Porter: The True Story of the Song “Don’t Fence Me In*. And dazed and confused historian **Jon Axline** takes us through the shadowy thoroughfares of the mining city in pursuit of the

*Mystery Man Stalks Uptown Butte: Hugger on the Loose.*

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► **10:30 A.M. –10:45 A.M. Coffee, snacks, and books**

► **10:45 A.M.–12:00 P.M. Concurrent sessions**

**On Sacred Ground** Harnessing power and fertile land in the Flathead Lake region during the early twentieth century meant success for Euro-American interests and potential devastation for tribal communities. In *Taking God’s Country: The University of Montana, Morton J. Elrod, and Allotment on the Flathead Indian Reservation*, MTHS Emerging Scholar **Dylan Yonce** will explore the University of Montana’s development and the long-lasting impacts of allotment on the Flathead Reservation. The Montana Power Company’s construction of the Kerr Dam (now known as the Seli’s Ksanka

Q'lispe' or SKQ Dam) in 1938 on the Flathead Indian Reservation brought both benefits and destruction to the reservation. In his presentation, ***The Dam That Changed Western Montana***, Butch Larcombe, author of *Golden Kilowatts: Water Power and the Early Growth of Montana*, will chronicle the SKQ Dam's complicated history, culminating with its 2015 sale to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes.



At the dedication of the Kerr Dam, a delegation of Kootenai tribal members adopted Montana Power Company president Frank Kerr into the tribe.  
C. Owen Smithers. Photograph courtesy of Northwestern Energy.

**Becoming Helena** Take a deep dive into Helena history in 1864 and 1889. Paul Cartwright's *Georgians on My Mind: How Helena Came to Be* investigates why a pair of veteran prospectors with little to show for it, a young Brit seeking adventure, and some guy from Iowa became the founding fathers of Helena in 1864 and honorary Georgians all around. Then step into the time machine with MTHS archivist Lindsey Mick, who will present *A Time Traveler's Guide to Helena, Montana, 1889*. Travelers will learn how to dress and travel on horses and in carriages, where to stay in town, how much money to carry and what stocks to buy, what to eat (and not eat), what cultural etiquette practices they should know, and much more.



The corner of 6th and Main (now Last Chance Gulch) in Helena, circa 1890. MTHS Photo Archives H-03192.



► 10:45 A.M.–12:00 P.M. **Concurrent sessions**



A scene from the play *Mine Tailings—The Valley*, a play about Belt's Mattie Castner. Courtesy of Jeff Ross.

**Bringing Up Belt** Finnish and Slavic immigrants founded Belt, a coal camp in central Montana named after nearby Belt Butte. More distinctive than its name is its vibrant African American roots. In *Cradled in Dixie*, historian **Ken Robison** will explore how formerly enslaved Mattie Castner, her white husband John, and other Black friends in Belt built a vibrant coal-mining community. Inspired by Mattie's story, playwright and Belt Theater director **Jeff Ross** will discuss the challenges of turning Mattie Castner's story into a live theater play in his presentation, *Speaking Through Silence: Mattie Castner on the Belt Stage*. Ross will share video clips of his play *Mine Tailings—The Valley*, and discuss how

Mattie's silence reveals her character.

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► 12:15 P.M.– 1:45 P.M. **Lunch & Keynote Presentation**

## **What Makes Montana, Montana? Searching for the Spirit of a State in a Time of Dramatic Change**

For years, Montana has witnessed bewildering demographic, economic, political, and environmental change, leaving many longtime residents to question their sense of place and self. Veteran Montana journalist and conservationist **Todd Wilkinson** will offer a thoughtful reflection on Montana identity based on nearly four decades of observation, interviews, research, and reporting on land and life under the Big Sky. Wilkinson will address how Montanans can use historical perspective to fashion a reinvigorated sense of place, history, and identity in the face of overwhelming change.



Todd Wilkinson is editor of the online journal *Yellowstonian*, founding editor of *Mountain Journal*, and author of numerous books including a biography of Ted Turner and, most recently, *Ripple Effects: How to Save Yellowstone and America's Most Iconic Ecosystem*. He hails from the sister state of Minnesota and is a graduate of St. Olaf College.

*Conference schedule is subject to change.*

## Thursday, September 25

7:30 A.M.–5:00 P.M. Conference Registration—Ballroom foyer

### TOURS

8:30 A.M.–4:00 P.M.	Grant-Kohrs Ranch Tour
8:30 A.M.–4:00 P.M.	Made in Montana Tour
1:00 P.M.–3:00 P.M.	Gates of the Mountains Boat Tour
1:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M.	Charter Oak Mine Tour
1:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M.	Archie Bray Foundation Tour
1:30 P.M. or 4:00 P.M.	Cemetery Tours
2:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M.	Little Shell Tribe in Helena Tour
2:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M.	Sieben Ranch Tour

### WORKSHOPS

8:30 A.M.–12:00 P.M.	Cemetery Preservation Workshop
9:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.	Educators Workshop
9:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M.	Historic Preservation Workshop (off-site)
9:00 A.M.–12:00 P.M.	Living History Workshop (off-site at Reeder's Alley)
1:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M.	Writers Workshop
4:30 P.M.–6:30 P.M.	Opening Reception—Montana Heritage Center Commons
7:00 P.M.–9:00 P.M.	Dessert and a Movie at the Myrna Loy Center

## Friday, September 26

7:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.	Conference Registration—Ballroom foyer
7:45 A.M.–9:00 A.M.	Breakfast & Keynote Presentation (see page 14)
9:15 A.M.–10:30 A.M.	Concurrent sessions (see pages 14–15) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Glacier Park in 3-D</li> <li>▶ Left Out in the Cold</li> <li>▶ Down the Rabbit Hole</li> </ul>
10:30 A.M.–10:45 A.M.	Break
10:45 A.M.–12:00 P.M.	Concurrent sessions (see page 15-17) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ On Sacred Ground</li> <li>▶ Becoming Helena</li> <li>▶ Bringing Up Belt</li> </ul>
12:15 P.M.–1:45 P.M.	Lunch & Keynote Presentation (see page 17)



- 2:00 P.M.–3:15 P.M.**      **Concurrent sessions** (see page 20–21)
- ▶ School Spirit
  - ▶ Bearing Witness: Vietnam Veterans Remember
  - ▶ Beneath the Apron
  - ▶ China Row (Forestvale) Cemetery Tour (pre-registration required)
- 3:15 P.M.–3:45 P.M.**      **Break**
- 3:45 P.M.–5:00 P.M.**      **Concurrent sessions** (see page 21–23)
- ▶ Central to History
  - ▶ Equal Justice
  - ▶ Focus on the Forts
  - ▶ Home of Peace Cemetery Tour (pre-registration required)
  - ▶ Helena’s Black History Trolley Tour (pre-registration required)
- 5:00 P.M.–6:00 P.M.**      **Cocktails and Conversations—Ballroom**
- 6:00 P.M.–7:30 P.M.**      **Banquet & Keynote Presentation** (see page 23)
- 8:00 P.M. – 9:30 P.M.**      **Montana History Pub Trivia** (see page 24)

## Saturday, September 27

- 7:00 A.M.–2:30 P.M.**      **Conference Registration—Ballroom foyer**
- 7:45 A.M.–9:15 A.M.**      **Breakfast & Keynote Presentation** (see page 24)
- 9:30 A.M.–10:45 A.M.**      **Concurrent sessions** (see page 28–29)
- ▶ Re-Exploring the Crossroads – Part 1
  - ▶ Buried Narratives
  - ▶ Workers Unite
- 10:45 A.M.–11:00 A.M.**      **Break**
- 11:00 A.M.–12:15 P.M.**      **Concurrent sessions** (see page 29–31)
- ▶ Re-Exploring the Crossroads – Part 2
  - ▶ Art in the Parks
  - ▶ Queer Montana
  - ▶ Teaching Montana History Recap
- 12:30 P.M.–2:00 P.M.**      **Lunch & Keynote Presentation** (see page 30–31)

### POST-CONFERENCE FUN

- 2:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M.**      **Traveling Medicine Show: Blackfeet Connections** (off-site at Lewis and Clark Library)
- 2:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M.**      **Hidden Helena Tour** (start location TBD)
- 2:30 P.M.–8:00 P.M.**      **Last Chance Community Pow Wow** (off-site at Lewis & Clark County Fairgrounds)

*A Place in Time*

► **2:00 P.M. – 3:15 P.M. Concurrent sessions**

**School Spirit** Sense of place runs deep in stories about school identity. In ***“M” Marks the Place: Constructing Identity in Montana’s Modern Era***, Montana State University graduate students **Carter Berg** and **Victoria Nelson** will tell the tale of building Montana State University’s hillside M monogram in 1915 and explain its impact and legacy. Far away across the prairie, in



The Hillside “M” in the Bridger Range.  
Courtesy of Associated Students of Montana State University.



Westby’s Monte Solberg battles for the ball.  
Courtesy of Jerry Worley.

northeast Montana, sports teams have historically shaped community identity. In ***Sons and Daughters of Farmers: The Last Years of Antelope High***, retired University of Wisconsin Eau Claire education professor **Jerry Worley** will share the riveting story of the 1975 Antelope Pronghorn boys’ basketball team’s face-off off with their nearby rivals, the Westby Rangers, in the State Class C championship game in Helena—500 miles from their prairie communities. He will also examine Antelope High School’s last days before a fire destroyed it in 1978 and cast a sudden shadow on the town’s spirit.

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**Bearing Witness: Vietnam Veterans Remember**

Fifty years ago, on April 30, 1975, the U.S. military pulled its last troops out of Vietnam, ending a war that transformed the country and especially the lives of those who served. Come listen to veterans of the conflict as they share their stories about heading to Vietnam, their time in the country, their homecoming, and the ways the war continued to affect their lives.



**Beneath the Apron** The story of Benjamin Stone, the lone Black man traveling with a group of Helena tourists through Yellowstone National Park, percolates to the surface in ***Stacy Montemayor’s Leadership Under Fire: A Black Montanan and the Nez Perce War of 1877***. Although Stone was historically identified

Benjamin Stone, circa 1887. J. P. Ball photographer. MTHS Photo Archives 957-599.



as merely the group's cook, Montemayor's research unveils the forgotten story of one African American man's lifesaving leadership abilities and high



profile in Helena business circles and state politics. When Sammy Williams, a male ranch cook from Manhattan, Montana, died in 1908, the undertaker discovered that Sammy was born a woman. Sammy's identity remained a mystery until Gallatin History Museum research director **Rachel Phillips** and former Gallatin County Clerk and Recorder **Charlotte Mills** dug into public records to find the truth. Their presentation, ***In Search of Sammy Williams***, offers a window to understanding Sammy's motives in moving through life as a man.

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**China Row Cemetery Tour** At its peak, Helena's Chinese community made up more than 20 percent of the city's population—a vibrant presence that has since largely disappeared and that left few physical traces. One poignant exception is Forestvale Cemetery's "China Row." Located just outside the formal boundaries of the well-maintained cemetery, China Row reveals powerful stories of perseverance, adaptation, and global interconnectedness. Join **Mark Johnson**, Fellow with the University of Notre Dame's Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies and his son, **Thomas Johnson**, a student of Chinese language evolution, for this exploration of Chinese grave markers, language, cultural symbols, and burial practices. *Pre-registration required; drive on your own.*

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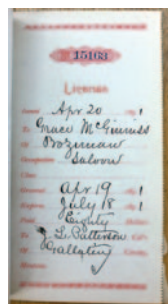
► **3:15 P.M. –3:45 P.M. Coffee, snacks, and books**

► **3:45 P.M. –5:00 P.M. Concurrent sessions**

**Central to History** In their recent research tracing author F. Scott Fitzgerald's time in Montana, historians **Melissa Barker** and **Stu Wilson** found a forgotten figure in central Montana history. In ***Copper Baron and Cattle King: Michael Donahoe's Hidden Legacy***, Barker and Wilson will share Donahoe's largely unknown influence in Butte's battle for copper, and later, his lasting investments and impacts in Meagher County. Montana's early twentieth-century county-splitting efforts brought prosperity to some towns and collapse to others. In ***Wheatland County: How Mountains, Homesteaders, a High School, and a Courthouse Split Meagher County***, retired rancher and MTHS Trustee **Bill Jones** will explore the unusual and acrimonious battle that led to the formation of Wheatland County in 1917.

## ► 3:45 P.M.–5:00 P.M. Concurrent sessions

**Equal Justice** Achieving legal justice in early Montana courts was difficult at best and far more so for minorities and women. In *As Good a Family as There Is: El Mejicano Fernando Portillo's Legal Battle*, Montana State University professor **Bridget Kevane** will highlight how a Mexican man in 1890s Montana navigated legal frameworks, racial categories, and prevailing biases to assert his rights. In *Grace McGinnis: Leading Madam and Legal Maven*, historian and lawyer **Victoria Lyons** will explore how one successful Butte madam challenged stereotypes and repeatedly used her legal savvy to her advantage.



Bozeman madam Grace McGinnis paid \$80 for her three-month saloon business license in 1891. Courtesy of Crystal Alegria.

**Focus on the Forts** Long before Montana had state lines, trading posts shaped the state we know today. In *The Smoke and Mirrors: Why Fort Union Really Is Nationally Significant*,



Thomas Adams sketched this 1855 drawing of Fort Owen on the cover of his journal. Courtesy of Princeton University Library.

former Fort Union Trading Post museum curator **Fred MacVaugh** will explore why this 1828 trading post, a once-contested unit of the National Park system, holds national significance for many tribal nations, reflecting treaties and relations, intermarriage and governance, smallpox, sovereignty, and survival.

In *Lqłmłš (Wide Cottonwoods) and the Mysteries of Fort Owen*, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks archaeologist **Rachel Reckin** will discuss how new research into primary sources, Indigenous histories, and the archaeological record have illuminated the complex Indigenous world of Fort Owen, including a previously unknown murder mystery, the site's deep Salish roots, and a surprising architectural history.

## Home of Peace Cemetery Tour

Public historian **Patty Dean** will guide participants on a walk through history to learn about the lives of influential Jewish citizens at the Home of Peace Cemetery, the oldest active Jewish cemetery in Montana, in use since 1867. Dean will also discuss Jewish cemetery design and burial practices. *Pre-registration required; drive on your own.*



Stone arches at Home of Peace Cemetery. Courtesy of Patty Dean.

**Helena's Black Past** MTHS community preservation coordinator **Kate Hampton** will lead a Last Chance Trolley tour highlighting Helena's Black history. Black residents played, and continue to play, important roles in the city's social and commercial fabric. The tour will feature family stories, Black businesses, and social gathering places. *Pre-registration required; trolley departs hotel at 3:45 p.m.*

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► **5:00 P.M.–6:00 P.M. Cocktails, Conversations, and Book Signing**, ballroom

► **6:00 P.M.–7:30 P.M. Banquet & Keynote Presentation**

*Sponsored by A&E Design*

## **The Story of Us: The Women Who Shaped Montana III**

End the day by watching the premiere of a compelling documentary about three trailblazing women who helped shape the state's past. Ella Knowles Haskell—a pioneering suffragist and the first woman to pass the Montana bar exam and practice law—defied societal norms and broke barriers for women. Nancy Cooper Russell's sharp business acumen elevated her husband, beloved Montana artist Charles M. Russell, helping him become the highest-paid living artist of his time. And last but not least, rodeo queen Fannie Sperry Steele's daring performances and unwavering determination in a male-dominated sport made her a legendary figure and an enduring inspiration for generations of women. With vibrant storytelling and compelling visuals, *The Story of Us* offers viewers a broader narrative of American women's rights and perseverance in the face of adversity.



**Crystal Alegria** and **Kimberly Hogberg** co-produced three episodes of *The Story of Us*. Alegria is the executive director of The Extreme History Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to making history accessible and engaging to the public. She leads initiatives that bring untold histories to light, bridge the gap between academic research and community engagement, and emphasize the power of place-based history. Kimberly Hogberg is a documentary filmmaker with a deep curiosity for uncovering hidden history. She received two Emmy Award nominations for *An Alien Place: The Fort Missoula Detention Camp 1941–1944* and the pilot episode of *The Story of Us*. Most recently, Kim collaborated with the Montana Historical Society to produce the film *Hidden Stories: Montana's Black Past*. She is currently partnering with the Greater Montana Foundation to produce a documentary about the life and legacy of broadcasting legend Ed Craney.

► **8:00 P.M.–9:30 P.M. Montana History Pub Trivia**, ballroom

Grab a group of friends and put on your smartest thinking cap to test your Montana history knowledge during four exciting rounds of trivia. Fun Montana history prizes awarded for first, second, and third places.

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## *Saturday, September 27*

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► **7:00 A.M.–2:30 P.M. Conference registration**, ballroom foyer

► **7:45 A.M.–9:15 A.M. Breakfast & Keynote Presentation**

### **Amp Skapii Piikuni Values and Oral Traditions**

Elders/traditionalists **Smokey** and **Darnell Rides At The Door** will share the history of Amp Skapii Piikuni or “The Real People” (Niit Sii Too Pii) from their genesis stories through to contemporary ways of life. They will share Piikuni values through origination stories, spirituality, relationship to the stars/cosmos, family dynamics, flora/fauna, and the role of arts/sciences. Their presentation captures the Blackfeet worldview expressed in modern context and explores where tradition meets contemporary value interpretations.

**Darnell Rides At The Door**, Piikuni (South Peigan/ Blackfeet), shares the history of her proud people as an Ookaan (medicine lodge), thunder and beaver medicine woman, painted lodge owner, and member to many Piikuni core groups. She consults on education, culture, traditions,



and Piikuni herbology and ethnobotany, and is a licensed and certified massage therapist, Reiki master teacher, and matriarch of her huge and ever-growing family. **Robert J. “Smokey” Rides At The Door**, Piikuni (South Peigan/Blackfeet), is an educator, coach, administrator, business entrepreneur, civic and tribal leader, and traditional caretaker of ancient teachings and bundles. He has served on many boards and councils and developed tribal relationships at the local, county, state, and international levels. Smokey and Darnell operate Ridesatthedoor Consulting.





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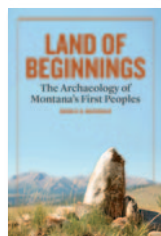
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# Heritage Guardian &

The Montana Historical Society's Board of Trustees' **Heritage Keeper Award** honors up to two individuals or organizations per year for their outstanding work, commitment, and effort in identifying, preserving, and presenting the history and heritage values of Montana for current and future generations. The **Heritage Guardian Award** recognizes the record of accomplishment or lifetime achievement of one of the

## **Jon Axline** | *Board of Trustees' Heritage Guardian Award Recipient*

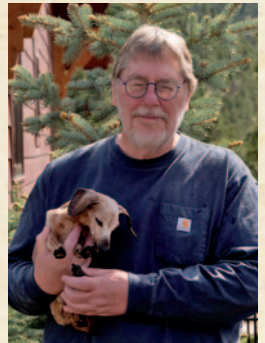
For his long-standing record of service documenting and preserving Montana history, MTHS has awarded historian Jon Axline its highest award, the 2025 Heritage Guardian Award.

For more than three decades, Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) historian Jon Axline not only has documented the Treasure State's history through its trails, roads, and bridges, but also has tirelessly shared his knowledge of Montana history with the public through teaching, public lectures, and countless articles and books. Jon takes a subject that some may consider dull, and with his deep understanding of Montana history and a playful sense of humor, he brings life and recognition to historic places we travel past daily.

After graduating from Montana State University with a master's degree in history, Jon got his start working at the Museum of the Rockies, the Montana State Prison Museum, the Bear Paw Development Corporation, and the Powell County Museum and Arts Foundation. He took a job as the transportation historian at the Montana Department of Transportation in 1990 and since then has become the authority on Montana's trails, roads, and bridges. He is also the editor or author of more than two hundred of Montana's beloved brown historical highway markers.

Outside of his work at MDT, Jon has taught college history classes, given countless public presentations, and served on boards. He is a prolific author, having written or co-written nine books and nearly sixty National Register of Historic Places nominations—a feat unmatched by any historian in Montana. Jon is also an institution at the annual MTHS Montana History Conference, presenting a lecture or leading a tour at nearly all of the past thirty conferences.

His dedication, zeal, and indefatigable energy for documenting and sharing history deserves recognition. He is an inspiration to all who come in contact with him, and his energy and commitment are contagious. Though we know Jon will miss his role at MDT when he retires at the end of 2025, we at MTHS are happy that he will have more time to spend on research, writing, and presenting his work.





# Heritage Keeper Awards

nominees for the Heritage Keeper Award. Both awards recognize individuals, families, organizations, educators, historians, and others whose efforts have had a significant impact on generating interest in, and the preservation of, Montana's diverse history.

The MTHS Board of Trustees hosted separate celebrations earlier in the year in the award recipients' home communities.

## **Chris LaTray** | *Board of Trustees' Heritage Keeper Award Recipient*

A Métis storyteller, a descendent of the Pembina Band of the mighty Red River of the North, and a citizen of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Chris La Tray has worked tirelessly to articulate the history and legacy of the Little Shell Tribe.

Chris has shared the history of the Little Shell and the Métis and their intertwined narratives with thousands of people of all ages, traveling widely to speak. His audiences include historians and tribal members, children and adults, people with deep knowledge of Métis and Little Shell history and those who have never heard of either group. His thorough research, fine writing, ability to connect, and willingness to share his personal story have improved understanding of Little Shell history throughout Montana and nationally.



In recognition of his impact, the Little Shell Tribe called Chris “the voice of a nation” when they honored him at their powwow in 2024.

According to Little Shell tribal council member Alisa Herodes, Chris “has given voice” to the tribe’s citizens “through his writing, storytelling and teaching.” Little Shell elder Al Wiseman lauded Chris’s passion, noting that Chris does all he does “from love, from his heart.”

A prolific author, Chris was named the Montana’s Poet Laureate for 2023–2025. Fifteen thousand people subscribe to his newsletter, “An Irritable Métis.” He is also the co-author of an eight-module teaching unit on the Little Shell, published by the Montana Office of Public Instruction for use in classrooms across the state. However, Chris has become best known as the author of *Becoming Little Shell: A Landless Indian’s Journey Home*, which won a Pacific Northwest Book Award and was named a *People Magazine* best memoir. *Becoming Little Shell* is Chris’s third book.

In addition to his outreach through writing and speaking, Chris is active in the language revitalization movement for two of his people’s languages: Ojibwemowin and Michif. Chris La Tray is a true Heritage Keeper, whose deep commitment to preserving and sharing culture and history makes him a fitting recipient of this award.

► 9:30 A.M.–10:45 A.M. **Concurrent sessions**

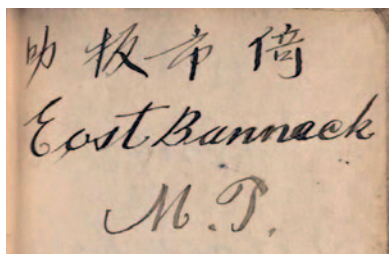
**Re-Exploring the Crossroads** Few places in Montana are as rich in history as Judith Landing, a crossroads on the Missouri River in central Montana. In Part 1 of this two-part discussion focusing on Judith Landing, historian **Lea Whitford** (Maistakii) and anthropologist **Sally Thompson** will present *The Lame Bull Treaty of 1855: New Perspectives*. The pivotal treaty—which was negotiated at Judith Landing—established communal tribal hunting grounds and paved the way for non-Indigenous settlement. Whitford will share Indigenous stories gained through roundtable discussions with knowledge keepers, field trips, and revisiting relevant documents. Thompson will present surprising new information gleaned from the recent discovery of railroad surveyor and Bitterroot Salish special agent Thomas Adams’s field journals. The intimate details in Adams’s account bring new perspectives to this important historic event.



The 1855 Blackfoot Council at Judith Landing by Gustav Sohon. Courtesy of Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma.

**Buried Narratives** In *We Made Our Stake: An African American Mining Community in Homestake, Montana*, historian **Kristen Steadman** will discuss the Brown and Flagg families of Homestake, Whitehall, and Butte, how they came to Montana, staked their home, and kept it from 1884 to the present day. Her presentation will discuss their contributions through mining, community advocacy, voting, athletics, and more. In *Bannack’s Chinese Community in the Archaeological Record*, **Mark Johnson**, a Fellow with the University of Notre Dame’s Liu Institute for Asia and Asian





Courtesy of Mark Johnson.

Studies, will discuss a recently discovered Chinese cemetery in Bannack. The session will cover opium usage—including how/why some artifacts are frequently misattributed to opium paraphernalia—and how lessons learned from this study can be applied to better understanding Chinese communities across Montana.

**Workers Unite** When Irish immigrant and union organizer Ed Boyce was elected president of the Western Federation of Miners in 1896, he transformed the organization by promoting Socialist ideals and encouraging workers to arm themselves. Using Boyce’s personal papers and other accounts of his presidency, University of Montana PhD student **Cole R. Costello** will explore the lasting impact of this controversial organizer in *A More Perfect Union: Ed Boyce and the Western Federation of Miners*. In *Marxism in the Mountains: The Socialist Labor Party in Montana*, Providence College professor **Jeff Johnson** will examine the connection between Montana’s radical labor movement, immigrant loggers and miners, and the Socialist Labor Party (SLP), investigating SLP activism in Montana before 1900.

► **10:45 A.M. –11:00 A.M. Coffee, snacks, and books**

► **11:00 A.M.–12:15 P.M. Concurrent sessions**

**Re-Exploring the Crossroads** In Part 2 of this two-part discussion focusing on Judith Landing, a panel of experts led by **Brenna Moloney**, Heritage Specialist at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), will discuss *Judith Landing State Park: A Historic District’s Next Chapter*. MTHS community preservation coordinator **Kate Hampton** and Winifred area historian **Candi Zion** will explain its significance to the local community and its place in state and national history. FWP recreation manager **Cannon Colegrove** and FWP tribal liaison **Kqyn Kuka** will lay out future plans for management, historic preservation, interpretive programming, and tribal partnerships.



Ruins of Fort Clagett Trading Post/Judith Mercantile at the future Judith Landing State Park. Photo courtesy of Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks.

► **11:00 A.M.–12:15 P.M. Concurrent sessions**



Mountain Lion by Sawyer.  
Courtesy of Robert Nisbet.

**Art in the Parks** In *Edmund J. Sawyer: Yellowstone National Park Naturalist and Artist*, art enthusiast **Robert Nisbet** will show how, in the 1920s, Sawyer set a new standard for quality art and illustration in Yellowstone with his paintings in the Mammoth Hot Springs Museum and richly illustrated *Yellowstone Nature Notes* bulletin. When President Franklin D.

Roosevelt established the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935, scores of artists were put back to work, promoting tourism and economic growth. In *Graphic Art of the WPA*, MTHS graphic designer **Luke Duran** will share examples of the more than 35,000 poster designs created during this time, highlighting Montana examples and profiling several notable designers who created the WPA style that remains popular today.



Chester Don Powell, Glacier National Park.  
Collection of Art in Embassies, Washington D.C.

**Queer Montana** In this panel discussion on *Preserving LGBTQ2S+ History in Montana*, historian and former state senator **Diane Sands** will gather members of Montana's LGBTQ2S+ community to explore ongoing efforts to preserve queer history. Panelists include **Linda Gryczan**, lead plaintiff in the lawsuit that overturned the law that classified the queer community as felons; **Steven Barrios**, Montana Two-Spirit Society co-founder; and Queer In & Out Oral History Project researchers **Erin Heaton** and **River Watson**.

**Teaching Montana History Recap** Teachers! Wondering how to put what you have learned from attending conference sessions to work in your classroom? Join Outreach and Education historian and former classroom teacher **Melissa Hibbard** to discuss ideas and make plans for how to bring information back to your students and apply what you've learned.



► **12:30 P.M.–2:00 P.M. Lunch & Keynote Presentation**

**York: The Untold Story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition** Join nationally acclaimed storyteller and living history interpreter **Hasan Davis** as he brings to life the remarkable and often overlooked story of York, the enslaved Black explorer who was an indispensable member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Through a powerful

first-person portrayal, Davis gives voice to York's courage, resilience, and humanity, shedding light on his critical contributions to one of America's most iconic journeys. Blending historical insight, dramatic performance, and deep empathy, this presentation invites audiences to reflect on the complexities of race, identity, and recognition in American history. Davis's portrayal not only brings the past vividly to life but also invites conversation about the enduring relevance of York's story in today's world.

**Hasan Davis** has performed York's story more than five-hundred times in the past twenty-five years. In addition to his portrayal of York, his theatrical performances include A. A. Burleigh, a Civil War soldier who escaped enslavement to join Union forces in the American Civil War; and Joe Louis, America's boxing champion. Davis has been honored as an Annie E. Casey Foundation Children and Family fellow; a Council of State Governments Henry Toll fellow; and a Rockefeller Foundation Next Generation Leadership fellow. Hasan earned a bachelor's degree from Berea College and a law degree from the University of Kentucky College of Law.

## *Post-conference Fun*

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### WORKSHOPS

#### ► 2:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M. **Traveling Medicine Show: Blackfeet Connections**

(Lewis and Clark Library Large Meeting Room, 120 S. Last Chance Gulch)

Stories of cultures and the history of our ancestors can be found in art. Join Glacier Art Museum education director **Kathy Martin** and Piikuni elders/ traditionalists **Smokey** and **Darnell Rides At The Door** for an exhibition presentation featuring ancient, traditional, and contemporary



Kathy Martin. Courtesy of Luke Duran.

art and artifacts chosen in collaboration with the Glacier Art Museum and members of the Blackfeet Indian Nation. The presentation will begin with exploration of more than 150 items and will continue with stories from Smokey and Darnell about those who lived in ancient times and the changes that came with newcomers to the land.

## SELF-GUIDED TOUR

### ► 2:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M. **Hidden Helena**

Explore Helena history behind the scenes in this self-guided tour into the basements, bedrooms, and backrooms of some of the Queen City's seldom-visited and often closed-to-the-public historic buildings. This tour of up to a dozen properties allows you to visit hidden gems at your leisure, chat with owners and fellow history buffs, and see Helena history in a new light. Start location and tour map provided after registration. Hosted by **Preserve Montana**.

## ON YOUR OWN

### ► 2:30 P.M.–8:00 P.M. **Last Chance Community Pow Wow** (Free Admission. Exhibit Hall, Lewis & Clark County Fairgrounds. Grand entry starts at 6:00 P.M.)

The 26th annual Last Chance Community Pow Wow offers a spectacular display of Native drumming, dancing, food, and arts and crafts. Saturday evening's Grand Entry begins at 6:00 P.M. with a colorful procession of young and old dressed in traditional regalia, dancing to the heartbeat of the drum. Each Grand Entry is followed by intertribal and competition dancing. And don't miss out on sampling the frybread and tacos at the concessions stand.



**SAVE THE DATE!**  
September 24–26, 2026

**BILLINGS**

Plan now to join us next year in downtown Billings at the Doubletree by Hilton for the 53rd Annual Montana History Conference. September 24–26, 2026. MTHS and partners in the Magic City will offer our perennial lineup of engaging workshops, tours, and lectures.

Above: A view of the Yellowstone River at Billings, 1908. Library of Congress.



# *A Place in Time*

MONTANA HISTORY CONFERENCE **2025**  
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