

MHS's Outreach and Interpretation Program Hosts Three Educator Workshops

Three workshops this past June provided resources and training for teachers and are fostering ongoing collaborations with schools across the state.

As part of MHS's yearlong World War I centennial commemoration, seventeen high school teachers and two museum educators gathered in Helena to study the war's impacts on Montana. The educators' aim is to engage students in researching how their own counties were affected and to share the research with their communities. Philipsburg social studies teacher Jennifer Graham reflected,

History truly comes alive when students are able to take ownership in the educational process. . . . Researching their county's contribution to World War I will give students pride in themselves and in the community that has raised them, allowing them to explore people, places, and events with a whole new meaning. I can't wait to see what discoveries will be made from Granite County.

Later in the month, seven dedicated educators gathered for a two-day Elementary Teacher Leader in History Summit. The participants have agreed to serve as MHS ambassadors and advi-



Tammy Elser, Salish Kootenai College professor, gave a workshop on teaching Montana history to struggling readers.

sors, helping spread the word about the Society's offerings and advising staff on the creation of new resources for teaching social studies at the elementary level. Among them was Billings school librarian Ruth Ferris. "I was glad we had time to share our struggles and triumphs," she said.

In its last offering of the month, MHS partnered with Salish Kootenai College professor Tammy Elser and the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to sponsor a workshop called "Struggling Readers and Content Area Textbooks—Making *Montana: Stories of the Land* Accessible to All." "Teaching reading

might seem outside the purview of the Montana Historical Society," said historical specialist Martha Kohl, who organized all three workshops, "but we've been hearing from teachers for years that the greatest obstacle to teaching Montana history successfully is that they aren't equipped to help their students read the textbook." According to Johanna Tooke, who teaches Montana history in Forsyth, "The workshop prepared me to help more than just my struggling students. All of my students will benefit."

Thanks to donations from the Greater Montana Foundation, MHS filmed the workshop in the on-site Ed Craney Studio. OPI will convert the one-day workshop into an online course so content will continue to be available to Mon-



Martha Kohl, MHS historical specialist, facilitates communication and collaboration with schools across the state.

Sometimes You Just Have to Look Up...

It's been a smoky, hot, and disturbing summer in Montana. Fires have burned over 1 million acres, the early heat was oppressive, and the relentless smoke has been choking. Some days, we can't see the sky. On top of that, MHS was faced with very difficult decisions resulting from budget cuts imposed by this past legislative session.

On August 21, however, we all looked up to see a remarkable event. The eclipse of the sun—93 percent of totality in Helena—brought a few hundred folks to our front yard. Senior photo archivist Jeff Malcomson arranged for one hundred pairs of "eclipse glasses," and folks were welcome to join the party, and they did, eagerly sharing their eyewear with one another. Once again, the Montana Historical Society provided a pleasant, safe, and fun place to gather to celebrate a historic event.

The spectacle of the eclipse and the fellowship that resulted brought much-needed smiles to our faces. It

reminded us of the importance of this institution to Montanans and visitors alike and MHS's ability to bring folks together. Throughout the year, the Museum is enjoyed by so many people. I see the smiles on the faces of young and old that are generated by the enjoyment of stepping back in time for an hour or two and the discoveries that invariably result from a visit. Likewise, when I step into the Research Center reference room, I often visit with patrons who are excited about, and sometimes deeply moved by, the results of their searches. A colorful pile of backpacks and jackets near the front entrance signals that there are schoolchildren in the building again and that it will be a good day at MHS.

We all go through good days and bad days, good seasons and rough seasons. We are facing very painful budget decisions due to a downturn in the state's income, but we will move forward. Eventually,

the snows will fall and the awful fire season of 2017 will be a part of Montana's history. The skies will clear and the air will become fresh once again.

The Montana Historical Society provides important public services: education, preservation, and enjoyment. People come together to learn and celebrate the remarkable tales of Montana's past, with smiles on the faces of visitors, squeals of delight from children, and the oft-heard comment, "I had no idea what a great place this is."

For much of the summer, we've had our heads down grappling with difficult issues in stifling conditions. Yet this is a pretty wonderful state, and the Montana Historical Society is an institution with an important, dare I say, essential, mission. Sometimes you have to witness a celestial marvel to be reminded of the remarkable things that are going on around us.

Sometimes you just have to look up. 📖

Montana State Capitol Artwork: *We Proceeded On*

In commemoration of the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the State of Montana commissioned a bronze relief sculpture by nationally acclaimed artist Eugene Daub for display at the State Capitol. Dedicated in 2006, *We Proceeded On* depicts a typical morning scene as the explorers

traveled upriver through the Missouri Breaks. Today, the seventeen-by-eight-foot bronze hangs in the Senate chamber.

To fund the project, an artist selection committee commissioned seventy-five limited-edition, num-

bered bronze maquettes that reproduce the mural at scale (29" x 14"). Bronze medallions (3") show images drawn from the lower border of the mural. These artworks are available through the MHS Museum Store. Please call (800) 243-9900. 📖



Limited-edition commemorative bronze medallions (above) and maquettes (right) are available at the MHS Museum Store.



The Historical Museum at Fort Missoula

Located just a few miles from downtown Missoula, the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula is dedicated to preserving the rich history of Missoula County and western Montana. Eight staff members (five full-time and three part-time) care for more than 40,000 artifacts and nineteen historic structures on thirty-two park-like acres.

A visit begins in the Quartermaster's Storehouse, constructed in 1908 to store supplies for the fort. Here, visitors can view a brief orientation video and explore three galleries. The permanent gallery features exhibits about the groups that have called Fort Missoula home, including the "buffalo soldiers" of the Twenty-Fifth Infantry, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and more than 2,200 Italian nationals and Japanese resident aliens who were held at the fort during World War II. Visitors can also tour the Heath Gallery, where the current exhibit, "Collecting Missoula," pulls the curtain back on museums and how they acquire and preserve their collections.

Stepping out of the museum, visitors are greeted with the panoramic views that made the site a prime location for a military installation. The grounds are a combination of original and relocated buildings that shed light on the institution's core areas of interpretation: Missoula County history, Fort Missoula history, the history of forestry and the wood products industry, and the alien detention center established at the fort in 1941.

The museum hopes to expand its interpretive efforts regarding the history of the alien detention center. According to executive director Matt Lautzenheiser, many Montanans remain unaware that there was an internment camp at Fort Missoula; fewer still know that the fort has more structures used during the internment era than any other site in the United States.

The museum is open year-round with extended hours during the summer season, offering public access seven days per week. Researchers are welcome by appointment. Proceeds from the



Exhibits, events, and workshops are held at Fort Missoula throughout the year.

on-site bookstore and gift shop benefit the nonprofit Friends of the Historical Museum. Events, fundraisers, and workshops are held at Fort Missoula throughout the year (nearly seventy-five in 2016), making it a hub for the surrounding community. Highlights include the Fourth at the Fort Celebration, Forestry Day in April, and November's Annual Book Sale.

"We feel like there is a little something for everyone here at Fort Missoula," Director Lautzenheiser says. "We really work hard to share the rich history of the Missoula Valley with both local residents and tourists." 📖

SOCIETY STAR PROFILE

MHS Welcomes Film Archivist Kelly Burton

Research Center film archivist Kelly Burton has complimentary interests in art and history that have led him to a successful career. Tasked with caring for MHS's collections of moving pictures and rendering them useful to the public, he brings a wealth of experience working with the medium of film. "Like most archivists," Kelly observed, "I enjoy connecting historical dots and sharing the picture with others." He was drawn to the field of film archives by "a deep respect for creating order from chaos" and by "a love for learning



about history through moving images."

While his day-to-day tasks can be varied and wide-ranging, Kelly characterizes his overarching responsibilities as ensuring the

preservation of and improving access to the Society's moving image materials. Preservation entails the rehousing of reels in chemically neutral containers and the establishment of a dedicated, climate-controlled film archives space at MHS. Improving access involves the creation of a detailed and searchable inventory, the cataloging of moving image collections, and the digitization of the most historically significant items. Processing an archival film collection is nuanced and stimulating work, *Burton (cont. on p. 6)*

CHECK OUT NEW WEBSITE FROM MHS


Appropriate, Curious & Rare: A History of Montana Object by Object

<http://digitalvault.mhs.mt.gov/exhibits/show/appropriate>

Objects from the past comprise the heart and soul of the Montana Historical Society. Individually, these items provide fascinating glimpses into the lives of earlier generations of Montanans. Together, the stories told by the hundreds of thousands of items held by the Society intertwine to form a rich tapestry illustrating our shared history. This online exhibit features a select handful of the most “appropriate, curious, and rare” gems from the Society’s vast collections. While each item is uniquely outstanding in its own way, when considered together, these artifacts help us better understand who we as Montanans are collectively.

The website is part of MHS’s larger *Appropriate, Curious & Rare* project. Fifteen authors have conducted intensive research to write

essays illuminating the intriguing, and sometimes surprising, objects. Staff photographer Tom Ferris’s images capture the nuances of each artifact. A full-color, large-format book published by the Montana Historical Society Press will showcase the work.

Appropriate, Curious & Rare is supported by the Montana Cultural & Aesthetic Grant Program. 

Italian artist Cesare Lapini sculpted *Odalisca*—a classically styled tribute to odalisques (female slaves or concubines from the Ottoman Empire)—in the late nineteenth century. August Fack (1856–1917), art collector and proprietor of the upscale California Wine House in Helena, acquired the white marble statue circa 1900. After Prohibition, new owner Harvey Fister moved *Odalisca* to his nearby Harvey Hotel on North Main Street. When fire swept through the block in 1928, the statue fell through the floor and suffered damage. Though scorched by fire and missing pieces, she remains a romantic, dancing figure captured eternally in mid-step.



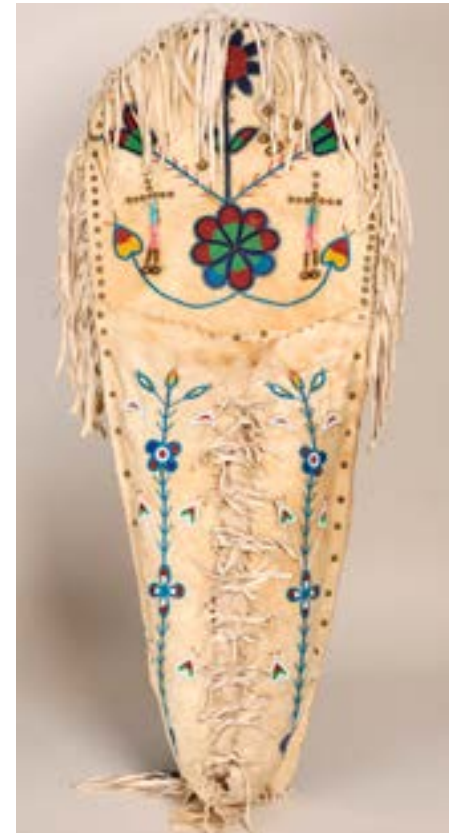
This enigmatic rock panel came from the Ellison Rock Formation near Colstrip. Before mining the area, the Western Energy Company removed a series of petroglyphs and donated this piece to the Montana Historical Society. Petroglyphic images of “shield-bearing warriors” like these have been found throughout the northern plains. Here, the central warrior stands with two smaller figures to his right. Another small figure, faintly visible to the left, seems to be unrelated to the other images. The date is unknown, but it is thought to have been created between 350 and 2,000 years ago.



At the 1956 Democratic National Convention, New York governor Averell Harriman hoped to gain support for his struggling presidential candidacy by gifting baseballs signed by each of his state’s three professional teams to the other governors in attendance. Harriman lost the nomination, but the baseballs, signed by legendary players like Jackie Robinson, Yogi Berra, Mickey Mantle, and Willie Mays, serve as unique reminders both of America’s national pastime and of Montana’s role in politics beyond the state’s borders.



One of a matched pair, this 1890s copper grotesque is emblematic of the grand, high-style architecture Helena and other Montana cities embraced in their attempts to “civilize” the formerly wild West. Originally perched on pedestals on either side of the Homer Block’s entryway, the twin grotesques recalled ancient mythical creatures, or chimeras, that once guarded temples and other buildings.



Montana’s indigenous women used cradleboards to carry their babies, enabling mothers to keep their arms free for other activities while ensuring the infants’ safety. This cradleboard, which dates from 1900 and is likely Shoshone, features soft white buckskin attached to a wooden plank with brass tacks. The floral design is made of glass seed beads, which, like the tubular beads on the fringe, are probably much older than the cradleboard itself.



Thousands of Chinese laborers were among the workers laying the railroad tracks connecting Montana to the rest of the nation in the early 1880s. This finely embroidered pouch was carried from China by a man named Ah Hei who was, presumably, one such railroad laborer. Although most Chinese who came to work on the railroad did not intend to stay in America, many, like Ah Hei, never returned to their homeland.



Faro, the most popular gambling game in the West during the nineteenth century, required a faro board, an abacus-like device known as a “casekeeper,” and a fifty-two-card deck. Although gambling was always opposed by many Montanans on moral grounds, it was not made illegal until passage of the state’s 1917 gambling laws. By 1920, when this faro board was seized in a raid on a Miles City saloon, the sale of alcohol had joined gambling as a strictly forbidden vice.



Amanda Perala Kraftenberg (c. 1882–1952) and her husband Fred homesteaded near Little Belt Creek in the Korpivaara (or “Wilderness Hill”) Finnish community in Cascade County. From 1916 until her death in 1952, Kraftenberg wove on this four-harness counterbalance loom, which was made by John “Jack” Veeda out of pine and willow harvested from the nearby Highwood Mountains.

Burton (cont. from p. 3) and Kelly notes that he finds himself “learning something new every single day.”

Kelly grew up in both the northeast corner of Texas and Salt Lake City and earned a BA in film studies from the University of Utah and a BA in English from the University of Washington. He then completed a master’s degree in history with an emphasis in archives and records management at Western Wash-

ington University. Prior to moving to Montana, Kelly spent eighteen years in Seattle working with a wide range of archival formats at the University of Washington Libraries, the King County Archives, and the Seattle Municipal Archives.

Kelly’s interest in the medium extends beyond the archives. He enjoys watching films in his spare time, has performed almost every conceivable job on a film set, and possesses a working knowl-

edge of video production and post-production.

As a member of the Society’s staff, he hopes to contribute to the ongoing work of preservation carried out across the state by other dedicated professionals and to make the relevance of MHS’s rich film collections known to researchers and the general public.

Funding for the film archivist position is made possible by the Greater Montana Foundation. 📷

MHS Celebrates Talented State Historical Preservation Office Employees

Montana’s chief information officer, Ron Baldwin of the State Information Technology Services Division (SITSD), acknowledged Damon Murdo, cultural records manager, and Michelle Phair, cultural records assistant, in “Recognition of Excellence Connecting Information and People.” Murdo and Phair earned this distinction for their contribution to a two-year collaborative effort to upgrade the SHPO cultural resource database, a project described by Baldwin as a “large and complex state data migration effort.”

The upgraded database features a searchable GIS map platform with information on over 59,000 recorded historic and archaeological sites as well as 37,500 reports of surveys and other place-based cultural resource studies in Montana.

It is used by SHPO for managing and sharing cultural resource information, particularly in consultations with agencies and applicants seeking to avoid unnecessary impacts from development projects under state and federal preservation laws.

Damon Murdo characterized the project as an effort to synchronize SHPO’s three primary data sets (tabular/GIS/digital) to make them accessible to staff and agency partners through one system. The biggest challenge was the data cleanup that had to occur prior to the migration to the new system, a process that took more than a year and a half. Once the data was prepped, designing and building a new online web application began.

In addition to improved functionality for users, the new system reduces costs by approximately

\$10,000 per year. Much of the most recent upgrade was made possible by an ongoing cost sharing agreement with the Montana Bureau of Land Management and a grant from the MICA Group’s Cultural Resource Fund.

“We at the Preservation Office are very proud of both Damon and Michelle for this well-deserved honor,” said SHPO program manager Mark Baumler. 📷



Share your photos and help identify Montana’s many significant historic places.



Become a #MTtimetraveler

Trips through Montana’s landscape also transport travelers through history. Whether encountering a sleek modernist edifice, hiking through Medicine Rocks State Park, or taking in a show at Anaconda’s Washoe Theater, there are opportunities to enjoy Montana’s heritage at every turn. Help us celebrate and identify memorable historic places by sharing your

own photograph of a meaningful Montana historic place. Your photo may be featured on MHS’s website. Submit photos through Instagram—#MTtimetraveler—or email them to mtshpo@mt.gov. Be sure to include the name of the photographer and the property. You can learn more by visiting <http://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/About/MTtimetraveler>. 📷

What’s New in the Museum Store?

The Museum Store now carries twenty remarkable art prints by acclaimed Blackfeet artist Gale Running Wolf Sr. Born and raised on the Blackfeet Reservation, Running



Prints by Blackfeet artist Gale Running Wolf Sr. are now available at the Museum Store.

Wolf creates artwork incorporating traditional images of Blackfeet lodges, warriors on horseback, and majestic mountains with bold contemporary colors, including his signature color “winter blue.” Each print is individually matted with a biography of the artist on the back. The larger prints are signed and numbered. Sizes range from 7" x 8" to 12" x 15" with prices between \$21.00 and \$43.00.

Young Men and Fire: Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition by Norman Maclean, with a new foreword by Timothy Egan.

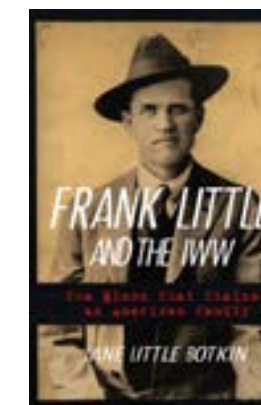
A devastating and lyrical work of nonfiction, *Young Men and Fire* describes the events of August 5, 1949, when a crew of fifteen of the U.S. Forest Service’s elite smokejumpers launched themselves above a remote fire. Two hours later, all but three were dead or mortally burned. Haunted by these deaths for forty years, Norman



Maclean put together the scattered pieces of the Mann Gulch tragedy in *Young Men and Fire*. 352 pp., hardcover \$26.00; softcover \$18.00; new audiobook on 8 CDs \$34.95

Frank Little and the IWW: The Blood That Stained an American Family by Jane Little Botkin.

Franklin Henry Little (1878–1917), an organizer for the Western Federation of Miners and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), fought in some of the early twentieth century’s most contentious labor and free-speech struggles. After Little was lynched in Butte in 1917, his life and legacy became shrouded in tragedy and family secrets. In *Frank Little and the IWW*, Jane Little Botkin chronicles her great-granduncle’s fascinating life and reveals its connections to the history of American labor and the first Red Scare. Hardcover, 512 pp., \$34.95



All of these new items and many more can be ordered online at <https://app.mt.gov/shop/mhsstore/> or by calling the Museum Store at (800) 243-9900. 📷

Bear with Us As We Improve

Over the past few months, MHS has been transitioning to a new information and magazine fulfillment system that allows us to merge important business systems and improve services for MHS members, patrons, and *Montana The Magazine of Western History* subscribers. Among the improvements you’ll see in coming months is an upgrade in email communications regarding MHS events, exhibits, and learning opportunities. The *Society Star* will be available in digital as well as paper format. You can decide how frequently you’d like to hear from us—weekly, monthly, or only when announcing special events.

Part of the transition has been a revamping of MHS’s membership mailing system. As with any major overhaul, there have been a few

glitches. You may have received a reminder letter announcing that your membership expired in a season rather than on a calendar date. Don’t worry, your membership lasts for 365 days, and you will still receive four issues of *Montana*. If your membership card does not properly reflect a renewal date, please contact us for a replacement.

If any of your personal information needs to be corrected or if you experience problems receiving your magazine, please email JFohn@mt.gov or (406) 444-2918.

We deeply appreciate your patience as we go through this transition. We’re looking forward to bringing you more of the highlights of the Montana Historical Society’s collections and research. 📷

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*We are
thankful for
our members!*



The solar eclipse on August 21, 2017, brought a few hundred eager viewers to the Montana Historical Society grounds. MHS staff arranged for one hundred pairs of "eclipse glasses," and the public was invited to join the party. Many sun worshippers showed up and excitedly shared their eye protection with one another. Once again, MHS provided a pleasant, safe, and fun place to gather to celebrate a historic event.