

Murdock Foundation Awards \$500,000 for Montana Heritage Center

The M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust recently awarded \$500,000 to the Montana Historical Society to help it preserve and promote the state's cultural heritage through the renovation and construction of the new Montana Heritage Center.

The funds will help MHS renovate its existing facility and construct a 64,000-square-foot addition.

"The Montana Historical Society plays a key role in preserving the history and culture of Montana. Organizations like MHS help educate and inspire children and families while simultaneously helping build and strengthen bonds of community. It is wonderful to see their growth as a result of successfully serving this mission, and we are grateful to play a small role as they expand to serve even more members of the Montana community," said Steve Moore, executive director, M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust.

The grant to MHS reflects Murdock Trust's continued investment in the Pacific Northwest, having contributed more than \$99 million to nonprofits serving communities in Montana and \$1.2 billion in the region overall since 1975. This includes \$3.3 million during the past decade for arts and culture organizations in Montana.

"This project has been more than fifteen years in the making, so we are thrilled to finally see it become a reality," said MHS Director Molly



Kruckenber. "This grant from the Murdock Charitable Trust ensures that MHS is able to continue promoting an understanding and appreciation of Montana's rich culture for generations to come."

Established in 1865, MHS is one of the oldest institutions of its kind

in the West. Since 1952, its home—and its vast collection of artifacts, photographs, and documents—has been in the Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building in Helena. The society has outgrown the building, and the building needs some

Murdock Foundation (cont. on p. 2)

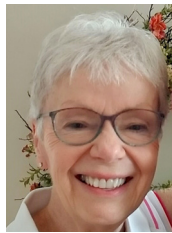
Reconnecting

In August we celebrated the release of *A History of Montana in 101 Objects* with a gathering of our friends on the front lawn of the MHS building. While we were recognizing the publication of this exhibit in book form, we also were celebrating that we were together. The event was the first time in more than a year that we welcomed our members and friends to an in-person event. It was great to reconnect with everyone.

Through these many months of COVID—quarantining, social distancing, and meeting virtually—we've missed gathering with all of you. As history enthusiasts, we enjoy sharing the stories that we've learned and studied with one another. To not be able to discuss new books and new research in Montana history has been difficult, and we're excited about reconnecting with fellow history enthusiasts to share our love of the past. I hope that you will join us at one of the many upcoming public programs to refresh our connections. We'll provide masks, hand sanitizer, and opportunities for social distancing at these gatherings.

We thoroughly enjoy reconnecting, but we also enjoy adding new friends to the MHS family. In July we welcomed three new trustees to our Board of Trustees.

Carol Donaldson was born and raised in Havre. She graduated



from Concordia College in 1977 and University of Montana School of Law in 1990. Carol practiced law before settling in the banking industry with First Interstate Bank. She retired in 2016 and resides in Kalispell, where she also serves on the Logan Health Foundation Board.

Lorna Kuney attended Billings



High School and Montana State University. She was instrumental in building convention hotels in Montana

and now owns Special Projects, a consulting and bookkeeping company. Lorna lives in Helena and serves as governor of the Best Western International Board of Directors and chapter manager of the American Red Cross for Lewis and Clark County.

Jay Russell has been employed with several museums in the field of development, including the C.M. Russell Museum. He was the first executive direc-



tor of the Montana Historical Society Foundation, later the Montana History Foundation. He recently retired as the executive director for the Lewis & Clark Foundation and lives in Great Falls.

Welcoming and building connections with new trustees means that we are saying farewell, although not good-bye, to trustees as well. Bob Brown, Tom Nygard, and Crystal Shors diligently served MHS for many years, promoting and advocating for Montana history. We are thankful for their hard work and dedication to saving Montana's past.

We wish our departing trustees the best and look forward to reconnecting with them at our events throughout the fall and winter. We hope to reconnect with you as well! 🌟

Murdock Foundation (cont. from p. 1)

mechanical updates.

The Heritage Center project is receiving \$42.2 million from the statewide accommodations tax, paid by those who rent hotel rooms or other accommodations in the state, with an additional \$10 million raised by MHS plus a \$5 million bond. MHS is creating new interactive public areas, an additional

collections space, a common area connecting to a café, a gift shop and event center, reconfigured galleries, and enhanced workspaces for staff. It is set to open in 2024.

The Murdock Trust, created by the will of the late [Melvin J. \(Jack\) Murdock](#), provides grants to organizations in five states of the Pacific Northwest—Alaska,

Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington—that seek to strengthen the region's educational, spiritual, and cultural base in creative and sustainable ways. [Since its inception in 1975, the trust has awarded more than 7,500 grants totaling more than \\$1.2 billion.](#) For more information, find the Murdock Trust [on its website](#) 🌟

101 Objects Book Released

Stories of Montana's history come alive in a new book: *A History of Montana in 101 Objects: Essays from the Montana Historical Society*.

Published by the Montana Historical Society Press, *A History of Montana in 101 Objects* showcases the remarkable collection of artifacts preserved at the Montana Historical Society. Since 1865, MHS has pursued its mission to collect and protect items of significance to Montana's past for the pleasure and education of residents and visitors. This assemblage of objects and interpretive essays draws attention to the diversity of experiences—the triumphs and the sorrows, the everyday struggles and joys—that made Montana.

Take, for example, a 1908 electric bathrobe. Once the height of technology and luxury, this electrified bath coat was manufactured by General Electric and belonged to wealthy businessman and Helena resident Thomas Cruse (1834–1914). The electro-thermo coat symbolizes the opulence and eccentricity of one of Montana's most prominent figures.

Cruse was an Irish immigrant who struck it rich as a gold miner in the small town of Marysville. He married in 1886 in an event heralded by the *New York Times* as “the most brilliant of its kind ever held in Montana.” But his happiness was short lived, as his beloved wife died after giving birth to their only child only ten months after the wedding.

His daughter grew up in protective isolation, with her domineering father fearing she would be a target for kidnappers. She eventually left home, and after a string of marriages and estrangements was found in a roadhouse outside Butte in 1913, quite ill and apparently addicted to alcohol. She



Kirby Lambert, the MHS Education and Outreach program director, introducing some of the 21 authors of the 101 Objects book at the book release party Aug. 26 at MHS.

died at the age of twenty-seven.

Heartbroken, Cruse turned to religious devotion and sank money into the development of St. Helena Cathedral. His was the first funeral mass held there.

Cruse's story is just one in this lavishly illustrated, full-color book that showcases the remarkable collection of artifacts preserved at MHS. The short stories accompanying the photographs come from twenty-one various authors.

“This book has been in the making for some time, since it was difficult to narrow to 101 the many objects in our collections to be included in *A History of Montana in 101 Objects*,” said MHS Director Molly Kruckenberg. “The book, in honor of our remarkable history, is definitely worth celebrating.”

A Farcountry Press companion publication, *Montana History for Kids in 50 Objects: With 50 Fun Activities!* helps even the youngest citizens understand that historical objects are key pieces of Montana's past. Written by Steph Lehmann, this delightful guide also offers fifty fun activities for children.



Both books are available at the Historical Society, 225 North Roberts in Helena, or online at <https://app.mt.gov/shop/mhsstore/>. 🌟

PBS Finding Your Roots Discovers MHS

A crew from the PBS show *Finding Your Roots* spent August 16 roaming the halls of the Montana Historical Society Research Center, shooting “B-roll” footage for the popular series.

B-roll refers to secondary footage to the main images, typically used for visual effects while the narrator is speaking. Lead genealogist Nick Sheedy, who grew up in Bigfork and lives in Columbia Falls, said they’re looking for visually interesting items, but they won’t typically be identified as coming from a specific location.

“Basically, we want to give everyone an idea of genealogical research and that it’s not easy to do,” producer Claire Hoffert added. “But every record we find for people is very meaningful. We want to share the idea that there’s a vast treasure trove of archived information.”

Research Center director Roberta Gebhardt showed the three-person PBS crew the wide range of materials that are available to people delving into history, even though that meant taking



Roberta Gebhardt is taped by PBS Cinematographer Stephen McCarthy as she shows him documents from the MHS collections. PBS Producer Claire Hoffert is overseeing the filming.

them into areas typically off-limits to the public.

Sheedy said they loved all the “nooks and crannies” where items are stored at MHS. The B-roll footage will be used during season eight and nine, with season eight

starting in January 2022.

“This isn’t for someone we’re researching who is from Montana, but just genealogical research in general,” Sheedy said. “They’re short clips to say we go into archives to find whatever we can.” 🌟

MHS Celebrates 100-Year-Old Farms/Ranches

The Montana Historical Society’s Outreach and Education department is delighted to announce the release of yet another book, *Montana’s Centennial Farms and Ranches, Volume I: 2010–2020*.

The softcover book celebrates the forty-two centennial farms and ranches listed in Montana’s Centennial Farm and Ranch register since the program began.

The stories paint varied pictures of the Treasure State’s agricultural growth and development during the past 150 years. They also represent every era of our state’s agricultural history, from

the territorial days of open-range cattle ranching to homesteaders with hand plows, on up to today’s closely managed ranges and highly automated planting and harvesting systems.

“Their stories give a snapshot of Montana’s immigrant heritage, changing economy, labor and transportation heritage, and community development,” said author Christine Brown. “While each family’s centennial story is similar on the surface, each one offers a different view that spotlights a singular aspect of Montana’s agricultural history.”

Softcover copies are available

for \$12 from the MHS Store or online at <https://app.mt.gov/shop/mhsstore>. 🌟

About Us

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New Faces at MHS

Katelyn Peat

Katelyn Peat is a new Montana Historical Society security officer, sharing a ready smile and southern charm with visitors.

She moved to Helena about nine months ago from New Orleans, where Peat was working at the Louisiana Art & Science Museum as the visitor services and reservations coordinator. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, the museum closed and laid off all its employees. Peat decided to take that opportunity to move to Montana to explore a part of the country she previously fell in love with during a couple visits. The transition had its challenging points—like learning to drive in the snow—but Peat said it's been an exciting adventure!

Peat wants to help the Montana Historical Society facilitate programs that will be interesting and engaging, whether in person or virtually. She combines an enthusiasm for art, history, and culture with her experience in



Katelyn Peat

the museum world to help ensure that Montana's rich history is preserved for future generations.

"My favorite part about working at the Montana Historical Society is when I see a spark of excitement in a child's eyes," Peat said. "MHS has a way of bringing art and history to life. Students and visitors can see 'Big Medicine,' an authentic white bison; come face-to-face with a wolf in the Wolf



Monica Latham

Den; gaze at the stars in the Vision Quest; and learn through play in our hands-on gallery. We make learning engaging and fun, while inspiring curiosity and interest in art, history, and the world."

Monica Latham

Helena native Monica Latham is the new accounting technician at the Montana Historical Society. She replaces Lori Ereth, who is

New Faces (cont. on p. 6)

Two Historic Properties Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

Two properties recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places have been accepted by the National Park Service (NPS).

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation. Using specific program criteria and procedures, the Montana Historical Society's Preservation Office (SHPO) and the State Historic Preservation Review Board evaluate and recommend nominations of eligible Montana places to NPS for inclusion in the register.

The Billings Communal Mausoleum, also known as Mountview or Landmarks Mausoleum, was designed by

prominent Montana architect John Gustave Link and placed in operation in 1922. The 330-crypt mausoleum was the state's first, and is one of only three known community mausoleums built in Montana during the earlier twentieth century. The mausoleum's construction and architecture are typical of the national Community Mausoleum Movement, when traditional burial practices shifted away from churchyards and private family graveyards and toward burials in landscaped public cemeteries. It is now listed in the National Register.

Shaw's Best Factory in Helena was designed by the local architectural firm of Neuhausen and Williams. The two-story American

Foursquare building's first function was to house businessman George W. Shaw's horse team and conveyance, as living quarters for a hired hand, and for feed storage. Circa 1893, Shaw converted the two-story carriage house to a home industry for the manufacture of baking powder and pancake flour. The family business manufactured goods in the building through 1918, when the company closed and the building returned to use as a garage. The building is in excellent condition and retains its 1890 footprint and 1893 appearance. Almost all the manufacturing equipment remains intact on the interior. It is now listed in the National Register. 🌟

In Memory of Our Friends



G.B. Carson

G.B. Carson

The Montana Historical Society staff were saddened to learn of the passing of G.B. Carson, a longtime supporter of MHS, who died peacefully at home on July 29, 2021.

Born and raised in Helena, he graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in the History of Art program. He had a long career as an art consultant and art appraiser in San Francisco and Berkeley. Two decades ago, he began dividing his time between California and Montana. He built a home overlooking the Missouri

River near Townsend, where his lifelong passion for bird hunting continued. He was honored to have served on the Montana Arts Council and was part of the committee that selected the artist for the Montana Women's Mural in the state capitol.

G.B. is survived by his mother, P.M. Dagenais of Helena, daughter Miranda Carson of Berkeley, wife Catherine Courtenaye of Bozeman, and French Brittany pup Jasper.

Gifts in his memory may be given to the Montana Historical Society, Planned Parenthood of Montana, or the ACLU of Montana.

Deanna List

Deanna List, a longtime supporter of the Montana Historical Society and Western Rendezvous of Art, passed away July 6, 2021.

Deanna was born August 30, 1937, in Maine. She married William Dawson List in 1959, and they had three children. The couple moved to Helena in the early 1970s and lived in their "forever" home in Grizzly Gulch.

"Dee was a lovely woman with a generous spirit and an impeccable eye for fine art. She welcomed everyone who visited her and



Deanna List

Dawson at their wonderful home on Grizzly Gulch. She is greatly missed by all of her many friends, including myself," said Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney, museum manager.

Memorials may be made to the Holter Museum of Art, the Archie Bray Foundation, the Montana Historical Society, or the Helena Civic Center. A graveside service and reception was held in early August. The full obituary can be accessed online at <https://legacy.co/2UUkaSc>. ⚡

New Faces (cont. from p. 5)

retiring.

Latham began her accounting career at the Department of Environmental Quality in 2020 after earning degrees from Helena College and Montana Tech. She also attended schools in Boston and Hawaii.

Protecting Montana's environment, culture, and heritage are values Monica shares with both DEQ and MHS.

"I'm excited to continue my accounting career at the Montana

Historical Society," she said. "I enjoy working in a smaller agency than DEQ, as well as exploring the amazing programs at the Historical Society."

While obtaining her degree, Latham worked at the Helena College for the TRIO Student Support Services program. TRIO provides support to first-generation disadvantaged students to help them succeed in school. She currently serves as a board member on the Helena College

Foundation, which raises money to support the mission of Helena College through student scholarships and program support.

She enjoys hiking, biking, skiing, and any water sport. Mount Helena, Mount Ascension, and Trout Creek are her local go-to hikes, and Double Falls, near Augusta, is her favorite hike. Latham recently biked the Hiawatha Trail in Idaho.

Her favorite animal is a manatee. ⚡

The MHS Museum Store: More than a Bookstore

Our Museum Store staff has been working hard this year to expand the selection of gifts and other items in the store!

Stop in to see our new assortment of Made in Montana items—Montana T-shirts, caps, bandanas, water bottles, stickers, beer glasses, coffee, cookie cutters, magnetic notepads, candles, lotions, kitchen towels, salad servers, tote bags, and more. You're sure to find the perfect gift or that special Montana souvenir.

We also have some hard-to-find items like rainbow fire sticks and surprise balls (with prizes inside) for children. Other items worth checking out are the Montana buffalo-hide wallets and coin purses, leather beverage cozies, metal flasks, and Montana fly-fishing wallets. We have new sterling silver jewelry with Montana agates and sapphires, as well as handmade pendants and ear-



rings, plus antique coin jewelry.

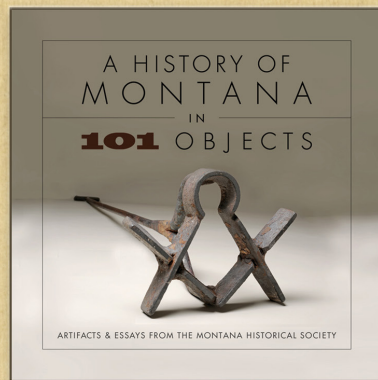
One new vendor we are excited about is Raeann Nilan from Livingston, who is providing her line of modern porcelain pieces, including platters, bowls, plates, vases, and earrings with stunning designs of flowers, lace, and ginkgo leaves! And remember, MHS members receive a

15 percent discount on most books and gift items in the store.

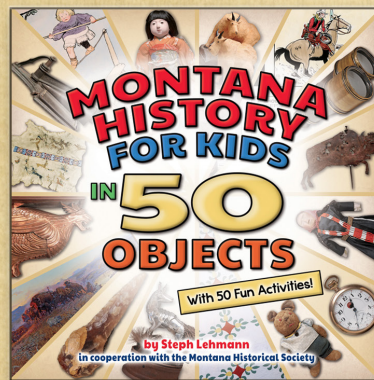
Come by today, shop online, or call Rod or Dianna at 406/444-2890 to place an order. We'd love to see you! MHS members: Look for our new Museum Store flyer in your mailbox in September and keep it handy for holiday shopping. 🌟

MONTANA HISTORY'S NEW DYNAMIC DUO

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Daniel Mulhall, Irish ambassador to the United States, visited the Montana Historical Society recently to learn more about its collection of Thomas Meagher memorabilia.

Clockwise, starting at the left corner of the photo:
Mike O'Connor, Thomas Francis Meagher Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Ireland Ambassador Daniel Mulhall, former Gov. Steve Bullock, MHS Director Molly Kruckenberg, MHS Library Manager Laura Tretter, former Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney