

Celebrate Our First 150 Years with a New Facility Worthy of Montana

The reason that one of the finest museums in the country is emerging here (and the reason that this Society as a whole is going full blast) is that we simply can't believe that full support won't be forthcoming.

—MHS director K. ROSS TOOLE in 1954

Many things have come and gone in the last 150 years, and throughout it all your Montana Historical Society has preserved, protected, and interpreted the history of this great land and all of its people.

We are excited to celebrate with you our 150th birthday next year. MHS was created by the Territorial Legislature in Bannack on February 2, 1865, and held its first meeting that February 25, with Montanans already excited about their history.

We are equally excited to start off MHS's next 150 years with the planned Montana Heritage Center as the new—and much needed—home for Montana history.

As you receive this issue of the *Society Star*, the Montana Legislature is preparing for its next session to begin in January. Now is the time to tell your community, your state, and your lawmakers why you think the planned Montana Heritage Center is needed and why you support it.

As the MHS staff travels the state holding workshops, working on historic preservation, gathering people together for the Montana History Conference as we did

last year in Sidney, and providing other services, people tell us they know a new facility would help us better serve all of Montana.

Local teachers, museum volunteers, records keepers, preservationists, community planners, librarians, and others are aware of MHS outreach statewide. Some people know only about the great museum MHS has.

MHS members are in a unique position to let people all across the state know the importance of Montana history and that the *150th birthday* (cont. on p. 4)



Hank Armstrong (center) is believed to be the longest continuous member of the Montana Historical Society. Hank became a member in 1953 just after the current Montana Historical Society building was completed. At eighty-seven he is still going strong and is pictured here at Old Fort Benton with artist Dave Parchen (left) and Sharalee Smith, both members of the Fort Committee of the River and Plains Society. As one of the original fundraisers for what is now the Montana Agriculture Museum of the Northern Great Plains in Fort Benton, Armstrong says time has taught him that history and places to collect, preserve, and exhibit it are important for the future as well as the past. For the full story on Armstrong, see page 5.

MHS Over Halfway to Completing Crow Indian Photograph Acquisition

Bud Lake and Randy Brewer spent more than thirty years collecting nearly 2,800 vintage photographs of the Crow Tribe and its people. They have offered this unparalleled collection to MHS for \$209,675—a sum that MHS is working to raise.

The photographs depict dress, food, dance, ceremonies, encampments, and many other aspects of Crow culture. The two men are also offering census records, court

cases, biographical information, and other documents, which make the collection even more valuable to the MHS Research Center.

Lake and Brewer based the price of the collection on what it cost them to buy the items individually over the years. MHS Research Center manager Molly Kruckenberg said that if offered on the open market, the collection would

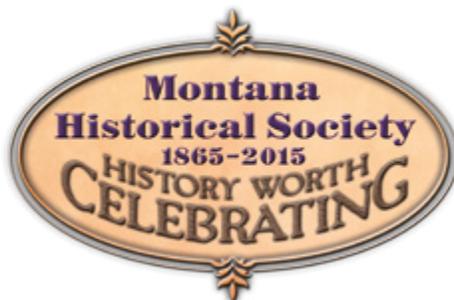
Acquisition (cont. on p. 4)

MHS at 150... History Worth Celebrating BY BRUCE WHITTENBERG

On February 2, 1865, just eight months after President Lincoln signed the bill that designated Montana Territory, the visionary leaders of the Territorial Legislature chartered the Historical Society of Montana. As history was being made, as dramatic change was coming to the new territory, as the quest for gold was driving the rush to the West, our founding fathers recognized the need to collect and organize the stories and lessons of their time for future generations.

That vision and the upcoming anniversary are at the top of our minds at the Montana Historical Society. The mission remains as important as it was 150 years ago. The Society's collections have grown continuously for 150 years. Efforts to provide access to the documents, photographs, artifacts, and art are ongoing. Not only do we welcome you to access these collections by visiting Montana's Museum and the MHS Research Center, we do our best to push content out to schools, libraries, museums, and communities throughout Montana. The educational programs, public presentations, publications, consultation, and sharing of collections are remarkable. The professionals at the Montana Historical Society are ambassadors for the young, yet rich, history of Montana.

Over the next several months, we will celebrate the anniversary of the Montana Historical Society,



but more importantly, the people and events that have created this place. It's truly a history worth celebrating. We are thankful for the support of MHS members, and we ask you to join us in expanding the work of the Montana Historical Society. We will once again be

asking our Montana Legislature to enhance access and outreach by funding the Montana Heritage Center.

As we approach February 2, 2015, let's reflect together on what a remarkable institution was signed into existence 150 years ago and the important work that goes on as we record history every day. Montana is a special place. We're proud of our place, proud of our history, and proud of our Montana Historical Society. Like our state, the history of the Montana Historical Society is truly History Worth Celebrating. 🇺🇸

SOMETHING NEW SOMETHING OLD: TREASURES FROM THE SOCIETY COLLECTION

What's in a Name?

William Ashton spent years compiling detailed information on the origins of the names of Montana cities, towns, and geographical features. That information fills ten one-foot-long file boxes with 3 x 5 inch cards.

Five of the boxes contain information about towns, and five are filled with information about geographical features and locations. The cards contain information on current and past town sites, post offices, and railroad stations, as well as bodies of water, mountain ranges, and many other place names.

Ashton was planning to write a book on these places in partnership with Dennis Lutz, but never completed it. Ashton's daughter Lois Hughes, a longtime volunteer in the MHS Photograph Archives, donated the collection and the 240-page unpublished manuscript to MHS.

The valuable collection will be



available to researchers in the MHS Research Center once it is processed. What's in a name? You can find out for yourself at MHS. 🇺🇸

About Us

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

- ✔ MHS Director: Bruce Whittenberg
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MHS Capitol Tour: Art, Architecture, and History

Many people travel to Helena during the fall and winter season, especially during a legislative session.

Politics aside, there are many beautiful things to see under the dome of the State Capitol in Helena. The dome is crowned with a seventeen-foot-high personification of liberty titled appropriately and simply as *Montana*.

She wears a liberty cap to symbolize freedom and holds three other classical symbols: a shield to represent the United States, a laurel wreath to symbolize victory, and a torch to light the people's way.

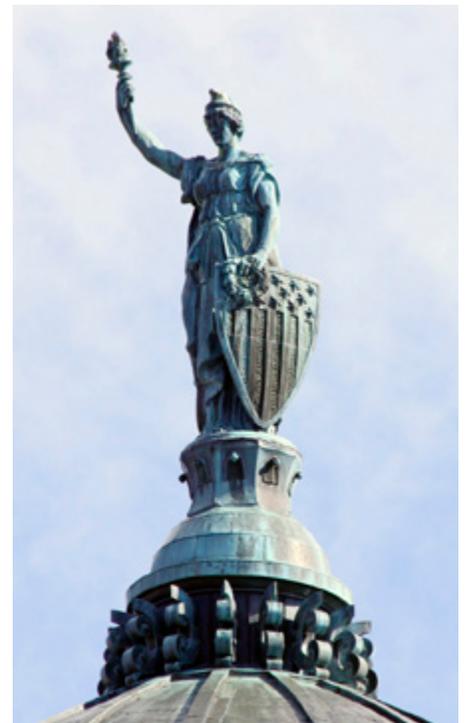
The capitol building was renovated a few years ago and restored to its original grandeur. It is acknowledged as one of the best capitols in the nation, particularly

because its artwork draws heavily on Montana themes and Montana artists.

The finest example of that is Charlie Russell's magnificent mural, *Lewis and Clark Meeting Indians at Ross' Hole*, at the front of the House Chamber.

The Montana Historical Society capitol tour guides love to answer questions and have fun with those on the tour. You don't really appreciate Montana's People's House until you take a tour and learn the stories behind the artwork and design.

Tours during the session are Monday through Saturday on the hour from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M. In non-legislative years, the tours are Saturdays only. The tours are free. Call (406) 444-4789 for more information. 🇺🇸



Montana stands proudly at the top of the Capitol dome.

SOCIETY STAR PROFILE

Rose Mary Mason Leads the Charge for MHS Volunteers

Ideas and enthusiasm spring from Rose Mary Mason as she talks about her new job as president of the Friends of the Montana Historical Society.

"I love all of the volunteers at the Montana Historical Society and its staff, and we all love Montana history," she said. "For me, being a volunteer makes me feel like I am of value and that I can learn new things. It has regenerated me and made me feel good."

As newly elected leader of the 130-member volunteer group, Mason comes to the job after a thirty-three-year career with the U.S. Postal Service. She was the first woman to be hired in Burbank as a letter carrier in 1969, and she loves a challenge.

"Rose Mary is never afraid to

jump into the unknown, learn new tasks, and push herself out of her comfort zone," MHS volunteer coordinator Katie White said.

The volunteers provide the equivalent of nearly three full-

time workers at MHS each year. They do a wide range of tasks from providing tours, to hosting and serving at special events, to working with artifacts. Their service and dedication are an invaluable asset to MHS, White said.

Loyalty is an important word to Mason. "I think the reason we have so many great volunteers is loyalty," she said. "It is a concern about the history of Montana and a desire to help the staff make this a success and a source of pride for Montanans."

Her husband was a U.S. Marine, and her daughter still serves in the Guard. Mason said one of the things she wants to do is encourage those who retire from the military to take on a new challenge by becoming MHS volunteers. 🇺🇸



Rose Mary Mason and Katie White appreciate Montana history.

150th birthday (cont. from p. 1)

Montana Historical Society serves them, too.

When MHS director K. Ross Toole traveled the state in the early 1950s talking about the need for a new building, he said support must go beyond “the people who bring their friends here and keep patting us on the back and telling us what splendid work we are doing.”

“Montana needs this museum, the research library, the Russell Gallery, the Gallery of Western Art, the Gallery of Fine Art, and *Montana The Magazine of Western History*. And it is good business—good in terms of tourist dollars and educational content,” Toole said. Today you can add the State Historic Preservation Office, Outreach and Interpretation, and the MHS Press to the list of what MHS offers the public.

History doesn’t stop. The current MHS building that Toole saw



This architect concept of the planned Montana Heritage Center just east of the State Capitol shows a welcoming place for those who want to learn more about Montana.

The existing MHS building would be linked to the new building by a grand concourse under Sixth Avenue, creating a gracious space worthy of Montana’s heritage.

opened in 1952 is cramped and crowded, and more state records, artifacts, collections, and other emerging needs like educational space and modern research facilities continue to put pressure on it.

History is a reminder that we have to keep moving forward. In 1976, an article in the *Great Falls Tribune* was headlined: “Museum

has everything but space.” The paper said, “The [Montana Historical] Society has been collecting items since it was founded more than 100 years ago and by now its storerooms and archives are close to bursting at the seams.”

Since then all that could be done to meet those space needs has been done in the existing building. Montana’s history and memory deserves and needs a new facility.

Many private sector donors have already stepped up with pledges and donations for the new Montana Heritage Center. But they want to see state government step forward and approve state funds to show it is committed to the project and that it will be completed.

It will take all of the voices of those who cherish Montana history and heritage to provide a new home for the Montana Historical Society as it begins its next 150 years. 🇺🇸

Acquisition (cont. from p. 1)

sell for far more than what Lake and Brewer are asking.

Lake and Brewer offered the collection to MHS because they want it to be kept in Montana and because of the reputation of MHS’s archives. Lake said, “Our photograph collection will be expertly cared for by the extremely knowledgeable staff and made available to those with interest similar to our own.”

Crow tribal preservation officer Emerson Bull Chief said his tribal office and Little Big Horn College support the acquisition of the collection by MHS. “Opportunities for collaboration between the MHS and the Crow Tribe abound with this project and we look forward to working together,” he said.

Once acquired, Kruckenberg said the photographs and related documents will be an invaluable

resource. “[The collection] captures a really pivotal moment of change from traditional to reservation life for the Crow Indians,” she said.

So far MHS has raised \$120,000 toward the acquisition and needs just \$89,675 more. An anonymous donor has pledged a challenge grant of \$50,000 toward the purchase on condition that it is matched by new donations.

If you or your organization are interested in helping meet the matching challenge, which is tax deductible, contact MHS development officer Susan Near at (406) 444-4713 or email snear@mt.gov for more information. You can make a donation online at <https://app.mt.mt.gov/mhsdonations> or send a check earmarked for the “Crow Photograph Collection” to MHS, PO Box 201201, Helena, MT 59620-1201 🇺🇸



Plenty Coos (sic), Chief of Crow Indians, O. S. Groff, photographer, n.d.

Hank Armstrong: Inspiration to MHS and Montana History

The mere mention of Henry “Hank” Armstrong’s name at MHS generates a torrent of praise.

For one thing, he is believed to be the longest active member of the Montana Historical Society—maintaining his membership continuously since 1953.

At eighty-seven, Armstrong still lives on the homestead of his grandparents near Geraldine. The house has been added on to over the years, but it remains a Montana treasure and is a centennial homestead site.

“Hank Armstrong is a treasure. He has written several national register nominations, several books, and is an expert on Evelyn Cameron and everything Central Montana—especially the Geraldine/Square Butte area. He is a historian, geologist, and all-around smart, generous soul,” MHS state historic preservation officer Kate Hampton said.

Those kinds of accolades come from every MHS program. Armstrong downplays his achievements with his familiar quick wit. “I have always had an interest in history from the time I was in high school,” he said. “It was one of the two things I could get an A in,” he added. The other was art.

Armstrong was one of the fundraisers and supporters of the Montana Agriculture Museum of the Northern Great Plains in Fort Benton. One of his great friends, historian Ken Robison, said that Armstrong remains very active at the museum.

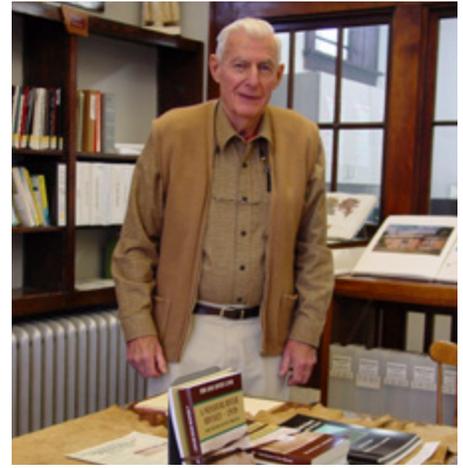
“Whether Hank was a better farmer than historian can be debated. Let’s just say Hank Armstrong was great at both. And Montana is the better for it,” Robison said.

When MHS curator emeritus

Bob Morgan was painting large murals at the Fort Benton museum, he got a little help from Hank and his other A in art. Armstrong remembered, “He did a terrific job. But he was painting one of Square Butte and Round Butte. I had to tell him, ‘Bob you’ve got them turned around.’ Within twenty minutes he got it fixed up.”

Armstrong’s books include *Steele: On the Road to Judith Basin and Beyond*, *Set in Stone: The Square Butte Granite Quarry*, *The Camerons—Evelyn and Ewen—Birding in Central Montana*, and *A Missouri River Odyssey: 1939 Fort Benton to New Orleans*.

Historic preservation brings out the passion in Armstrong. “I sure try to make people understand the reason for historic preservation.



Hank Armstrong is at home whether on a tractor or in an office working on Montana history.

It is important to take a look at history before you destroy something. There have been too many good historic things destroyed without any thought at all,” he said.

Thanks to Hank, a whole lot of Montana history has been saved. 🇺🇸

Historic Properties Added to National Register

MHS’s State Historic Preservation Office was hard at work from June to September working with local groups and individuals to add five important properties statewide to the National Register of Historic Places. The properties are:

■ **St. Wenceslaus Church in Danvers:**

The significance of the church is its history as the social center of the small Czech community, beginning with its construction in 1916.

■ **The Red Lodge–Cooke City Approach Road Historic District (Beartooth Highway):**

The road, constructed in 1931, is an excellent example of the relationship between the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) and federal land managing agencies.

■ **Camus Creek Cutoff Road:**

Constructed between 1960 and 1967, the Camas Road in Glacier National Park is a unique example

of National Park Service Mission 66 planning, and is an exceptionally well-preserved example of the design philosophies of the Bureau of Public Roads.

■ **The Milwaukee Road Railroad**

Substation No. 10: The building represents the Milwaukee Road’s electrification of its line between Harlowton, Montana, and Avery, Idaho, in 1915. The electrification made the rail line one of the most technologically advanced in the United States.

■ **MacDonald Pass Airway Beacon:**

The beacon represents aviation history, particularly the safe navigation of small aircraft across western Montana since 1935. It functioned as one of the Northern Transcontinental Airway’s eighteen beacons strung across Montana and guided airplanes over the Continental Divide west of Helena. 🇺🇸

MHS Looks to Future with Help and Example of Greater Montana Foundation

The Greater Montana Foundation has provided more than \$600,000 to the Montana Historical Society. The funds are earmarked for the construction of the Montana Heritage Center and for other projects to carry state history proudly into MHS's next 150 years.

"As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Montana Historical Society, our partnership with the Greater Montana Foundation is based on the shared belief that Montana deserves a new Heritage Center worthy of the history of Montana and the people who have gone before us. We also share a belief that technology is a key to telling the story of Montana to ever expanding and changing audiences," MHS director Bruce Whittenberg said.

The Greater Montana Foundation was created by pioneering Montana broadcaster Ed Craney, whose vision is reflected in its mission statement: "The Greater Montana Foundation benefits the people of Montana by encouraging communication, with an emphasis on electronic media, on issues, trends and values of importance to present and future generations of Montanans."

Randy Morger, Greater Montana Foundation chairman, said his organization's support "recognizes the vital role of the Montana Historical Society in capturing and fostering our state's history—the bedrock of many of the issues and trends important to our citizens."

In addition to contributing to the planned Montana Heritage Center as a new home for the Montana Historical Society, the foundation has funded many projects already completed that will be an important part of the new facility—including the Craney Studio,

which features state-of-the-art equipment to record, edit, and produce videos.

As a result, the Montana Historical Society has more than one hundred programs available on its YouTube channel. Viewers can find them by visiting www.montanahistoricalsociety.org and then clicking the YouTube icon.

"With strong partners like the Greater Montana Foundation, we believe that the new Montana

Heritage Center will receive the funding necessary to complete the project. We thank the foundation for their leadership and example in getting that job done," Whittenberg said.

"The new Heritage Center will be a wellspring for programs and historical interpretation that touch every Montanan," Morger said. "It's a top priority that the GMF Board is proud to enthusiastically support." 🌟

Sue Hart Brought People Together with the Stories of Montana

Sue Hart was a teacher who taught us about Montana through the literature that she adored.

The longtime Montana State University–Billings English professor died at seventy-eight on August 26, leaving behind a legacy of people enriched by her passion for Montana.

Former MHS Board of Trustees member and Montana State

University history professor Mary Murphy said that Hart had an "endless commitment" to bringing the untold stories of Montana women to new audiences.

"At a (MHS) Montana History Conference in Helena, Sue talked about some of the historic women we know well, like Nannie Alderson, and those lesser known, like the poet Gwendolyn Haste, both of whom wrote about eastern Montana," Murphy said. "Sue had studied their works for years, but reading them still brought tears to her eyes, and her empathy evoked tears in the audience."

Hart was a great friend of MHS, presenting many programs over the years related to Montana history as well as providing her insight and skills to MHS Press books and magazine articles.

In 2003 Hart was presented the Montana Governor's Humanities Award for her lifelong achievements.

"You left her company knowing more about whatever topic had come up, and wishing mightily that the encounter didn't have to come to an end," Murphy said. 🌟



Sue Hart (center) in 2003 when she received the Montana Governor's Humanities Award. At left is Humanities board member Barbara Archer and at right is fellow award winner Diana Eck.

MHS Assists in Creation of Montana Outdoor Hall of Fame

A diverse group of Montana state agencies and conservation organizations recently established the Montana Outdoor Hall of Fame to honor individuals who have contributed to the restoration and conservation of Montana's fish, wildlife, and other outdoor amenities.

Participants in the effort include the Montana Historical Society; Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks; Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation; the Montana Wildlife Federation; the Montana Wilderness Association; Montana Trout Unlimited; and the Cinnabar Foundation. Efforts to include tribal representation are underway. MHS director Bruce Whittenberg is on the MOHF Steering Committee, and the MHS Research Center has offered support from the archives and photograph archives. Roberta Jones-Wallace of Montana's Museum

designed the official award, which is based on the iconic work of C. M. Russell, *When The Land Belonged to God*.

"Today's treasured wild nature was restored from what was once the wildlife bone-yard of nineteenth-century America," said Jim Posewitz, who led the effort to create the Montana Outdoor Hall of Fame.

In a recent letter commending the group's effort, Governor Steve Bullock noted that creating a Montana Outdoor Hall of Fame "is a good way to begin capturing and teaching the personal stories that made these treasures of our state happen."

An event to announce the first class of twelve Hall of Fame inductees is scheduled for December 6, 2014, in Helena.

For more information, visit www.mtoutdoorlegacy.org. ☺

Montana's Charlie Russell: New MHS Book Rounds Up Russell's Art

Since 1952, when the family of Charlie Russell's friend and patron Malcolm Mackay donated his collection of Russell masterpieces to MHS and the people of Montana, MHS staff members have dreamed

of publishing a comprehensive book of all of Russell's artwork in the MHS collection.

Fulfilling that dream, MHS's Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney and Kirby Lambert have coauthored *Montana's Charlie Russell: Art in the Collection of the Montana Historical Society*.

The new book not only beautifully shows all of Russell's art in the collection, but also describes the talent, mastery, technique, and stories behind the art.

The authors were aided by many Russell experts including Society curator emeritus Robert Morgan. Morgan has wanted to see the Russell collection cataloged for

FIRST DOOR ON THE LEFT

A Challenge to Take

BY REBECCA BAUMANN,
MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

How can you say "thank you" to the thousands of Montana Historical Society members that have gone before you and made MHS the home of Montana history and heritage that we all cherish today?

As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of MHS, I challenge you to sign up a new member to increase our growing ranks.

You know why MHS is important to you and the many benefits you receive for being a member. I will be happy to work with you to sign up that new member. You can also give a gift of membership to someone you know during the next year.

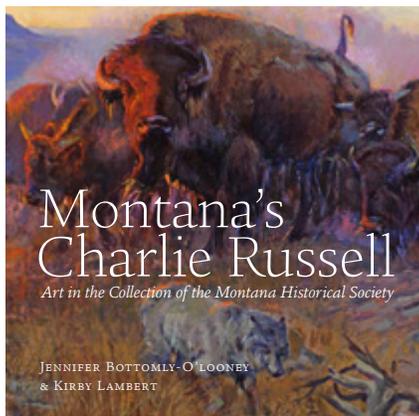
Contact me, Rebecca Baumann, at (406) 444-2918, or email rbaumann@mt.gov, and I will provide you with the materials to sign up that new member or to make a gift of membership.

Please take the pledge to find a new member today! ☺

nearly sixty years, and the book is dedicated to him and his wife, Genevieve.

Montana's Charlie Russell is a high-quality coffee-table art book that you will love sharing with family and friends. Each page showcases Russell's art in all of its glorious color and detail.

You can pick up your copy at the MHS Museum Store, call (406) 444-2890, or go online to www.montanahistoricalociety.org. The 432-page hardcover book is \$80.00, but with their discount of 15 percent, members can purchase it for \$68.00. Shipping and handling is \$15.00 for the first copy and \$3.00 for each additional copy. ☺



Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.

Montana Historical Society

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Inside

- ✔ Build the Future with MHS 1
- ✔ What's in a Name? 2
- ✔ MHS Longest Active Member 5
- ✔ Greater Montana Foundation Support 6
- ✔ Losing a Friend 6



These young people are trying their hand at sculpture after experiencing our exhibit of Bob Scriver bronzes this summer. The past belongs to all of us, but the future is for the young. That's why MHS reaches out to young people. We help schools with footlocker history tools, programs for students and teachers, and curricula. We host Archaeology Day annually for kids, and we have a special hands-on exhibit for young people in Montana's Museum. During special kid-friendly events throughout the year, we just plain make sure they have fun learning about Montana history. To be honest, though, our volunteers and staff have as much fun as the kids do, and that's what history is all about at the Montana Historical Society.

We are thankful for our members!

Visit us online at www.montanahistoricalsociety.org.