April 3: Pre-contact Trade This presentation will explore the Pre-contact American trade network, with emphasis on Great Plains and Intermountain goods and participation. Discover where goods that originated in Montana ended up, what goods were imported into the region, and the important role that tribes from this region played within the larger trade system. About the speaker: Jessica Bush is the State Historic Preservation Office Review and Compliance Officer for the Montana Historical Society. She received her Master's degree in Anthropology from the University of Montana, where her primary area of interest was pre-contact plains archaeology.

April 10: Montana’s Early Fur Trade in the Wake of Lewis and Clark Reports of abundant fur-bearing mammals in the Rocky Mountains traveled quickly after the return of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to St. Louis in 1806. As a result, in 1807 Manuel Lisa established Montana’s first trading post at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Bighorn rivers. Soon, the lure of Montana’s beaver led to a veritable flood of traders and trappers moving into the upper Missouri and northern Rockies. About the speaker: Jim Hardee has published numerous articles and books on the Rocky Mountain fur trade, most recently Hope Maintains Her Throne: The Western Expeditions of Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 1834–36. For ten years, he served as editor of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal, published by the Museum of the Mountain Man in Pinedale, Wyoming. Hardee acted as historical and technical advisor to the History Channel’s program on fur trader Jedediah Smith and was featured in that program as well as several other documentaries about the fur trade.

April 17: The Rise and Fall of Open Range Cattle Raising on the Montana Plains. The Montana cattle industry began in the 1850s with the arrival of high grade cattle driven north from the Emigrant Road in what is now Wyoming, Idaho, and Utah. Texas longhorns and other lesser known types of cattle arrived next, leading to the open range boom of the 1880s and the devastating consequences of the Hard Winter of 1886–87. About the speaker: Vic Reiman, who recently retired from the Montana Historical Society, has done extensive research on firearms in the Society’s collection. He is the author of the article “Whoa, Blue, Whoa!: Cowpuncher Teddy Blue Abbott, We Pointed Them North, and Montana’s Open-Range Era,” published in Montana The Magazine of Western History.

April 24: Do Treaties Matter? From 1777 to 1871, US relations with individual American Indian nations were conducted through treaty negotiations. These contracts between nations created unique sets of rights for the benefit of each of the treaty-making tribes and the US government. Mike Jetty will provide a basic overview of treaty history and show how they are still being interpreted today. About the speaker: Mike Jetty is an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Dakota Nation and a Turtle Mountain Chippewa descendant, who currently works at the Montana Office of Public Instruction as an Indian Education Specialist. Jetty has taught in classrooms at both the K-12 and university levels and, since 2004, he has provided over 200 workshops on teaching Indian history and culture for over 4,000 educators.
May 1: Dreams and Dust: Montana during the Great Depression. Montana’s economic depression began in the 1920s with drought, falling commodity prices, and bank failures impacting communities across the state. Learn how this extended Depression as well as the New Deal, intended to mitigate its effects, changed the lives of Montanans and shaped the future of Montana communities. About the speaker: Montana State University Distinguished Professor Mary Murphy is the author of numerous articles, including “Bittersweet: Gender, Food & the State in the U.S. & Canadian Wests during World War I” published in Food Across Borders and “When Jeannette Said ‘No’: Montana Women’s Response to World War I,” published in Montana Magazine of Western History. Her books include Hope in Hard Times: New Deal Photographs of Montana, 1936-1942, published by the Montana Historical Society Press.


May 15: Montana during the Relocation and Termination Era. In the 1950s, two new federal policies changed life for American Indians in Montana and across the United States and threatened to undermine tribal sovereignty. Termination aimed to dissolve reservations, nullify treaty rights, and end the nation-to-nation relationship between tribes and the federal government, while Relocation moved thousands of American Indians from reservations to urban centers in an effort to integrate and assimilate them into the broader American society. About the speaker: Laura Ferguson earned her M.A. in Native American Studies at Montana State University. Since 2010, she has worked as an instructor of Native American Studies and Native American literature at Carroll College and Helena College and as a writer/editor of Indian Education for All education resources. Ferguson is a co-author of Beyond Schoolmarms and Madams, a collection of biographical sketches of Montana women. She currently works as an associate editor at the Montana Historical Society.

May 22: On the Road Again. The United States economy boomed in the years following World War II and transportation networks changed dramatically. Growing suburbs, a new golden age of automobile tourism, and the rise of commercial trucking all had a profound impact on Montana. These changes sparked a boom in highway construction in the Treasure State, crowned by the completion of nearly 1,200 miles of Interstate highway by 1988. About the speaker: Jon Axline is a graduate of Montana State University and has worked at the Montana Department of Transportation since 1990. He is the author of a number of books and articles, including Conveniences Sorely Needed: Montana’s Historic Highway Bridges, Taming Big Sky Country: The History of Montana Transportation from Trails to Interstate, and “Operation Skywatch: The Montana Ground Observer Corps, 1952–1959,” which appeared in the Summer 2017 issue of Montana The Magazine of Western History.

May 29: Montana’s Triple Revolution. Join one of the deans of Montana history to explore the state’s more recent past, from about 1960 to 1975, a formative period which Dr. Fritz describes as Montana’s “Triple Revolution.” About the speaker: Professor Emeritus Harry Fritz taught history at the University of Montana for 40 years. Generations of UM students recall the wit, verve, and color of his lectures, in which he shared his vast knowledge of American and Montana history. His awards include the 2008 H.G. Merriam Award for distinguished contribution to Montana literature, UM professor of the year in 1972 and 1999 and Montana Professor of the year 2004. In addition to his esteemed career as a Montana historian, Fritz served as a state representative from 1985 to 1989 and as a state senator from 1991 to 1995.