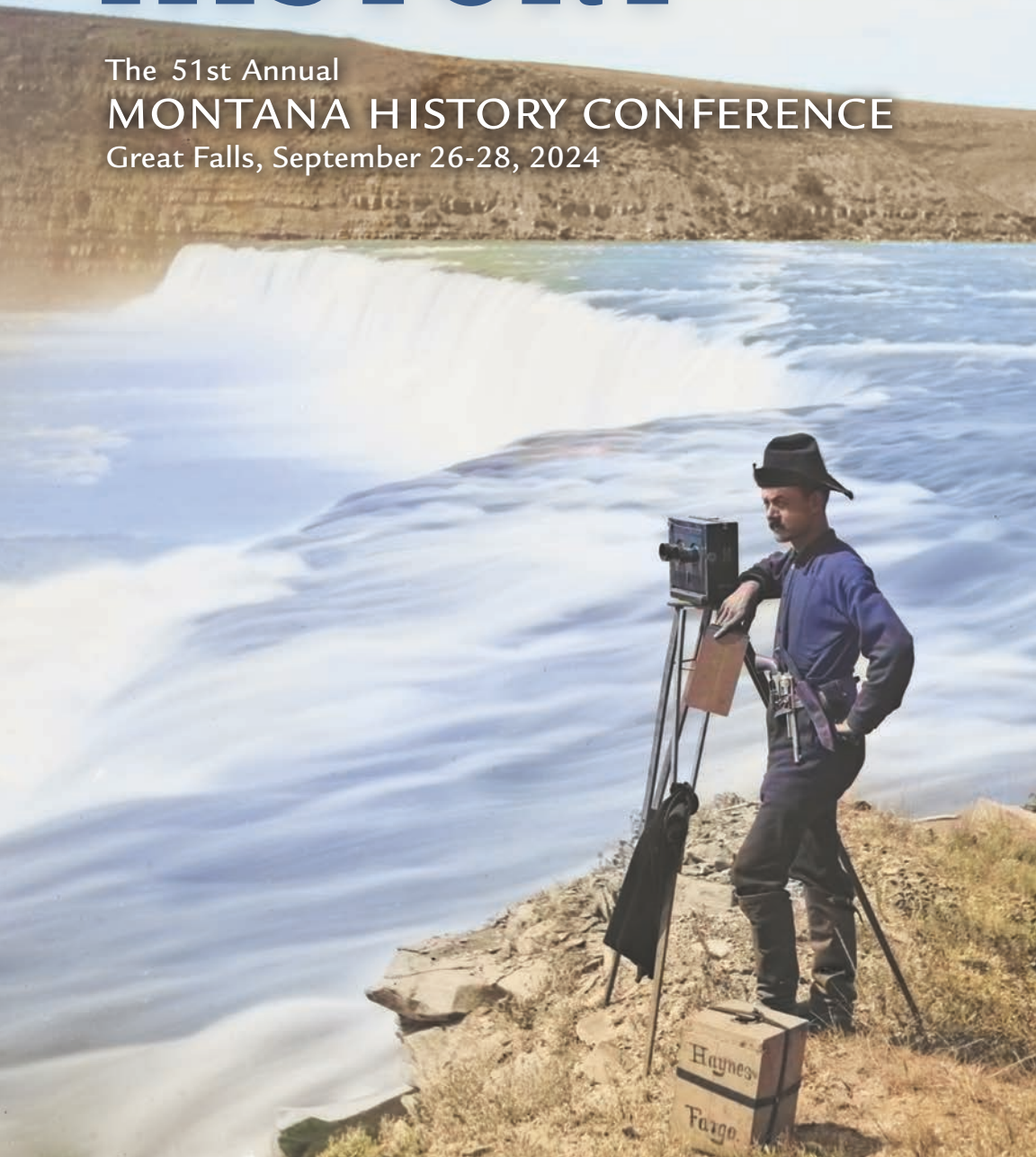


CENTRAL to HISTORY

The 51st Annual
MONTANA HISTORY CONFERENCE
Great Falls, September 26-28, 2024





(above) Vintage postcard image of Central Avenue looking east.
Great Falls Photo View Co., MTHS Postcard Collection.

(front cover) Photographer F. Jay Haynes at the Great Falls of the Missouri, 1880.
MTHS Photo Archives H-00323.

Conference logistics (see map on page 39)

The history conference will be headquartered at the **Heritage Inn**, 1700 Fox Farm Rd., Great Falls. Group rates start at \$119 per night plus tax. **Call (406) 761-1900** to make your reservation. Be sure to ask for the Montana History Conference rate.

Other accommodations: **Holiday Inn Convention Center**, 1100 5th St. South, (406) 727-7200. Group rate, \$107 per night plus tax. Be sure to ask for the Montana History Conference rate or use online group code EG2.

Hotel accessibility: All conference rooms, the ballroom, and restrooms at the Heritage Inn are wheelchair accessible. Accessible lodging rooms are also available.

Teacher Credit: Up to 23 OPI Renewal Units are available for conference attendees. Teachers seeking renewal units may obtain forms and additional information at the conference registration table.

CENTRAL to HISTORY

The Montana Historical Society's annual Montana History Conference is back again, offering a three-day exploration focusing on Central Montana history. We hope you'll join us in investigating the people, events, and episodes that make the Treasure State's heritage so complex and intriguing. This year's theme, **Central to History**, highlights Great Falls and Central Montana with topics including industrial, agricultural, military and women's history, Indigenous heritage and culture, and more. The agenda is overflowing with educational workshops, outstanding guided and self-guided tours, a wide variety of engaging presentations, and a whole lot of fun with the Montana history community.

We invite you to immerse yourself in Montana's past and, while in Great Falls, we hope that you extend your visit 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 Alliance Business Sponsors at the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, Valley Bank, and Opportunity Bank and our conference sponsors Northern Ag Network/Northern News Network, A&E Design, The History Museum/Cascade County Historical Society, Big Sky Country National Heritage Area, TDS Telecom, Humanities Montana, Historical Research Associates, and the Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers. In addition, we could not pull this off without fantastic support from our local partners at the Fort Benton Museums/River & Plains Society, Cascade County Historic Preservation Commission, Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana Genealogical Society, and the Great Falls Public Library.

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



Molly Kruckenberg
Director

**"Neither the life of an individual nor the
history of a society can be understood
without understanding both."**

– C. WRIGHT MILLS



DENNIS & PHYLLIS
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FOUNDATION

Please note: The conference schedule is subject to change. Unless otherwise noted, all events will be held at the Heritage Inn, 1700 Fox Farm Rd., Great Falls.

Thursday, September 26

7:30 A.M.–5:00 P.M. Conference registration,
convention area

Guided Tours

8:00 A.M.–4:00 P.M. Made in Montana
(Coach bus departs from Heritage Inn;
limit 24; lunch included)



The Black Eagle Dam powerhouse today.

Grains of History* Great Falls

founder Paris Gibson spent considerable time and expense developing this Missouri River town into a thriving, yet livable industrial city. Gibson's early efforts to develop hydropower paved the way for the giant Boston and Montana smelter operation, but it also attracted a host of supporting industries. This year's Made in Montana tour will highlight this legacy with a rare chance to tour the Black Eagle Dam powerhouse to learn about the history of hydropower on the Missouri. Another significant source of power—horsepower—will come into play at the 100-plus-year-old Grizzly Saddlery and a lunch stop at the restored and repurposed 1890 Arvon Block/Axtell Stables. Participants will also learn the past and present significance of grain processing in north-central Montana with visits to Montana Milling and Montana Specialty Mills to see how Montana grains and seeds are processed into flour and oil today.

**This tour is moderately strenuous. Parts of this tour involve climbing/descending multiple stairs and standing/walking for thirty minutes at a time.*

9:00 A.M.–4:30 P.M. Fort Benton Landmark Heritage
(Coach bus departs from Heritage Inn; lunch included)
Sponsored by Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers

Birthplace of Montana This all-day guided tour of the Fort Benton National Historic Landmark, led by local historians Ken Robison and Randy Morger, will illuminate Fort Benton's colorful past with a morning visit to the Old Fort Benton Trading Post and the Museum of the Upper Missouri, a walk along the historic steamboat levee, and lunch at the Grand Union Hotel. The

tour continues with stops at the Upper Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center and the Museum of the Northern Plains. This jam-packed history tour will trace historical development on the Upper Missouri, offering a glimpse of every era.



The ruins of old Fort Benton in 1912.

MTHS Photo Archives 947-017.

10:00 A.M.–4:30 P.M. Lewis & Clark

Portage (Starts at Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center; limit 20; lunch included; drive in your AWD or 4WD vehicle*)

Tracing Their Steps Get off road and in-depth with Lewis and Clark history during this rare opportunity to travel in the footsteps of the Corps of Discovery as they overcame one of the most challenging segments of their cross-country journey. After a tour and lunch at the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center to get oriented, Lewis and Clark Honor Guard member Norman Anderson will pilot participants in their own rugged vehicles across gravel roads and private lands to experience the actual route that Lewis and Clark traveled to portage around the Missouri River falls.

*Participants may be asked to consolidate/carpool to limit vehicles. This tour is moderately strenuous, requiring participants to walk up and down uneven, rocky terrain and get in and out of vehicles multiple times. Weather dependent.

1:00 P.M.–4:30 P.M. Western Art (Meet at C. M. Russell Home and Studio, 400 13th St. North; limit 20; drive on your own)

Art Central Join local art and architecture experts for a colorful and informative tour of Montana's first art museum, the newly restored Charles M. Russell Home and Studio National Historic Landmark; the 1912 Collegiate Gothic Ursuline Academy, where Sister Raphael Schweda taught art and painted in a fifth-floor tower studio for fifty-three years; and



See where cowboy painter Charlie Russell created now-famous works of art.

the 1896 Great Falls Central High School, repurposed into the Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art, an art education facility and showcase for the works of contemporary artists of the West.

1:30 P.M.–4:30 P.M. Malmstrom Air Force Base (MTHS vans depart from Heritage Inn; limit 30; valid ID required at gate)

Within Arms Reach The 341st Missile Wing, headquartered at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, is one of only three U.S. Air Force bases that maintains and secures the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM). Join 341st Missile Wing historian Troy Hallsell and learn about the base history and ICBM development. Highlights include a mission brief by the wing commander and visits to the missile procedures trainer, launch facility trainer, base museum, and air park.

2:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M. Great Falls North Side Historic District Walking Tour (starts at Gibson Park bandshell, Park Drive North and River's Edge Trail; limit 15)

The Electric City Elite Minneapolis engineer Paris Gibson took one look at the sweeping flatlands south of the thunderous falls of the Missouri and declared it the perfect setting for a new town. Together with railroad magnate James J. Hill, Gibson platted Great Falls in 1883, and by the early 1900s the city's Lower North Side boasted block after block of fashionable houses sporting a variety of architectural styles. Join local historian Carol Bradley for a mile-long, ninety-minute walk showcasing this charming neighborhood.

3:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M. Great Falls South Side Neighborhood Walking Tour (Starts at Union Bethel African Methodist Church, 916 5th Ave. South; limit 15)


Exploring Montana's Black Past Beginning in the 1880s, Black people came to Great Falls from locales near and far, some traveling from earlier Montana homes or nearby military bases, and others coming from elsewhere in the United States. By the twentieth



The Union Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on 5th Avenue South played a crucial role in the development of Great Falls' Black community.
Photo by Tom Ferris.


century, the city boasted one of the largest African American populations in the Treasure State. This tour will highlight the landmark businesses, residences, and institutions associated with the city's historically Black neighborhood south of downtown. Participants will also tour the Union Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in the heart of the neighborhood, which continues to serve as a social, cultural, and religious touchstone to the community.

Self-Guided Tour

 2:00 P.M. or 3:00 P.M. **Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center**
(4201 Giant Springs Rd.; pre-registration required; drive on your own)

A visit to the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center offers a sense of President Thomas Jefferson's vision for expanding America to the west. Start the tour with one of two feature films shown on the hour and continue the self-guided adventure through 25,000 square feet of exhibit space chronicling the expedition, the Indigenous people the Corps met, and the mammals and plants they encountered. Visitors may also enjoy five different trails throughout the property that offer a variety of Missouri River vistas and views of the surrounding landscape.

On-Site Workshops

 9:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M. **Educators Workshop** (limit 40; lunch included)

Teaching with Primary Sources In honor of the hundredth anniversary of the Indian Citizenship Act, Native American Studies instructor Laura Ferguson will present a mini unit on American Indian citizenship from 1874 to 1924. Hali Richmond, 2023 Centennial Bell Montana History Teacher of the Year, will share ways she brings Montana history to life. Then Dylan Huisken, 2019 Montana Teacher of the Year, will present on ways educators can structure primary source research to help students critically analyze past voices using the Lewis and Clark journals. Dr. Tammy Elser, literacy specialist at Salish Kootenai College, will offer ideas for using picture books and historical fiction to support historical thinking, deepen vocabulary, and enhance conceptual understandings. And finally, Montana Historical Society historian Dr. Melissa Hibbard will introduce Project Archaeology units based in Montana that use archaeological inquiry to foster understanding of past and present cultures, improve social studies and science education, and enhance citizenship education to help preserve our archaeological legacy.


 1:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M. **Writers Workshop** (limit 25)

Publishing the Past: A Workshop for Authors

This three-part writer's workshop focuses on the ins and outs of getting books and articles into print and a discussion of the writing process by best-selling author Jamie Ford. The workshop kicks off with a roundtable discussion featuring editors and authors who will talk about both sides of the publishing process. Then, in break-out groups, participants will have the opportunity to talk in depth with discussants on topics ranging from how to identify a potential publisher to what they look for in research and writing, what happens to manuscripts after submission, 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 Great Falls resident Jamie Ford. Ford—whose debut novel *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* spent 130 weeks on the *New York Times* best-seller list—will talk about the power, responsibility, and joy of being a historical storyteller. He'll also offer advice to historians who want to publish fiction, and counsel writers of fiction on the benefits and pitfalls of playing with history.



Best-selling historical fiction author Jamie Ford will talk on the craft of storytelling.


 2:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M. **Archives Preservation Workshop** (limit 25)

Handle with Care Join Montana Historical Society archivists to learn how to care for archival materials. Discover the possible preservation issues that threaten paper and film-based historical items. How do we prioritize threats and dangers while storing and using archival collections? What are some difficult historical materials to work with and what special supplies, tools, and skills are required to preserve them? What in the world do you do with scrapbooks? Gloves or no gloves? We'll have answers to these questions and more in this workshop, where we'll cover details and broader strategies through presentations, group discussions, and hands-on best practices demonstrations.




Library of Congress.

Off-Site Workshops

 9:00 A.M.–4:30 P.M. **Genealogy Workshop and Library Tour**
(Great Falls Public Library, 301 2nd Ave. North)

Join the Montana Genealogical Society at the Great Falls Public Library for a day of expert instruction from seasoned genealogists and librarians. Manager of the Genealogy Center at Allen County Public Library in Indiana, Curt Witcher's presentation, **Indigenous Peoples: First Nations Genealogical Research**, will help beginners get started on researching Indigenous ancestors. Next, professional genealogist Amber Oldenburg will review the wealth of information available in federal homesteading records. In the afternoon, take one of three scheduled tours of the library to get familiar with its many research resources. And don't miss out on a slot at the **Heritage Hustle**, where participants can get help solving their genealogy mysteries during one-on-one, twenty-minute research sessions with experienced genealogy researchers.

 9:30 A.M.–2:30 P.M. **Historic Preservation Workshop**
(Paris Gibson Square Museum, 1400 1st Ave. North; lunch included;
hosted by the State Historic Preservation Office)


Buildings for the Future

Following updates on current issues from local preservation officers, Harvard University professor of history Tiya Miles will present **Preserving Black Historic Buildings from Massachusetts to Montana: Notes from the Field of Collaboration**. Miles will share her experiences helping to preserve three historic buildings: the African Meeting House on Nantucket Island, the Harriet Jacobs House in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the Samuel Lewis House in Bozeman, Montana. With fascinating stories to tell about the varied Black past, these distinct local sites required creative preservation strategies. The afternoon will offer a discussion led by Heather McMilin and Julie Stiteler of Homeword regarding



Dr. Tiya Miles

layered funding sources for the Baatz Block Apartments project, specifically how they leveraged State and Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits to adaptively reuse a valuable downtown historic building in Great Falls. When completed, the Baatz Block will include twenty-five permanent supportive homes with space for key houseless services for residents. The workshop will conclude with a tour of the Baatz Block property.

 5:30 P.M.—7:30 P.M. **Opening Reception**
(The History Museum & Research Center, 422 2nd St. South)
Sponsored by Cascade County Historical Society and TDS Telecom

Join your fellow Montana history enthusiasts for heavy appetizers, drinks, and great conversations at the Cascade County Historical Society's History Museum & Research Center, located in the repurposed International Harvester implement dealership on Machinery Row. Tour the new Research Center, peruse the exhibits, and enjoy live piano jazz by Melissa Smith in the museum's Ozark Club room, which pays tribute to a social scene that broke racial barriers in Great Falls from the 1930s to the 1960s.



The 1929 International Harvester warehouse in Great Falls now houses The History Museum.
Cascade County Historical Society.

Partners then...
partners now



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the future

Inspired by you.



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Friday, September 27

🕒 7:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M. **Conference registration**, convention area

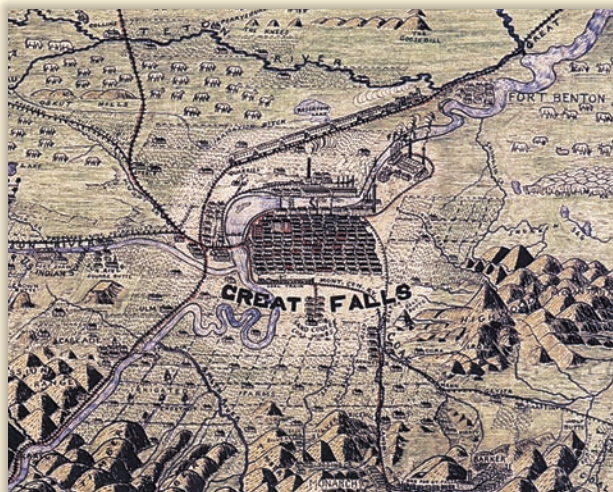
🕒 8:00 A.M.—9:15 A.M. **Light Breakfast & Keynote Presentation**

Cultural Cascade: The Epicenter of Montana History

Through millennia, Great Falls served as the geographic, transportation, industrial, agricultural, military, recreational, and even extraterrestrial center of the region. The Great Falls of the Missouri provided a landmark for travelers, connected trade routes, and offered seemingly limitless power to foster development. Here, at Montana’s crossroads, people influenced history statewide, nationally, and internationally—from rebellion and intrigue to the “Ace in the Hole.” Join MTHS historian Kate Hampton’s lighthearted look at why Great Falls really is central to history.

Kate Hampton is the Community Preservation Historian at the Montana Historical Society’s State Historic

Preservation Office, where she works directly with local community preservation programs to document and preserve their cultural resources. She directs “Identifying African American Heritage Resources in Montana,” projects that identify, research, and document resources throughout the state associated with African American history. She served as executive producer and co-writer of the documentary *Hidden Stories: Montana’s Black Past* and wrote *The Best Gift: Montana’s Carnegie Libraries*.



Great Falls, Montana, 1893. MHS Library Map A-335.

🕒 9:30 A.M.—10:45 A.M. **Concurrent sessions**

They Headed West Great Falls founder Paris Gibson spent much of his life in Maine and Minnesota before heading west in 1880 at age forty-seven. In **Go West Young Man: The Life of Paris Gibson**, Bill Dakin (a Gibson descendant) reviews Gibson’s early business life east of the Missouri River and then explores

his prolific late-career projects that impacted culture, business, and industry both inside and outside Great Falls. In **Martha Edgerton Plassman: Resilient Montana Woman**, author Benjamin Sanders (descendant of Martha's cousin Wilbur F. Sanders) chronicles the life of the formidable Martha Edgerton Rolfe Plassman. Raised in Ohio, she came west in 1863 as a teenager when her father Sidney Edgerton became Montana's first territorial governor. After her marriage, she lived in Great Falls, where her life as an activist, social reformer, journalist, and newspaper woman began.



Martha Edgerton Rolfe Plassman, ca. 1916.
MTHS Photo Archives, 944-365.

Indigenous Pathways For millennia Northern Plains peoples inhabited what we now call Montana, and their stories are still thriving, changing, and impacting our culture today. Nolan Brown and Bailey Dann of the Shoshone-Bannock Language and Cultural Preservation Department present **Shoshone-Bannocks: Central to Montana History**, which includes the ongoing efforts to restore tribal lands in southwest Montana, assert tribal perspectives in the Montana Indian Education for All curriculum, and create space for Shoshone-Bannock history in public exhibits. In **Blackfeet Traveling Medicine Show**, art educator Kathy Martin interprets an exhibition of ancient, traditional, and contemporary art and artifacts from the Hockaday Museum, while traditional games instructor Mary Ellen Little Mustache (Blackfeet/Piikuni) discusses the role of games in Blackfeet culture, including time for audience participation.

PROUD TO SUPPORT THE MONTANA HISTORY CONFERENCE



The Museum Store



Prairie Skyscrapers

Grain elevators tower above the rolling hills of Central Montana's farmland, punctuating the seemingly endless horizons of the Big Sky State. Immensely scaled, yet dwarfed by the landscape, historic grain elevators were the final collection point for harvested grain before distribution by train. Eventually replaced by larger facilities boasting modern technology, many remaining grain elevators have been ravaged by weather after falling into disuse and disrepair. In **Disappearing Artifacts of Central Montana's Agricultural Landscapes**, Kate Geer and Jared Schmitz, historic preservation team members at A&E Design, share their work documenting the early evolution of grain elevators in Central Montana.



Arrow Creek grain elevator, Judith Basin County.
Photo by Jared Schmitz.

 10:45 A.M.—11:00 A.M. **Coffee, Books, and Student Posters**

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

Creative Catholics

In 1956, the Sisters of Providence in Great Falls selected fledgling Great Falls architects George Page and Vincent Werner to design what became the largest concentration of Modernist buildings in Montana. In **Page & Werner's College of Great Falls Campus**, historian Patty Dean and architect Lesley Gilmore investigate how the Cold War values of the Catholic Church aligned with Modernist aesthetics as embodied by the campus's original eleven buildings. In **A Tale of Two Sisters**, retired MTHS Outreach and Education Program manager Kirby Lambert profiles one of the



A rendering of the 1964 College of Great Falls physical education building, designed by architects Page and Werner.



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college's influential sisters, Sister Mary Trinitas Morin, along with another significant sister, Mother Raphael Schweda of the Ursuline Center. Both shared a call to serve God and a love of art, yet their stories—and especially their art—are strikingly different.

Captured on Glass and Film

In 1880 photographer F. Jay Haynes made his first excursions into Montana Territory. Traveling with his stereographic camera and glass plate negatives, he captured dozens of photographs of the people and landscapes he



The Great Falls of the Missouri River; stereograph by F. Jay Haynes in 1880. MTHS Photo Archives H-00326.

would encounter. In **Up the Missouri to the Great Falls: Haynes's First Photographic Foray into Montana Territory**, MTHS Photo Archives manager Jeff Malcomson shows images from Haynes's little-known photographic expedition. Fast forward seventy years to 1950 when Nick Mariana, general manager of the Great Falls American Legion baseball club, saw something extraordinary in the sky above the field. In **The Montana Film**, Montana Department of Transportation historian Jon Axline explains how Mariana captured the first footage of an unidentified flying object (UFO) ever taken and examines the alleged government conspiracy that has generated speculation since the film was made public.

Facing the Music Montana has its share of famous musicians and musical events, yet there are many unknown facets of the state's musical history yet to be researched. In **Garth Brooks and the Evolution of Entertainment at the Montana State Fair**, *Montana The Magazine of Western History* associate editor Cody Ewert explores what the record-breaking 1991 concert reveals about the cultural significance of music at the Great Falls fair and how audience expectations have changed over time. In **Lost Sounds and Basement Archives: A Brief History of Music Collecting in North Central Montana**, Dave Martens, creator of the Montana music archive Lost Sounds Montana, joins Dr. Aaron Parrett, musician and professor of English at University of Providence, to provide a crash course in music history along the Upper Missouri. The pair will discuss the phenomenon of amateur music collections as a means of

archiving local music and provide a sampling of lost sounds using a portable Victrola.


1776–2026: A Semiquincentennial Roundtable In 2026, the United States will mark the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. What does this anniversary mean to the people of Montana? How should we recognize it? Join members of the Montana 250 Commission for a roundtable discussion that will include an overview of the commission's plans to commemorate the anniversary, an introduction to the commission's guiding themes, a chance to brainstorm ideas for programming, and an opportunity to discuss the ways individuals, organizations, and communities can get involved.

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

Becoming Little Shell Growing up in Montana, Chris La Tray always identified as Indian even though his father fiercely denied any connection. He found Indians alluring, often recalling his grandmother's consistent mention of their Chippewa heritage. When he attended his grandfather's funeral as a young man, he finally found himself surrounded by relatives who were obviously Indigenous. "Who were they?" he wondered, and "Why was I never allowed to know them?" Embarking on a deeply personal and revealing journey into his family's past, La Tray discovered a larger story of the complicated history of Indigenous communities—and the devastating effects of colonialism that continue to ripple through surviving generations.



Chris La Tray is a Métis storyteller, a descendant of the Pembina Band of the mighty Red River of the North, an enrolled member of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and the 2023–2024 Montana Poet Laureate. He is the author of *One-Sentence Journal: Short Poems and Essays from the World at Large* (Riverfeet Press, 2018) and *Becoming Little Shell* (Milkweed Editions, 2024).

 2:15 P.M.–3:30 P.M. **Concurrent sessions**

Documenting the West Accurately researching, documenting, and interpreting Western history depends on a variety of resources both old and new. In **For the Record: Telling Fort Benton's Story from 1880 to Today**, *Fort Benton River Press* newspaper owner and editor Bethany Monroe DeBorde examines

how the *River Press* archives serve as a first draft of Montana history and how the newspaper still provides a valuable service, continuing to write the first draft of history for tomorrow's historians. Historian Dr. Delia Hagen has mined the *River Press* often in her work, "**Re-visioning the West: Deep Mapping Non-White Montana,**" a series of intensive spatial history projects, including place-based projects on Montana's urban Indigenous, Black, Chinese, and Mexican populations. These projects radically re-map Western places to transform understanding of Western space and history, as well as both the history of underrepresented communities and of the United States.

Livestock and

Livelihood While later accounts sanctimoniously claimed settlers were "too busy building to go in for any organized sports," horse breeder Robert Vaughn and city founder Paris Gibson incorporated the North Montana Fair Association in 1889. In **Montana Bunchgrass**



Horse racing at the fairgrounds in 1946.
Photo courtesy Powell County Museum.

Country—Horse Raising and Racing in North Central Montana, author Brenda Wahler traces Great Falls horse racing from its first races in 1885 to present-day races at Montana ExpoPark. In **Livestock Disease and State Power: The State Veterinarian and the Livestock Sanitary Board in Montana, 1884-1917**, Dr. Kerri Clement, assistant professor of history at Weber State University, explores how early Montana veterinarians and livestock officials fought livestock diseases and, in doing so, helped expand state government.

Cooking and Community Mary Murphy, professor emeritus of history at Montana State University; Jan Zauha, Humanities and Outreach librarian at Montana State University; Zoe Ann Stoltz, retired reference librarian at MTHS; and Molly Kruckenberg, MTHS director, are working on a book about food and community in Montana history. Their presentation, **Roots, Rhubarb, and Raspberry Pie**, explores how Central Montana women wrestled with preserving and cooking the food they grew in their gardens; examines the cooking lessons they learned at home, in school, from newspapers, and on Great Falls station KRTV; and illuminates how cookbooks can provide windows into women's lives and communities.

Schedule at a Glance

The conference schedule is subject to change.

Thursday, September 26

7:30 A.M.–5:00 P.M.	Conference registration— convention area
8:00 A.M.–4:00 P.M.	Made in Montana Tour
9:00 A.M.–4:30 P.M.	Fort Benton Landmark Heritage Tour
10:00 A.M.–4:30 P.M.	Lewis & Clark Portage Tour
1:00 P.M.–4:30 P.M.	Western Art Tour
1:30 P.M.–4:30 P.M.	Malmstrom Air Force Base Tour
2:00 P.M. or 3:00 P.M.	Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center Tours (self-guided)
2:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M.	Great Falls North Side Historic District Walking Tour
3:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M.	Great Falls South Side Neighborhood Walking Tour
9:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.	Educators Workshop
1:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M.	Writers Workshop
2:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M.	Archives Preservation Workshop
9:00 A.M.–4:30 P.M.	Genealogy Workshop, Heritage Hustle, and Library Tour— Great Falls Public Library
9:30 A.M.–2:00 P.M.	Historic Preservation Workshop— Paris Gibson Square Museum
5:30 P.M.–7:30 P.M.	Opening Reception— The History Museum

Friday, September 27

7:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.	Conference registration— convention area
8:00 A.M.–9:15 A.M.	Light Breakfast & Keynote (see p. 13)
9:30 A.M.–10:45 A.M.	CONCURRENT SESSIONS (see pp. 13-14) They Headed West Indigenous Pathways Prairie Skyscrapers
11:00 A.M.–12:15 P.M.	CONCURRENT SESSIONS (see pp. 15-18) Creative Catholics Captured on Glass and Film Facing the Music 1776–2026: A Semiquincentennial Roundtable
12:30 P.M.–2:00 P.M.	Lunch & Keynote (see p. 18)
2:15 P.M.–3:30 P.M.	CONCURRENT SESSIONS (see pp. 18-19) Documenting the West Livestock and Livelihood Cooking and Community

2:30 P.M. or 3:30 P.M.	Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center Tours (self-guided)
2:30 P.M.–4:30 P.M.	First Peoples Buffalo Jump Tour (guided)
3:45 P.M.–5:00 P.M.	CONCURRENT SESSIONS (see pp. 22-23) Perspectives on Military Life Women of Virtue and Vice Making Preservation Pencil Out
4:00 P.M.–5:00 P.M.	Brother Van Museum Tour (guided)
5:00 P.M.–6:00 P.M.	Cocktails and Conversations
6:00 P.M.–8:00 P.M.	Banquet & Keynote (see p. 24)

Saturday, September 28

8:00 A.M.–2:30 P.M.	Conference registration— convention area
8:00 A.M.–9:15 A.M.	Light Breakfast & Keynote (see p. 28)
9:30 A.M.–10:45 A.M.	CONCURRENT SESSIONS (see pp. 28-30) Preservation and Politics Humans and the Environment Métis and Chippewa Cree Stories Teaching Montana History Recap
11:00 A.M.–12:15 P.M.	CONCURRENT SESSIONS (see pp. 30-31) Student Poster Presentations A Federal State Away From Home Great Falls: City of Industry
12:30 P.M.–2:00 P.M.	Lunch & Keynote (see p. 32)

POST-CONFERENCE FUN

2:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M.	Native Tea Time with Mariah Gladstone
2:30 P.M.–4:30 P.M.	The Little Shell Today
2:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M.	From Camp to Castner Street: Belt Historic District Tour
2:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M.	Fort Shaw Historic District
2:30 P.M.–3:30 P.M.	Brother Van Museum
2:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M.	Great Falls North Side Historic District Walking Tour
2:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M.	Charlie and Nancy Russell Honeymoon Cabin
2:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M.	J. C. Adams Stone Barn
3:00 P.M.–5:00 P.M.	First Peoples Buffalo Jump

- 🕒 2:30 P.M. or 3:30 P.M. (pre-registration required)
Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center (4201 Giant Springs Rd.; self-guided; drive on your own)

A visit to the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center offers a sense of President Thomas Jefferson's vision for expanding America to the west. Watch one of two feature films and continue the self-guided adventure through 25,000 square feet of exhibit space chronicling the expedition, the Indigenous people the Corps met, and the mammals and plants they encountered. Visitors may also enjoy five different trails throughout the property that offer a variety of Missouri River vistas.

- 🕒 2:30 P.M.–4:30 P.M. (pre-registration required) **First Peoples Buffalo Jump Tour** (342 Ulm Vaughn Rd., Ulm; drive on your own)

Join a knowledgeable park staff member on a two-hour guided hike to explore one of the largest buffalo jump kill sites in North America.

The tour covers the history of the site, including how it was used by

at least thirteen Indigenous nations from approximately AD 900 to 1500. The hike on the park's main loop trail covers three miles round-trip with 400 feet of elevation gain/loss. Expect to walk on gravel and dirt trails with a short section of wood and rock steps.



Photo by Tom Ferris.

- 🕒 3:30 P.M.–3:45 P.M. **Coffee, Books, and Student Posters**

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

Perspectives on Military Life In **Entirely Uncomfortable: Frontier Army Life on the Upper Missouri**, interpretation specialist Austin Haney explores the experiences of soldiers stationed at early military forts such as Fort Shaw, Camp Cooke, and Fort Benton during the 1860s and 1870s. In **Fort Assinniboine and the 1896 Cree Deportation Act**, writer Gabriel Furshong reveals the story of U.S. efforts to violently deport members of unrecognized Indigenous tribes to Canada. Furshong examines why this dark chapter in Montana history is underrepresented and how we can bring this period of ethnic cleansing to light.

Hundreds of Métis and Chippewa Cree helped build Fort Assinniboine in 1879 but were forced to leave in the 1880s and 1890s.

MTHS Photo Archives H-00386.



Women of Virtue and Vice In **Trial and Triumph: Cascade County Women at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition**, Brigham Young University–Idaho professor of history Andrea Radke-Moss examines the organizing efforts of Cascade County women in 1892–93, including the challenges and successes they faced in representing Central Montana at the World's Fair. Ladies organizing the fair exhibit chose to exclude women like Mollie Thompson. In **The Notorious Mollie Thompson in Great Falls**, local historian Daniel Wells explores the tumultuous life of actor and variety theater owner Mollie Thompson, who ran the well-known Park Theater between 1892 and 1896.

Making Preservation

Pencil Out Preserve Montana executive director Jenny Buddenborg, Arvon Block LLC owner Peter Jennings, and Homeword project development director Heather McMilin discuss **Investing in Montana History through Historic Preservation Tax Credits** in a panel discussion on how tax credits can incentivize historic preservation and keep communities strong through economic investment in the form of building reuse, downtown revitalization, local job creation, and affordable housing.



Historic preservation tax credits made the Baatz Block in downtown Great Falls a viable renovation project.

MTHS Photo Archives Lot 001 B3F4.01.

🕒 4:00 P.M.—5:00 P.M. (pre-registration required)

Brother Van Museum Tour (113 6th St. North; drive on your own; limit 30)

William Wesley Van Orsdel, fondly known as Brother Van, came to Montana in 1872 and was instrumental in establishing dozens of churches, hospitals, a children's home, and a college. He was a beloved circuit-riding preacher, and the home where he lived in Great Falls from 1910 to 1919 tells his story. Along with a trained docent, visitors will tour his well-preserved Great Falls' North Side home while learning about Brother Van's many good works and his impact on the state's history.

🕒 5:00 P.M.—6:00 P.M. **Cocktails and Conversations**, convention area

🕒 6:00 P.M.—8:00 P.M. **Banquet & Keynote Presentation**

Sponsored by A&E Design



The Illustrated Letters of Charles M. Russell

Although most Montanans know of Charlie Russell the painter, fewer know that he was a dedicated correspondent who wrote beautifully illustrated and humorous letters to friends far and wide. Cowboy poet Randy

Rieman has been an avid student of the life and works of C. M. Russell for nearly five decades. For the past ten years, Randy has been giving presentations on Charlie's letters, hundreds of which survive and are recorded in Brian Dippie's book *Charles M. Russell, Word Painter*. Randy's engaging presentation brings Charlie's letters to life, revealing the heart and soul of the artist himself.

Randy Rieman is a lifelong cowboy who began his career on cow-calf operations and grazing associations in the Gallatin Valley some forty-five years ago. He worked on ranches in California and Hawaii before returning to Montana, where he continues to work with horses and people from his home base in Choteau. Randy is also a widely appreciated musician and reciter of classic cowboy poetry who has performed at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko for nearly four decades.

Keeping **Montana** Connected



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Heritage Keeper and Heritage Guardian Awards

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 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.

Board of Trustees' Heritage Guardian Award Recipient

Ellen Crain

For her long-standing record of service in preserving Montana history, MTHS has awarded Ellen Crain its highest honor, the 2024 Heritage Guardian Award.

An administrator, archivist, historian, fundraiser, public servant, janitor, author, and editor, Ellen Crain spent thirty-two years building the Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives into a world-renowned research center. When Ellen came to the Butte Archives in 1990, the former Quartz Street fire station was a partially heated garage with a dimly lit research room and irreplaceable records piled on the basement floor. Within a few years, Ellen raised funds to buy archives shelving and shore up the floors to hold the hefty records.



She continually worked to improve conditions and never missed a chance to share her enthusiasm and promote the archives to residents, students, community groups, and out-of-town visitors. Visitation increased dramatically, and in 2007, Ellen advocated for a \$7.5 million bond issue to rehabilitate and expand the 100-plus-year-old building. The bond issue passed with an unprecedented 75 percent voter approval—a testament to the overwhelming community support she built for the Butte Archives.

The beautifully restored fire station and sensitively designed, state-of-the-art addition opened in 2010 and now serves about 5,000 visitors per year from around the world. The expanded facility not only preserved a landmark building and improved archival storage conditions, but greatly expanded visitor services. Ellen made sure the new building could host school groups and provide space for public meetings, exhibits, and live presentations.

Her tireless dedication to preserving and promoting Butte history extends far beyond her work to improve the Archives building. From 2000 to 2006, she led the effort to expand the Butte National Historic Landmark District. It now contains more than 7,000 buildings, including much of Anaconda and the Washoe Smokestack; the Butte, Anaconda & Pacific Railway; and portions of Butte's mining and smelting landscape. Additionally, Ellen co-wrote three books: *Images of America: Butte*; *Motherlode: The Legacy of Women's Lives & Labors in Butte, Montana*; and *Remembering Butte: Montana's Richest City*. Outside Butte, Ellen shared her passion for history by serving on the boards of the Montana Preservation Alliance, the State Historical Records Advisory Board, and Humanities Montana.

Board of Trustees' Heritage Keeper Award Recipient

Ralph Saunders

Using methodical and meticulous skills acquired as a professional cartographer, Ralph Saunders preserves history by interpreting historic maps against modern topography. In his tireless volunteer work, he has enriched, broadened, and willingly shared his knowledge of events and characters from a bygone era with Montana citizens and Western history enthusiasts.



Saunders's research and mapping skills have been integral to understanding the travels of numerous Montana explorers. His research was instrumental in interpreting maps of the Beartooth region made by the avid Swiss mountaineer Fred Inabnit in 1924. In 2012, he recorded historic points on the Yellowstone River in Billings and determined the accuracy of the steamboat *Josephine's* high-mark landing, which is now noted on signage along the river. In 2013, Saunders uncovered the true location of Fort Manuel Lisa, the fur trading outpost at the confluence of the Bighorn and Yellowstone Rivers.

Saunders's fascination with Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's explorations in Montana resulted in numerous discoveries and interpretive projects about Clark's passage through today's Stillwater County. He helped identify Clark's Crossing on the Yellowstone River and Clark's Canoe Camp, using multiple sources to determine the camp's probable location, including the Prussian Army camp layout protocols used by the captains. Though the site is on private land and now washed away by erosion, Saunders helped write an interpretive panel and worked with city officials in Park City to install it for the public to enjoy. Along the way, Saunders has graciously donated his time and has never missed a chance to share his knowledge with K-12 students.

In the last four years, Saunders has been instrumental in helping Our Montana prepare documents to designate the Bozeman Trail as a National Historic Trail. He has spent thousands of hours studying aerial photos, historic maps, diaries, and landowner interviews and conducting on-the-ground investigations to locate visible sections of the trail. His maps and assessments will be given to the Montana Historical Society, and he is developing a travel guide for visitors who wish to follow the trail. His contributions to the study of Montana history are outstanding and a model for others to follow.

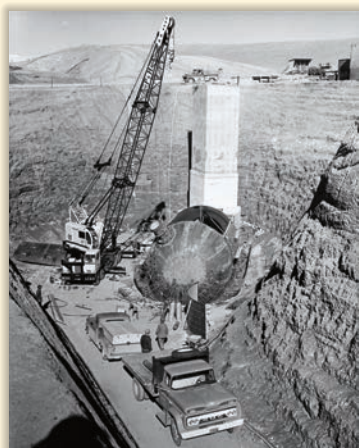
Saturday, September 28

🕒 8:00 A.M.–2:30 P.M. **Conference registration**, convention area

🕒 8:00 A.M.–9:15 A.M. **Light Breakfast & Keynote Presentation**

Building Malmstrom's Missile Fields in Central Montana

From 1960 to 1963, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Air Force built the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) fields throughout Central Montana. Shortly after construction began, the United States and Soviet Union entered a standoff against each other known as the Cuban Missile Crisis. In this talk, 341st Missile Wing historian Troy A. Hallsell examines how the Strategic Air Command and the 341st brought the first flight of missiles on alert, enabling the United States to prevail against the Soviet Union. The crisis helped both sides realize the dangers these weapons posed to humanity. Following the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Department of Defense pared back resources for the ICBM mission, leading to the mission's post-Cold War problems.



A missile launch control center and elevator shaft under construction in Cascade County, circa 1961.
MTHS Photo Archives 84-91 MMInstall1.

Before coming to the Air Force as a government service civilian, **Troy Hallsell** served in the U.S. Army from 2005 to 2010 as an intelligence analyst. After a stint at the National Ground Intelligence Center in Charlottesville, Virginia, he entered graduate school in 2011 and earned a PhD in history from the University of Memphis in 2018. He is the author of several articles on military, urban, and Western history topics and a member of the Cascade County Historical Society Board of Directors.

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

Preservation and Politics In **Understanding National Heritage Areas**, seasoned Heritage Area panelists will explain current efforts to establish the Big Sky Country National Heritage Area and explore how National Heritage Areas promote history and culture and contribute to local economies. Presenters include Justin Henderson, National Park Service Heritage Partnerships Program Manager; Sabrina Stoker, Executive Director

of the Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area in Colorado; and Ellen Sievert, former Great Falls-Cascade County Historic Preservation Officer. Former Director of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center, Jane Weber, will moderate the discussion.

Humans and the Environment

The North American beaver once ranged the entire continental United States and north-south from the Arctic region of northern Canada to the northern Mexican desert. They were one of the most successful mammals in North

America, with population estimates ranging from 60

to 400 million prior to the fur trade. In **Overrun with Fire: The Environmental Consequences of Beaver Removal during the Pacific Northwest Fur Trade**, graduate student and MTHS Emerging Scholar Amber Bell will explore the history of the beaver pelt trade, the species near extinction, and the catastrophic ecological consequences that followed. In 1987, Drs. Deborah Popper and Frank Popper proposed their controversial Buffalo Commons idea, which recommended the Great Plains be taken out of intensive agricultural use and transformed into a federally protected restored grasslands. The idea never came to fruition as envisioned, but Montana State University graduate student Angus Bisgard Cummings argues in **Prairie Prophets: Deborah and Frank Popper and the Legacy of the Buffalo Commons** that the idea is happening on a different level. His presentation will reveal how the return of bison to Montana has been, and continues to be, an issue of conflicted understandings of best land stewardship practices and competing ideas of cultural heritage.



American Beaver, lithograph by J. J. Audubon.
MTHS Museum x86.03.01.

Métis and Chippewa Cree Stories

The Métis—people of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry—have a long history in Central Montana. In **Métis in Montana**, Alisa Herodes (Little Shell) and historian Ken Robison discuss the history, language, music, and culture of Montana’s Métis people.


In **Controversy in Great Falls: Montana’s Native Americans and the Politics of Conscription 1940–41**, University of Montana doctoral student James Compton explores the 1940 Montana Indian Convention in Great Falls at which the Rocky Boy’s Reservation’s Francis Four Souls allegedly asserted that his father, Chief Little Bear, had negotiated in an 1870 treaty that “the Chippewa Crees” were

“exempt from Army service.” Compton’s presentation explores how the story developed, Native American responses to the draft, and, more broadly, the politics of conscription in Montana in 1940–1941.

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.

 10:45 A.M.–11:00 A.M. **Networking Break**

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

New Blood Learn about the latest research into Western history topics during our student poster presentations. Thank you to the MTHS State Historic Preservation Office and A&E Design for supporting student registration, lodging, and travel.

A Federal State This three-part session, titled **Beef, Bread, and Bowdoin: The Federal Government and Montana**, explores the outsized influence of the federal government on agriculture and transportation in Montana. Daniel Gresham, professor of history at St. Mary’s College in Kansas, discusses how the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) created a national research network of agricultural colleges and used the 4-H and collegiate livestock judging competitions to foster acceptance of a new prime beef standard aimed at industrializing meat production. Montana State University assistant professor of history Micah Chang follows the evolution of wheat production, specifically how the USDA went about standardizing both wheat production and wheat producers in the 1920s. Shipping agricultural products to market created many small rural towns in Montana, but these towns



Artist U. J. Keppler’s 1911 illustration suggests that American crops will conquer all. Library of Congress image.

lived or died based on policies made elsewhere. Montana State University history professor Dale Martin chronicles the rise and decline of the town of Bowdoin as it relates to the federal government as an example of how small towns succeeded or failed in the face of circumstances far beyond their control. *Sponsored by Northern Ag Network and Northern Ag News*

Away From Home Thousands of Indian children attended boarding schools in Montana, including in Cascade County at St. Peter's Mission and Fort Shaw Indian School. In **Off Reservation Boarding Schools in Cascade County**, Great Falls History Museum executive director Kristi Scott explores the biographies of five individual children who experienced the boarding school era between 1892 and 1910 with a look at their lives through material culture, archival records, and family histories. In **The Crow Indian Student Experience at Carlisle Indian Industrial Boarding School: A Bittersweet Legacy**, Dr. Janine Pease, founding president of Little Big Horn College, shares stories of students who attended a school designed to, in the words of school founder General Richard Henry Pratt, "kill the Indian, but save the man." Crows experienced many horrors, even as many of them learned trades and later had a major impact on Crow history.

Great Falls: City of Industry Shuttered in 1980, the Anaconda Company smelter and metals refinery was the Electric City's largest employer for more than a half-century. In **Ghosts of an Industrial Behemoth**, retired *Great Falls Tribune* reporter Richard Ecke shares rare photos, videos, and personal accounts to explore the importance of the smelter site to Montana and world history. In **Stories of Great Falls'**

Breweries, Great Falls History Museum archives administrator Megan Sanford discusses the industry that slaked the thirst of legions of smelter workers. With endless pure Missouri River water and high-quality barley nearby, Great Falls breweries flourished. Many rich stories, including immigrant families, a missing brewmaster, and scientific controversies, punctuate Great Falls' brewing history.



The Anaconda Company smelter facility at Black Eagle in 1941. MTHS Photo Archives Lot 019 F0171.


Recipe for Resilience Locally harvested, pre-contact foods are a testament to the resilience of Native lifestyles and should be part of our modern kitchens. Many native North American foods, both cultivated and harvested, were removed from Native diets through intentional colonial efforts. Mariah Gladstone is leading a food movement dedicated to revitalizing and incorporating these important foods into the contemporary diet. Her presentation will include a history of Indigenous food systems as well as the relationship between cultural identity, health, and native plants and animals.

Mariah Gladstone, Piikuni (Blackfeet) and Tsalagi (Cherokee), grew up in northwest Montana. She graduated from Columbia University with a degree in Environmental Engineering and returned home where she developed Indigikitchen—an online cooking show dedicated to re-indigenizing Native diets. Using foods native to the Americas, Indigikitchen gives viewers the important tools they need to find and prepare food in their own communities. Beyond that, it strengthens the ties to our cultures and reminds us of the inherent worth of our identities while fueling our physical bodies.



Post-Conference Fun

Workshop

 2:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M. **Native Teatime with Mariah Gladstone** (limit 25)

For thousands of years, Indigenous people have hunted, fished, farmed, and foraged for food on this continent. Gladstone will bring a variety of plants she has grown and foraged that have traditionally been used to make tea—such as cedar, yarrow, and mint. Participants will sample Mariah's prepared teas and then work with her to create their own personalized teas to take home. Throughout this hands-on workshop, Mariah will also discuss traditional Native foodways, changes that took place with colonization, and what is happening with the Indigenous Food Movement today.

Guided Tours

2:30 P.M.–4:30 P.M. The Little Shell Today
(Coach bus departs from Heritage Inn; limit 30)

The Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians became the 574th Indian nation to be recognized by the U.S. government in December 2019 after more than 150 years of trying. On this tour with Montana poet laureate, storyteller, and Little Shell tribal member Chris La Tray and Little Shell Tribe secretary/treasurer Colleen Hill, participants will learn about the nation's past and future through visits to their tribal headquarters, the historic Hill 57 area, and to the top of Mount Royal for a drum performance at their beautiful new powwow arbor.

2:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M. From Camp to Castner Street: Belt Historic District Tour
(Coach bus departs from Heritage Inn; limit 30)

John Castner discovered rich coal deposits along Belt Creek in 1870. With Fort Benton trader T. C. Power, he opened a commercial coal mine, and the Belt Creek “Little Pittsburg” mining camp grew. In 1885, Castner and his wife, Mattie, one of Montana's

early African American businesswomen, established a stage station and hotel along the Lewistown-Great Falls Road. The Anaconda Copper Mining Company later purchased and expanded the mine in 1894, causing Belt to boom and its commercial district to relocate near the stage station on what became known as Castner Street. Join this guided bus tour through Belt's colorful ethnic and mining history, with stops at the Belt Jail, Pythian Castle, and Methodist Church, to learn how Belt transformed from a ramshackle camp to a modern twentieth-century trade center.




The 1916 Pythian Castle in Belt, now repurposed into the Belt Performing Arts Center. Photo courtesy Belt Performing Arts Center.


2:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M. Fort Shaw Historic District Tour (Meet at Fort Shaw Elementary School, Hwy 200 and School Loop Rd., Fort Shaw; drive on your own)

Knowledgeable guides will illuminate Fort Shaw's long and varied history during this afternoon tour. The military post, built in 1867 and abandoned in 1891,

originally included four company barracks, six sets of duplex officers' quarters, a commanding officer's quarters, a hospital, band quarters/guardhouse, and quartermaster buildings and offices around a central parade ground. It then served as the Fort Shaw Government Industrial Indian School from 1892 until 1910. Six buildings still remain, reflecting the colonial and boarding school eras.


 **2:30 P.M.–3:30 P.M. Brother Van Museum Tour**
(113 6th St. North; drive on your own; limit 30)

William Wesley Van Orsdel, fondly known as Brother Van, came to Montana in 1872 and was instrumental in establishing dozens of churches, hospitals, a children's home, and a college. He was a beloved circuit-riding preacher, and the home where he lived in Great Falls from 1910 to 1919 tells his story. A trained docent will tour visitors through his well-preserved Great Falls North Side home, sharing information about Brother Van's many good works and his impact on the state's history.

 **3:00 P.M.–5:00 P.M. First Peoples Buffalo Jump Tour**
(342 Ulm Vaughn Rd., Ulm; drive on your own)


Join a knowledgeable park staff member on a two-hour guided hike to explore one of the largest buffalo jump kill sites in North America. The tour covers the history of the site, including how it was used by at least thirteen Indigenous nations from approximately AD 900 to 1500. The hike on the park's main loop trail covers three miles round-trip with 400 feet of elevation gain/loss. Expect to walk on gravel and dirt trails with a short section of wood and rock steps.

Walking Tour

 **2:30 P.M.–4:00 P.M. The Electric City Elite: North Side Historic District Walking Tour** (starts at Gibson Park bandshell, Park Drive North and River's Edge Trail; limit 15)


Minneapolis engineer Paris Gibson took one look at the sweeping flatlands south of the thunderous falls of the Missouri and declared it the perfect setting for a new town. Together with railroad magnate James J. Hill, Gibson platted Great Falls in 1883, and by the early 1900s the city's Lower North Side boasted block after block of fashionable houses sporting a variety of architectural styles. Join local historian Carol Bradley for a mile-long, ninety-minute walk showcasing this charming neighborhood.

Self-Guided Tours

-  2:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M. **Charlie and Nancy Russell Honeymoon Cabin** (20 Russell Dr. South, Cascade; drive on your own)

While visiting his friends Ben and Lela Roberts in Cascade in October 1895, beloved Montana cowboy artist Charles M. Russell met sixteen-year-old Nancy Cooper. Nancy and Charlie married a year later in the Roberts' parlor and moved into the small bunkhouse and studio behind their house. Though they only lived here a year, the home has been lovingly restored and offers a glimpse of Charlie and Nancy's life before Charlie's artistic career brought them to Great Falls.



-  2:30 P.M.–5:00 P.M. **J. C. Adams Stone Barn** (1 mile northeast of Sun River on Hwy 89, south side; drive on your own)

Take this rare opportunity to tour inside one of Montana's iconic barns and learn about its varied history, restoration efforts, and future. Sun River cattle rancher J. C. Adams spent an exorbitant \$10,000 in 1885 to build a stone Romanesque Revival-style barn to rival even those back East. When it was completed, the *Sun River Press* newspaper called it the "Marvel of Montana."

Save the Date! Plan now to join us next year in Helena at the Best Western Great Northern Hotel for the **52nd Annual Montana History Conference**, September 25–27, 2025. In addition to our perennial lineup of engaging workshops, tours, and lecture sessions, don't miss the opportunity to tour the Montana Heritage Center (just before it opens to the public) and kick off the conference with us in the new MTHS Event Center.



The new Montana Heritage Center set to open in late 2025. Rendering courtesy Cushing Terrell.

Thank you to our sponsors!

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Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art

Malmstrom Air Force Base 341st Missile Wing

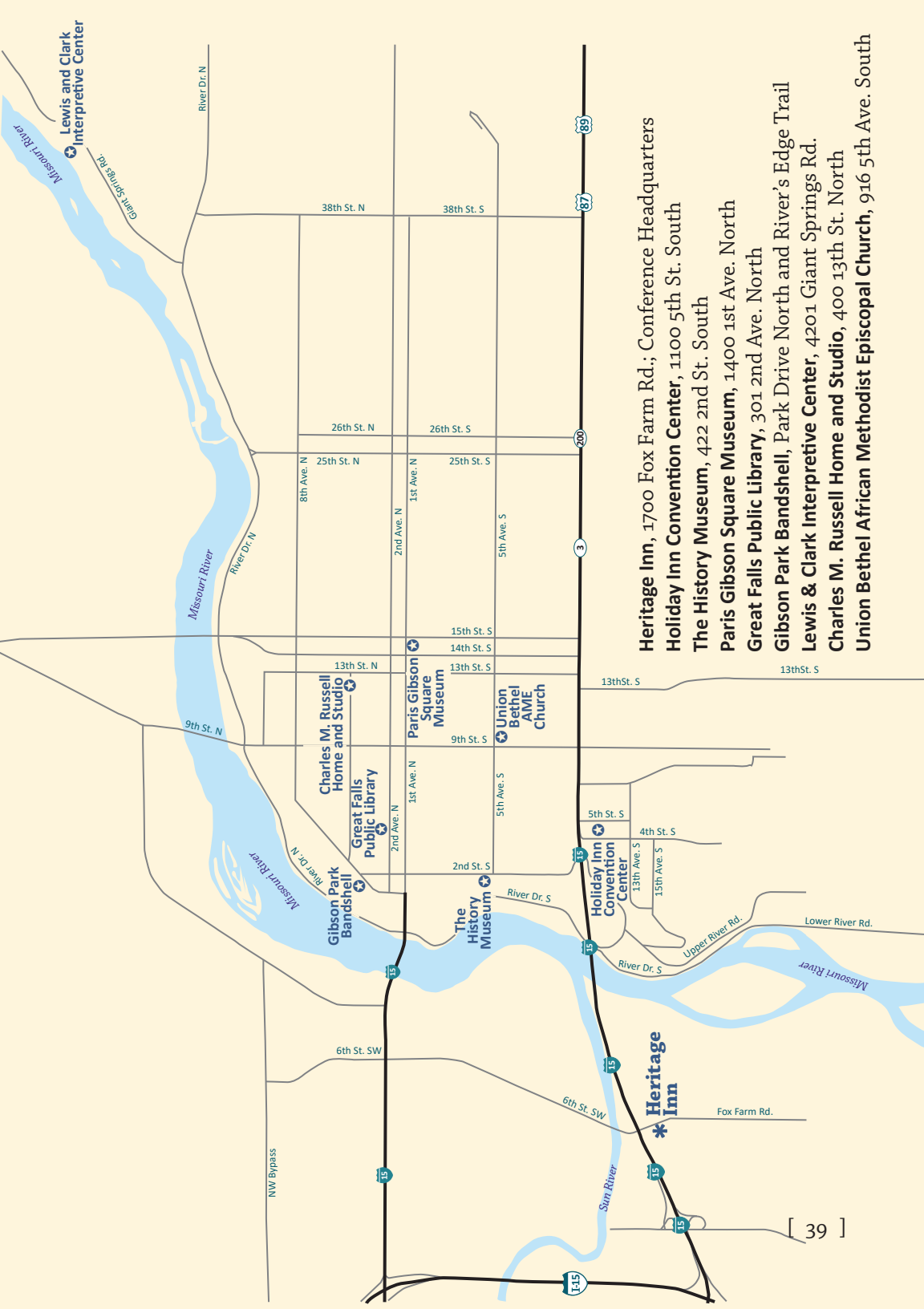
Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center

First Peoples Buffalo Jump

Fort Benton Museums/River & Plains Society

Brother Van Museum

Sun River Valley Historical Society



- Heritage Inn, 1700 Fox Farm Rd.; Conference Headquarters
- Holiday Inn Convention Center, 1100 5th St. South
- The History Museum, 422 2nd St. South
- Paris Gibson Square Museum, 1400 1st Ave. North
- Great Falls Public Library, 301 2nd Ave. North
- Gibson Park Bandshell, Park Drive North and River's Edge Trail
- Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center, 4201 Giant Springs Rd.
- Charles M. Russell Home and Studio, 400 13th St. North
- Union Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 916 5th Ave. South



PERSPECTIVE MAP OF
GREAT FALLS, MONT.
1891.