PONY TRACKS

Newsletter of the Northwest Montana Posse of Westerners

Vol. 9, No. 4 Kalispell, Montana May 6, 2022

Richard A. Hull, Ye Editor, e-mail: richardahull@charter.net

MAY MEETING

Monday, May 16, 2022

Topic: "Western Montana in Time-Lapse Photography"

Presenter: Doug Ammons of Missoula, Montana

Where: Northwest Montana History Museum, Second floor historic classroom 124 Second Avenue East, Kalispell, MT.

Time: Gab 'n' Greet and book signings start at 6:00 pm

Dinner: No dinner will be available

Historic Presentation: Program begins at 7:00 pm and will require pre-event reservations or admission on a first-come, first-served basis at the door.

For reservations call (406) 752-9642 (leave message) or send an email to kbrittonrn@gmail.com.

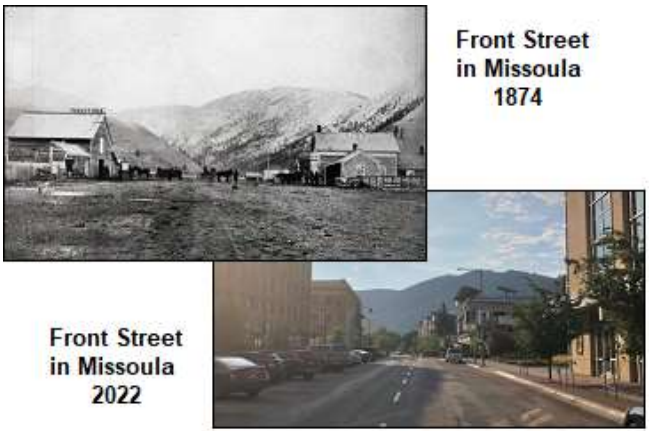
Posse members may join the program through Zoom at the following address:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84087182510?pwd=UjY5RllrRXV0T25uMjBqdStlTWRLZz09

Meeting ID: 840 8718 2510

E-mail Tim Christianson at tim.chris@yahoo.com for more help.

ABOUT THE PRESENTATION



Front Street in Missoula 1874

Front Street in Missoula 2022

Montana historian Doug Ammons returns with his newest set of before and after historic time-lapse photographs.

Doug precisely re-shoots historical photos, carefully matching the location, and uses these to create time lapse videos that seamlessly merge the past into the present. Over the past five years he has created nearly 1,000 that visualize the historical change over the past century.

This program follows changes in Salish and other tribes from before the homesteading era and then through the first major industrialization. The quiet remote landscape of the early 1800s shifts with the building of towns and cities, through railroads, dams, bridges, mines, smelters, and lumber mills, as the westward expansion accelerates. Doug weaves stories about the waves of change sweeping through the west from 1870 through 1920s, illustrating how our contemporary surroundings arise out of the past.

At the end, he will show a film of a short drive down Park Street in Butte that continuously blends the past into the present. It takes the viewer on a voyage of a quarter mile through the center of the city and sweeps through 150 years of time.

This is Doug's third visit to the Posse. In 2020 he presented the well-received "A Darkness Lit by Heroes" about the 1917 Speculator-Granite Mountain mine fire, and in 2020 was back with his time-lapse photos centered around Butte, Montana.

About the Presenter

Doug Ammons attended the University of Montana for degrees in mathematics and physics, and his PhD in experimental psychology, and has pursued many other interests such as geology and history.

He is an award winning author, Emmy Award winning cinematographer, scientific editor, award winning adventure story-teller, and extreme kayaker. Along with *A Darkness Lit by Heroes*, he is also author of *Whitewater Philosophy, The Laugh of the Water Nymph, Bolivia: Andes to Amazon* and *Jungle Kayakers*.

GENERAL MEETING INFORMATION

NMPW 's meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month, except the months of December and January.

May's meeting is being held at a its new location – the Northwest Montana History Museum at 124 Second Avenue East, Kalispell, Montana.

Unlike previous years, there will be no dinner. However a variety of restaurants are within walking distance of the Museum.

Meetings begin with a Grab 'n' Greet session from 6 pm. to 7 pm. for chance to get acquainted. Historical attire is encouraged, but not required.

Local history authors will have their books for sale, and will be available for signing.

The presentation on local or Western Montana history starts at 7 pm.

The program is free for members and youths 16 and under. Non-members may attend at a cost of $5.

Historic books will be raffled off as a fund raiser.

Doug's presentation have been very popular, and pre-event registration is recommended to assure seating. Entry is otherwise on a first-come, first-serve basis.

In addition, all meetings will be broadcast on-line via Zoom for our Out-of-County Corresponding and Brigade members and the members who cannot physically or choose not to attend the meetings.

NEW MEMBERS

The following new member recently joined the Posse:

Richard Bauer of Kalispell, Montana
Stephen Olson of Kalispell, Montana
Bob and Sandy Schneller of Kalispell, Montana

FROM THE
SHERIFF'S SADDLEBAG

By Edward "Eddy" Byrne

As I assume the reins of the Northwest Montana Posse of Westerners as Sheriff there are myriad changes and opportunities embracing the Posse as we move into a new chapter.

However, before looking ahead, it is only fitting to recognize and pay tribute to the Sheriff who has organized and led the Posse since its exception – thank you Ron Beard for all you have done over the years. Truly a job well done.

Now as we adjust to our new home and partnership with the Northwest Montana History Museum located at 124 2nd Ave E. in Kalispell, change due to the circumstances of the unprecedented past two years is inevitable. What will not change is the quality of our programs and the core mission statement of the NWMPW.

One of the casualties of the times is foregoing the monthly dinner that has preceded the meetings. Given the growing costs of catering and renting a venue that is conducive to dinners is not fiscally practical. Instead, we are looking into the possibility of an end-of-year gala that includes dinner, a guest speaker, music, and a fundraiser raffle/ silent auction – more to follow.

Priorities for the remainder of this year are to grow the Posse through returning past members, recruiting new members, and developing an outreach program to attract middle school and high school students to attend our monthly meetings.

In addition, we need your active involvement to make this happen. Specifically, we need assistance with setting up and assisting with the monthly events, writers to submit articles, and volunteers to fill out the Board of Directors.

A special thanks to those individuals who have provided the continuity over the past years – Kathy Britton, Grant Mounteer, Rick Hull, and Ed Rothfus. In addition, Malinda Shafman has stepped up to be the Treasurer. Jacob Thomas, the Director of the Northwest Montana History Museum, and his staff have been instrumental in facilitating our new location.

And of course, none of this could be possible without you, our members who continue to attend and support the Posse. I look forward to serving you and am excited to see where we will be 12 months from now.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

June: Monday, June 20, 2022
"Lewis & Clark Expedition"
by Hal Sterns. (Part 3)

July: Monday, July 18, 2022
Part 3 of a series on Montana Aviation
by the Museum of Mountain Flying.

August: Monday, Aug. 15, 2022
"Paris Gibson and Charlie Russell
in Great Falls," by **Bill Dakin**

As a result of the availability of David Bulter of Santa Fe, NM, Posse Deputy Sheriff Ron Beard scheduled him for a presentation on the "Civilian Conservation Corps in Glacier National Park" in October. It is a topic that has been on the Ron's wish list for year.

To make this happen, Posse member **Bill Dakin** has graciously consented to move his program on Charlie Russell to this August.

Notice: The membership Renewal Grace Period will end on Monday, May 16th at midnight. So please send in, or deliver, your 2022 dues before your time runs out.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Members aware of events not listed here are encouraged to contact Ye Editor with the particulars at richardahull@charter.net

- May 25**:** The Northwest Montana History Museum presents "Man in the Wilderness" during its monthly movie night. The 1971 film is based on the story of mountain man Hugh Glass, who was left for dead after a grizzly attack. The tale was also tackled in the 2015 movie, "The Revenant." The show starts at 7 pm. and admission is free.

- The Heritage Museum in Libby opens for the season on May 21. Hours are 10 am. to 5 pm. Monday through Saturday, and 1 to 5 pm. Sundays. The museum is on U.S. 2 on the southeast end of town.

- Ninepipes Museum, located between Ronan and St. Ignatius, is now open. Hours are 10 am. to 4 pm Fridays and Saturdays during April. To schedule a tour at other times, email jo.cheff@ninepipesmuseum.org.

- This year's Fort Connah annual rendezvous will be June 16-19. The historic 1846 Hudson's Bay Company outpost is six miles north of St. Ignatius, Montana, on Hwy. 9.

TRIVIA QUESTION

Barbara Boorman and **Pat Walsh** again had the answer to last month's question: What is the present name of the Maple River that Lt. John Mullan followed north from present-day Kalispell in 1853.

The answer is the Stillwater River, which extends northwest to Stryker, before turning towards its source in the Whitefish Range.

Just over a shallow divide at Stryker is the headwaters of the Tobacco River, which heads almost to the Canadian border.

The Flathead and Tobacco valleys occupy a fold in the Rocky Mountains that was created by faults and earthquakes, and not by rivers.

This Month's Trivia Question

In an effort to outwit Google, I found this fact in an excellent book by local author and Posse member **Darris Flanagan** entitled *Skid Trails: Glory Days of Montana Logging*.

The question: Before logging trucks, how did logs get to lumber mills?

This mode of transportation was used even when timber was hauled out of the woods on logging railroads.

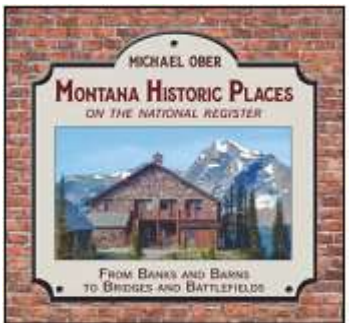
Submit your answer to Ye Editor at richardahull@charter.net and we will print the names of all those who get it right.

FROM THE BOOK SHELF

By Rick Hull

In keeping with this month's presentation, Posse member **Michael Ober** has just published *Montana Historical Places on the National Register.*

Ober's book includes the usual historical sites, including the Conrad Mansion and the Izaak Walton Hotel. But as noted in the subtitle, "From Banks and Barns to Bridges and Battlefields," it contains an eclectic collection of fifty places.



There is the massive Snowden Bridge across the Missouri River in Richland County, and the very simple Cottonwood Creek bridge in Fallon County.

Also featured is the DeSmet Tour boat on Lake McDonald, Dave's Texaco service station in Chinook, and the prehistoric Lookout Cave in Phillips County.

For Hornaday Camp in Garfield County, where an 1886 expedition shot specimens of the last bison for mounting in the Smithsonian Institutions, little remains.

It is "more a concept than a place," Ober writes.

The descriptions are accompanied by modern color photographs. Most are by collaborator Steve Woodruff.

Ober is the former library director at Flathead Valley Community College and worked summers as a seasonal ranger in Glacier National Park.

He previously authored the second edition of *Montana Myths & Legends.*

Montana Historic Places is published by Mountain Press in Missoula and cost $20. It is available on Amazon and locally, including the NW Montana Museum bookstore.

Join the Posse Team

Volunteers are needed to continue the Posse's more than six years of history programs.

- Clerk of the Posse (Secretary-Treasurer)
- Deputy Sheriff for Membership
- Book Wrangler to maintain the Posse library and book raffles
- Assistant Zoom Master to assist and backup the Zoom Master
- Board Members
- Assistant Editor to assist the editor in writing and publicizing Posse newsletters.
- Webmaster for Posse website
- Archivist

Please join our Posse team as we rebuild our organization. Contact Eddy Byrne at 406-871-6001 or edwardjbyrne860@gmail.com to volunteer.

Posse Gold Stars

Recognizing those members and friends whose generosity has assisted the Posse in so many ways:

Parkland Books,
raffle donations

Blacktail Mountain Books,
raffle donations

Northwest Montana Historical Museum,
meeting room

Tim Christenson,
Zoom annual subscription

Posse member donations
to the equipment fund and
anonymous raffle donations.

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HIDDEN GEMS IN THE NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER

By Rick Hull

The Gibson/Lebert House in 1992
Photo by Historian Kathy McKay

An interesting pastime is scrolling through the National Register of Historic Places websites for Flathead County and Montana.

The property down the street might not only be on the register, but may have been owned by a pitcher in the first World Series, a nationally known author of books for adolescent girls or by someone who explored for oil at Kintla Lake in present Glacier National Park.

Or perhaps it was used to harvest ice from Lawrence Park.

That would be the Gibson House on East California Street in Kalispell.

Joseph Gibson was a New England engineer and surveyor who had helped survey Hudson Bay at age 17. When he came to Kalispell in 1891, when the town consisted of two log cabins. The railroad arrived the next year, and Gibson and his partner won the contract to plat the new town for the Kalispell Townsite Company. When the railroad main line moved to Whitefish in 1903, he surveyed that townsite also.

Gibson remained among Kalispell's founders, serving as county assessor and surveyor, as well as volunteer fireman. He was also an architect, designing some of the most prominent buildings in town, including the Masonic Temple on Main Street.

One of his designs was his home on East California Street. Overlooking present Lawrence Park, it originally covered 3.66 acres, and included a barn and hen house. In a factor that would become important later, the property continued down the bluff to reach the Stillwater Slough on the south side of the current park.

Gibson died in 1918 at age 54. Then story moves to two other pioneers, Frank Lebert and his younger brother John. Frank started a sawmill in Demersville in 1891, and operated other mills. About 1898 the brothers built a dam on the Stillwater River, east of the present Whitefish Stage bridge. The dam powered a sawmill that could produce 70,000 board feet a day by 1905. There was enough electricity left over to run a downtown flour mill. It made Frank Lebert a fortune, according to local newspaper.

However his brother John had another idea for making money.

The dam had backed up the river and enlarged the Stillwater Slough. It now lapped at the edge of the hill at Third Ave. E.N and reached depths of 60 feet at times. It was the ideal spot for providing ice to city residents.

In the time before refrigerators, ice was cut from lakes and ponds in the winter, and stored in sawdust-insulated ice houses. Ice blocks were delivered on a regular schedule to homes for use in iceboxes.

Frank took his profits and moved to California, but John stayed. He first bought the Gregg Brothers'

ice business in 1905, including the ice houses, delivery wagon and 3,000 tons of stored ice. Then he bought the Flathead Ice Company.

Lebert ran his operation on the hillside just east of the Gibson property. The Stillwater Slough ice was cut with saws and mechanical conveyors hauled the blocks up the hill and into the ice houses. A crew of 30-40 men were cutting ice during peak times.

Lebert also ran a cordwood business at the slough. The logs were rafted down the Stillwater River, diverted into the slough and then hoisted up to street level by an electric elevator system.

The opportunity to expand came when Joseph Gibson died in 1918. John Lebert bought the house and moved in with his family.

Gibson's widow, Effie outlived her husband by 36 years, dying in Arizona in 1954.

Lebert stayed in the ice business until 1936, when he sold out to an employee. The business stayed on the site, and eventually switched to refrigerated-created ice. John Lebert bought a hotel in Joplin, Montana, but it burned down, and he returned to Kalispell.

The former Gibson House stayed in the family until 1955.

The easiest Historic Register website to use is on Wikipedia at:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National Register of_Historic_ Places_listings_in_Flathead_County,_Montana

This brings up an alphabetical table with a current photo of most listings. Clicking on the property's name links to a brief article. For more information, click on the ID number, such as #94000887 for the Gibson/Lebert House. Then click on "DOWNLOAD THIS PDF" to see the original application with its historical narratives.

This issue of Pony Tracks is Volume 9, Number 4

The Pony Tracks is published monthly except December and January by the
NORTHWEST MONTANA POSSE OF WESTERNERS

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Notice to Contributors

Copy intended for this newsletter should be sent to the Editor at the e-mail address below. Copy must be in the Editor's in-box on or before the first of the month in order to make that month's issue. Copy received after that date will be held over until the subsequent issue.

The next issue of Pony Tracks will be issued June 13, 2022 (or thereabouts)

richardahull@charter.net