



Miracle of America Museum

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Summer 2019

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

36094 Memory Lane Polson, MT 59860 406-883-6804 www.miracleofamericamuseum.org • info@miracleofamericamuseum.org

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Join the fun during Live History Days —

First order of business is preparations for our annual Live History Days July 20-21. It seems that all of our projects during the year are in preparation for this weekend. Our biggest concern is finding volunteers to exhibit and help with the various activities. We have lost some friends due to death, moving out of the area, and family reunions. And abundant spectators and audiences make our musicians and docents feel like their contributions are appreciated.

If you would like to participate in this meaningful activity and share your passion for history, we can really use your help. Please contact Gil ahead of time in case some familiarization or training is necessary. We have commitments for several of the rides, flint napper, glassblower, blacksmith, beader, concessions, and some music so far, but we haven't heard from some of the others yet. We've improved the power source for the Fly O Plane, and could use some help there. Bruce Ruby says he will be happy to help with the photo op in the cockpit of the jet fighter trainer. We could use some help with the green chain on the sawmill, and the tennis ball cannon and the can crusher as well. Schoolmarms and playground assistants could spell off our scheduled readers to give them a chance to visit other venues on the grounds. Come and have some fun those days — you'll be glad you did. *Go back in time with a visit to our 1912 schoolroom; get your photo taken in the cockpit of the T-33 jet trainer!*



“Best Fourth of July ever!”

Gil flies in the Collings Foundation B-17, thanks to Frank Hale

4 July 2019 – My mind imagines what it may have been like over 70 years ago as men readied themselves and their equipment to smash the enemies of freedom around the world. As 36 cylinders from four radial engines warm up to propel the Flying Fortress that I am fortunate to be on this pleasant morning, I think that the sound is familiar, for I would have heard this sound as a baby (being watched by an elderly sitter) as my mom and dad worked feverishly to send another B17 heavy bomber out of the Boeing factory at Seattle.

This particular bomber is “Nine O Nine” from the Collings Foundation, part of their fleet of three heavy bombers and two fighter aircraft on a national “Wings of Freedom Tour”. My “dream come true” flight is an hour-and-a-half flight from Spokane to Kalispell, made possible by frequent museum visitor Frank Hale who is a corporate pilot by day and a volunteer pilot by night – so to speak – of the Collings B-17. He arranged my complimentary ride and we even flew over the museum and then headed to our target. With me in the bombardier's seat, at 10 a.m. we flew over the Kalispell courthouse and along the parade route before a perfect touchdown at Glacier airport.

In flight, I was able to roam around the plane and spot various equipment that we have on display. As I positioned myself at various

battle stations, I realized just how vulnerable the crews were to enemy fighters and anti-aircraft flak.

The uniforms and personal effects on display in the MOAM became even more meaningful



Gil and Frank in front of Nine-O-Nine; Gil crawls into forward nose position of bombardier and chin turret gunner while in flight.

National American Legion Commander in Polson for parade



We provided five vehicles for the special American Legion parade downtown Polson June 29 with H.J. Pieper driving the Vietnam era tribute jeep carrying National American Legion Commander, Brett Reistad who was from Richmond, Virginia.

He was in town for the State American Legion Convention, a four day event commemorating the 100th anniversary of its founding at the end of WWI. Polson had the honor of being the site for the centennial celebration of the American Legion.

According to the Lake County Leader, Polson's Hardwick Post 112 hosted attendees from around the state including members from local posts—Arlee Post 113, Bigfork Post 86,

Charlo Post 126, Ronan Post 138, and St. Ignatius Post 106.

The Leader's Marla Hall reported, "A highlight of the convention was a parade on Polson's Main Street featuring well over 100 veterans and American Legion Auxiliary members proudly marching . . . Not to be deterred, some of those marching even made the trek down Main Street with the assistance of canes."

Although local conventions historically do not bring many visitors to MOAM because of scheduled meetings and banquets, Brett, his aide and driver took the time to visit and spent a couple of hours here. He wanted to stay longer, but had other business, and he presented us a challenge coin and an autographed photo.

We also had a display in the registration area of our historic Legion collectibles.



The Past and Its Lessons are Gifts for the Future. Give Today

To ensure the future of the MOAM we have established an endowment and chosen the Montana Community Foundation (MCF) as our partner in philanthropy.

Through MCF there are many ways to give and 100% of your donation benefits the MOAM endowment, and is tax-deductible. It doesn't matter how you give, it simply

matters that you give. To ensure that your donation benefits our endowment make your check payable to or direct your gift to "MCF/ Miracle of America Museum. Mail to Montana Community foundation, 1 North Last Chance Gulch, Suite 1, Helena, MT 59601. Find out more by going to www.mtcf.org/Giving/Ways-to-Give.

Teaming up on B-17 Nose Art



At left is Gil with the B-17 bomber nose and jacket art he designed and artist Ramona Cajune, the artist who painted it, as well as other projects at the MOAM. The jacket is displayed in the new bomber barracks building, and will be featured more fully in a future article.

Museum benefits from raised admission

Raising our admission and friend price has been a real boon to our budget. Admission is now for age 2 to 12 and dogs on leash is \$5; and 13 and older is \$10. Annual single membership is \$50 and immediate family is \$100. Many visitors think we should charge even more.

I am overwhelmed with donations this last quarter and will not be able to list them all, but I keep the notes and receipts in an upcoming newsletter file to try and work everyone in eventually. Even though repeat item donors keep finding neat stuff, I'll try and give newer donors their place in the sun.

What makes a Citizen?

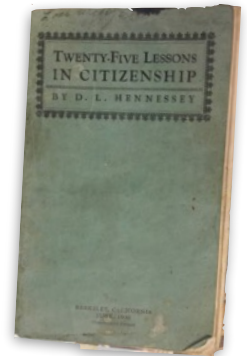
Allen Dodson donated a 62-page 1930 citizenship booklet. It might make us question what is going on in California and other places where some want to give illegal aliens voting rights and other benefits which citizens have worked for.

Can we learn anything from history? The citizenship booklet includes some tough questions such as:

What are the necessary qualifications for a voter in California? A) A voter must be 21 years of age, 1 year a resident of the state, at least ninety days a resident of the county, and 30 days a resident of the precinct.

A 1954 *National Geographic* shows a picture of immigrants studying the English language and books about America before having their records checked by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

A person might wonder about those who expect to enter America with their hand out and no intention of assimilating.



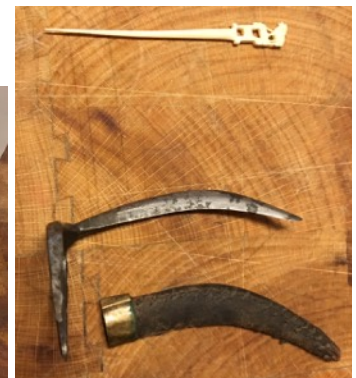
MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS

Occasionally any museum can get overloaded or change its mission and have items in its collection that they will deaccession or dispose of. **The Museum of the Rockies** in Bozeman recently gifted us with 154 items and **Lisa Verwys** of the Registrar's office even delivered them. We will feature several of them in this issue. They ranged in size and weight from a carved ivory toothpick to a 20-lb hat band perforator. This unusual item from 1892 would perforate a man's hat band with his initials. Since many men wore similar hats back in the day it would aid in getting the right one back from the hat check girl. This, of course, is now

displayed in our tailoring shop with numerous men's hats. Some of our hats had been initialed previously, but I had not given any thought about it until receiving this gift.

Most of this last haul has been placed on display, but where to work in one item has me wondering. I had thought that cock fighting roosters used their natural spurs. But included in the collection was a strap on steel spur which even has a small leather scabbard to protect its razor sharp edge. I'm thinking it might go in with our contraband items in the law and crook exhibit for now.

Karen Dunwell excessed a few miscellaneous items and called me. One, a 1940 Japanese artillery shell casing went into the appropriate AXIS military display. Another was a unique wooden clothes laundry wringer. It brought back memories especially when I turned it over and found my name on it. I remembered I had given it to her grandfather in the late 1960s when he started the downtown Polson museum. The wringer is now in its new home in our utility and cleaning building. I did give Karen a cash donation to be used for new roofing which they desperately need.



Pictured here is just a small sampling of the 154 unique items we obtained from the Museum of the Rockies. We are in the process of identifying them and displaying them in a meaningful way.

Top, left to right Bicycle bell, tire/tube mending tool, wheel spoke tightener; check protector and liberty bond box; jewelers anvil and metal mainspring box; 1880s soda bottles and unique metal over glass seltzer bottle.

Bottom, left to right; medical and dental potions and devices including pre Civil War blood-letter; four- strand rope maker, Larvex moth-proofing dispenser and ivory toothpick, and cock-fighting blade with scabbard

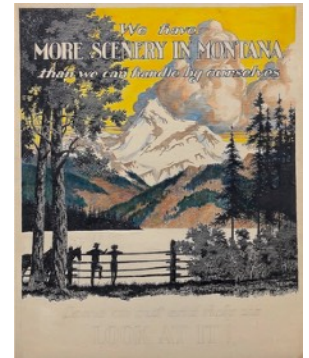
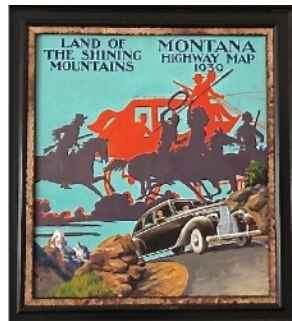
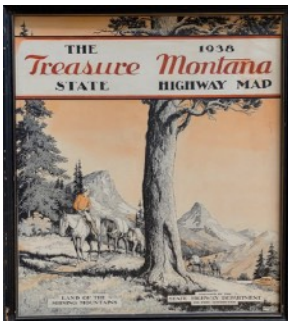
Rare Opportunity to Obtain Original Montana Art



A rare opportunity to obtain original Montana Art puts us begging for donors again. As far as anyone knows, we have the largest collection of Montana Highway Commission road maps on public display. The beautiful art work in the 30s and most of the 40s was done by "Shorty" Shope. Charlie Russell was impressed with his work, but Shorty didn't have the public relations and showmanship of Mrs. Charlie Russell, so Shorty wasn't as well known.

Shown is a portion of our map display, as well as the five original art pieces we have the opportunity to purchase at *half of the appraised value thanks to a very generous seller*. These are average of 18" x 19" in size and are professionally mounted on acid free material and uv shielded glass. We have placed a down payment on these to hold them, but must raise \$10,000 to own them and take delivery.

If you enjoy art, please consider making a directed donation so we may add these to our collection for all to enjoy.



The originals available to us show the skill and passion of artist Irvin "Shorty" Shope, Left to right: "The Treasure State", 1936 cover; "Land of the Shining Mountains", 1939; "Roads to Romance", 1940; and "We have more scenery in Montana than we can handle by ourselves", undated.

Live History Days Saturday and Sunday July 20 and 21!

Bring the family and guests
for a fun-filled weekend!

Your once-a-year chance to see living
history!

Historic Demonstrations of Pioneer Crafts
Blacksmithing, Leather working,
Woodcarving,

Gunsmithing, Rope making, and
Glassblowing with wares for sale



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