New Community Project!

The Gallatin History Museum is proud to announce a new community project: the Gallatin County Tapestry. The Museum is currently working with local artists to create a timeline of images that will tell the history of Gallatin County from the land to the first peoples to the creation of all that Bozeman and the surrounding communities are today. Once the drawings are complete, we are going to ask you, our community, to join us in embroidering a panel, or two, or many!

Each participant will be given a kit containing the panel image on fabric, a color guide, a history snippet on the panel content, one hoop, and the embroidery floss and basic needles needed for the project. We ask that our participants be creative in the way they use the embroidery floss to show us your unique style. We welcome a plethora of stitches! We will also be sharing online content and resources to assist anyone who wants to pick up an embroidery needle for the first time.

We will be asking for a donation for each kit, big or small, it is up to you, to pay what you can for the kit. We don’t wish to turn anyone away because of cost.

We look forward to sharing more details about the project soon but if you are already interested, please email Kelly Hartman at curator@gallatinhistorymuseum.org or call 406-522-8122 to get on an email/mailing list.
Director’s Gem by Cindy Shearer

To those who are not as passionate about the power of museums as readers of this newsletter, it can often seem that such institutions are merely places where forgotten objects go to enjoy their final years. But despite this, there is a strong case to be made that the museum is more relevant today than it has ever been. From addressing key social issues to transforming how we see the future; the humble museum has the power to reflect and shape our society. Here are some reasons why we need museums now more than ever.

**Learning from the past**

First and foremost, museums and galleries provide an insight into the history of humankind. And while no museum can claim to provide a complete picture, the lessons we can learn from past events, wonders and tragedies are priceless. At the GHM the exhibition of the “Execution of Seth Danner” tells not only the story of his personal life but also brings the practice of the death penalty into the conversation.

**Bringing communities together**

Local museums can provide a sense of community and place by celebrating a collective heritage, offering a great way to get to know the history of a particular area. With the recent population growth in Gallatin County the need to share the stories and practices of the first inhabitants and early settlers is more important than ever to help add value and aid newcomers to embrace local. The Gallatin History Museum has also brought people together in a more literal way, through public events, workshops and lectures.

**Digitization, innovation and interaction**

Technology is transforming museums from spaces of looking and learning to spaces of interaction, participation and engagement. During the past 5 years the GHM has used interactive flat screens to help visitors dig deeper and interact with the collection in new ways, through the use of GHM produced videos in the theater space and sharing on social media, we are proud of the technological advances of our little local history museum. We are doing things here that museums much larger with significantly larger financial resources are not doing. Our artifacts are inventoried with bar codes denoting donor and location, both on exhibit and in storage. With 20,000 plus images digitized and more recently the addition of digitizing the GHM slide collection, the GHM’s archives are a researcher’s dream.

Advances in technology have also made museums more accessible than ever. For those who might struggle to attend an institution in person, museums and galleries are increasingly sharing their collections online. Virtual reality, digital guides, downloads, apps and digital trails are all becoming increasingly available to anyone and everyone. With time and resources your future Gallatin History Museum is so full of possibility and opportunity.

**Educating future generations**

Speaking of the future, museums and other cultural institutions will always have a role to play in the education of future generations. From creating exhibitions targeted towards children to teaching children in an alternative environment, institutions around the world are doing their bit to pass down knowledge.

Museums have been described as “an educational country fair” – and this is truer today than ever. In the United States alone, around 80% of museums provide educational programs for children, and spend more than $2 billion per year on educational activities, according to the American Alliance of Museums.

The GHM typically tours 400 local school children through the museum, providing teachers with supporting content for local history as well as assist establish the tools for the research process. With the closure this year we made a big push to add content to our website specifically for our local teachers complete with lesson plans. We also have coloring pages and fun videos related to local history and other youth related content.

Museums are just as important to the future as the future is to museums. Not only can our museums bring history to life, but they can also shine a light on both our present and our future – a light which can be hard to find elsewhere.

Cindy Shearer

PS: Please help us keep that light on by supporting the Gallatin Historical Society/Gallatin History Museum during our year-end fund-raising drive. Please and thank you!
President’s Plum by Rick Benson

Museums of local history are important. They collect, preserve and display artifacts, documents, and photographs related to stories of the past; in our case, the past of Bozeman and the Gallatin valley. This history is an essential element of the “human glue” that binds us together as a community and as a society.

An example of how important people view local historical societies and their museums, (depending on the definition of local,) there are more than sixty such organizations active in the state of Montana. History is never static. Fresh discoveries, new research, and the continuous evolving of our cultural understanding of who we are and how we got here will always require organizations such as ours. It is our mission to make ours the best it can possibly be.

Your Gallatin History Museum Board - Part 1

John Backes

Raised on the Front Range in Colorado in farming and ranching I followed an educational path in history leading to a degree in library and information science. Working as a librarian in public, special and higher education libraries I found helping others research their questions around family and place especially interesting. About halfway through my career I moved into college administration which ended in retirement in 2012. While my work life was in Washington state, our daughter became a MSU Bobcat and so we moved to Bozeman to be with her and her family. I was a board director for our local history museum and heritage center for many years meeting many incredible individuals and families whose stories shaped the present-day towns in that area. My interest in place and the human, environmental and ecological changes to it continues to be a major interest.

During the pandemic most of us have curtailed our travel plans to protect ourselves and our community. The Gallatin History Museum lets us time travel and enjoy the experiences of looking at the Gallatin Valley and southwest Montana with new eyes. One way we support the museum is allocating some of our travel budget to its work in giving us a thoughtful and fun experience through the lives of those who came before us. The museum’s gift store is a treasure cove full of books, photographs and gifts to take home and enjoy safely. I hope that as we get through this pandemic that you will visit the museum’s web site and learn more about this last best place.
Richard Holper

What makes the Gallatin History Museum and Historical Society special to me and why do I offer it my support?

I am of course somewhat prejudiced in this regard as I am an historian by background and honored to be one of the Directors of the Society. The Society was founded in 1977 and is organized as a 501c3 charitable organization. Contributions to the Society are deductible for tax purposes.

The mission of the Society is to preserve, promote and foster the history of Gallatin County and Southwest Montana. Why is this mission worthy of support? It is because we live in an historically significant part of our state and of our country. We live in an area rich in history. This history begins with the native tribes that lived and hunted in this area. It incorporates the Lewis and Clark Corp of Discovery that crossed thru this area twice during the years 1804-1806 and it incorporates the growth of the population of our state beginning after the Civil War, That growth continues to this day.

Writing in the 1850s Daniel Webster observed this with respect to our part of Montana “What do we want with this vast, worthless area, this region of savages and wild beasts.” Forty years later, things had changed. Writing in 1889 Rudyard Kipling is reported as describing our area as an area of “unbridled confidence in national exceptionalism.”

The history of Gallatin County and Bozeman is filled with interesting, and, sometimes controversial actors such as John Bozeman, Julius Lehrkind, Nelson Story, Mathew Bird, Fred Wilson, Samuel Lewis (a mixed race immigrant from the West Indies who arrived in Bozeman in the 1860s and thrived in business), Richard and Mary McDonald, former slaves who immigrated to Bozeman after the Civil War and many others.

Its history is filled with events relating to trails, mining, race relations, the role of the military, railroads, ranches, farming missionaries, wars, homesteading, attempts to lure the State Capitol to town, the growth of a University, political differences, dueling newspapers, an occasional crime, ever expanding economic growth growing high tech and health service sectors, the creation and preservation of sometimes unique architectural styles, cultural and civil events, business and commercial dealings of all types and constant change and growth.

For those who value the opportunity to learn more of how this complex area evolved from what it was to what it is and thus to understand what it might be in the future, the Historical Society provides a vehicle to preserve our history and to learn and appreciate the area in which we live and how it has developed.

The Society publishes a quarterly journal recounting historical events in our area. The Society also operates the Museum located in a unique building located across from what was the original Story Mansion. The building was constructed in 1911 for use as a jail. Today a tour of the Museum highlights interesting facts about occurrences in and prior occupants of this building. The Museum also houses the research facilities of the Society, contains many historical exhibits for viewing by the public, hosts tours of its most interesting history and provides a wealth of historical reading material for both members of the Society and visitors.

It is for all these reasons, that I support the Historical Society and Museum.

1A very readable history of our land is found in two books; Montana 1864 (the year that Montana became a territory) and Montana 1889 (the year of Montana Statehood). These books both written by Ken Egan Jr provide a starting point for someone wanting to determine how Gallatin County and Bozeman as well as other areas in our State progressed from this vast worthless area (Noted by Egan in Montana 1864 p 13) thru to an area of unbridled confidence observed by Rudyard Kipling in 1889 (Noted by Egan in Montana 1889 p-117) to its present status as a modern, vibrant, diverse and unique part of 21st Century America.
Those of us who work in the research library at the Gallatin History Museum always get excited when we are given documents pertaining to local families. Usually these collections contain priceless nuggets of local history and fascinating stories. This past summer, the Gallatin History Museum received a large collection of papers, letters, and photographs from the Lessley family. Included in this collection were documents from other local families connected with the Lessleys through marriage – Irvine, Stanton, Walton, and Williams.

The Lessley family originally hailed from Missouri but moved to Gallatin County in the 1910s. Herbert Lessley, Sr. married Iva Stanton in Bozeman in 1917. Iva was born in 1894 in Willow Creek, Montana to E. F. and Rosalie Williams Stanton. Herbert and Iva lived on a small farm on South Church Avenue, where they operated Quality Gardens and raised their children. Herbert and Iva’s daughters, Jeanne Lessley Jarrell and Lois Lessley Irvine, grew up in Bozeman and lived in a variety of locations across the United States during their adult lives. Son Herbert Lessley, Jr. served five years in WWII and enjoyed a long career with Milam Greenhouses. Oldest son William Wallace Lessley also served in World War II. He went to law school, married a local girl named Mae Walton, and served over thirty years on the bench in Bozeman as a district court judge and state Water Court judge.

Among the family vacation postcards, photo snapshots and greeting cards in this collection, we found letters home from WWII, marriage announcements, birth certificates, and memorabilia from Judge Lessley’s law career. Archival collections like these bring families back to life and they become more than just names on a page. Well-known figures like Judge Lessley certainly shape local history, but they are also molded by the people, places and events that make up Gallatin County’s heritage. Foreshadowing what was to come, on the last page of his graduation announcement from Central College in Fayette, Missouri in 1929, the future Judge Lessley wrote the following note: “To Mother and Dad, who have been the source of my inspiration and help all along the way – and who someday I hope to make happy and proud by being a successful lawyer. Your loving son, Wm. ‘Bill’ Lessley, ‘1929’.”

Researcher’s Trove by Rachel Phillips

The Research library is still here to serve your needs! Researchers can access the collection in person on an appointment basis. Appointments can be through an online portal on our website or by giving us a call. We ask that you make your request at least 24 hours prior to your planned visit to give our Research Coordinator time to pull what you might need during your visit.

Hours are 11-3 Tuesday through Friday.

Rachel and Charlotte have been creating a better storage system for the many wonderful framed photos that are in the Museum’s archive collection.

And they have been having fun to boot!
Our exhibit work has continued on at GHM. With the Museum closed, we are using this as a time to completely reinvent some of our display spaces. This past month we have been hard at work on two new exhibits: Women and a new Exploration Room. We also completed a new mural for our Agriculture exhibit.

The exhibit for Women will still be located in the original women's cell quarters of the building but with some new and exciting changes. We have repainted the space a lighter shade and will be opening up the original bathroom space for the first time as an exhibit space that will tell the stories of the powerful women in Gallatin County’s past. And not to forget the notorious women that have made their mark on the area, we are creating a new display in one of the original jail cells to share the lives of the women who were incarcerated there for a spell, including the story of Iva Danner, ex-wife of Seth Danner, the only man executed in the old jail. We will still have a fashion stage to show off our wonderful textile collections, but it will be updated to include a few new murals.

The exploration room is perhaps the most exciting new venture we have taken. This space will be used to share how the museum collects artifacts and archives and will include a space for displaying our new acquisitions. The room will also feature a panel showing how one can research their ancestry, or a person interesting to them, through time by using the resources we have in our research library.

As always, we are ever grateful for the volunteers who worked tirelessly to create this organization, and those that donated their time to creating the exhibit spaces we still use today.
2020 Business Membership Program

Benefits of becoming a Business Member
Provide support for programs and exhibitions
Enjoy enhanced name recognition
Reach new customers and targeted markets
Enrich the quality of life in our community

All Business Members will receive:
One vote per membership for general elections
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Subscription to and acknowledgement in The Quarterly Magazine
10% Discount on bookstore purchases
5 complimentary admission passes
Listing/link on Museum website
Volunteer opportunities for you and your staff
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Gallatin $250.00
Two Business Membership Cards, 10 additional passes and one business card size ad in one issue of The Quarterly.

Madison $500.00
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Yellowstone $1000.00
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Missouri $2500.00
Two Business Membership Cards, 20 additional passes, a half page ad in two issues of The Quarterly, a framed certificate of recognition and special tour for your organization and guests. Named co-sponsor for annual events.

Please feel free to call Cindy at 406-522-8122
For additional information email: director@GallatinHistoryMuseum.org
Additional Quarterly Magazines are available at a discounted rate for our business members to share in waiting rooms, break rooms and other public spaces.

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Donate Online at: www.GallatinHistoryMuseum.org
Jello Cheese Cake

1 small pkg. lemon jello
1/2 c. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
1 can crushed pineapple
1 large pkg. cream cheese
1 can evaporated milk (cold), whipped

Graham cracker crust (make in 13x9x2 inch pan):
1 pkg. graham crackers + 2, crushed
1 stick melted butter or margarine

Dissolve jello in 1 cup hot water. Add sugar and vanilla. Blend in cream cheese. Fold in whipped milk. Add 1 can drained pineapple. Pour into crust. Refrigerate 1 hour and serve.

Carla Reichman, Sedan, Montana Community Cookbook