



PONY TRACKS

Newsletter of the Northwest Montana Posse of Westerners

Vol. 8, No. 6

Kalispell, Montana

July 12, 2021

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

JULY MEETING

Monday, July 19, 2021

Topic: "Guiding Lights: Montana's Historic Airway Beacon System"

Presenter: Kate Hampton of Helena, Montana

Where: The Red Lion, 20 North Main, Kalispell, Montana. (east end of the Kalispell Center Mall)

Time: 5:15 pm Grab 'n' Greet
6:00 pm - Dinner (includes the presentation)
7:00 pm - Presentation

Dinner: \$19; Red Lion's special entree, sides, green salad with choice of dressing, rolls and butter. Regular or decaf coffee, or hot tea. Chef's choice of dessert.

Dinner Reservations: Call (406) 752-9642 (leave message with names and phone number); or send email to kbrittonrn@gmail.com with the same information.

Reservation Deadline: Wednesday, July 14, at 9:00 pm

Posse members may join the program through Zoom by contacting tim.chris@yahoo.com for registration and instructions.

ABOUT THE PRESENTATION

(This program is Part 2 of a multiple part series on historic Montana flying.)

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Federal Airway Division installed a chain of lighted airway beacons across the country to guide pilots across dark skies.

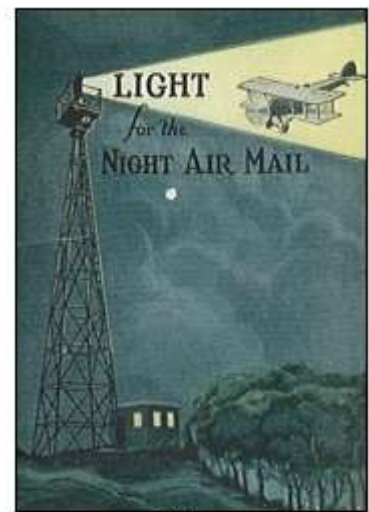
At the system's peak in the early 1940s, 84 beacons marked airway routes across Montana. For over eighty years, the beacons helped guide commercial and private pilots across the United States.

Today, Montana is the only state that still maintains these beacons, and the historic towers can still be spotted – day and night – throughout the western mountains .

The beacons essentially became a nostalgic souvenir of the early history of aviation in Montana. Several are still lit.

The surviving towers are maintained by local governments and non-profits. The St. Regis and Lookout Pass beacons are now used to remotely monitor weather and road conditions on Interstate 90.

Only one beacon, on Strawberry Mountain



Yahoo.com image

Visit our website: northwestmontanaposseofwesterners.wordpress.com

near Bozeman, could not be saved.

By the end of this year all the beacons will no longer be the state's Aeronautics Division's official responsibility

In recognition of their significance to the history of aviation in Montana, eight airway beacons are listed in or are in the process of being listed in the National Register of Historic Places. MacDonald Pass is the most prominent of the historic airway beacons and the only one that is easily accessible.

Kate Hampton, is the Community Preservation Officer 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.

A contributing author of numerous articles, book chapters, nominations, projects, and cultural resource reports and as a presenter documenting places throughout the West.

She has studied and written about Montana's important places and the architectural landscape that not only makes the state unique, but also ties its history to the rest of the nation.

Hampton is author of *The Best Gift - Montana's Carnegie Libraries*.



Spokane Beacon, located east of Helena.

MDT Aeronautics photo

FROM THE SHERIFF'S SADDLEBAG



The past year and a half has brought so many changes one would think that it couldn't get any worse – well, guess again. We recently received word that the Red Lion Inn is now under new ownership, which will most likely result in a renegotiation of room rates, meal costs, and other charges after the July Posse meeting. The Posse's objective will be to financially survive the remainder of the 2021 season. Since we have not yet formally met with the Red Lion, we have no specific details but it appears likely that we may have move our meeting location.

As for the July Posse meeting, due to the lack of personnel, we will return to the buffet style meal delivery.

As for good news, the History of Apgar Project (HOAP) is coming out of hibernation. The goal of this committee's effort is to reprint the 1950 booklet prepared by the student's of Mrs. Leona Harrington, of Apgar School, consisting of response letters from 'old timers' as to their memory of their early years in the Apgar and North Fork areas. We have received the blessing of the Supt. of Flathead County Schools so we are moving forward with this.

We are continuing to work with the Montana Veterans Home in Columbia Falls and with the Buffalo Terrace complex in Kalispell for Zooming the Posse programs into their facilities.

As a promotional to the Posse's August meeting on the History of the Smoke Jumpers, we will be hosting a showing of the 1952 historic movie "Red Skies of Montana" starring Richard Widmark, Constance Smith, Jeffrey Hunter, and Richard Boone. The film was loosely based on the August 1949 Mann Gulch Fire in Montana. Mark your calendar for Thursday evening, August 12 in the

Community Room at Flathead Electric Cooperative.

We will continue in our spirit of having fun, so historical or hysterical attire will be promoted at each meeting. Period attire is not mandatory and is entirely optional, of course, but greatly encouraged. Raffle items and history themed book signings will be available during the Grab 'n' Greet session. Hope to see each of you at our June meeting on the 19th.

Please bring a friend/neighbor, an airplane pilot, a navigator, a airplane mechanic, a search and rescue volunteer, or one of each.

GENERAL MEETING INFORMATION

NMPW's meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month, except the months of December and January, at the Red Lion, 20 North Main, Kalispell, Mt. (East end of the Kalispell Center Mall).

All meetings begin with a Grab 'n' Greet for a chance to get acquainted, followed by the evening meal, and a presentation pertaining to Western history.

Evening meals are open to both members and non-members. Dinners require advance reservations. Pay for the meals at the door upon arrival.

Walk-in seating will be available free to all Posse members and youths 16 and under and \$5 each for all non-members.

There will be our usual raffle for door prizes.
Local history authors will sign books.

NEW MEMBERS

The following new member recently joined the Posse:

Gary Boe, of Kalispell, Montana

FUTURE PROGRAMS

August: Monday, Aug. 16, 2021
"History of the Smoke Jumpers"
(Part 1 of a Series)

September: Monday, Sept. 20, 2021
"Glacier Lake Missoula"
(Part 3 of a Series)

October: Monday, Oct. 18, 2021
"Hungry Horse Dam"
(Part 1 of a Series)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



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

- **August 15¹²:** Historical movie, "Red Skies of Montana" at the Flathead Electric Cooperative' Community Room. 6:30 p.m. Free admission.
- **August 18:** Slide show of original photos by E. B. Gilliland of Somers. 6 p.m. at the Northwest Montana History Museum. Free admission.
- **September 1:** History Book Club. Mrs. Wheeler Goes to Washington. 2 p.m. at the Northwest Montana History Museum.
- **September 10, 11 & 12:** Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society. Hilton Garden Inn, Kalispell
- **October 8 & 9:** Westerners' International Third Annual Gather and 75th Los Angeles Corral in Los Angeles. Details coming.

Visit our website: northwestmontanaposseofwesterners.wordpress.com

FROM YE EDITOR'S DESK

By Rick Hull

Posse member **Barbara Boorman** easily answered June's Trivia Question, about what impact the Chinooks, a West Coast tribe met by Lewis and Clark, had on northwest Montana geography: the tribe flattened their heads. "Flathead" is now the name of a local Indian reservation, a lake, a county and more.

The trivia answer opens up the whole issue – and mystery – of how the practice of a Washington tribe put its mark on Montana maps.

Names of people and regions typically come from neighbors. America was named by French cartographers in 1507, who based their decision on the somewhat inflated resume of Italian Amerigo Vespucci.

Germany is a name dating back to Roman times. The residents call themselves the Deutsch, leading to the misnaming of the Pennsylvania "Dutch".

North American tribes generally called themselves "The People". In fact, the opening statement in the American Constitution, "We the People" echoes a Iroquois document that predates the settling of the United States.

However the people reference goes beyond even beyond the nationalist "Volk", or folk, of Germany. Most Indian tribes believed animals, such as bears, were sentient and had their own language, songs and traditions. Some tribes went so far as to describe themselves as the "human beings," and the Nez Perce call themselves the Nimiipuu, or the "Real People."

Tribes were typically named by outsiders, and often those names were converted into their present form by French Canadian fur traders. The Nez Perce had nose piercings and the Pend d' Oreille wore ear ornaments. Gros Ventre means "big belly". Perhaps the most uncomplimentary was the Coeur d'Alene, who were know as sharp traders. It means "heart

like an awl." The Blackfeet were said to have gotten their name from setting prairie fires to drive game into traps.

The most notorious were the Lakota-Dakota who we call the Sioux. Some accounts say Sioux means "enemy." Fittingly, the tribe is represented in sign language with a "slice the throat" gesture with the index figure.

This brings the story to the Flathead Indians. Technically they are the Salish, sometimes narrowed down to the Bitterroot Salish. But Salish unwraps a much bigger package. It refers to a language and family of tribes that cover the Northwest and British Columbia.

The list of Salish tribes literally reads like a road map – Snohomish, Puyallup, Tillamook, Wenatchee, Coeur d'Alene, Chehalis, Colville, Pend d'Oreille, Spokane, and Kalispel (with one "l"). This doesn't include chief names like Seattle, and locally, Charlo and Victor. The entire Puget Sound, San Juan Islands and Vancouver Island area has been named the Salish Sea.

The homebase of the Bitterroot Salish was the Bitterroot Valley, south of Missoula. It is located on the very east edge of the Northwest. Since the tribe spent part of the year hunting bison, the Flatheads were likely the only Salish that the Great Plains Indians knew.

"Salish," was translated among other tribes simply as "those who speak Salish." So it is probable that it is the Flatheads are the source of the name "Salish."

But how did the Flatheads get their name, even though everyone agrees they never flattened their heads? There are a couple theories.

One account points to the number of Salish tribes who strapped their babies into cradle boards, with a hinged board pressing against the forehead.

Along with the Chinooks, the Coast Salish, the Clatsop, Kathlamet, Killamuck, Winnapa, Cowlitz, Kwalhioquas and the Wahkiakum tribes adopted this practice.

The explanation is the Montana Flatheads, had heads that were flat, instead of wedged-shaped.

Jesuit missionary Antoine Ravalli was among those with another theory. He felt that the Flatheads took their Washington relatives, such as the Chinooks, on bison-hunting forays. The unusual head shape attracted notice among the Great Plains tribes.

Evidence for this version is the 1885 book "The Indian Sign Language" by W.P. Clark. The sign for the Flatheads was indicating the wedge-shaped head: "Press the upper part of the forehead and head with palms of hands, fingers extended and touching, tips of finger touching above the head."

The head flattening did not affect the children's intellectual growth.

But there was a negative side. Tribes used the flattening to differentiate themselves from their slaves taken from other tribes, since it could not be duplicated past infancy. The Mayans of Central America, in particular, were known for this.

TRIVIA QUESTION

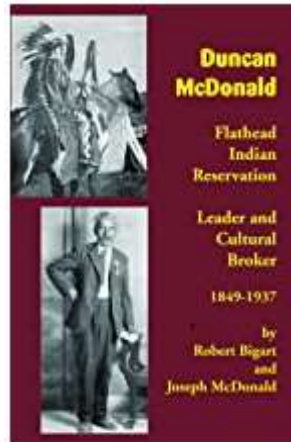
As noted above, **Barbara Boorman** knew the answer to last month's trivia question.

This month's question is also geographic. Game cameras were used in a grizzly-bear study in Glacier National Park, and they soon recorded numerous, and also humorous, videos of bear's scratching themselves against trees. (See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6v1rQ4Z3drM> for one example.) The behavior, prior to video evidence of its true purpose, resulted in the naming of which Flathead Lake community?

Submit your answer to Ye Editor at richardahull@charter.net and we will print the names of all those who get it right. See next month's newsletter for the full story.

FROM THE BOOK SHELF

Duncan McDonald - Flathead Indian Reservation Leader and Cultural Broker is the biography of one of the most influential and unknown characters in local history.



Born in 1849, he was the son of Angus McDonald, the Hudson Bay's Company trader at Ft. Connah, just north of St. Ignatius.

Part Indian himself, he was as comfortable in war bonnet and buckskin as in a suit and tie.

He pops up in contemporary accounts as the proprietor of the Ravalli Hotel, which was on the main route into the Flathead Reservation and upper Flathead Valley.

But for most of his life he represented the Flathead chiefs in their disputes with federal and state authorities.

He was a multi-faceted individual. His tale of holding desperately onto a bison calf's tail became a painting by Charlie Russell. And, on a picnic in Idaho, he located the remains of David Thompson's 1809 Kullyspell House.

Self-taught, his written accounts are flawless and he was a frequent public speaker.

If the book has any faults, it often gives only tidbits of major reservation issues in which McDonald played a role.

By Robert Bigart and Joseph McDonald. Paperback, 2016 \$16.95. 244 pages.

We would like to
thank Posse member
Dale Haarr,
who contributed to the
Live-Streaming Equipment Fund.

PARKLAND BOOKS



GENERAL OUT-OF-PRINT BOOKS
AND PAPER WITH EMPHASIS
ON WESTERN AMERICANA &
NATIONAL PARKS

850 LAKE BLAINE ROAD KALISPELL, MONTANA 59901
(One mile east of Junction of Routes 55 & 206)

Open Noon til 6 PM Friday, Saturday and Sunday
MARGE & ED ROTHFUSS, OWNERS

Ph. (406) 752-4464

E-mail: PARKLANDBK@AOL.COM



Video
Pre-Production
Production
Post-Production

406-407-0213
213 South Main
Kalispell, MT 59901

whitecliffproductions.com

Blacktail Mountain Books



42 First Avenue West
Kalispell, Montana 59901

(406) 257-5573

Hours: 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM
Closed Sundays

Since 1977

www.facebook.com/blacktailbooks
www.blacktailbooks.com

30,000 books and we trade!

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

The Red Lion, promotions
and audio equipment

White Cliff Productions
and Paul Nuff,
Audio/Visual Consulting

Tim Christenson,
Zoom Guy

Anonymous,
raffle books



This issue of Pony Tracks is Volume 8, Number 6

The Pony Tracks is published monthly except December and January by the

NORTHWEST MONTANA POSSE OF WESTERNERS

c/o Clerk of the Posse, P. O. Box 10811, Kalispell, MT 59904.

Authors of articles hold the copyright to their contributions. All other
content is ©2021 by Northwest Montana Posse of Westerners.

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.

For submissions to the Posse Dispatch, contact the Editor by e-mail first for
submission requirements.

The next issue of Pony Tracks will be issued August 16, 2021 (or thereabouts)

richardahull@charter.net

Visit our website: northwestmontanaposseofwesterners.wordpress.com