



PONY TRACKS

Newsletter of the Northwest Montana Posse of Westerners

Vol. 10, No. 2

Kalispell, Montana

March 13, 2022

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

MARCH MEETING (Returning to Red Lion)

Monday, March 20, 2023

Topic: "From Tex and Jerry to Modernization:
The Legacy of Hungry Horse Dam"

Presenter: M'lissa Morgan of Kalispell, MT

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

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

Dinner: \$20 (Summer BBQ with side dishes)
Dinner is payable at the door.

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

Reservation Deadline:
Thursday, March 16th, at 9:00 pm

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

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81346458390?
pwd=bkwvd3pTdUxkNmIKRkxnTDI5NHVrZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81346458390?pwd=bkwvd3pTdUxkNmIKRkxnTDI5NHVrZz09)

Meeting ID: 813 4645 8390

Email tim.chris@yahoo.com for more help.

ABOUT THE PRESENTATION



Hungry Horse Dam under construction.

Photo - Bureau of Reclamation

March's presentation is just in time for the 70th anniversary of the 1953 completion of Hungry Horse Dam.

Historian M'lissa Morgan will tell of Tex and Jerry, the two horses whose winter ordeal gave the dam its unique name. And she will cover the history of the dam, which had been proposed for decades before construction started in 1948. And she will also talk about modernization of the dam, which allows it to hum unattended during the night while controlled remotely from Grand Coulee Dam in Washington state.

Hungry Horse Dam was the third largest and second highest, concrete dam in the world at the time of its completion. Rising 564 feet, the arch dam contains of 3.1 million cubic yards of concrete. It backs up a reservoir of

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more than 37 square miles that extend deep into the wilderness of the South Fork.

Construction also spawned the boom towns in the Canyon. Employee housing moved from the temporary city at Hungry Horse are now scattered around the Flathead Valley.

Though the aluminum refinery at Columbia Falls once consumed nearly all its electrical output, Hungry Horse Dam's upstream location allowed timely flows that made up for it with increased power production from dams throughout the Northwest.

The dam's flood control function proved itself in 1964, when it was able to hold back the South Fork when a 500-to-1,000-year flood hit the Flathead Valley.

About the Presenter

M'lissa Morgan has been with the Bureau of Reclamation at the Hungry Horse Field Office for almost three years, first as a Reclamation Guide and now as the Historian. She has a varied background of heritage work, including archives, museums, archaeology, and National Parks. She received a BA in history from Colorado State University-Pueblo in Colorado and a MA in Historical Archaeology from the University of Leicester in England.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

- **April:** Monday, April 17, 2023
"Charles Lindbergh in Montana History"
by Dennis Gaub of Billings
- **May:** Monday, May 15, 2023
"1929 Half Moon Fire"
by Posse member **Rick Trembath** of Bigfork
- **June:** Monday, June 19, 2023
"Larger Than Life Leaders: Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery" (Part 4)
by Hal Stearns of Missoula



FROM THE SHERIFF'S SADDLEBAG

By Edward "Eddy" Byrne

I am still awaiting the return of the robins, and crocus and daffodil flowers. Unfortunately the snow (and ice) are fighting the transition to spring. The delay gives us another reason to get out of the elements and attend our upcoming meeting. This month we are back at the Red Lion for M'lissa Morgan's presentation on "The Legacy of Hungry Horse Dam".

Remember if you want a BBQ dinner we need your reservations no later than Thursday. We are keeping the cost down at \$20.00 per person.

The Deputy Sheriff for Programs, Kyle Stetler, has been extremely active in filling out 2023 and working the 2024 schedule.

He is also soliciting members (and friends/family) who are interested in a field trip to Missoula to visit the Museum of Mountain Flying. We are targeting May on a Saturday or Sunday. You can sign up at the meeting or contact Kyle directly at kmstetler@gmail.com.

Thank you to all who signed up to assist with the Posse administration and logistics. We will meet immediately after the program for about fifteen minutes. In addition, we will set a time to meet the following week for an off-site.

March is our last big push for membership this year. Thank you to all who have paid their dues. Our Treasurer is working on the budget and would greatly appreciate anyone who has not paid bringing their completed applications with them to the Red Lion Monday.

To volunteer or if you have any questions, recommendations, or concerns, please get in touch with me at 406-871-6001 or email edwardjbyrne860@gmail.com.

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FROM YE EDITOR'S DESK

By Rick Hull

The snow and winter off-season has bogged down plans to highlight museums in the area. But a stroll through the National Register of Historic Places in Kalispell is a convenient respite. In paging through the descriptions, one name continually pops up – architect Fred Brinkman.



A 1930 rendering of the KCFW building at 401 First Ave. East when it was the Anderson Service Station.

Brinkman designed some of the stereotypical grand buildings of Kalispell, like the Bethlehem Lutheran Church on Main Street. But Brinkman drew up plans for buildings so diverse that it is difficult to believe they are by the same architect. There is the Tudor-style Presbyterian Church with its Glacier Park motif, the art deco KCFW building (originally a service station) and the Anderson Style Shop, the classical city Water Department building and the colonial mansion Cornelius Hedges School.

Brinkman was born the son of German



The Kalispell Water Department Office in 1930.

immigrants in 1892, and attended a German-speaking boarding school until eight years old. Back in Kalispell, he graduated from Flathead County High School in 1912. His grade average was 97, the highest in the school's history, and he was class valedictorian. He earned a degree in civil engineering at the University of Wisconsin, with additional schooling at the University of Michigan. He worked in Panama, Detroit, and then Billings with notable success.

Kalispell's only practicing architect, Marion Rizzo, died in 1921 and Brinkman's father persuaded his son to return home. He was married to Aral Linthactun, a former Kalispell school teacher he met in Billings, and she ran a dressmaking business out of their modest home on Kalispell's west side. She also was an interior decorator on some of his projects.

Brinkman died in 1961. Though he has an entry in *Wikipedia*, there are no photographs, nor are there any at the Northwest Montana History Museum.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

- April 5: The History Book Club discusses *Ridgeline: A Novel by Michael Punke* at 2 p.m. in the Northwest Montana History Museum.
- Ninepipes Museum, located between Ronan and St. Ignatius, is now open. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays during March and April. To schedule a tour at other times, call (406) 644-3435 or email info@ninepipesmuseum.org.
- April 10: "A History of the Chinese Experience in Montana" by Mark Johnson. 6 p.m. Northwest Montana History Museum.

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GENERAL MEETING INFORMATION

NMPW's meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month.

Because of a scheduling conflict at the Northwest Montana History Museum, the event is moving to the Red Lion meeting room at the east end of the Kalispell Center Mall.

The meetings begins with a Gab 'n' Greet for a chance to get acquainted, followed by the evening meal at 6 p.m., and the presentation at 7 p.m.

The meal is \$20 and open to both members and non-members. Pay for meals at the door.

All meetings will be broadcast on-line via Zoom for our distant members and those who cannot physically attend.

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

There will be the usual raffle for door prizes. Local history authors may be on hand to sign books.

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

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



Flying Museum Field Trip?

After two excellent presentations from members of the Museum of Mountain Flying in Missoula, we have been coordinating with their staff on a potential field trip this May. We anticipate a Friday or Saturday visit.

However before we can schedule a date, we need to know how many are willing and able to go! Please let Posse Programs Deputy, Kyle Stetler, know as soon as possible at kmstetler@gmail.com.

Montana is the birthplace of mountain flying and the museum has numerous displays and aircraft, including the famed *Miss Montana*. The museum is located at the Missoula International Airport.



DUES REMINDER

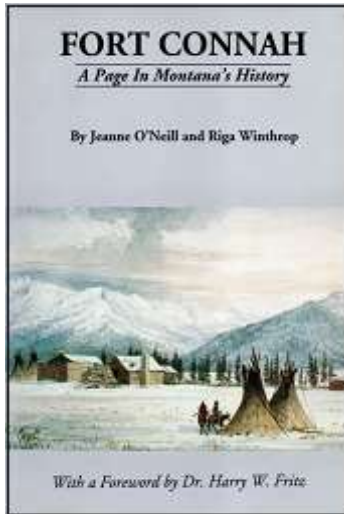
It is time for our annual members renewal and new member drive. Statements have been e-mailed to all current members. Please support our organization and its goals by responding as soon as possible.

We ask that your dues be made promptly to the address on the dues statement or brought to the March 20 meeting.

Do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or comments.

FROM THE BOOK SHELF

By Rick Hull



I grabbed *Fort Connah, A Page in Montana's History* after stumbling across it in a used bookstore. Little local history is as significant and immediate as Fort Connah. Located in a field between Ronan and St. Ignatius, the log cabin is considered the oldest standing

building in Montana. A highway historic sign marks its location.

As pointed out in the book, Fort Connah is part of a history unlike the American explorers and settlers who came into Montana from the east. Instead has its origin in Canadian fur traders who first ventured from the west and north shortly after Lewis and Clark.

The book doesn't have much new to say, but it packs a lot of information in one place. Included are how beaver were trapped, how the mounted skins were used as currency, and details on skills like making pemmican.

Much of the book is biographies of the McDonald family, Jocko Finley, David Thompson and others. The biographies emphasize how the Canadians lived with local tribes, instead of displacing them. Fort Connah was not a military outpost surrounded by log ramparts, but instead a trading compound with a store and warehouses.

Angus McDonald, the Hudson Bay's Company trader most connected with Fort Connah. Of imposing stature and entertaining storyteller, he spoke multiple tribal languages, along with his native Gaelic, English and French. He took part in Indian war dances, and then impressed the natives with a Scottish sword dance. Angus, a fan of

Shakespeare, penned stories of his adventures, and his Nez Perce wife also left an account of her journey to the Gulf of Mexico. The book has numerous photographs of the McDonald Family.


Fort Connah was established in 1946, which made the Canadian operation technically illegal, since it came after the international border along the 49th parallel was extended to the Pacific. But it remained in business until 1871 when a deal was finally reached to buy out the Hudson's Bay Company holdings south of the border.

Fort Connah is not old history. A local group, the Ft. Connah Restoration Society, disassembled the historic building, stored up the foundation, reassembled it, and put on a new shake roof. A rendezvous is held every year on the site. Memberships are available for \$10 at P.O. Box 56, Charlo, MT 59824.

By Jeanne O'Neill and Riga Winthrop
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TRIVA QUESTION OF THE MONTH

I apologize. Last month's question wasn't written clearly. The question was: "Arlee, Montana is an alteration of what name?" **Pat Walsh, Barbara Boorman** and **Malinda Shafman** were quick with the obvious answer – it was named after Chief Arlee.

But I was looking for the origins of the name Arlee. The question has to do with the Catholic names given to tribal members by the Jesuit priests at the St. Ignatius Mission. For example, a Kootenai outlaw was named Pascal, like the French mathematician. Some names got scrambled in the translation. Chief Moise was originally Moses.

According to story by Indian Agent Peter Ronan, Arlee's given name was Henry. But the

"H" is silent in Salish and "R" was troublesome. So the name was reduced to "alee". Eventually the "R" slipped back in, since Arlee is a legitimate, though girl's, name.

The confederated tribes have gotten their revenge with the renaming of Kerr Dam to the nearly unpronounceable Seli's Ksanka Qlispe'. It combines the native names for the Selish, Kootenai and Kalispel tribes.

This Month's Trivia Question

This is a question related to South Fork drainage. What was the plant cultivated by local tribes at Spotted Bear. It was also grown at a more notable location.

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

The plan to flood the Flathead Valley during WWII

By Rick Hull

At the height of World War II in 1943, Polson residents were alarmed to discover federal officials were proposing to flood their city. Kerr Dam would be enlarged, raising Flathead Lake water levels by 17 feet and ultimately up to 37 feet. Portions of Polson, Somers and Bigfork would be flooded, and much of the Lower Valley inundated. At the full 37 feet, the lake would be lapping at the edge of Kalispell.

The plan also called for dredging the outlet at Polson, allowing Flathead Lake to drop an additional 10 feet during the winter draw down. Much of Polson Bay would become mud flats.

It was all part of a wartime emergency project to impound an extra three million acre feet of water in Flathead Lake, boosting power production at downstream dams in the Columbia River system.

The news struck the Flathead Valley at the end of May, 1943, and the Bonneville Power Administration and Army Corps of Engineers scheduled a public meeting June 3 in Kalispell.



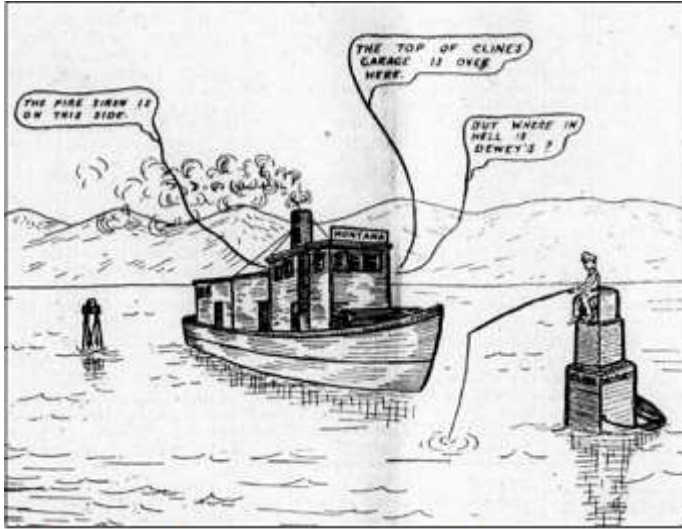
Kerr Dam at Polson was operated by Montana Power during World War II on leased tribal land.

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But there were immediate protests.

About 300 people turned out May 28 in Polson. Raising the lake the full 37 feet would flood half of Main Street, submerge the Hwy. 93 bridge into town, and inundate the city's water and sewer plants, they noted.

S.C. DeMers, representing the confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes, said, "I don't believe Money can buy our Flathead valley," and added, "I'm sure there are a few tomahawks left on the reservation."



A cartoon in the Flathead Courier showing a boy fishing atop Cline's Garage in downtown Polson.

The Kalispell public meeting lasted three days, with local resistance on the rise. Montana's congressional delegation was enlisted in the battle, with both Senators and both Congressmen declaring their opposition.

But in a June 17 front-page article, the *Flathead Courier* said, "There is a growing indication that for all the protests made at the public hearing at Kalispell and the assurances of Montana congressmen, the plan to raise the level of Flathead Lake by the army engineers and Bonneville administration is not dead, and has not been abandoned."

A Flathead Valley committee was formed, and \$10,000 raised to pay for the work of various groups and necessary trips. At a meeting of East Shore residents, a six-year-old girl insisted her 18 cents be added to the fund. The meeting's contributions peaked at \$100, and there were many \$50 donations, the *Courier* reported.

There was an immediate search for a more acceptable source of the extra water. A low dam on Albeni Falls on the Pend Oreille river had support in Idaho. Other proposal included dredging the south inlet on the Kootenai River, which would drain 30,000 acres north of Bonners Ferry, Idaho, and dams on the Z Canyon in northwest Washington and Glacier View on the North Fork of the Flathead.

But the most promising was a low dam on the South Fork river. "Such a plan will involve partial construction of Hungry Horse dam to impound about 1,000,000 acre feet of water as quickly as possible for war purposes," noted Paul Raver, Bonneville Power administrator.

It was estimated the Hungry Horse Dam could be on line by 1945. The proposals came at a time when the allies were just turning the corner in World War II and the conflict was expected to last to 1948 in the Pacific.

The Albeni Falls Dam was built in 1955 and the Boundary Dam at Z Canyon in 1967. The full Hungry Horse Dam was completed 1953.

Congressional pressure began to weigh on the Kerr Dam proposal. Burton K. Wheeler, Montana's powerful Senator, pressured federal authorities for a decision. An upcoming Congressman, Mike Mansfield, said, "I want to call to the attention of Congress that is the raising of Flathead lake is allowed to go through it will directly affect 25,000 people and indirectly 50,000 or one-tenth of the population in my state."

By August the Flathead Lake proposal was essentially dead, and it was taken out of the emergency "war project" arena and turned over to Congress.

The House of Representatives' subcommittee on irrigation held a hearing in Kalispell that September.

"At no future time will an effort be made to change levels of Flathead lake," Raver said at the hearing, and added that the Bonneville administration "has come to believe it would have been a mistake."

Instead the emphasis would be on the interim Hungry Horse plan, he said.

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The next issue of Pony Tracks will be issued April 10, 2023 (or thereabouts)

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