



PONY TRACKS

Newsletter of the Northwest Montana Westerners

Vol. 11, No. 2

Kalispell, Montana

March 13, 2024

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

MARCH MEETING

Monday, March 18, 2024

“Montana Breweries – A Family History”

Presenter: Steve Lozar of Polson, MT

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

Time: Gab 'n' Greet, raffle and book signings
start at 6:00 p.m.

No dinner offered, but there are
downtown restaurants within
walking distance.

Historic Presentation: Program begins at 7:00
p.m. No reservations are required, but
seating will be limited; so come early.
Call (406)-309-0938 with any
questions.

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

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89538012174?
pwd=U3B4aEw1UXRQT1NNGVjRWV5VSs
xQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89538012174?pwd=U3B4aEw1UXRQT1NNGVjRWV5VSsxQT09)

Meeting ID: 895 3801 2174

Passcode: 330729

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

ABOUT THE PRESENTATION



Steve Lozar and a poster from his collection for
the Kalispell Malting and Brewing Company.

Steve Lozar says he isn't a big beer drinker.
Other than a beer at dinner, he'd rather have a diet
Coke.

But a lifetime fascination with the history of
beer brewing in Montana led to building a private
beer museum over his business in Polson.

Beer was always part of the pioneer West, Lozar
said. Communities as small as Creston and Egan
had their own breweries. Pulling out a page from
the 1892 Inter Lake, he points to an advertisement
where Lang & Tiedman tout their “Flathead

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Shingle Mill and Brewery” east of Egan.

At one time, Butte had 39 breweries, and Deer Lodge had four, he said. Kalispell had a major brewery district, with the buildings still standing on Fifth and Sixth Avenue West.

“Your town suddenly had a future if you had a brewery,” he said.

But in the 1970s, before the craft beer explosion and changes in tax laws, the United States was down to 17 commercial breweries.

Beer brought Steve's family to Montana. His great grandfather was recruited from native Slovenia in 1887 for his brewing expertise.

Beer was part of the family dinner, children and all. “No matter how old you were, we all got a pint,” he said.

The lion's share of the Lozar family ended up in Butte, which remains his favorite place.

Each ethnic neighborhood had their own occupation in the mines, their own food, and their own variety of beer – and their delivery horses were all the same distinct color, he noted.

Among his relatives was the feisty, and one-eyed, Sophie Morigeau of Eureka. She smuggled her bootleg liquor from Canada throughout western Montana in a wagon with a false bottom.

About the Presenter

Steve's grandfather moved to the Flathead Reservation. He took a job hauling mail and married a local Postmistress, who was a full-blooded tribal member.

His father married a Fork Peck Reservation woman, making Steve more than three-quarters Indian. “I'm the lightest one in the family,” he said.

He was sent to a boarding school in Wyoming at age 6, and eventually attended art school in Sacramento.

Steve has degrees from San Diego and Hawaii, and worked in education for 40 years. He was also elected to the Flathead Reservation Tribal Council.



FROM THE SHERIFF'S SADDLEBAG

By Edward "Eddy" Byrne

We kicked off the year last month with a great presentation by one of our own, Michael Ober, on historical sites in Montana. It was well attended by members and guests alike. We look forward to keeping the momentum going with next Monday's presentation by Steve Lozar who has founded his Beer Museum in Polson. It reminds me of the old adage “Montanan's drink beer [and whiskey] and fight over water”.

The schedule for the remainder of the year is coming together. We have some first-time presenters and a couple of familiar faces such as Doug Ammons from Missoula who has given superb presentations on Butte and superimposed old photos with current ones. We are also discussing an extended program to celebrate our tenth anniversary.

On a separate topic, our board is entering its final year for several key individuals who will be stepping down. It is imperative that we attract members who are willing to join the Board and fill these key roles to include Vice President of Programs, Vice President of Membership, and Treasurer. We are also looking for someone to help manage the group's web page.

The new Board will be installed at the November meeting.

For the continuation of the Northwest Montana Westerners organization and maintain the quality programs and its smooth running, members need to step forward to volunteer a couple hours a month.

The Board meets from 6:00-6:30 p.m. before the 7 p.m. presentation at the museum. All members are welcome to attend to observe the meeting. Also, anyone interested in becoming more involved with the group is encouraged to show up early and volunteer your time and services.

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

FROM YE EDITOR'S DESK

By Rick Hull



Historic beer posters fill the ceiling of Lozar's museum.

Steve Lozar said he has been collecting beer memorabilia most of his life. As a youth, he decorated his room with beer posters. “Which was pretty weird for a seven to eight year old boy,” he admits.

The collection grew and grew, and eventually he turned the second floor of his screen printing business into a museum.

The centerpiece of the museum is the bar from his great grandfather's establishment in East Helena, which was rescued from the family basement.

As expected, the museum features bottles and cans from Montana's breweries. But there is much more. In one corner is a research library, with shelves of historic documents. And the ceiling and walls are covered with beer posters. About every

year, Steve, now nearly 75 years old, gets out a ladder and replaces the posters with others from his collection.

Photographs of former breweries are strategically placed. “Virtually everyone of these have an interesting story,” he said.

Most interesting is his collection of the promotional items that the bars and breweries gave away. Besides bottle openers, there were baseball umpire whisks and small sewing kits. To attract women after Prohibition was repealed, bars gave away makeup compacts.

He has a matchbook where each match is a tiny beer bottle, and a cleverly designed piece of cardboard that could literally be used to whistle for a beer in a crowded bar.

What looks like ashtrays were dishes of salt, designed to stoke thirst for another beer in those taking advantage of the free “Dutch Lunch.”



Steve with his collection of promotional bottle openers.

The advent of eBay has devastated antique buying. “Beer cans sold in excess of \$35,000,” he said.

To keep his collection intact, Steve has arranged for his collection to go to the Montana Historical Society on his death.

The museum is in the Total Screen Design building directly across from Walgreens at the Highways 93 and 35 junction in Polson. For a tour, stop in and ask the proprietors to call him. “It's just a joy meeting people,” he said.

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TRIVA QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Last month's question asked the location of six vanished or renamed communities. The list came from the 1901-02 Polk City Directory, and all the places were on the Great Northern Railway.

Trish Walsh was among those who knew Gateway was the border town on the railroad spur into Canada that ran along the Kootenai River. Hayden was five miles south of the border and Rondo further downstream.

Richland and Rockhill were on the GN's former main line through Pleasant Valley.

Harrisburg was an early name for Fortine. **Darris Flanagan** pointed out that a community named Roe was in the same area.

This Month's Trivia Question

Three bars were located on the 100 block of Kalispell's Main Street – the Brewery Saloon (120 Main), the Pastime Bar (140 Main) and the Silver Dollar Saloon (127 Main). What happened to the three drinking establishments when Prohibition took effect in 1919?

Submit your answers to the editor at richardahull@charter.net and we will print the names of all those who get them right.



DUES REMINDER

It is time for our annual members renewal and new member drive. Statements have been 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 meeting.

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

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



● April 3:

The History Book Club discusses *Montana Legacy; Essays on History, People and Place*. 2 p.m. at the Northwest Montana History Museum.

GENERAL MEETING INFORMATION

NWMTW 'S meetings are held on the third Monday of the month, except the months of December and January, at the Northwest Montana History Museum at 124 Second Avenue East, Kalispell, Montana.

Meetings begin with a Grab 'n' Greet session from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. for a chance to get acquainted. Local history authors will have their books for sale.

The presentation starts at 7 p.m. and is free for members and youths 16 and under. Non-members pay \$5.

Historic books are raffled off as a fund raiser. All meetings are broadcast on-line via Zoom.

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KALISPELL'S SOLE BREWERY

Kalispell Malting and Brewing Co. operated from 1893 to 1955

By Rick Hull

Kalispell's only brewery operated for more than 60 years on the city's west side. It shipped beer as far as Libby and Havre, and had its own hog farm to get rid of the leftover malt. The brewery had a major economic impact in the Flathead Valley, including spawning a local barley growing industry.

Kalispell Malting and Brewing Company was located on the block between Fifth and Sixth Avenue West, next to the big silos on Center Street. Many of the buildings remain, though heavily modified with metal additions.

Best Bottled Beer, Glacier Beer, October Ale, and Topper Beer were among the brands produced by the brewery.

The brewery was founded by immigrants Henry and Charles Lindlahr, who came to Kalispell in 1892. Their father had been a brewer in Germany. That summer they opened the Brewery Saloon on Main Street.

In September the brothers bought 10 out of 12 lots on Fifth Avenue West, and started construction of the new brewery. They ordered hops and a carload of malt so they could start operations as soon as city water was available. By July of 1893 the brewery was producing beer.

The business was formally incorporated in 1894. Bus Gamer, another German immigrant who had operated a saloon and liquor store in Demersville, joined them as a partner.

The brewery complex had a corral and stables on site, and delivered beer six days a week by horse and wagon. Other loads went out by the Great Northern Railway, whose railroad yard bordered the brewery. Beer was sent to Columbia Falls, Whitefish, Eureka, Rexford, Libby, Troy, Bonner's Ferry, Havre, Chester, Shelby, Cut Bank, and Inverness. A wagon load was also shipped once a month by barge to Polson.

Beers included a blend made from local barley, Bavarian hops and cream of malt. It was advertised as "Concentrated Liquid Food which is Practically Non-Intoxicating/Restores Health/Invigorates/ Enriches the Blood." The firm touted beer as less intoxicating than hard liquor and more beneficial for body and mind.



The only intact building of the Kalispell Malting and Brewing Company complex is this brick building on Sixth Ave. West.



By 1895 the brewery was producing 1,200 barrels of beer a month, and in 1901 purchased more than 600,000 pounds of local barley. It operated a hog farm north of Kalispell, because health officials wanted the leftover malt removed from town. The complex grew to include a two-story spouting floor and storage room for the malt and barley, a four-story tower with barley elevators, separators and cleaners, and a kiln for drying barley. A four-story malt house was added in 1901 and a 25-ton cold storage plant and 40,000-bushel grain elevator built in 1903. Employees and management lived in neighboring homes.

Charles Lindlahr died in 1900 of typhoid fever at age 34 and schools were closed for his funeral. Shortly afterwards Henry Lindlahr sold his interest in the brewery, and moved to Chicago.

In 1910 the brewery was producing 12,000 barrels annually. About a fifth was shipped in wooden barrels. The beer was aged at least four months, and six months for special brews.

When Prohibition hit in 1919, the brewery kept going by making cider and near beer. After the repeal in 1933, the Kalispell Malting & Brewing Company jumped back in with the first locally brewed beer in the state.

In 1935 Gus Bischoff, Jr, a long-time employee, purchased the brewery and his family ran it until it closed in 1955. Bischoff, who was also a German immigrant, had been a company teamster.

Like other local breweries, it was put out of business by stiffer regulatory requirements and economies of scale that favored the national beer producers.

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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 edition of Pony Tracks will be issued April 10, 2024 (or thereabouts)

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