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Montana Historical Society

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The Montana Historical Society (MHS) is a historical society located in the U.S. State of Montana that acts to preserve historical resources important to the understanding of Montana history. The society provides services through five operation projects: Education and Outreach, Historic Preservation, a Museum, Research Center, and Publications.^[1] Founded in 1865, it is the oldest such institution west of the Mississippi (excluding Louisiana).^[2]

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History and organization

On December 21, 1864, seven months after the creation of the Montana Territory, Council Bill 15 was introduced into the Territorial legislature by Francis M. Thompson, a representative from Beaverhead County who would only live in Montana two and a half years, to create the Historical Society of Montana.^{[3][4]} The bill, "An Act to Incorporate the Historical Society of Montana", was signed into law February 2, 1865 "in order to collect and arrange facts in regard to the early history of this Territory, the discovery of its mines, incidents of the fur trade, etc." and was incorporated by H.L. Hosmer, Christopher P. Higgins, John Owens, James Stuart, W.F. Sanders, Malcolm Clark, Francis M. Thompson, William Graham, Granville Stuart,

W.W. De Lacey, C.E. Irvine, and Charles S. Bagg.^[5] It was reorganized as a state agency March 4, 1891 and by "An Act to Perpetuate the Historical Society of the State of Montana" March 1, 1949.^[6]

Originally located in Virginia City, it was moved to Helena in 1874 after a disputed election approved Helena as the territory's new capital. In 1902, it was located in the basement of the new Montana State Capitol building.^[7]

Collections

The archives collections includes manuscripts from the early 1860s to the present, state and local government records, in addition to oral histories. The library collection comprises books and pamphlets, newspapers and periodicals, maps, federal and state publications, posters and musical scores, as well as the state's largest collection of newspaper clippings and magazine articles.^[8]

Publications

The Montana Historical Society has been publishing *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* since 1951. The quarterly magazine focuses on people, places, and events significant to the western region of the United States. The Montana Historical Society Press also publishes books designed to connect Montana's social, political, and cultural developments in addition to the perspective of Native Americans on Montana history.^[9]

References

1. ^ "Services Provided to the Citizens of the Treasure State by the Montana Historical Society, 2007 to



Lolly, by Charles Marion Russell in the Montana Historical Society Museum

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